
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, December 15, 2009.

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)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.)

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., B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.) (Lond.), LL.M (Leic.)

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

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

His Excellency 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, B.Sc., M.B.B.S. (Minister of Economic Affairs, Empowerment, Innovation, Trade, Industry and Commerce)

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C., 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. F. J. STUART, Q.C., B.A., LL.M. (Deputy Prime Minister, Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs)

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

Hon. E. G. HUTSON, F.C.C.A., C.A. (Minister of International Business and International Transport)

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

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

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE, Ed.D., M.Ed., B.A., Dip. Theology (Minister of Environment, Water Resources and Drainage)

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 Education and Human Resource Development)

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS, M.B.A., B.Sc., (Minister of Health)

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, M.Sc., B.A., (Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, Urban and Rural Development)

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

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, December 04, 2009.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its Meeting of Friday, December 04, 2009, be confirmed subject to any omissions, corrections and/or observations.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that, Sir. Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no corrections or observations, then let those Minutes stand confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am in receipt of the Accounts and Statements as prepared by the Accountant-General for the month of June 2009.

House A51 Sequence 2 10.20 a.m.

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

PAPERS

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

1. International Financial Services (Licence Fees) (Regulations) 2009;
2. Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No.7) Order, 2009;
3. Value Added Tax (No. 4) Order, 2009.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. 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 rest of this day's Sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 6 – RESOLUTION TO CONSIDER THE GRANTS OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND.

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. S. A. LASHLEY, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

ORDER NO. 6

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$19 146 749 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2009-2010 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 4/2009-2010 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION.

HEAD 23

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

IN THE AMOUNT OF \$16 577 534

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

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Mr. Chairman, this Supplementary being requested by the Ministry of Health is quite necessary. It is in keeping with our desire and continued work in the Ministry of Health to continue work and to improve the facility, the staffing level and the general ambience around the health sector in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, the first part, \$461 651, relates principally to the payment of \$350 000 for tax cost in respect to Civil Suit No. 1198 of 2000, regarding the St. Joseph Hospital Commission of Inquiry. I believe I have spoken to this several times on this Floor and in other places but certainly here again we see the need to settle some expenses that have occurred, as a result of some bad decisions made by the former Administration in that respect. I want to emphasise that a sizeable portion of this part of the Head relates to costs associated with settling matters in relation to the St. Joseph Hospital Commission of Inquiry. Sir, \$350 000 is going towards that particular expenditure.

We also had this year the unexpected but very challenging situation of H1N1 Influenza/AIDS virus with which Barbados was challenged in the first two months of the year. Sir, not having had expenditure allocated for that, we were forced to come here today to seek some funding of approximately \$110 000 to settle expenses incurred in respect of that, including costs associated with additional physicians, laboratory work, et cetera.

In respect to \$141 000, that too relates to the need for improvements in the laboratory system to meet the challenges there. Some \$4.2 million is for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and that is principally to deal with challenges that may occur in respect of general supplies of pharmaceuticals. We have also \$304 000 allocated towards the Orthopaedics Department.

Mr. Chairman and Members of this Honourable Chamber, let me say that Barbados and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital continue to be challenged with the number of motor vehicle accidents in particular. As I said at a recent gathering this weekend, we do get the highlights and the fatalities and our sympathies go out to the particular families, including a constituent of mine who recently lost his life in an accident in St. Philip.

Sir, we are also challenged in the Accident and Emergency Department and throughout the Queen Elizabeth Hospital with those who present themselves with other injuries, including loss of limbs and other orthopaedic-related challenges coming out of motor vehicular accidents and those who inflict grievous bodily harm on others. That has continued to put a strain on the Orthopaedics Department. This is a department in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which had been challenged for many year, but which was grossly neglected, like the rest of the health sector, by the former Administration.

We decided that we needed, on top of the funds already allocated for this year, to come back and to seek a Supplementary to ensure that the Orthopaedics Department at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is adequately equipped to deal with the challenges presented by these unfortunate situations throughout Barbados. Mr. Chairman, let me say that we have also agreed and have recently added additional staff to that department, and I expect that we should see some improvements there in the not-too-distant future.

Mr. Chairman, the other \$340 000 relates to the Opthomology Department, in order to meet additional supplies that are required as result of the suspected number of opthomology procedures that will be done in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on a monthly basis. We are seeking to increase the number of operating theatres that are there that can accommodate these challenges.

Mr. Chairman, let me make the point that the Lions Eye Care Centre, which had been conceptualised by the Lions Group here in the Caribbean, in particular Barbados, and certainly got going under the previous Democratic Labour Party Administration, has suffered tremendously over the years, due to neglect and an ineffective maintenance programme under the former Administration.

Sir, it is regrettable that after almost 15 years after that building was completed, it still has not been officially handed over to the Government of Barbados. The former Administration must be condemned for playing politics with health care in Barbados, principally because of the association with the now President of the Honourable Senate, the former Minister of Health. Sir, just as they did with the St. Joseph Hospital, they ran amock and neglected to maintain the health care institutions in Barbados.

Sir, I keep saying all the time that illness does not choose one according to his or her political persuasion. This Government is committed to providing a health care system that takes care of all Barbadians, regardless of race, class, colour, creed or political affiliations. Sir, the Barbados Labour Party must constantly be condemned for their persistent neglect of the health care sector during the 15 years they held the reins of Government. Sir, certainly they had more money to spend than any other Government in the history of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I have to constantly remind Honourable Members and the public of Barbados that two years into a Democratic Labour Party Administration, we have done far better in respect of public health care than the Barbados Labour Party has done in the 15 years they have been in office.

Mr. Chairman, let us be clear. The Opposition has no moral authority to comment seriously about the health care system in this country, but we are pressing on. Sir, I am happy to say that we are solutions-driven. Certainly many strides are being made in improvements in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and in other parts of the health sector. Mr. Chairman, \$340 000 is needed in respect to the Opthamology Department.

10.30 a.m.

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

Hon. D. O.N. INNIS: Sir, in respect of the ambulance service, we also require another \$1.1 million to assist there.

Mr. Chairman, if I could just say that we inherited an Administration and a Government where the ambulance service for years has been starved of resources and, certainly, was not able to meet the demands. Sir, realistically, Barbados would need about eight ambulances from the Government Ambulance Service operating on a daily basis to meet the demands.

Sir, currently, due to some constraints they have had over the years, they are only able to keep an average of four ambulances on the road on a daily basis. However, as we speak, this Administration has just acquired two additional ambulances for Emergency Ambulance Service, which are expected to be here in Barbados for the first quarter. We have sent officers to Italy to inspect them and to ensure they are outfitted to meet the demands of Barbados and I am proud to say that purchase, coupled with new initiatives to improve upon maintenance of the existing fleet, will see Barbados within a year's time being able to meet the demand of ambulances on the island.

Sir, we are, certainly, solutions driven, unlike the former Administration.

Mr. Chairman, \$1.2 million is also required for additional work at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to meet regular maintenance programme and to reduce the number of breakdowns attributed to the absence of maintenance contracts and to ensure timely maintenance of the plant, equipment and vehicles there. Sir, let me say that once again this speaks volumes about the failure of the former Administration to properly maintain the biomedical equipment and plant within the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mr. Chairman, recently, the Chief Executive Officer and his team have been speaking publicly about some of the changes but, more importantly, about what they are doing to improve things at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and, Sir, I commend them wholeheartedly. I have a Board that is really working and a management team that is very effective on delivering on the goods throughout the system but we have inherited a system where vital pieces of equipment were purchased and there were no maintenance contracts in place.

Mr. Chairman, the Board recently had an audit done of equipment in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to identify what equipment had maintenance contracts in place and which ones did not and, out of a three-page Excel spreadsheet that I saw, only six items had maintenance contracts in place. Sir, that is reprehensible because you should not be using taxpayers' money to purchase expensive equipment and then do not have warranty agreements or maintenance agreements in place for maintaining them.

Sir, that is part of the challenge that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has had over the years. As a responsible Government, we have insisted that all the equipment being procured by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and at all health care institutions must have the requisite maintenance agreement and we must have staff trained to maintain the equipment.

We will hold all suppliers of goods and services to our health care institutions to the highest standards and to the highest level of accountability. Sir, we have done it for the elevators and we will do it for all parts of the health care system in Barbados. Mr. Chairman, there is much that we are doing and certainly, this money that is required will assist us considerably.

Mr. Chairman, we have heard recently that part of the funds are going towards this case. We have had situations, over time, where the recovery room in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been filled because of the number of accidents and emergencies needing surgery and when that occurred we would have had to take the decision

to postpone elective surgeries, not emergency surgeries, the ones that are deemed not to be emergency cases.

Sir, due to the fact that we need to do better in that area, we have taken the decision recently to take Ward A3 and establish a high dependency unit, which is an eight-bedded unit, and which would certainly help relieve a lot of the pressure in that area and increase upon the number of surgeries to be done in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mr. Chairman, I am proud to say that the high dependency unit should be operational by December 21, 2009. Mr. Chairman, we have also recruited additional nursing staff for the institution throughout the health sector and there is much more that could be done there as well.

Sir, in respect of the maintenance of equipment, which some of these funds are going towards, as I have said before, we had a situation where the former Administration purchased expensive equipment that were lying around the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in boxes and lying around Barbados in containers and in storage rooms rented from the private sector. Sir, this was equipment that the staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital sometimes did not know about.

Sir, only this morning I was advised that in Lears, St. Michael, that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, for the last five years, had been storing air-conditioning equipment brought into Barbados for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which today, is of very little use.

It was \$450 000 worth in equipment lying in a storeroom in a private sector in Barbados that today we are faced with a situation where, because of its lack of use, we cannot have a maintenance agreement because some of the parts are obsolete and, therefore, that is a waste of taxpayers' money. Mr. Chairman, that is what the former Administration left for us in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, there are many issues that have been raised, for example, in terms of radiology. We inherited a situation, and the Honourable Member for St. Philip West can tell you about it during his tenure in the Minister of Health, where the Radiology Department continues to be challenged; where Barbadians continue to complain about long waits for X-rays and other diagnostic work to be done.

Sir, today I am happy to report that within the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Radiology Department, Room 1, the Mammography Room, that equipment has been serviced and this service took place in November 2009, and that equipment is fully functional.

Mr. Chairman, Room 2, the General X-ray Room is fully functional. However, it was a work horse for a long time and there was one functional general X-ray room and

we have just acquired a new tube for that. The specialists from Siemens, the manufacturer, are on hand to install it and, Sir, that will also be fully functional.

Mr. Chairman, Room 3, the Colonoscopy Room: The installation for this equipment has been completed. However, this colonoscope is a piece of equipment that was purchased by the former Administration nearly three and-a-half-years ago. However, due to the long time that the equipment was in storage, the battery on the system failed and, therefore, the brains on the system crashed.

It is necessary to do an entire reload of the software. The room is being made patient-ready with lights, ceiling, et cetera and we expect that the engineers from Phillips Engineering should be on site next week to get it going.

Mr. Chairman, the members of the Barbados Labour Party were busy flying all over the world and with hifalutin stuff instead of paying attention to things that matter most to the average person in this society. Sir, this Administration is busy getting on with the business of the people. We are very proud to educate our successors in this Administration but we must never lose sight from whence we have come.

We inherited a health sector in Barbados that was unattended for almost 10 years and that is why I constantly say that the Opposition Barbados Labour Party has no moral authority really to speak seriously about health matters in Barbados. Sir, where we are today is, perhaps, where Barbados should have been 10 years ago and, Sir, that is the harsh reality.

Mr. Chairman, this Democratic Labour Party Administration, led by the Honourable Member for St. John, takes the health of our people seriously and that is why we have committed those kinds of resources we have committed to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the entire health sector.

Mr. Chairman, all repairs to the CT single slice machine appear to have been completed, is fully functional and is in use, so too is the CT 64-slice machine. Sir, I must say that we were in a situation where you had pieces of machinery breaking down in the X-ray Department of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and the Government was spending \$125 000 per week sending people out to get work done. We took a decision in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and in the Ministry of Health, that we must get the equipment in the hospital functioning. I am proud to say that we have made major improvements today, which would save taxpayers a considerable amount of money.

Mr. Chairman, there is much that we have done and there is much more left to be done. We will not be distracted. We will continue to focus and operate on the

premise that the health of the nation is the wealth of the nation, and I am sure we will make great strides therein.

Mr. Chairman, we have also requested \$7.5 million for the Barbados Drug Service. Let me say, Mr. Chairman, and Honourable Members of the Honourable Chamber that the Barbados Drug Service cannot continue operating as it has been for the last decade.

Sequence 4

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Mr. Chairman, I am satisfied that there are measures we will put in place to ensure a sustainable Drug Service, costing taxpayers less money, but ensuring that the health of the nation is in no way compromised. There are some business decisions that have to be taken, and we are not prepared to do so, but unlike the former Administration we are prepared to operate like Lords from on high.

We are not prepared to operate as though Ministers are the sole reservoirs and depository of knowledge. We take democracy seriously. Therefore, within my Ministry, in respect of the forms for the Barbados Drug Service, we have consulted with all of the stakeholders. We have met with the Barbados Medical Association of Medical Practitioners, only a few days ago.

We met with the Pharmacists, the Pharmacy owners, the Formulary Committee of the Barbados Drug Service, the Tenders Committee of the Barbados Drug Service, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and all the stakeholders, and there is a commitment from my part that by the beginning of the next financial year, Barbados should be aware of a restructured Drug Service that is lean and mean, satisfying Barbadians but costing the taxpayers less money going forward.

Sir, the wastage has to stop. There is too much wastage and too much abuse within the system in Barbados, and it has to come to a screeching halt, but mindful of that, we need an additional \$7.5 million to deal with that.

Sir, in terms of care of the elderly, utilities, given the increases in water rates and the charges for the sewerage system at the Geriatric Hospital, we need an additional \$80 000 to meet that particular Head.

Sir, let me say that this Government has exhibited, and I am not speaking of myself as Minister but all of my colleagues on the Front and Back Bench, have exhibited a level of care and compassion for older folks in this society that has never been witnessed under the former Administration. We could not believe, the Honourable

Member for St. Philip West could tell you, the kind of conditions that some of our elderly folk exist in society, a government that had millions of dollars to spend, almost \$300 million which the Honourable Member for St. Peter said that he put aside for a rainy day.

The rain did not come, the money went but the elderly in Barbados were not taken care of. As a responsible Government, we are committed to making it right for those who have worked so hard to build this society up, none of them will be left behind.

Sir, we are mindful of the neglect with respect to the physical plant for the elderly throughout Barbados. If you go to the Geriatric Hospital on Beckles Road now, you will see that a long awaited kitchen and storage facility, which was talked about for years, has started. It is not going to cost the taxpayers of Barbados \$5.3 million as was originally estimated. It will cost \$3.9 million, construction and equipment.

We believe that we have to get it right, in terms of the kind of accommodation we provide for the elderly individuals in society and the staff who labour under very trying circumstances to accommodate them and to ensure that their lives in the evening of their days are as comfortable as possible.

I also say that there is a minority in this society that is not exhibiting that love, care and compassion for the older folks in our society, and as stated whenever we see that existing, we have to intervene and bring it to a screeching halt.

Sir, there are discussions ongoing across the Ministry of Social Services, that should see within the next year major new policy changes that will inform and programmes that will address the care of the elderly in Barbados. I wish to reiterate that this Government cares deeply and genuinely about those who are not so well off in the society, but particularly the elderly and children in our society.

Sir, I believe that the additional funds requested here, will be put to very good use. This is certainly a reflection of this Government's commitment to continuing to get it right in health care. We will continue to focus on this vital aspect of our society, for we recognise that the health of the nation is the wealth of a nation, and we are committed to providing a health care service, that once again, Barbadians can be extremely proud of.

I beg to move that this Head stand part.

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

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

Mr. H.F. LASHLEY: Sir, the health of the nation is certainly its wealth. Permit to us on this occasion to basically congratulate the Honourable Minister of Health. I am going to tell you why. When the Honourable Member took up the post of Minister of Health, very few anticipated that he would have taken such a hands on approach to health care in Barbados. The visibility of the Minister in each department under his Ministry must certainly be complimented from the perspective that the health care sector among the people of Barbados is one that this Minister surely cares and is one that is certainly trying.

Sir, I want to make some very pertinent points as it relates to health care in Barbados. We have an amazing paradox in Barbados. We have one where Barbadians are living longer than anyone else in the Eastern Caribbean, and perhaps this side of the Western world. On the other hand, we have a situation where Barbados has the highest level of amputations in the Western side of the world. One has to ask themselves what is the problem in terms of this high level of amputations. Therefore, the approach of healthy living and healthy lifestyle certainly has got to be practised and enforced, throughout the communities in Barbados. I am saying that against a certain background.

If we could have Barbadians adopting a better lifestyle, certainly, we would have a higher degree of persons living much longer. Perhaps we can refer to the demographic projection in Barbados, where the Government would have to undertake this tremendous paradigm shift. It is worked out that by the year 2020, which is not too far from now, more than half of our population will be over the age of 50 years.

This will present some serious challenges to Government in terms of how we execute our programmes, as it relates to the elderly. It will also create some challenges in relation to the gender balance situation in Barbados because the whole idea of gender budgeting will have to be taken into serious consideration.

I am saying that in the Madrid Conference of 2005, most of the developed nations across the world were looking at Barbados in terms of how we deal with our elderly population. The Minister obviously referred to a small number of Barbadians who have no respect, in my view, for the elderly folk and certainly neglect them. Not only neglect them, but also abandon them.

The responsibility of the elderly in Barbados should not be solely left to the Government alone. It is one that should be the full responsibility of the family. I am saying that family should be held very much accountable for the abandonment and ill-treatment of their elderly persons.

After all, the elderly are the pillar bearers of our society. The elderly persons in Barbados are the repository of knowledge.

Sir, I would like to see the Minister pursue a policy of creating at the District Hospitals across Barbados a memory bank where they could tap in on the knowledge of our seniors before they depart planet earth. I must say that kind of memory bank, would certainly look at the tapping in of the memory and experiences of our elderly and preserve them for posterity, so that students at the university and other tertiary institutions, and even secondary school, and persons that are even taking on study in gerontology could very well tap into the experiences and knowledge of our elderly persons.

H A51 10.10 a.m. Sequence 5

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

House A51, Sequence 06, 10.50 a.m.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, it is against that background, that a decentralisation of services as they relate to health should also be put in place as it relates to community health care.

Sir, I want to certainly congratulate the staff of the Wildey Polyclinic, who have recently celebrated their anniversary. They did an excellent job, in terms of mixing and getting into the community, where the students of the Parkinson Secondary School and other members of the community itself were involved in that entire activity. Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, I would want to use this opportunity to not only congratulate a member of staff, Miss Clarke, but also Dr. Singh at the Polyclinic, who really orchestrated that kind of community approach, in terms of the celebration of the Wildey Polyclinic.

Mr. Chairman, I was exceptionally heartened to learn that the Lions Eye Care Facility at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will be reactivated very shortly, after its dormancy for a number of years, and our having to look at the alternative position of sending elderly people to Cuba to have their eyes checked.

Now, with the reopening of the Lions Eye Care Facility, this certainly will save the Government some much critically needed expenditure but more so, it speaks to the fact that we have the kinds of expertise in Barbados that could carry out the necessary operations and treatment of persons, particularly the elderly in Barbados, who have glaucoma and other diseases.

In another forum, I would have made my strong support, in terms of using a particular substance for medical purposes. I must say on the Floor of this House,

Mr. Chairman, that it is a proven fact too, that the element of marijuana was used as a cure for glaucoma, and that is undisputed because all the medical journals have spoken to this, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, recently, there have been a number of serious road accidents in Barbados. When we have accidents like this, it puts a tremendous strain on the Accident and Emergency Department of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Sir, I am saying that we need to strengthen a faster delivery of services at the Accident and Emergency Department. Sometimes the wait is still a bit too long. I know that there have been some improvements in that area but when we have these emergencies across Barbados, the entire staff is thrust into the area dealing with emergencies and other persons have to wait.

Maybe as a solution, we could extend the hours at the Polyclinics across Barbados, probably to midnight, 1.00 a.m., 2.00 a.m. or to a 24-hour service, where these emergencies and accidents could be dealt with throughout Barbados at the respective polyclinics, hence taking the burden off the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

It has always been a challenge because we cannot on any day determine how many persons are going to come into the Accident and Emergency Department and we do not have any control over those emergencies.

I was at the Accident and Emergency Department three weeks ago. Sir, if you go inside you would see how hard-pressed it is, particularly with asthma patients, because we have a high number of persons throughout Barbados reporting to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for treatment, particularly children that are asthmatic.

I am saying this places a tremendous burden on the Accident and Emergency Department. Perhaps, the Government might have to look at a separation of children. I know there is a Pediatric Ward at the QEH. Maybe at a second general hospital like the QEH could look at building a children's hospital in Barbados like other developed countries.

In my view, a children's hospital in Barbados is a practical investment. It is a good investment and it is also a specialised investment, in terms of services for our children. I think there is a children's hospital in Jamaica, St. Kitts and the Trinidad Government is contemplating building one very near to Mount Hope and therefore a children's hospital, in my view, is critically needed in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, at the same time I want to really congratulate the Minister of Social Care because in St.

Michael South East, they are upgrading the George Dunner Senior Citizens' Home, located in Golden Rock in the Pine. This is a tremendous boost for the people of St. Michael South East particularly, the persons that reside in the Pinelands Housing Area, since the Pine Housing Area of itself is one of the most thickly populated areas of Barbados and has a very high level of senior citizens living in that immediate area.

There were some drainage problems related to the repair work at the George Dunner Senior Citizens' Home, but the Home has been named after a very serious community practitioner, one of the pioneers of social development in the Pinelands area. I am happy to see that the landscape around the George Dunner Senior Citizens' Home will be expanded so that it could accommodate more people because there is a tremendous demand in Barbados for senior care. I really believe it is an area that we must explore to facilitate independent employment, as a kind of a small business thrust.

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

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

After all, Sir, when persons are going to travel, there is a tremendous demand for that service in terms of persons looking after the elderly in their own homes, rather than having them placed in an institution, where the Government has to look after them. This could be a service provided for these persons within their own homes and, therefore, the whole precept and concept of home care for seniors in Barbados should be seriously pursued from the perspective that it would not only provide accommodation for those persons who are in need, but it also gives the Minister of Social Care the alternative to look at those home helpers who have been trained and are doing an excellent job, by putting them in a kind of professional area of employment by expanding the services to the elderly at the National Assistance Board.

Again, Sir, as I conclude, I am very impressed so far with the work of the Honourable Minister. It is good at times to see that a person who is not a doctor...

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, there is a perception in Barbados that the best lawyers are the ones who are trained in law, the best economists are the ones who are trained in economics and the best Ministers of Health are the ones who are doctors.

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Yes, we have had many doctors who were Ministers of Health and who have done well but I am saying that this community practitioner, because that is what he is - and I speak on behalf of the community practitioners who would not speak for themselves and who do not want to boast, so I am speaking for them.

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, I want to say that if all of us are going to be genuine and really tell the truth in this Honourable Chamber, then we have to compliment the Honourable Minister of Health.

With those few words, Mr. Chairman, I have extended my time a bit, please forgive me and I will now take my seat.

Asides.

House A51, Sequence 06, 11:00:31

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I support a number of the areas identified in this Supplementary because I believe that when it comes to health care and, indeed, the facilities for training, and the expenses that are placed in the various social agencies that at the end of the day Barbadians are the ones who would benefit.

Indeed, there are other visitors among us who would also benefit from the services that are offered in our health care system and, therefore, there is no political divide where that is concerned, because at the end of the day, I believe that the preservation of human life is really very paramount.

Mr. Chairman, almost every other week I had to be at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to visit friends and indeed relatives who were there. I must confess, Mr. Chairman, that these funds are really necessary because the conditions at the hospital have deteriorated, particularly over the last year more so than at any other time that I have ever seen or visited the hospital. Mr. Chairman, I visit the wards and therefore I know of the conditions. Mr. Chairman, I had reason to be there only last week. I would reveal very quietly some of the issues that I have with what I witnessed. I am not speaking of what anybody told me. As I walked the corridors, I saw all kinds of pieces of equipment, particularly on the wards, where people have to manoeuvre.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I will sit if the Honourable Member for St. James South wants to speak further because he really has not titillated anything in me with his presentation except what I know and to have said earlier that the Barbados Labour Party did nothing in health care for 15 years when we have been able to see polyclinics developed.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: We have extended the services at the polyclinics for longer periods in the evening to ease the tension at the Accident and Emergency Department of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We have put in all kinds of equipment and so on, but I do not want to dwell on that, I want to deal with the reality of the day because when my relatives and friends are there, and when Barbadians generally are there, any of us may end up there, we never know, I believe that the quality care should be top class and, therefore, that is the premise on which I am speaking.

Mr. Chairman, my friend who was in a Ward that will remain unnamed said to me that her daughter had to go with a prescription to a private pharmacy to buy medication for her in the year 2009. This is the first time since the early 1990s, when the Administration of the Democratic Labour Party was the Government, that has happened. There were no bandages on her cut, Mr. Chairman, to cover that incision that she had, and that bothered me. When I saw the meal...

Mr. Chairman, I want to speak to the dietary aspect of the health care. There is no point in putting me in the hospital if I am a diabetic and not giving me the meals that are appropriate for my condition. Sir, when I saw the diabetic with two salt breads, I do not know where they came from, they were stale bread. I am telling you what I saw, Mr. Chairman.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: When I saw that there were two salt breads on a plate, this much in grated carrot and a flying fish for a diabetic, it bothered me.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, please, I would like to hear the Honourable Member make her presentation. The asides are beginning to get a bit too audible.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: As usual, those men on the Other Side do not respect the women in here.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair will guide that process. You do not need to make those assertions.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am appealing to Honourable Members to allow the Honourable Member to proceed. Thank you.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, when I saw that, I knew that something was wrong with this economy. That alone told me that there is mismanagement of this economy by the Democratic Labour Party Government under the leadership of the Honourable Member for St. John. That mismanagement of the economy of Barbados has led to a deterioration in the quality care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Yes, I am seeing some improvements from the main road which are welcome, but that is the taxpayers' money that is fixing it. If we were the Government we would not have it fix, we would have had a new hospital on the way. Mr. Chairman, I would give credit to the Honourable Member for St. James South for making an effort to do some physical upgrades.

Mr. Chairman, I will speak to the quality care because. at the end of the day. one can live in a house that is not so good and still get a good life because of the meals they would eat and the way they are treated. When I saw the plate, Mr. Chairman, it hurt my heart because there is no way that two salt breads, a little grated carrot and a flying fish could be a meal for a diabetic.

Mr. Chairman, another day, it was a meal of carbohydrates. I do not know if it was creamed potato or yam, and some stewed beef. The lady said: "Miss Forde, my foot was amputated on Friday and by Sunday my blood pressure went up in the air and the nurse was saying why is this, you were being stabilised the other day or yesterday or whatever." Mr. Chairman, that is because of the content of salt in the diet. Where are the nutritionists or the dieticians who help with the programming?

Mr. Chairman, I was told that the meals are like this now because a private contractor brings in the food and all the workers at the hospital do is to serve it. If that is the case, the Honourable Minister should let us know because I know that the Democratic Labour Party has something about catering. They had millions of dollars in food brought in for the summer camps but I am not going to go there because that is not the debate.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that better could be done. The Honourable Minister spoke about the accidents and the various incidents and so on with injury, again another reflection of the Democratic Labour Party's management because when economies are good and people are employed they have less time to be lawless.

At almost every fete, including the one in St. Philip on Independence Day, where we had a terrible night up at the Garrison in order that Ministers and Members of Parliament of the Democratic Labour Party could go up to St. Philip to jump in a carnival, there was a lot of crime, somebody's throat got slashed, and somebody got shot. A lot of that is the lawlessness that is going on in this country because thousands of people have lost their jobs under the mismanagement of those Honourable Members on That Side, and that bothers me.

Mr. Chairman, domestic violence is increasing. The Honourable Member for St. George South spoke about that at length last week. Again, I support a lot of what was being said because it is a fact. Mr. Chairman, domestic violence will increase if people have issues. If there is no work, people cannot maintain their families, they cannot pay their mortgage, they cannot do this or they cannot do that because there is no money coming in and that would cause the Accident and Emergency Department to have bigger numbers because of the infighting in the households, the shooting, the robbing and all the other things. Mr. Chairman, that is also a reflection of the mismanagement on the part of this Government.

Mr. Chairman, in relation to patient care, I believe that members of the public should be given further opportunity to help with looking after individuals in the hospital. Sometimes when you go there, you see people are there with the food in front of them for 15 and 20 minutes because they cannot help themselves. I know that there are a shortage of nurses at the hospital, and in the world in general, because our nurses go to other countries for a better life, just like how our teachers and our policemen do. I do not know why some politicians do not go, but the only place they would survive is in Barbados with the attitude that some of them have.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West came here early last year as a young vibrant Minister and made a statement and said that whenever they are finished here not one of those Nigerian nurses would remain at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. They would send home all of them. Mr. Chairman, so said, so done.

House A51 Sequence 7 11.10 a.m.

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Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, about two months ago, it pained me when I heard the Director of Nursing saying - she did not say, "We are saddened..." because she cannot make any political statement - that to have lost the expertise of the Nigerian nurses was a terrible blow to Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, those Nigerian nurses were specialists and we were patterning our nurses, working along with them, to help our nurses to develop some of their skills. Sir, those Nigerian nurses were sent home, lock, stock and barrel, along with a big scandal that some of them were sent home in body bags. That helped to destroy the whole attitude and the service that we expected at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mr. Chairman, we are now hearing this week that we are going to get nurses from the Philippines. Sir, I know of some trained Barbadian nurses who have been successful in their examinations but who are still at home waiting to be called out for work. Therefore, the Minister of Health need to do further investigation to be able to engage those Barbadian nurses, on whom we have spent thousands of dollars per nurse, to ensure that they are well-trained.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, when we left office, we left 150 nurses in training. We also increased that number from 60, in 2006/2007.

Sir, I believe that more can be done with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, if only some of us would put on a human face and deal with some of the issues there.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I did not interrupt the Honourable Member for St. James South, nor am I going to pay attention to what is being said.

Sir, I also think that more has to be put in place to ensure that our polyclinics are upgraded. As I said, efforts before have been made, and the Honourable Member knows that, they have files. Sir, more has to be put in place because there has to be better operation at the polyclinics for late openings. Sir, this was put in place by us in some of those institutions and was on the books, only for the Honourable Member to put it in place. Sir, this would take a lot of the weight off the Accident and Emergency Department.

Mr. Chairman, what also bothers me about diet in that

hospital is that every corridor now has a machine which dispenses either sweet drinks or snacks. Sir, the

number of machines has increased over the last six months. Mr. Chairman, I do not believe that any of those machines should be found there, except in the areas where the nurses are, if those nurses choose to buy.

Sir, those machines are not good for children in the waiting room, waiting to be seen by a doctor. They are not good for the diabetics. Sir, they are not good for anybody because we know of their contents. Some of them are too sweet, some too salty and some are not appropriate.

Mr. Chairman, sometimes we do not even know where some of them are made because the labels do not indicate any details of their contents or manufacturer. Therefore, when I go there and see those numbers of machines, that bothers me as a Barbadian. Where are we going? What plans do this Government have for health and wellness, in respect of what is happening at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, especially what greets you as you enter the main building? That too is a matter that needs to be addressed. What is the Government's health and wellness plan?

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member talked about amputations and we are cognizant of the various challenges that are impacting on our people's health and well-being, but it has to be tackled in a more organised fashion. Sir, this Government has to lead. What about the energy conservation plan this Government has for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital?

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, those are some of the issues I would want to hear from the Honourable Member as he makes his presentation.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House by giving the impression that this Administration is, in anyway, condoning the sale of beverages without labels or indications of where those beverages are made. This is not the truth. The Honourable Member must stick to the facts. This is not a process that is condoned by this Administration. Sir, it does not happen.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Honourable Member should take cognizance of the fact that Highway 2A is a big death trap, and that if the Democratic Labour Party had followed the plan to build flyovers, we would not be seeing almost seven deaths in one week. That is what the Honourable Member has to pay attention to, as a result of serious injuries and deaths that are causing the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to have more challenges.

His Honour K. St.C. BEST: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is misleading this Honourable House. Sir, none of the areas where there were those recent accidents is in the vicinity where the flyovers were originally designated. Therefore, for the Honourable Member to say that had we built the flyovers, there would not be so many deaths on our road is not true.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please continue, Honourable Member.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East really has a thing with me but I cannot help him. He is a total lost case and the Honourable Member knows that.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I said injuries and deaths on the highway.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member knows that, but I will withdraw it.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you cannot even say that the Honourable Member knows that.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I withdraw the comment.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please proceed, Honourable Member. You have exactly one minute in which to wrap up.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, all I wanted was to clarify the point further for the Honourable Member, if he does not understand road fatality, I mean to say people who are being killed on the highway.

Mr. Chairman, all I am saying is that had that plan been put in place, it would have minimised a number of the serious accidents, some of which have led to fatalities on our highway. Therefore, whatever is happening is impacting on the Accident and Emergency Department, that is already overwhelmed with the number of persons who are coming.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would need to pay some attention to that aspect of it, so that it could help to minimise some of the issues at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, granted also that motorists, bicyclists and

pedestrians, are to be responsible for their own health and safety when they are on the roads. Sir, it would help to minimise the challenges if our roads are well-marked and educational programmes are put in place.

Mr. Chairman, I will end here, granted that I will get the opportunity to make another intervention. Sir, I wish to thank you.

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

Hr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I commence by looking at the question of the presence and continuing survival of the Lions Eye Care Ophthalmic facility. Mr. Chairman, it seems to me as though at the time when this eye care facility was established, that a number of unanswered questions arose, indeed, a number of unasked questions arose.

Sir, there was a situation where a non-governmental organisation proposed to the Government of the day that it would establish an Eye Care Centre. Sir, if the Government of the day were to be properly briefed and involved, then one of the functions of the persons promoting the idea was to have fully taken Government into its confidence and explained every aspect of the proposal to that Government.

Sir, one thing that we have to resolve, as we look back as historians on this particular facility, is whether by the time the Government then agreed to having the Lions come on board with eye care, whether there was a clear identification of where all the resources would have come from. Mr. Chairman, it cannot be fair to any Government for a non-governmental organisation, or a community-based organisation to want to embrace the activities and programmes of Government and then want to lean on Government 100 per cent.

Sir, it seems to me, based on the distance I have from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Lions Eye Care Centre, that at the point when that centre was established, it was not known to the then Government where all the resources, human, technical and financial, would have come from.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the last Administration that managed the affairs of this country had difficulty understanding how to finance that particular centre. As the current Government looks at the facility, my recommendation is that this Government takes the ophthalmologists in Barbados into its confidence and listen to them.

11.20 a.m.

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Mr. R.C. EASTMOND: Sir, we, in here, are a responsible Parliament and as the Minister of Health suggested, we should all turn our faces against wastage or against the mis-allocation of funds. Sir, in the interest of transparency, fairness and equity, wherever known Governmental organisations are going to float joint ventures with Government, Government must not be made to pay a disproportionate amount to such a proposal.

I am suggesting and doing so out of all honesty, Mr. Chairman, because as we progress down the years, increasingly more and more so-called benefactors and altruistic spirits are going to try to come on board with Government to engage Government on projects in the expectation that, ultimately, Government is going to hold the bag for everything.

Sir, I am saying that one difficulty we have to resolve is whether the Government of the time did not find itself having to face a number of unanswered questions, or whether the persons who are promoting the venture really took Government in its confidence in the best possible way so that Government would appreciate the extent to which the private sector was going with the project; the extent to which the Government was going with the project and things of that nature.

Mr. Chairman, of necessity, this debate has attracted word on the Accident and Emergency Department Facility at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I sense that gone are the days where some people go there for frivolous purposes. Sir, 25 years or 30 years ago, some of the people of this Barbados community would turn up at the Casualty, as it was then called, with all kinds of what I call frivolous complaints. Sir, some were just hangovers from drinking white rum the night before; some had casual and passing ailments that they could have just taken some rest on to resolve themselves and a lot of them used to go around the hospital and hang around there but that has stopped. I do not see any evidence of that occurring, and it is a tribute to the fact that we are a maturing community.

Mr. Chairman, I heard reference while in Wanstead, directly opposite and close to the constituency office of the Honourable Member for St. James South, when I heard reference to the ambulance services. Sir, I checked a few days ago about the total number of ambulances available to Barbados and I was told the number was 12.

I asked how many ambulances are really available to Barbadians on a daily basis and they told me that four were available. I then asked of the four how many really worked properly and I was told that sometimes, of the four, one might be a little temperamental. When I asked what they meant by an inanimate object being temperamental, they told me that the engine sometimes misbehaves when it

craves engine oil, so three ambulances were, a few days ago, functional of 12.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot have 12 ambulances and only four are working; we cannot have it. Sir, much as there is some comfort in Government's intention to bring in two additional ones, we have to make sure that consistent with our desire to achieve the highest levels of effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of emergency services, that our ambulance service is improved.

I am told that some of the best mechanics work on those ambulances and it would be, therefore, ironic, if you have first-grade; first-rated mechanics who service and fix the ambulance and you do not get a maximum number.

Mr. Chairman, if we have 12 as the fleet, we should not have eight of them idle. There would be doing nothing more than following a norm set by the Transport Board, where the Barbados Transport Board - I am speaking obliquely but I am going to get back to the thing about the ambulance.

Sir, the Barbados Transport Board often sees too many buses idle. I am sure the authorities would address this matter, certainly, if not in 2010, I am sure the authority will address that matter, certainly in 2011 and 2012, as time would suggest that particular restorative steps be taken. Mr. Chairman, we have to ensure that our ambulance service is improved.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister never spoke scathingly about the quality service. The Minister spoke about the absence of a sufficiency of ambulances to provide care. Mr. Chairman, of necessity, Sir, we have come to the stage where we have to look creatively as we view the contribution made by ambulances as to whether in some cases the ambulances, whether than have to trek their way from St. Lucy or St. Philip to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital can, dependant on the condition of the patient in the ambulance, seek help at the polyclinics. There must be cases occurring in St. John, St. George and St. Philip, where, based on the evaluation made by the paramedics, it would not be absolutely necessary to bring the patient or patients all the way to Bridgetown to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. There must be cases where some of these patients could be treated, for example, at the Glebe Polyclinic in St. George and at the Maurice Byer Polyclinic in St. Peter.

Mr. Chairman, I want the Honourable Member for St. George South to hold this name - Mrs. Chabral - and in time I will see if I can put him in contact with her. Sir, this name "Chabral" matters a lot. I was going to raise it with the previous Minister of Health, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West but she, like many others, is of the opinion that we need a holistic approach to the care of the elderly. Mr. Chairman, let me make it clear from the outset

that a holistic approach to the care of the elderly does not necessarily mean that Government has to foot the bill 100 per cent. Sir, what it means is that at the level of policy and care, we must transcend where we are now and go, investigatively, to really ascertain the extent to which a number of private Old Peoples' Homes really fit the standard that they would suggest to the Ministry of Health and the Minister that they are meeting.

Mr. Chairman, I am, therefore, urging Government to look very closely at a large number of Old Peoples' Homes, which are populated by persons who have made a contribution as citizens but which are also populated by a number of people offering care who lack the necessary training.

Sir, a lot of those Old Peoples' Homes, with due respect, Mr. Chairman, are nothing more than profit centres. There are set up by private sector interests, interested in the bottom line of profit and the consequence is, that as profit centres, they neglect to install particular schemes and even particularly equipment to encourage the practice of the types of habits that would lead to better care of old people.

There have been disturbing reports and Honourable Members in here are not deaf, they would have heard them about how some of our senior citizens are treated in the private day care homes because some of the personnel offering care do not have the professional expertise that would abound.

Sir, to some extent that can be understood. The reason that could be understood is this. If you take it that we have a shortage of nurses for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Psychiatric Hospital and even for places like the FMH and such like; if we already have a pre-existing shortage of nurses and you have a proliferation of Old Peoples' Homes in a culture where you have a shortage of nurses then the end result would be that the high probability will be, you will not have trained nurses at many of those old people's homes.

H/A51/11:30 Sequence 9

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Mr. R.C. EASTMOND: That seems to be nothing more than that which is logical.

In recent times, the Ministry of Health has been making some public pronouncements in defence of its record, sometimes in defence of its attitude to health in Barbados. We have been hearing recently both that we have a shortage of nurses and we have a brain drain where some of our nurses leave here for greener pastures.

The Government has given a figure running into the millions of dollars invested in training nurses only to see at the end of the day the very nurses, who have been trained out of the public purse, leaving Barbados to go in search of careers where the pay is higher.

Then there is something of significance. It is, that many persons in Barbados will tell you that beyond the fact that we have a shortage of nurses and that nurses are leaving Barbados in significant numbers, a lot of unlikely people are opting for careers in nursing.

Sir, there are certain professions or vocations in Barbados that see people practising something called "Career Transients". What is "Career Transients"? Abraham wants to be an engineer. Abraham's family does not have the money to send him to a school of engineering. Abraham hears that there is a job in the field of nursing where there is a vacancy. Abraham's disposition is not to be a nurse, Abraham's disposition is to be an engineer, but because of the fact that the opportunity is there for Abraham to go into nursing, Abraham goes into nursing as indeed his cousin Joel might go into teaching as a transitional thing. We call it "Career Transients". Ultimately, the practitioner of Career Transients is going to occupy a given career temporarily in a kind of holding situation until circumstances lend themselves to fleeing out of that short-term career that was chosen more opportunistically than based on principle for higher ground and greener pastures.

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

Mr. R.C. EASTMOND: We must bear all these things in mind.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is very busy at this point speaking to the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, but I want to conclude on this score. When we listen to what the Ministry of Health is saying about a brain drain, when we listen to what the Ministry of Health is saying about persons making Government spend millions of dollars and then leave this country, starving it of resources, and those persons to lend to the development of other countries, we then come squarely to confront our human resource position.

Sir, there are some who feel that the Ministry of Education is not to be burdened with Human Resource Management, that it should really belong to the Ministry of Labour. Then the Minister of Labour is already burdened. It must go somewhere. We need now a quick working Green Paper on Human Resource Development in Barbados because we have to take careful stock of where

we are in terms of the rich diversity of skills there may be, and in terms of what we want to be in this country.

Sir, in great measure, your name sake, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, made a very solid point where he was speaking about where people are going generally, and he was speaking specifically about our impending crisis on the question of aging. We are an aging community. That means that as aging occurs rapidly, it is going to put stress on the health care services. It also is going to put stress on the National Insurance services. It is going to put stress on social care services.

It is going to mean that at the end of the day, and I am concluding now, Sir, if we maintain the age 65 as the age at which we retire, in circumstances where many people go on to live to age 80 and 85, we are going to have a situation maybe we have to rethink where we are as a nation in view of this impending crisis of aging because it would mean that we would be experiencing a declining population as we age, because there is nothing to suggest that fertility is abounding in Barbados in the area where the birth rate is that high.

We could end up agreeing with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East that by 2020 the population in Barbados can actually start to decline. At that stage, the National Insurance system is going to have to revise seven or eight years before 2020 to make the necessary adjustments to protect the Scheme and to continue to provide a safety net for Barbadians.

Sir, I am delighted that you have allowed me to speak and may I use this opportunity to wish you and yours, in view of all that you have endured recently, all the best for the coming season and all prosperity in the year to come.

Thank you very much, Sir.

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

His Excellency D.St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support this Resolution but I have a problem with one section, that is, the one that dealt with the St. Joseph Hospital. After hearing the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, I do not know how the Minister of Health could have rushed to this Parliament to cover the cost for the St. Joseph Hospital, considering that it took 14 years and a change of Government to get it before this Honourable House.

I do not understand how all of a sudden this Government is so urgent with everything that it could take up the lag from the Barbados Labour Party and to rush this before this Parliament. I am saying, after hearing what was

said about the condition of the hospital, it seems to me that it would have been better using this money to deal with the two salt breads and flying fish for a diabetic, if it is true what was said by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, than to rush to bring money to compensate the last Government for being able to have a Commission of Inquiry, that up to now nobody can understand why it was called.

Sir, these political decisions should not be supported by this Parliament because when one looks at the outcome, it is just a waste of taxpayers' money. I felt that money could have been spent on the hospital looking after the diabetics and other patients.

I am saying that we can now understand why the Honourable Member for St. Thomas spoke the way she did. The Honourable Member understood the importance of money for an institution like that. When the Honourable Members on This Side were attacking the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, I felt sorry for her because the Honourable Member for St. Thomas was saying that the money should not have been wasted on the St. Joseph Hospital Inquiry but it should be used to enhance the diet at the hospital. Sir, I support her 100 per cent on this matter.

Sir, I heard in this Honourable House this morning that there are 12 ambulances and only three are working. This Government has been in office for less than two years. I want to know what magical occasion occurred under this Government to make all the ambulances old in two years. It could not be the fault of this Government that you could have all the ambulances becoming old in two years, because we go by the age of the vehicle and not the miles travelled.

I am very glad that the Opposition has made a very strong case for the Government, and they have given a confession here this morning that they have neglected health care. I would not even go to the Lions Eye Care Centre at the hospital that was closed and have so many people in Barbados that we regard as the massive blind. Sir, I would like to know what they were hiding from the people that instead of making them being able to see, they closed the Eye Care Centre so that they would not be able to see.

Sir, I know that you do not have to see to know that for 14 years we had wonderful occasions on the Other Side, but still at the end of the 14 years you have nothing to show for it.

H A51 11.40 a.m. Sequence 10

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House A51, Sequence 11, 11.40 a.m.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, all we have heard in here is that for 14 years we had bountiful occasions on the Other Side but yet still at the end of the 14 years, we have nothing to show for it.

Sir, we heard about how these things occurred 14 years ago and how they are happening again. I also heard that Barbadian nurses were not being employed but yet some from Nigeria and other places were employed. Mr. Chairman, you know sometimes it worries me when I hear the Honourable Members on the Other Side speaking because they ignore the advice and then they come and glorify afterwards, as if they had given the advice to themselves and they have accepted it.

Sir, I told the Other Side when they were sitting here - and you can go to the records - that it is more expensive to bring nurses from Nigeria to Barbados than what the nurses were asking for to go under the new Board, but they ignored the request of the local nurses. Sir, that is why you would hear me say that the last Government was a Government of foreign workers. They were more interested in foreign workers than local workers, and that is why you heard me a couple weeks ago talking about the usage of technology versus man, and how technology has replaced man in this country.

Sir, let us look at everything they have done. They tell you about cheapness and they are using cheapness in the sense that once you can get something sourced from overseas, you bring it in and you replace your own, but they do not understand that there is a foreign exchange cost. Sir, people want to know why we have a foreign exchange problem - not that we have one but it could have been better - it is because of the taste of the last Government for everything foreign against local.

Sir, they come in here and talk about the condition of the hospital but go and check the record and you would see that I was on record for making the point that we needed a second hospital even before they spoke about it because, the one under them was making the patients sick. Mr. Chairman, there was a very famous Minister of Health, who in a very clever way used to get up in here whenever he wanted to make the point without appearing as if it was coming from the lips. He always used to say:

"Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has always made the point that we need a second hospital."

He never said it for himself. He always used me to make his point.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I am saying that when health care could get to the highways, and when you can tell me that health care is now flying on a flyover, which puts you from one point to the same point, because the only place in the world I have ever seen flyovers proposed to fly from the highway to highways is in Barbados. Nowhere else in the world, Sir, I have ever seen it. If I go to Trinidad it is taking traffic off the highway, and if I go to the United States of America it is taking traffic off the highway.

I will tell you, Sir, that if the proposal for the flyovers that were supposed to come to Barbados was to take traffic off the highway, the first supporter would have been me, but I could not understand the nonsense of putting traffic in traffic. It seems to me to be the ulterior motive that sometimes we used to hear down the Gold Coast.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying today that I am happy with the decision that was made to make the Honourable Member for St. James South the Minister of Health, and Barbadians are now seeing the work. I like his approach as it relates to the elderly, or the more experienced people of Barbados for the simple reason we have to understand that in this country when people have given and worked hard for the country, they should be compensated.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I was in here when I heard Honourable Members from the Other Side make the point that young people should not live with old people and if they do, they should not repair the houses.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Yes, under the Barbados Labour Party Government, people were punished who could not get their houses repaired, if they had a young person living in the house. The Honourable Member for St. George North would tell you that I have always criticised that policy.

Sir, I am happy to see that there is a new approach and an understanding to tell the young people that there is nothing called old in the country anymore. These are experienced people from whom you can get knowledge and I am proud of that and, as I said to Honourable Minister on Friday, I will support you, once you continue to look after the experienced people of Barbados, because they have something to offer this country.

Sir, you know it is not by accident that no wonder so many people now cannot get retirement benefits in this country. Mr. Chairman, you would not believe that when people should have been able to retire early, some of them

are now getting a coffin before they retire, and they cannot get their benefits. I am saying that in a country which wants to be a developed country, one should be allowed to retire early and use their experience to help other people and to employ more people. I said that in this House but it was ignored.

Sir, what sense it makes to have civil servants with talents and keep them in a job doing the same thing all the time, when you could allow them and other persons to retire early, and then allow them to come back and use their money to create jobs to employ more people. The unemployment situation has been created, Sir, by the policy of the last Government, and not of this Government.

Sir, in order for returning nationals to get benefits in this country - and this is under the Barbados Labour Party policy - you had to be 50 years and over to come back here, but if you are young, brilliant, have talent and money, you are not welcomed in your own country. I am saying, Sir, talking about health care, in other words you have to be getting ready to die before you could benefit from the policies of the last Government and I am saying that this must stop.

Barbados could have been, as it was in the early 1960s, 1970s and even the 1980s, a leading centre for health care. I remember the time when the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as we know it, used to have part of the Royal Family being attended to there, and since the change of Government in 1976, that has gone down, down.

I thought, Sir, that when we brought the Lions Health Care Centre back to Barbados, that would have been the impetus for enlightening Government and to encourage Barbadians to recognise that we have an opportunity to match Cuba, but instead of using the foresight of the Minister of Health, we not only closed the Lions Health Care Centre, but we called a Commission of Inquiry into the St. Joseph Hospital that lasted 14 years and still going on today, and we have to look for money to pay for the Inquiry.

Sir, now people would wonder why we do not have money. All the debt left by the Barbados Labour Party we have to pay, even before we could start programmes. I am saying, Sir, the truth must be told because this is not our cost. It was not our decision to call for a Commission of Inquiry into the St. Joseph Hospital that turned out to be only a report, which was not laid, by the people who called for it, even though they had 14 years in Government.

Sir, if you had to judge the health care of the Barbados Labour Party, you would have to judge it by the St. Joseph Hospital Report that was not laid, the Eye Care Centre that was closed, the St. Joseph Hospital that was closed and the St. John Polyclinic that was not opened.

Now, they want you to believe that they care about the health of the people, even though I heard it from their mouths telling me that the health of a country is the wealth of the country and, if you had to tell them that the health of the country is the wealth of the country, no wonder we are so poor today.

Thank you, Sir.

Asides.

House A51, Sequence 11, 11:49:49

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I trust that I would not reach the level of animation or distraction that the previous Honourable Member engaged in, given the topic that is before the Honourable Chamber.

Mr. Chairman, it is interesting that we are discussing a Supplementary today on health care because this Government has promised much and has delivered little in the area of health care in the 23 months since being elected. One only needs to go back to their fundamental plan during the campaign, that of a rescue plan for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. That there can be every week no less than two to three stories in the newspapers relating to complaints about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is the independent evidence that is needed.

The Minister in his address this morning would have referred to the former Administration no less than 13 or 14 times believing therefore that he clearly is in a defensive mode. The Minister had 30 minutes to speak, which meant that he referred to the former Administration every other minute. Mr. Chairman, when a Minister comes in here with such a defensive posture, it is the greatest acknowledgement of incompetence and failure on his part to be able to deliver for the people of this country.

Mr. Chairman, I go further. The reality is that the people of this country, in particular the families of those who are in the hospital as well as the patients in the hospital, are not interested in the Barbados Labour Party or the Democratic Labour Party. They are interested in whether they are receiving the appropriate treatment to be able to deal with their problems and are interested in when the Government, whoever is the Government of the day, will complete the work on the Medical Intensive Care Unit, a decision which was taken since 2007.

We even had the Rotary Club West agree to assist with the establishment and equipping of that Medical

Intensive Care Unit (MICU). The MICU had six beds. It was proposed to expand it to 12 beds and all of a sudden a decision was taken in relation to the establishment of a Pediatric Clinic in that area.

Mr. Chairman, what is the significance apart from the need for those needing to go into the MICU... If you do not have those additional beds in that Unit, it means that additional pressure will be put on the Surgical Intensive Care Unit, on the Accident and Emergency Department and on the recovery rooms.

Mr. Chairman, we have a situation where the Minister and the Hospital CEO has said that no elective surgeries can be done now. Mr. Chairman, elective surgeries sound academic. We talked about relating elective surgeries to life-threatening surgeries. By all means, life-threatening surgeries must take priority but what is the reality of those waiting for elective surgery in this country. We are talking about people in some instances who are in chronic and continuous pain.

We are talking about people who may have fibroids, which is categorised as an elective surgery, who may face pain 16 and 18 hours a day and who therefore cannot carry out their functions. Most of these women are in the prime of their life. If they are working in jobs, they cannot focus on their jobs. These are the realities of what postponing elective surgeries mean.

Mr. Chairman, it is a stark reality that many of the same ladies who may be facing that pain may not be able to get insurance coverage to cover the surgery privately. If they have insurance coverage, as I have come across in many instances in my Constituency and across the country, many of them may have had a pre-existing fibroid when they got their insurance, and so the insurance companies refused to cover any pre-existing condition under their policy, so they are left to rely on the public health care system in order to be able to deal with their pain and to be productive and healthy citizens in this country.

Mr. Chairman, it is easy for us in here to get up and to argue as if it is a sterile debate but it does not help any one of those patients waiting for an elective surgery. It is easy for us to get in here and talk about the former Administration 14 times in 30 minutes but it does not help anyone else.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I really did not want to interrupt the Honourable Member in her stride but she is misleading the House. You cannot or should not seek to give the impression that elective surgeries at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital have been cancelled and have to be resumed. A decision was taken a few weeks ago given the fact that the recovery room in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was near full

capacity because of an upsurge in accidents and emergency surgeries for the proceeding two days, to stop elective surgeries. That is a responsible decision. You could not bring people on a operating theatre and then do not have the space to accommodate them in the recovery room.

Sir, non-emergency surgeries were stopped but only for three days. The Honourable Member knows that under her regime that was the norm, for us it is the exception.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, the point is taken.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am going to deliver to the Minister of Health the list of people whose elective surgeries have been cancelled, postponed indefinitely and whom to this day, including supporters of the Democratic Labour Party, have been frustrated by reason of the inability to get their elective surgeries done. If the Minister was well briefed rather than seeking to believe that this is a political platform...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Minister clearly is so obsessed with his own voice, he does not believe that anybody else has the right to speak in here but he would soon find out that not even his voice could quell the suffering of Barbadians in their greatest hour of need.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, just one second please. Asides are fine, but shouting across the Chamber certainly would not be entertained while I am in the Chair, please.

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

Mr. Chairman, I make the point that if you do not complete the MICU, the people who would normally be in the MICU would be kept in the Accident and Emergency Department, the Recovery Room or the Surgical Intensive Care Unit. Mr. Chairman, even the High Dependent Unit that the Minister spoke about and said would be ready by next week, and we truly hope that it will be, is not going to solve the problem.

Mr. Chairman, what bothers me when I reflect even on the functioning of this Parliament is that these are issues that go beyond partisan divide. If we are voting for \$15 or \$16 million in here to be able to help the health care system, particularly the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Barbados Drug Service, one would want to believe that the average citizen would feel that they would have better

access to health care in this country. Mr. Chairman, I think there is a fundamental problem.

I also believe, Mr. Chairman, that we need to address frontally the issue of the financing of health care in this country because part of the difficulty being faced by people who could otherwise or should otherwise be able to claim under their policies to get some of these elective surgeries done, that would take some of the pressure off of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, are not being able to do so because of the prohibition for pre-existing conditions that in no way inflates the risk in any serious way that would bankrupt the insurance company.

Mr. Chairman, you have people who have health plans in the Public Service whom may have gone in with a pre-existing condition, particularly women with gynaecological issues, and they cannot get an elective surgery done. I say to you, Mr. Chairman, that this is an issue that we need to address frontally.

Equally, we must admit, and this was our position, that is why we took the decision to expand the Medical Intensive Care Unit, that six beds in a population of this size cannot be sufficient for a MICU. The reality is that the population, your constituents, Mr. Chairman, and mine, are now far better equipped to research issues on their own in relation to medical problems and therefore they have a higher expectation as to what ought to be part of their patient care. That is part of the problem that the country is facing across both Administrations.

People have a higher appreciation for what can be done to make themselves or their families more comfortable or for them to be able to recuperate and therefore that expectation translates in the need for additional services.

House A51 Sequence 12 12:00 noon

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, we cannot be a First World country or to be near First World status in every respect and not expect our population to expect First World standards in health care. Sir, that is part of the dilemma and dichotomy that we face at this time in Barbados in terms of the provision of health care.

Mr. Speaker, it is for this reason that there needs to be greater clarity from the Government in relation to what are its plans. We have seen diverging opinions from the previous Minister of Health and the Prime Minister as to a new hospital. We have seen diverging opinions from the current Minister of Health and the Prime Minister as to a new hospital. There is nobody in Barbados today who

could say with certainty whether or not the Government will construct a new hospital.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister announced a feasibility study to be conducted to determine whether there should be a new hospital. All we are doing is spending good money over things that have been completed, and the prices which would have confronted the last Government, which were based on 2006 prices, are likely to be far greater whenever the final decision is taken.

We are seeing a commitment from this Government to open polyclinics on a 24/7 basis, but we have seen no progress on that. Sir, even if you cannot do that as promised, what are the interim steps to be able to relieve, in a serious way, the Accident and Emergency Department, particularly as it relates to asthma patients and other non-critical patients, who can be seen at least by polyclinics that are located in the north, one in the centre and one in the south.

Mr. Chairman, even if they open those three polyclinics such that patients can receive that non-critical care, to be able to take the pressure off the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, do you know what the issue is going to be? The issue is going to be one of funding. It is going to be the post. It is going to be the need for security.

Sir, in recent weeks, a person at the Warrens Polyclinic was attacked. We had a doctor who was shot in his office last Saturday and therefore there will be issues in relation to funding. Mr. Chairman, we know that but we have to address the issue of the funding of health care frontally, if we are going to be able to get some of these difficulties and intransigent problems out of the way. We know that the Government has had problems in paying its suppliers in the Barbados Drug Service and that is partially why this is here.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Minister would want to deny that in an aside but the reality is that members of the private sector talk to each other. Sir, I would want the Minister to deny that at least \$5 million to \$6 million is owed for that.

Mr. Chairman, the truth is, that is not a crime in this current environment but it is a question that has to be considered, as we look at the overall plans for the health care system because we have a Drug Service that currently provides medication free-of-cost to persons under 16, to persons over age 65, and to persons with certain chronic diseases.

Mr. Chairman, earlier on the Minister indicated to the public of Barbados that he would want or may have to

see the imposition of handling charges for the Drug Service. Therefore, I would want the Minister to tell the public of Barbados where is he and would he be imposing charges on persons who benefit from the Drug Service? Sir, I would want people to know that, particularly at this time when people are already facing a range of increases in charges in fees across this country and have little or nothing in their pockets to be able to accommodate any further increases in anything. Mr. Chairman, we would like to know because the Minister has given his position philosophically. Therefore, is he carrying the Ministry and would he be inviting Cabinet to go in that direction? We do not know.

Mr. Chairman, we had issues in relation to the fact... Sir, what is the reality of the last 23 months at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital? The Board has been a virtual revolving door. The gentleman who was there as Chairman first, this Minister did his best to make sure that he is no longer Chairman. There was another member who was on the Board, he too was removed. The Board structure was changed. In all fairness, the Board cannot settle down and do any work if you have that kind of change every few months because whoever comes in needs to get up to speed, needs to be able to take full briefings as to where you are.

Sir, if we thought that the door was a revolving door, let us look at the staff. The Director of Support Services - and I noticed that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is out of this debate - was brought on and all of a sudden was dismissed. He was fired unceremoniously. The post for Director of Medical Services has been vacant for almost one year. Sir, that Director was obviously a man of great competence because he received National Honours for his excellent work in this country in the field of medical emergencies, in particular.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, what do we have? We have a series of revolving doors which, even if Government's policy was clear and certain, which it is not, even if the Government was providing not just enough resources but the appropriate resources in the appropriate areas like the Medical Intensive Care Unit, which it is not, it would be difficult with that perfect environment, perfect policy and resources, still to run the hospital properly, with the kinds of changes in the Board, in the Medical Staff and in the Administration that we have seen.

Mr. Chairman, we say that it is time for the hospital to settle down and that the Minister would do well, rather than having eyes in his head that look back and cause him to talk about the previous Administration every two

minutes, that he remembers the pain and suffering of the people.

Sir, I would want the Honourable Member to look at the fact that people are being forced to go out and buy their own pharmaceuticals; the fact that people are not getting the appropriate diets for their conditions; the fact that people who need to go into the Medical Intensive Care Unit are being kept in corridors or in the Accident and Emergency Department. Sir, this has been a problem across both Administrations in terms of the basic supplies, but it does not mean that it is not a problem that can be solved or must be solved.

Mr. Chairman, the truth is, you cannot say that your Government's basis was to provide this rescue plan and then we are all over the place. We are all over the place on what the Minister believes to be the iconic projects of the Democratic Labour Party: the Lions Eye Care, the St. Joseph Hospital.

Sir, it is two years later and we still do not know what is happening with the St. Joseph Hospital.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Barbados Labour Party's policy was not to go there but the reality is that the previous Minister announced the need for a structural evaluation to integrate it into this health care. This Minister has reversed the previous Minister. Sir, part of the problem is that we are into a series of reversing of policy and revolving doors, from a new Queen Elizabeth Hospital to the use of the St. Joseph, to the use of handling fees in the Barbados Drug Service.

Mr. Chairman, I know that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West would not support the imposition of fees in the Barbados Drug Service because the Honourable Member knows what it is to have to look into the face of a patient who cannot afford it and tell them. He knows and he knows that they cannot afford it. Therefore, what do you do? Do you condemn a person to more pain, or in some instances to death, because of the lack of access to medication because of the fact that they do not have the money in their pockets?

Mr. Chairman, I hope that we could have this debate. I have not even gone into the case of the rising of the dead at the morgue.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: That can happen anytime, anywhere. He is a constituent of mine. My only comment is that if those things happen, we should deal

with them frontally and get them out of the way, rather than letting them become parodies of the health care system.

Mr. Chairman, in those circumstances, I would urge this Government to treat to it with the urgency with which it develops.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the reality is that the Attorney-General is taking a position I would expect him to take in defence of the Government's purse, but the reality is that sometimes we have to get the facts and deal with them quickly, so that they do not become perennial commentaries on our health care system, as is beginning to happen in the newspapers.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

12.10 p.m.

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to make a very short contribution to this debate because I think, as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said in his presentation, that the health of the nation is the wealth of the nation and, Sir, I think he was quoting someone else from the previous Administration. It really is a truism and one that we really ought to take as seriously as we need to.

Mr. Chairman, I am a little disturbed when we have these overly animated debates in this House of Assembly about the issue of health care. Sir, I should say that I marvel at the presumptiveness of the Opposition but I certainly marvel at the unabashed nature with which the former Administration tries to lecture the Democratic Labour Party Government on anything to do with health. I know and I believe truly, on matters relating to the social infrastructure of Barbados, that the Barbados Labour Party Opposition really should try its best to engage a constructive discussion on how we can go forward rather than trying to give the impression that they did everything that needed to be done in the 14 years that they were in Government than what they did when they were in office.

Mr. Chairman, we all know, as a matter of fact, that the Barbados Labour Party Government of the past, not just this one, but ones of times past, lacked any basic creditability when it comes to the social infrastructure of Barbados. Could you imagine, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that the Party that endeavoured to import cadavers into Barbados - you must have heard the song by the famous calypsonian,

the Mighty Gabby - could be lecturing a Democratic Labour Party Government on health care?

Sir, those who have been around long enough and those who have studied the political history of Barbados would that the Barbados Labour Party put a halt to the training of nurses in Barbados prior to 1986.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House in terms of giving the impression that the Barbados Labour Party's record is to stop nurses from being trained. Sir, the record is that we resumed training and, in fact, carried the number of persons to be trained up to as high, I believe, as 80. The Honourable Member is, therefore, misleading in his implication that the Barbados Labour Party is against the training of nurses in Barbados.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am not trying to imply anything. I am saying it categorically that a previous Barbados Labour Party Administration, previous to 1986, in the 1976 to 1986 period, took a decision to stop the training of nurses in this country. I will tell you this, Mr. Chairman, Sir....

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I am not going to get myself excited by it because during those years, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was a "Barrowrite". I remember the Honourable Member very well on the truck jumping up behind the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, while I know the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow well and while I may have more cause to have affinity with him than the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, he must get his facts right since during that campaign I was at the London School of Economics studying, granted, as recommended by him.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to get into that because that is not germane to the debate. Sir, I know I first met the Honourable Member in George Street, at the Auditorium, in the car park on the truck.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, the Honourable Member is so defensive...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, just to say that what the last Honourable Member said is totally irrelevant to this debate. I have allowed the point of order in terms of correction, but the Honourable Member is

basically going beyond the realms of the debate and I would want to constrain him to come back to the debate.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, for the record. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. If I met the Honourable Member anywhere, it was when in 1998 and 1999, Kerry Symmonds left the Democratic Labour Party, the Honourable Member sent a message, along with one other person on the Front Bench that he wanted to join the Barbados Labour Party because he could not tolerate the Prime Minister.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, following that explanation, I would wish to bring the Honourable Member back to the debate.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I would not get involved in that, Sir. The point is that what we in the Democratic Labour Party have had to grapple with, both the previous Minister and the current Minister, is the fact that we inherited a health care system that was on the brink of collapse.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East speak about changes at the Board of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Sir, it is a certain fact and if I am not correct, the Honourable Member for St. James South or the Honourable Member for St. Philip West can correct me, that the Board of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the last year of the Administration of the Barbados Labour Party hardly met to administer the business of the hospital and, in fact, it was reported in the Press as well in this country. Sir, to come and say that things are so mightily bad and that we are to correct in two years what they destroyed in 15 years, Sir, I think is disingenuous and unreasonable to the core.

Mr. Chairman, we had to go in there and do a proper analysis of what is going on, particularly at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital where staff morale was low; where key technical posts were unfilled and both of the Ministers appointed by the Democratic Labour Party so far have tried their level best in the throes of a global economic recession and a decline locally to try to fix problems at the hospital.

Mr. Chairman, we have sought over a period of time to try to get the management structure of the hospital correct. Sir, that is what the Democratic Labour Party has been trying to do. Sir, we have brought in a new CEO of the hospital and one who is properly qualified to administer business at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We have also brought in a new human resources officer for the hospital and we tried to get a mix of talents to reposition the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as the primary care giving institution in Barbados.

H/A51/12:20 Sequence 14

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Sir, go into the hospital and you see a couple things, as the Honourable Member for St. Thomas put it, out of place. You rushed into Parliament to give a statement that you are concerned about the dietary health of people regarding the nutrition of the person in the hospital, that you saw somebody with two salt bread and that kind of thing, is absolutely uncalled for in the Parliament of Barbados. It is completely untrue, unnecessary and unreasonable.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member cannot see for me. I am a woman going on in my years. I witnessed it at the hospital and I am telling the truth. If that is not accepted by the Honourable Minister of Health to be able to put a measure in place to correct the problem, then woe betide Barbadians when they fall ill.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Sir, I take the intervention of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas as you should take it. We are not splitting hairs here. We are talking about serious matters and brevity is a function of knowledge. Therefore, that is why the Honourable Member was as brief as she was.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLAIR: Sir, I made the point before and I will make it again. When it comes to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital we all have to put our minds together. It is a matter of record that even in recessionary times the Democratic Labour Party has given more money to the functioning of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital than any other Government. Sir, the issue is not only about money, it is about management as well.

That is why the Honourable Minister of Health, in his wisdom, has been trying to plug, reform, redesign and recreate the structure of the management of the hospital, particularly at the lower levels of management where the issues arise, because you could have the best managers at the top, but if your supervisory management is weak, then you are going to always have problems, understand that. That is where the Barbados Labour Party did not understand the issues at the hospital, because they felt that throwing money at the hospital was the way to solve the problems.

Sir, could you imagine that in spite of all the money that the Honourable Member claimed that they gave to the hospital, from the previous Administration, the Honourable Ministers, both of them from this Administration, had to come in and try to resolve a major electrical supply problem at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. With the able support of the Minister of Public Works and working

through the infrastructure of the Cabinet, had to ensure that the electrical substation was upgraded.

We were on the brink of a potential major catastrophe happening, while the last Administration was frittering away and wasting taxpayers' money, close to half billion dollars, on a lot of monuments to their own intelligence. Sir, look at it and see. Sir, we will take good counsel, but we are not going to take lecturing conceived in anything other than what is good in relation to this.

Sir, when you think about the general health care of the nation, in the middle of a major global crisis, look at the steady and responsible response. This Supplementary today speaks about recovering resources for handling the H1N1 problem.

Sir, you have a Minister who came in, very fresh into his tenure, and was able to handle that matter without any major hiccups at all. We have to congratulate the Minister for that.

Sir, look at the issue of care of the elderly. This Honourable Minister and the Democratic Labour Party Government have been in the leadership of this matter that has been allowed to get out of hand by the last Administration. I can say today, as Minister of Social Care, that under the last Administration, they allowed several of the Senior Citizens Homes in this country to be ran down, or go out of business to the extent that we now have a major problem on our hands.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: I am not taking any lecturing on these matters from the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, Vauxhall is struggling, Black Rock was closed down under the last Administration. They allowed George Daniel, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East spoke so glowingly about, to be run down and the Democratic Labour Party had to come and try to get it passed in the Estimates.

In fact, we now have seriously, given the state of dilapidation of that building, to consider whether it is safe, and the structural engineers are looking at that. All of that has now been placed in the lap of the Minister and the Ministry of Health, and I am going to be lectured in here about who cares of health care.

Sir, could you imagine the dastardly sin committed by the Barbados Labour Party against the good people of St. John? The Honourable Member for St. Thomas drove up and down, passed me and did not even look right, only because the greatest sin of the people in St. John was to elect the Honourable Member for St. John as Member of Parliament, and before him the Right Excellent Errol

Walton Barrow as Member of Parliament. That is the only thing that he did, and that is the greatest sin they ever committed through the politics of spite to rob them of it, of proper health care in this country.

Sir, if I were the Mayor of St. John I would be moved to put up a barricade with a sign saying BLPs not allowed to enter, but we do not do that in Barbados. That is not something that we do in Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: When we are talking, the St. Joseph Hospital situate in the Constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the former Prime Minister, I doubt the Honourable Member ever set foot on the compound, the maximum leader of the Barbados Labour Party, who as usual is not here today. They did not look at the St. Joseph Hospital, yet we are to be told that we have not made a statement on St. Joseph Hospital of what we are going to do with it. For 15 years...

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member, as is his want, is misleading the House again. The allegation has never been that no statement was made on St. Joseph Hospital. The allegation is, the two Ministers have disagreed with themselves as to the use of the St. Joseph Hospital.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: There is no disagreement on the use of the St. Joseph Hospital. The Democratic Labour Party's position in Government has always been quite clear, and is still clear, that we will bring the St. Joseph Hospital back into the mainstream of the provision of health care in Barbados.

H A51 12.30 p.m. Sequence 15

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House A51, Sequence 16, 12.30 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Whatever, whether it is for Barbadians or visitors, both alike, whether it is through a public/private sector arrangement or whatever, that is the point. It is coming back and we will not allow the property to run to ruin, in the way which it has been run to ruin under the last Government.

Sir, let us go even further. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East mentioned the Lions Eye Care Centre. Could you imagine it? Could you imagine that the Honourable Member could even mention Lions and eye care in the same sentence?

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

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

The point is, Mr. Chairman, that when we left office in 1986, we had an elaborate, well-conceived and properly articulated arrangement with the Lions. It was well equipped and ready to go. Sir, doctors left Barbados and went to the United States of America at the University of Indiana to be trained. Mr. Chairman, when the Barbados Labour Party Government came, because it was not an idea conceived by them, they shut down the entire Lions Eye Care Centre.

Mr. Chairman, they then turned around and, through the previous Minister of Health, proudly standing up like Napoleon on a bucket, said that they are making an arrangement with Cuba to send people to get their eyes checked and to get cataract surgery, when we could have done it here in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the Eye Care Centre that we had here.

When I speak of no credibility on these issues, that is what I am speaking about. Sir, health tourism, you can deal with the issues and we know that we have a high rate of cataract cases in Barbados from the eye study which was conducted. Yet, in the face of all that, they just completely abandoned the Eye Programme.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, that is a lack of foresight and therefore, I close as I began that the Party that attempted to import cadavers in Barbados to frighten Barbadians, cannot lecture the Democratic Labour Party on anything to do with social programmes. They are a Party of the classes. We continue to be a Party of the masses.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.45 p.m. today.

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

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

House A51, Sequence 16, 12:34:27 Tuesday, December 15, 2009

RESUMPTION

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (RESUMED)

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

ORDER No. 6 (Resumed)

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

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support this Resolution under Head 23, Ministry of Health, to assist in funding the operations within the Ministry of Health and to support the Honourable Member for St. James South, the Minister of Health, who reminded the Opposition and the public that the Barbados Labour Party Opposition has no moral ground upon which to stand in relation to the health sector in our society.

Mr. Chairman, I remember very well that under a Barbados Labour Party Administration someone very well-known to the people of the City boasting publicly that there was a hiatus in relation to the training of nurses under the Barbados Labour Party Government prior to the 1986 General Election.

Mr. Chairman, health officials today as we speak lament the fact that we are still recovering from that ill-informed policy under the Barbados Labour Party regime. They do not like to be reminded about this but the people of Barbados have not forgotten. We will not be going back to those dark days under the Barbados Labour Party Government when they showed no competence whatsoever in running the health sector of our society.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, the Leader of the Opposition, should be reminded that it is this Democratic Labour Party Government under the able stewardship, in terms of the Ministry of Health, of the Honourable Member for St. James South who recently upgraded the electrical work within the hospital.

I understand that a transformer had to be procured from another Government Department to ensure that the electrical upgrade was expedited because, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said, these issues threatened the health and even the life of patients within the hospital.

Mr. Chairman, could you imagine there being a power cut where the emergency backup system does not kick in effectively and there are people in the Intensive Care Unit under electrically-controlled and powered respirators that breathe artificially for those very ill patients? If we have serious electrical challenges, the life of these patients would be threatened, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Labour Party Government seem not to have cared about patient care. They now have this awakening all of a sudden since the people of Barbados have thrown them out of office. Under the Barbados Labour Party Government for 14 long years the electrical system at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was in a very serious state of concern with the health and safety of patients under threat. Mr. Chairman, we in the Democratic Labour Party have addressed this head on and the Minister of Health must be congratulated for taking the bull by the horns and treating this as an urgent matter.

Mr. Chairman, let me go further. There is a breath of enthusiasm prevailing in the Ministry of Health with the useful demeanour and approach of the Honourable Member for St. James South where we are not making excuses but are looking to solve problems on a daily basis. This is what we expect and what the public expect from a responsible Opposition, because the issue of health care should be bipartisan. We should not seek to score cheap political points at the expense of delivering proper health care to the masses of our country.

Mr. Chairman, I would have expected the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East to join her colleague from St. Thomas who led off the response for the Barbados Labour Party in supporting the Government. This is no issue that should invoke the criticism of the Opposition. I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East must get out of this opposing for opposing sake mode and be mature about it. This is what the public expects. We are just hearing complaints and not solutions. We must join together as a responsible Parliament and seek solutions to some of our challenges

that we face as a nation, be it the health sector or what have you.

Mr. Chairman, in that vein, I will continue my presentation to make some suggestions, for example, the issue of the decentralisation of the Ambulance Service. I know, Mr. Chairman, that you are very interested in this issue. I taught at the Alleyne School many years ago and I would have appreciated the fact that if there was a medical emergency involving myself or others who would have been occupying that space in the north of the country, that the hospital would have been at the southern end of the island.

If a number of ambulances are strategically deployed throughout the island, be it at a fire station, a polyclinic or at some viable location, then the response time in terms of getting persons in medical distress to the hospital would be much shorter and we can save lives.

Mr. Chairman, this is an issue that I look forward to the professionals in the health sector delving into so that we can come up with a viable situation which would see more ambulances being deployed throughout the island.

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Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Chairman, I remember during the 1970s we had emergency television programmes such as "Adams 12", where we would hear the medics attached to the Fire Service responding urgently and liaising with the medical personnel at the hospital. I remember hearing about giving the patient D-5W, the saline solution. I remember they being able to revive a patient whose heart had stopped beating.

Sir, these interventions where paramedics are trained in a specialised way could definitely help us. I know that the paramedics have improved from what they were decades ago, where the ambulance personnel were not very well-trained. I think that ongoing training could help to ensure that state-of-the-art best practices are obtained in this regard.

I remember a university visiting our Ministry and indicating that in the past they had trained a number of Fire Service personnel. We were able to refer them to the Attorney-General, the Minister of Home Affairs, so that we could look into the possibility of ensuring that more firemen could be trained in modern firefighting techniques, be it search-and-rescue or emergency response, in terms of timely medical intervention. Sir, this can go a long way.

Mr. Chairman, I heard you making the point about the 911 situation. We are exposed to the Internet and

television networks from North America and so the 911 scenario is not something that we should think that is beyond us in Barbados. Sir, while the person in medical distress awaits the arrival of the ambulance, the operator on that 911 situation can talk to that person, or persons attending to them through the situation. In fact, this could very well save lives.

Mr. Chairman, this is the sort of situation I would envisage Barbados going into this new millennium. I am talking about tangible solutions. I am saying, let us not oppose for opposing sake. Let us put our heads together and dream; let us seek to implement these state-of-the-art practices that can improve the quality of health care available to Barbadians and visitors as a whole.

Mr. Chairman, with regard to the late opening of polyclinics, I would take this opportunity to remind the public about the services available at these polyclinics, which would remove some of the pressure which is placed on the Accident and Emergency Department at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I think that more Barbadians need to know. As I understand it, within some of the polyclinics, as we speak, there a "stat" room which allows for emergency medical attention to be given, where necessary. This is similar to what you would have in the Accident and Emergency Department within the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

I know, for example, if someone presents themselves at a polyclinic, who has internal bleeding or hemorrhaging, that person would be fast-tracked and given priority. Sir, if the public are aware of these services provided by the polyclinics, they would be more confident to use polyclinics as an alternative, as opposed to spending 24 hours or more in the Accident and Emergency Department waiting unnecessarily.

Mr. Chairman, while speaking about the Accident and Emergency Department, I look forward again, as I dream about the future, that within our improvements within the Queen Elizabeth Hospital sector that we seek to ensure that any new Accident and Emergency Department would be on higher ground. Sir, currently that area is low-lying. I know that in case of serious flooding in that area or a hurricane, that the Accident and Emergency Department has to be relocated upstairs. Mr. Chairman, these are issues we have to look at, in case of a tsunami and other issues because much of Bridgetown is low-lying and flood-prone. Sir, we have to bear this in mind.

Mr. Chairman, I had the opportunity to act briefly on at least one occasion as the Minister of Health and I would have had to deal with the applications for the Medical Aid Scheme. I know a number of very poor Barbadians who may need emergency treatment such as surgical and other

interventions abroad that are not available at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

I know that these treatments cost sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars and that these people are relying on this Medical Aid Scheme to save their lives. I know that this Supplementary allocation is urgently needed because within a few months of the financial year the funds within this Medical Aid Scheme would become depleted and so I thoroughly support this Supplementary provision.

Mr. Chairman, I would add as a suggestion that we could look at establishing relationships with medical facilities in developed countries. This would see some of their surgeons and other medical personnel coming to Barbados and providing some of these surgical procedures here at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, along with the necessary support in terms of infrastructure and equipment, so that in so doing our local surgeons and other health professionals can be trained, thereby improving our system of health care.

Sir, perhaps too, it could provide savings, in terms of not having to spend thousands of dollars in foreign exchange to send our patients abroad. Sir, this obviously would be an ongoing process. I know that initiatives have already been put in place. I know that there has been one professional who makes prostheses. He comes from Canada to Barbados and provides that tremendous service to Barbadians who need artificial limbs. This is nothing farfetched.

Mr. Chairman, I would also take this opportunity to say that while in Opposition, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who, at the time, was Shadow Minister of Health and I, were part of a delegation visiting the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Sir, we had to wait a very long time before the Barbados Labour Party Government would allow us that tour of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

As we toured the area - and I drew it to the attention of the Chief Engineer and the Medical Director at the time - we realised that the chimney of the incinerators at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is too low and that on any evening you pass there when the medical waste is being burned, you can see a lot of black smoke which ends up on the premises of my constituents in King William Street.

Sir, my father and some other relatives of mine live downwind in King William Street. When the Barbados Labour Party was in office, I had drawn it to their attention but nothing was done, but I am confident that this Administration and this Minister of Health will see this as a serious priority.

I know too that we are thinking of having waste energy projects, in terms of treatment of waste and so I

look forward to the possibility of this being used as an alternative to having this incinerator. Sir, if the incinerator is necessary, certainly we have to look at raising the height of the chimney because we are aware of the serious medical hazards of these pollutants, the black smoke with the actual residue landing on the houses of the persons.

When I go into their homes, they show me the black soot all over their furniture. This clearly is injurious to their health and I look forward to this issue being settled in a speedy way. Sir, this presently affects a whole district. It affects that Wibix Land area, including Nelson Street, Beckwith Street, Dukes Alley, Spruce Street, et cetera. Sir, these are people too and so I look forward to an ease. I gave my constituents the assurance that their Member of Parliament will ensure this issue be treated as a priority.

2.10 p.m.

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Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Mr. Chairman, I would just like to say that we in this Administration are very serious about health care and the issue of the care of the elderly. Sir, if you remember, the Honourable Member for St. John, the Prime Minister, set up Committees of Cabinet so we have the Social Policy Committee headed by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, the Ministry of Social Care, and the Deputy is the Minister of Health, and we look together across the relevant Ministries to work together in a harmonious way. I believe this collaborative approach would go a long way to alleviate some of the problems we have in terms of the care of the elderly.

Mr. Chairman, my mother was hospitalised in recent years on a number of occasions so I had occasion to visit the wards on a daily basis and I noticed certain challenges in this regard. When you visit the Accident and Emergency Department, you would see a number of persons, senior citizens, primarily who are discharged but because no one was there to collect them they were in the Accident and Emergency Department for a number of days.

I know that the Minister of Health is working assiduously, as I understand it, with the Geriatric Hospital so that weekly checks are made by the Geriatric Hospital to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to assure that persons who can be transferred to the Geriatric Hospital would be transferred there by freeing up the important bed spaces so that you do not get a backlog in terms of the Accident and Emergency Department. Sir, we are being creative and we are being serious about solving these serious health concerns. Mr. Chairman, this Administration is not making sport with health.

Mr. Chairman, I go further. I was in the Ministry of Social Care and I know back then we saw the challenges of

persons who may have problems with housing and we repaired those houses. Sir, we visited and went on the ground, do not mind that the Opposition wants to criticise us for touring. We did not stay in our office. We went on the ground. We went into Christ Church and St. Michael.

Sir, we went into the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and we did not discriminate against her. We went all throughout the island and we noticed that houses may have been repaired for senior citizens but there needed to be proper collaboration with the Minister of Health to ensure that these persons are not just presented with a new house, but they have the same old oil stove, the person is blind or otherwise disabled and are unable to fend for themselves so you need to bring in the home help, the district nurses and the medical personnel to ensure that senior persons or that disabled person is not left alone to burn himself or herself, God forbid, and so forth.

Mr. Chairman, these are collaborative efforts that within the Social Policy Committee of Cabinet. I look forward to us working together, and to have neighbouring Ministries collaborating so that you do not get the bureaucracy where one Ministry does not know what the other is doing, and to make contact with another Ministry takes forever, while members of the public are suffering in the process. Sir, I look forward to this work.

Mr. Chairman, in closing I want to draw attention to a point which was made by the Minister of Health publicly, to the Barbados Defence Force Decompression Chamber because we talked a lot about Barbados being the amputation capital of the world and so forth.

I look forward to the medical practitioners in our country looking at the modern best practices in terms of the treatment of what you would call life sores and other cases where burns and cuts are not healing and people could get gangrene but, as I understand it, with the Decompression Chamber, you can oxygenate the tissue affected giving them a new lease on life and reducing the need for amputation.

Sir, this Government is a serious Government. I congratulate the Minister of Health and assure the public that the Democratic Labour Party Government cares about health.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. George North. Before you go, just to let Honourable Members know that we have exactly half of an hour left in this debate.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I want to spend a few minutes dealing with this important Head.

Mr. Chairman, I have never tried to score any cheap political points at all when dealing with health because I am aware that health is very important to not only the country. We have heard from members that the health of a country is the wealth of a country. We have heard about these things but I want to say that we need to look carefully at what we are spending in the health service of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say from the outset that when you look at this small country, I could go back from 1966 and when you go back to this country as an Independent nation, a country with limited resources; a country the size of Barbados; that over the past 40 years we have spent considerable sums of money on our health care service in this country in both political parties. I have taken steps to look at what we spent in the last 10 years on the health care service in Barbados. We have spent on average more than \$300 million every year on the health care service of this country.

Mr. Chairman, this debate today is not about taking resources from the health service. This debate is about putting money in the health service of this country and, therefore, we support this. I take offense, however, when Honourable Members on the Other Side would say to me that I have no moral ground to speak on this topic. I think it is wrong to say these things because I have the right to speak in this House on anything whether it is right or wrong. Mr. Chairman, I want to say that we must look at the health service in this country and try to improve it.

Mr. Chairman, over the years a lot of resources have been spent on this country and we continue to spend money on it, but the question is: Are we getting value for money? Have we put in place a system that could give account of what we are spending in the health service? We are going to spend in this debate over \$16 million or thereabout, but have we put in place a system?

Sir, we have heard a lot being said and, of course, when I visit the hospital, from time to time, people have said to me to come and see this and to come and see that. Sir, I have seen the X-ray Department and persons have shown me the Department not working but I am not one of those who will say it is not working because the Government has not given resources. Sir, the management of the hospital cannot only rely on the Minister and the Minister must not come and make us believe that he is more hands-on than anybody else because systems must be put in place.

Mr. Chairman, for example, people have asked me to ask the Minister when he is going to put a pathologist in place and what is going to happen because many people

have died and are waiting to be buried, so when is he going to put a pathologist in place. I have asked them if they want the Minister to answer this question or if it is the Board of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mr. Chairman, we can continue to point fingers at persons because we have heard a lot of news of what is happening. Sir, there are problems at the hospital that needs to be fixed and the Minister and the Ministry must not believe that all is well because there are problems. Sir, I have gone to hospitals abroad and, Mr. Chairman, do you realise that at this time at the juncture of our history that persons have to go and collect their records.

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Mr. G.A.CLARKE: Can you imagine this? In 2009 when the world is high-tech, the record keeping at the hospital needs to be upgraded. I am of the view it has to be a priority of any Government, who is seriously going forward into the 21st century, to look at the best way to keep records. This country must move forward.

Sir, when you go to North America or other places, the records are kept in such a way that there are accessible throughout the hospital. You just flash your card and the record comes up, but here we are operating like in the 1950s. We need to go forward in a meaningful way. The Government must tell us in the future what will happen to upgrade the health service of this country, rather than pointing fingers and telling me that I have no moral response, that I cannot speak in here because my Party did not do this or my Party did not do that. I want to hear what is happening.

I want to hear from the Minister if it is true that a living man was put in the morgue. Tell us about these things. You must tell us about these things. Sir, what about the flu virus and the H1N1 vaccine? Are we getting it free? Is it free? What is happening? I want to hear the Minister tell us that we are spending a lot of money here, but the Minister has not told us what is happening or where we are going. He is looking in the past.

We have counted 13 or 14 times where the Minister said that the Barbados Labour Party Government did not do this but I want to hear what is happening. People want to know about the Drug Service. Are we going to have to pay for certain drugs? Is it free? Tell us.

Sir, the Honourable Minister had half an hour but he did not tell us anything. I am asking some serious questions but he does not want to hear these things. He wants to come and complain again, so that the Minister would spend another 15 minutes complaining about what we could have

done, but did not do. He has the opportunity to do it now. I want to see a good health service.

I want to make this point to the Honourable Minister. In all my years in Parliament I have never once got up to make a political speech on health because I know its value. I am asking the Minister what is happening. You cannot get up and tell me that you have done so well, pat yourself on the chest and say that you have done so well, when at the same time we pointed out serious problems in the Ministry of Health. Sir, we have pointed out that there is a shortage of nurses. There will always be a shortage of nurses.

Sir, I heard that This Side did not train nurses but you trained them. That is not true. Both Sides trained nurses and we trained within the limits of our resources, but are we getting value for what we are doing? We are in the Committee stage. We are in committee. Are we getting value for what we are doing?

I also want to find out about the Ambulance Service. I believe the time has come, because we have spent a lot of money. I remember coming to this Parliament when we bought 12 ambulances in one year. Now I am hearing that out of a fleet of twelve ambulances, you have less than 25 per cent working. We are going to spend money to buy ambulances, but has the Ministry look at privatising the Ambulance Service?

Sir, when you use the word “privatise”, members of the Government who do not understand what is happening in a modern world, the Government will still have control over the Ambulance Service, even if it is put in the hands of the private sector. At least we will ensure that there is an adequate supply of ambulances. Has the Government looked at the ambulance service in its totality?

I am of the view that more has to be done to ensure that there is an adequate supply of ambulances in Barbados. The Government alone cannot do it, but the Government can provide resources every year to ensure that we have an adequate supply of ambulances, but necessarily run the service.

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, the Minister of Housing has asked me if I want poor people to pay for it? Privatisation does not mean that people must pay for it.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, privatisation does not mean that people have to pay for it. What will happen, you will have a different level of management in the private sector

at a reduced cost. Sir, I am saying we have to look at what ought to happen as we go forward.

In the United States of America the big debate is on health. We are having a similar debate in the Caribbean. The time has come for us to look at what a previous Barbados Labour Party regime said about a national health service. There are too many people who cannot find the resources at this juncture.

There are still too many who must wait in line at the Polyclinics. There are still a number of persons who have challenges. I am saying the Government needs to look at a Green Paper, once again, on the health service of this country. We need to look at it very carefully as we go forward.

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

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, when you look at the plan for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital it cannot accommodate the modern technology we are talking about. It cannot. The technology that we talk about in terms of record keeping cannot be done at the hospital. So you have to look at a new health service.

Sir, I heard the Minister speak about repairs here, repairs there and repairs everywhere. He has been repairing, but at the same juncture we are spending a lot of money. You are requesting the Ministry of Finance every year to spend \$60 million on repairs. If you continue like that, within the next 10 years you will still be at the level of the 1960s. You will have to upgrade the total health service at this point as we move forward. That is the only way. It is going to take some time.

Sir, developed countries have taken steps. They have to do one thing at a time. You cannot try to do everything in the health service at this time. Take one and do it well. Then go on to the next and do that well. You cannot be telling me that I repair here. I repair there. I repair everywhere and we may be at the same juncture 10 years from now.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There are fifteen minutes left in the debate. I see the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central and I also see the Honourable Member for St. James South.

The Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you very much in bringing this Head to a closure. I want to thank all those Honourable Members who have

spoken on this particular matter. For those who did not get a chance to speak, I note their quiet support for this particular matter.

I do not intend to spend too much time elaborating on what the Opposition had to say. The reality is, I think that Honourable Members in this Chamber and Barbadians generally speaking, have accepted that the previous Administration did not take health care seriously. Secondly, I think they have also accepted the starting point from which this Government has had to go, and the seriousness of the levels of success that we have made to date as an Administration not just in health, but across the whole social services spectrum.

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House A51, Sequence 21, 2.30 p.m.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: We have listened to much castigation and condemnation of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the health sector from the Opposition and one would believe that nothing has been done in the last 18 months that we have been in office, but when you realise that for years the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has suffered as a result of an inadequate supply of electricity and you realise that this Government has started a major electrical upgrade of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to the tune of almost \$10 million, it tells us that we are doing something right in this country.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, with a staff complement of just over 2 000 employees, a 600-bed facility with hundreds of individuals visiting the facility every day, a supposedly 24-hour operation, and the former Government closed the cafeteria. Sir, staff and visitors to the hospital could not get even two salt breads - as the Honourable Member for St. Thomas talked about - to eat and they were forced to go around the property and buy food from the back of a van, and staff working late at night were forced to order dinner from KFC. This Administration determined that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital should have a cafeteria and it will be back in operation by the end of this year.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Sir, that is what you call action. For years, the hospital had been complaining about an inadequate supply of functioning beds. The staff there have been labouring with the terrible condition of the beds in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and this Administration a

few months ago provided 200 new beds to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: This Administration delivered more beds to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the last year, than the previous Government did in 14 years. What hurts the former Administration is that they are actually seeing some real progress in health care because you have a Government, once and for all that genuinely cares about people. When you speak, for example, of the old ambience of the hospital - I am not going to get into any debate about new construction I said because that will take time but we cannot allow the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to go further down. We have to keep it afloat and improve upon it, that is why when you look around the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and you see a window replacement programme ongoing, it is needed.

It was neglected for too long. The asbestos roof of the main entrance to the hospital that was there from the time it was built 45 years ago was changed. The bathrooms could not be repaired because there were leaking roofs and those have been fixed.

For years, as I said earlier, the electrical supply was precarious with serious overloading of circuits. We were able to get a transformer and, unlike the former Government, we did go abroad and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to get one. We found one right here in Bowmanston, St. John that was installed at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and able to stabilise the power supply in vital areas of the hospital.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Sir, that can only come when you have a Government that cares about people. They spent \$70 million on the Greenland Landfill breeding mosquitoes and we today at the QEH, with far less than that, are saving lives and that is what hurts the former Administration, to see that we are really making strides in health care in Barbados.

The Medical Intensive Care Unit and ICU that they have talked about for such a long period of time are back on stream and are functioning. We all want to see it improve and we are not resting on our laurels until we get that place going well. We are very mindful of the challenges that exist but rest assured that this Government is getting things right at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and in health care on the whole.

We have also stated that we cannot look at the QEH as the sole component of health care in Barbados. We recognise that there are other parts of the health sector that

will have a greater impact upon the QEH as a tertiary institution. For example, we talked about preventative care, and we recently established a national task force on exercise, as a plank in getting Barbadians to lead healthier lifestyles.

It is no sense saying that diabetes and all the chronic noncommunicable diseases are reeking havoc on our economy and then do not do anything about it, so we recognise we cannot focus alone on the curative side of health care and that is why we have taken a lot of effort now to improve on the preventative aspect of health, so exercise is one issue.

The Ministry of Health recently released dietary guidelines, targeted at young people.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: They are teaching their parents and the schools to provide the right kinds of food for our young people. We cannot wait until they get in their 20s and 30s to say that we should have done something back then, so we are attacking this problem from all angles. We are leaving no stone unturned, in respect of getting it right with health care in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, we have launched the National Noncommunicable Disease Commission. A Strategic Plan has been released and the action points in there are being worked on.

It would please the Honourable Member for St. George North to know that we have even launched the Mental Health Commission. We are not leaving those behind either so there is a very holistic approach to health care that is ongoing in this country, and we intend to continue to focus on that, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, there are other areas that I must say we have to work on in terms of cost containment. It troubles me to know that the monthly electrical bill at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is \$450 000, which is a large sum of money and they have been asked to make efforts to reduce that sum. The water bill at the QEH is almost \$90 000 a month and that too, has to be reduced. Sir, because it is Government, it does not mean that you cannot turn off lights and the AC when you leave the office.

Mr. Chairman, there are other issues that we also have to deal with. It is not just the physical plant. Every clinical department at the QEH has provided a list of vital equipment that they need. We have gotten approval from Government for additional funding and, rest assured, that some departments, for example Plastic Surgery, has gotten their equipment, and some have been ordered for Urology.

As I mentioned earlier, the Orthopedics Department, apart from the couple million dollars allocated, we are providing in this Head here another \$304 000 to the Orthopedics Department. The Ophthalmology Department that people have been complaining for years, is now beginning to get right. Sir, despite the challenges they have in physical constraints as placed at the hospital, we are getting it right with Ophthalmology too.

The Cardiovascular Department, Sir, you would not believe that under the former Administration, \$5 million of grant funds were placed in a bank account and kept there, not even earning interest. The account is now dormant. Sir, \$5 million in grant funds were placed in a bank account at the QEH for the purpose of constructing a Cath Lab, a suite in the same Lions Eye Care Centre building.

I went there and could not believe that all I saw there was (raw) concrete. Sir, \$5 million sitting in a bank account, when Barbadians were complaining about delays in Cardiovascular treatment in this country. This Administration has gotten the architects back in there working and that Cath Suite will start in the next three months.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: These are the things we are doing for the people of Barbados, who elected us to office.

When you spent in excess of \$100 million more than you need to spend on a prison, highways and the largess and wastage we had around this country, they were not paying attention to health care. If the Honourable Members of the Opposition had done what they had to do back then, we would not be in this position today, but I hope they have accepted that this Administration is busy when it comes to health care. We are not prepared to leave anyone behind.

They spoke of the Ambulance Service. Yes, there are challenges. I heard the Honourable Member for St. George North say that they have purchased 12 ambulances in one year. I do not know which island they went to, but not to Barbados, because I can tell you that I saw the last report which indicated that ML917 which was bought in 2004 is currently undergoing bodywork, ML922 bought in 2008 is currently undergoing mechanical work, MP898 bought in 1988 and one bought in 2001. These are the challenges we have with the Ambulance Service.

Mr. Chairman, the reality about it is that in 2008, the completed Calendar year, the Ambulance Service would have received 14 402 calls for assistance. They are, St. Michael 6 087, Christ Church 2 294, St. Philip 1 167, St. James 1 220 and at the very bottom end, St. Joseph 276 and St. Lucy 309.

House A51, Sequence 21, 14:40:15

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: The Ambulance Service continues to be challenged with calls from individuals who really are not emergency cases but may need a ride to the institution. That is a reality. Sometimes we are faced with those, what we call, nuisance calls. In 2008, of the calls received, 2 347 were classified as trauma cases and 9 742 were classified as non-trauma cases.

Mr. Chairman, the Ambulance Service has had its challenges but we have provided additional funding in this financial year to purchase two additional ambulances which should arrive here by April next year. On top of that, we have asked that the Mechanical Department and the Maintenance Department be adequately staffed and equipped to ensure that as many of the vehicles we have now are brought back into action. Beyond that, we will continue to work with the Barbados Defence Force and the two private ambulance companies to provide the necessary backup support in the event of disasters.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot support the Honourable Member for St. George North in his call to privatise the Ambulance Service. I suppose next he would be asking us to privatise the Royal Barbados Police Force, the Fire Service or the Barbados Defence Force. That is his modus operandi. We accept that these are essential services that Barbadians must get regardless of race, class, colour or political persuasion.

The Honourable Member for St. George North also asked about pathologists. Mr. Chairman, the longest time it takes to get an autopsy done at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is 48 hours. I have checked in the last year...

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, it is to my knowledge that there are some people at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who have died who have been waiting for more than eight days for an autopsy to be done, so something is wrong.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: What is wrong, Mr. Chairman, is that the Honourable Member, who served in the Cabinet for many years, does not understand the difference between a coroner's request for an autopsy and the traditional pathology report out of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The ones he speaks of are for those that relate to the Coroner. That is not a Queen Elizabeth Hospital/Ministry of Health issue per se. Mr. Chairman, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has three pathologists on staff who are functioning. Unfortunately, we do not have any to pronounce the Barbados Labour Party as dead, but we have pathologists who work on living human beings and get the work done.

Mr. Chairman, in wrapping up, I just want to send the clear message that this Administration has delivered on many fronts in relation to health care. We took a very holistic approach to it. We have instituted several initiatives on the preventative side of health care, such as looking at exercise, diet and stress level. On the curative side, we certainly addressed many of the challenges within the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, including the electrical upgrade, clinical functions, staffing, et cetera. In terms of secondary care, we have addressed issues in respect of care of the elderly. We have also addressed the issues in terms of mental health.

Mr. Chairman, no one is being left behind. It is a mammoth task. We have started from a position that we all would have wished we did not have to start from, but I am satisfied that we have made great strides. We will not rest on our laurels. This is no time for me as Minister, or for any one of us, to beat our chest and say we have done well. We need to stay focussed and realise that every Barbadian is entitled to decent health care. Mr. Chairman, this Administration, led by the Honourable Member for St. John, will ensure that the resources allocated are deployed well and are well-managed.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 23 stand part.

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

The question that Head 23 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 19 - TREASURY

\$853 276

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 19 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 62

MINISTRY OF FINANCE, INVESTMENT,
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY

\$1 715 939

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 62 stand part.

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

The question that Head 62 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the 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. F. J. STUART, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS (Recommittal)

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Private Members' Resolution, and I read as follows:

"WHEREAS the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance provided a report on the economic outturn for the period January-October 2009.

AND WHEREAS the said report reflects an overall decline by 4 per cent in the economy for the first nine months reflected in the following areas:

Tourism receipts 11.7 per cent;

Domestic exports, a decline of 14 per cent;

Capital and financial accounts, a decline of 20 per cent;

Government's revenue, a decline of 7.3 per cent; and

An increase in unemployment recorded at 10.5 per cent for the third quarter;

AND WHEREAS this state of affairs has led to a downgrade in the credit rating of Barbados' economy both by Standard and Poor's and by Moody's Investor Services;

AND WHEREAS the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has urged Members of the Opposition as well as Barbadians to join Team Barbados in his effort to confront and manage the challenges facing the Barbados economy;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this House takes note of the state of the Barbados economy at this juncture;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this House urges the Government of Barbados to present urgently its

plan to stabilise and rescue the Barbados economy, given its continued poor performance, which has resulted in hardship to Barbadian households and Barbadian businesses;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this House establishes a joint standing committee on finance and economic affairs.”

I thank you.

House A51 Sequence 22 2.50 p.m.

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS (Recommittal)

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give Notice of the following two questions. Sir, notice was originally given on November 17 for both questions. To ask the Minister of Finance:

1. (i) Will the Minister of Finance urgently provide to this Honourable Chamber the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding announced in his 2009 Budgetary and Financial Statement signed between the Government of Barbados and CLICO Holding (Barbados) Limited or any other subsidiaries of CLICO Holdings (Barbados) Limited?

(ii) Will the Honourable Minister also state whether it is his intention to lay this Memorandum of Understanding in this Honourable House? If so, will the Minister state when he intends to lay the said Memorandum of Understanding?

(iii) Will the Minister of Finance further provide the terms of reference of the Government Control Oversight Committee that has been established to have oversight of the sale of the financial subsidiaries of CLICO Holdings (Barbados) Limited and its expenditure?

(iv) Will the Minister of Finance indicate if the Oversight Committee is still operational, and the demand they extend beyond six months, given at the time of its establishment?

2. Will the Minister of Finance please say whether CLICO Insurance Limited or however else the same may be traded has presented its audited financial statements for 2008, which were due by April 30, 2009, under the Insurance Act, to the Supervisor of Insurance of Barbados?

(i) If it has not, will the Minister state what action is being taken to correct this situation?

(ii) Will the Minister state what was the amount of the portfolio held in annuities, insurance, life, group and health by CLICO Life, as recorded in the audited financial statements of 2008 and its breakdown?

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to give notice of the following question. To ask the Minister of Transport and Works:

1. Will the Minister say what is the legal limit of the overdraft of the Transport Board as of November 18, 2009?

(i) Will the Minister further state to what extent, if any, is the Transport Board's overdraft as of November 15, 2009?

(ii) Will the Minister further state whether the Transport Board has secured a loan from the Barbados National Bank, to be guaranteed by the Government of Barbados? If so, will the Minister state the amount of the loan being secured and how the Transport Board will use the proceeds of the loan?

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS(Recommittal)

ORDER NO. 4 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE LAND DEVELOPMENT DUTY (SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT AREA) (HASTINGS TO ROCKLEY) ORDER, 2009.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, this particular Resolution is to give effect to what was previously debated in this Honourable House. The Honourable House agreed that an area of land, which stretches for the length of the boardwalk in Hastings to Rockley, would be an area that would be brought under the Land Development Duty Act. This piece of legislation was passed in the Honourable House and now it is necessary by this Resolution to give effect to the Order which was made in 2009.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if there is any significant debate on this because it had the support of both Houses. I would like to give notice now, though, that it is Government's intention to do a similar Order with respect to the area of land in Holetown, St. James, where a

boardwalk has also been constructed. Sir, this would have accrued to the benefit of the landowners on the immediate foreshore and we feel strongly that where there has been any significant improvement in the value of those properties, that windfall should be shared with the Government by way of the application of land development duties.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister correctly reflected on the debate which took place before and therefore we have no objection on This Side.

I have no objection neither to the planned application of the Order in respect to Holetown. Sir, may I say, though, that on the last occasion on which we had this debate, we had discussed the possibility of a Select Committee on the issue of beach accretion - if my memory serves me correctly - and we would look forward, therefore, to advancing that work because we believe that those issues have to be settled, sooner rather than later.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 5 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWNS LAND (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225 THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF A PARCEL OF LAND THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN, SITUATE AT BREEDY'S LAND, NEAR SILVER SANDS, IN THE PARISH OF CHRIST CHURCH IN THIS ISLAND FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Housing and Lands.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Resolution before this Honourable House seeks permission to vest 451 square metres of Crown's land at Breedy's Land, Christ Church, in the National Housing Corporation for residential purposes. Mr. Speaker, the then Cabinet, at a meeting on March 30, 2000, agreed to the acquisition of the said land for residential purposes. The Cabinet agreed that the land should be vested in the National Housing Corporation. Sir, the land was acquired by private treaty, by a conveyance

dated March 24, 2002, and recorded in the Land Registry on June 5, 2002, as Deed No. 2980 of 2002.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, in accordance with the provisions of Section 5.1.(c) of the Crowns Land (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, which gives the Minister the authority, with the approval of Parliament, to sell, lease, exchange or grant, assign or surrender any such land, the Crown is now seeking to have this land vested in the National Housing Corporation for residential purposes. Mr. Speaker, the Surveyor's Plan is attached. This land situate at Breedy's Land is now vacant and so it can be utilised to assist some needy persons; obviously some persons on the Government's waiting list, so that those persons could have house spots.

Mr. Speaker, in those circumstances, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

4.00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 15, 2009

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today. I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, January 12, 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, speaking on the Adjournment, and since I am on my feet, we are into the Yuletide period, referred to as the Christmas Season and we see right across Barbados the beginnings of the enjoyment of that period.

I have seen tens of thousands of Barbadians moving across the landscape with large bags in their hands and I know they are not shoplifters. Sir, that would say to me that Barbadians, notwithstanding the global challenges, which all of our countries are facing, are utilising some of their resources, which they have kept for a rainy day, that they have now brought out to celebrate the Yuletide Season.

Mr. Speaker, we want to wish all of Barbados the best for the Christmas Season. Of course, we look forward to the year 2010, when all Barbadians of every walk of life, every class, colour, creed, would join together with the Government, the members of the Democratic Labour Party to continue the work on behalf of this great nation and on behalf of its great people.

Mr. Speaker, a word of caution must also be placed in the midst of things, that is, we have been seeing recently, some accidents on our streets and we tend sometimes during the Christmas period, the Old Year period and the New Year period to see a few persons being a little reckless in the use of our streets.

We would want to join with all those in the Police Force, who have called already for persons to drive with a certain modicum of decency, to keep rational behaviour as they go about their business in this country. Sir, we need to appeal for persons not to speed; for persons to have designated drivers during the time of the festivity and the celebration and the use of some of our products which we produce from our factories and distilleries, that they would do so with moderation.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to wish the Clerks, the Deputy Clerks and the staff of this Honourable House the best as well for the Yuletide period. I am sure they too would use what resources they have to reach out to their families and to others within their neighbourhood, however they construe their neighbourhood to be, and to share with those who might not be as fortunate as them during this period. We know on This Side of the House that all Honourable Members have started this process. Indeed, it is a process which is not truncated into time slots but that all Honourable Members reach into the community but, Sir, they reach more now during this period when good cheer should be given to all and sundry.

Mr. Speaker, we want to thank the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force for their help with the security service here at Parliament and wherever else they provide the security services in Barbados and to appeal to the entire citizenry to understand that they too have families, that they too would want to celebrate Christmas and, therefore, do not create that much trouble which would cause them to have the time limited in such a way as to police the national State.

Mr. Speaker, this is the time when Christ was part of the process of being born and bringing good cheer to the salvation of man. Therefore, do take that goodness, that sharing, that caring, that feeling and good understanding and reach to your fellow man out of Christmas. In the midst of the shopping and improving your personal lifestyle or your personal experience, do not forget that it is important to also continue to serve God.

To all others within the hearing of my voice, I am sure that when Honourable Members go through their constituencies that they would be welcomed with sorrel, jug-jug and all of the other delicacies that we are renounced for in this country knowing that we shall not turn our noses up and that we shall partake, most definitely, of what is

offered to us by our constituents. Of course, what we offer to our Constituency, we know too, that they will partake.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to wish you and your family, however that family is construed, the best for this festive season and look forward to seeing you at the various activities we would all be at but, more particularly, on January 12, 2010.

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

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the Adjournment too. I am not sure that I might be as piercing as the Honourable Member, especially in his last comments, but, suffice it to say, this is the time of year when we both reflect and celebrate. I trust and hope that all persons starting first with those who have served us in this Honourable Chamber, the Clerk, the Deputy Clerks, the Hansard staff, the Police, the media and all those who provide the catering, to wish them a very prosperous Christmas, a reflective Christmas.

I believe that this has been a challenging year but, having said that, we are a resilient people, and to that extent, we would reflect in all that we do, the Christian spirit that requires of us the ability to share and to share especially with those who are least able to provide for themselves at this time of the year.

Sir, that is a message that is to be reflected, not just by those who offer themselves to public service, but all Barbadians who can, ought to share and to give to others who are not in a position to assist themselves this year.

Mr. Speaker, I believe as well that the time of year is one that causes us to reflect and to prepare ourselves for what 2010 has to offer. Indeed, when this House meets again, we will be in 2010 and I trust that all of us prepare ourselves for an equally challenging year.

The forecast does not reflect any ease, certainly in the half to two-thirds of the year and, I suspect the whole year, and to that extent, it is going to require greater resilience and greater discipline on the part of all Barbadians as we seek to keep our heads above water in these circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, as it relates to you, I say simply to you that I wish you and your family all the very best for the season and certainly for the New Year. I would like to wish, through this Chamber, to all Barbadians and end on the point where I have started. If ever there was a time to share, it is now. Sir, not just because it is Christmas, but the circumstances of this year have made it difficult for a number of people, who have either been laid off or who are on short week and, to that extent, I think there is an

obligation on all of us to ensure that what we have is well-shared such that there is no family who goes completely wanting at this time of the year.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you and wish you all the very best.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before I put the question, let me say that I want to thank the staff of Parliament, including the Clerks at the table, for their kind assistance during the last calendar year and Honourable Members, for your co-operation. I believe that in spite of all the challenges, economic and otherwise, we have had a good year and, Honourable Members you have contributed to that.

Also, on behalf of myself and my family, however construed by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, I want to wish you all a very Happy Christmas. As you know, it is not necessarily all rest and revelry for the parliamentarian but I would ask that you try to enjoy yourself as you meet, treat, eat and, perhaps, drink with your constituents, but that you also take time to remember the reason for the season and that is the birth of Christ.

All the best for the season.

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, January 10, 2010 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

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CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
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EASTMOND, Mr. R.C. (St. James North)
FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)
G.A.CLARKE, Mr.
INNISS, Hon. D. O’N. (St. James South)
JONES, Mr. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, His Excellency D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Hon. M. A. (St. Philip North)
LASHLEY, Mr. H. F. (St. Michael South East)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

Q1. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Minutes. The Speaker's words 'If there are no corrections or observations, then let those Minutes stand confirmed' run on, with the words 'Mr. SPEAKER:', inside Hon. F. J. Stuart's seconding speech, and the mover is labelled 'Mr. R. D. JONES'. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Papers. The Prime Minister says he is commanded to lay 'the following Bills', but the three items are Regulations and Orders. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Adjournment. The motion is to adjourn until 'Tuesday, January 12, 2010 at 10.00 a.m.', but the procedural sentence reads 'Tuesday, January 10, 2010'. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Committee of Supply, Head 23. The Minister of Health refers to 'the unexpected but very challenging situation of H1N1 Influenza/AIDS virus'. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Speaker labels. Labels include 'Hr. R. C. EASTMOND', 'Hon. C.P. SINCKLAIR' and 'Hon. D. O.N. INNIS'; Hon. C. P. Sinckler opens with 'Mr. Speaker, Sir' in Committee, and Mr. G. A. Clarke addresses 'Mr. Chairman' when giving notice of a question in the House. The heading 'ORDER No. 6' appears twice. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, 15th December, 2009, with Mr. Speaker in the Chair. The Minutes of Friday, December 04, 2009 were confirmed and the Speaker reported the Accounts and Statements for June 2009. The Prime Minister, Hon. D. J. H. Thompson, laid the International Financial Services (Licence Fees) (Regulations) 2009, the Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 7) Order, 2009 and the Value Added Tax (No. 4) Order, 2009. Standing Orders were suspended for the rest of the Sitting.

On Order No. 6 the House went into Committee of Supply on a Resolution to grant \$19 146 749 for

Supplementary Estimates No. 4, 2009-2010. Under Head 23, Ministry of Health, \$16 577 534, the Minister of Health, Hon. D. O'N. Inniss, explained the items: \$350 000 for tax cost in a civil suit concerning the St. Joseph Hospital Commission of Inquiry, about \$110 000 for the H1N1 outbreak, \$4.2 million for pharmaceuticals and supplies at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, \$304 000 for Orthopaedics, strained by motor vehicle accidents, \$1.1 million for the ambulance service, \$1.2 million for maintenance and \$7.5 million for the Barbados Drug Service, which he said could not continue operating as it had. He also described the repair of CT machines and the start of a kitchen at the Geriatric Hospital.

Mr. H. F. Lashley congratulated the Minister and called for decentralised community health care. Miss C. Y. Forde raised hospital food for diabetic patients, the loss of the Nigerian nurses and road deaths on Highway 2A; after points of order from Hon. J. D. E. Boyce and His Honour K. St.C. Best she withdrew a remark at the Chairman's request. Mr. R. C. Eastmond questioned the future of the Lions eye care facility. Mr. D. St.E. Kellman supported the Resolution but objected to the St. Joseph Hospital item. The Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, said the Government had promised much and delivered little on health in 23 months, that the Minister had referred to the former Administration 13 or 14 times, and that elective surgeries had been cancelled; the Minister rose on a point of order. Hon. C. P. Sinckler said the Government had inherited a health system on the brink of collapse, amid points of order from Miss Mottley. The House was suspended until 1.45 p.m.

In the afternoon Hon. P. M. T. Todd spoke on emergency services and care of the elderly, and Mr. G. A. Clarke called for modern record keeping at the hospital and argued that privatising its management did not mean patients would have to pay. Replying, the Minister said more beds had been delivered to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in a year than in the previous 14 years, contrasted the \$70 million spent on the Greenland Landfill, and spoke of non-emergency calls to the ambulance service. Heads 23, 19 (Treasury) and 62 were agreed to and the Resolution was passed.

Miss Mottley gave notice of a Private Member's Resolution noting a 4 per cent decline in the economy, downgrades by Standard and Poor's and Moody's, and urging the Government to present a plan to stabilise the economy and to establish a joint standing committee on finance and economic affairs; she and Mr. G. A. Clarke also gave notice of questions, including on the CLICO Memorandum of Understanding and the Transport Board's overdraft. The House then agreed without division to the

Resolution approving the Land Development Duty (Special Development Area) (Hastings to Rockley) Order, 2009, the Prime Minister giving notice of a similar Order for Holetown, and to the Resolution vesting 451 square metres of Crown land at Breedy's Land, Christ Church in the National Housing Corporation for residential purposes, moved by Hon. M. A. Lashley.

On the adjournment Hon. R. D. Jones and Miss Mottley offered Christmas greetings, and the Speaker thanked the staff of Parliament and Members for their co-operation during the year. The House was adjourned until January 2010; the last take-slip reads 15:10.