
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Pursuant to the Adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 23, 2010.

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)

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

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

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 Health, National Insurance and Social
Security)

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, B.Sc., M.B.A., (Minister of
Tourism)

Hon. F. J. STUART, Q.C., B.A., LL.M., (Attorney-
General and Minister of Home Affairs)

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

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

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

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

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE, Ed.D., M.Ed., B.A., Dip.
Theology, (Minister of Social Care, Constituency
Empowerment, and Urban Development)

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

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

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

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, M.Sc., B.A., (Minister of
Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and International Business)

Prayers were led by Rev. Cannon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: This House of Assembly is now in
session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday, February 16, 2010.

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

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

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

House A57, sequence 02, 10:20:12

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

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 remainder of this day's Sitting.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, I beg to move that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South be appointed as temporary Chairman of Committees.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ORDER No. 2

RESOLUTION THAT THIS HOUSE RESOLVES
ITSELF
INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER
THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE
SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND.

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. M. A. LASHLEY, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

(a)RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$9 014 038 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. 8, 2009-2010 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 62 BE AMENDED AS SHOWN IN THE SCHEDULE.

HEAD 56

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND
CULTURE

\$1 520 243

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

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$1 520 243 is being sought for the Ministry of Community Development and Culture. This sum is made up of an amount of \$70 000 which is Government's contribution to assist with the hosting of the 9th Meeting of the International Advisory Committee of the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, which was held here in August last year.

This sum should have been included in the Estimates for the 2009-2010 financial year; however, this was not done because Cabinet's approval was not obtained in time to allow for these funds to be included. That sum of \$70 000 is therefore required to meet the cost associated with the attendance at that particular meeting.

The sum of \$14 400 is also being required to cover some costs incurred in the Ministry. The sum of \$44 212 has been approved in the Estimates and Expenditure for the financial year, 2009-2010, to cover the cost of utilities.

The sum of \$2 000 per month was the rate previously quoted with respect to telephone services when the Ministry was located at Government Headquarters in Bay Street and at Bay House in the same location. The average monthly rate has since risen to some \$3 600. As you know, Mr. Chairman, we have moved from that location where the Ministry was originally located and we are now in the Warrens Complex, and therefore we have had some increase in the utility rates especially for telephone services.

Mr. Chairman, also making up this amount is the sum of \$45 000, which has been approved in the current financial year, 2009-2010, to provide payments for the fees of Board members and attendance at meetings for the Film Censorship Board. The censorship of movies and the purchase of refreshments have also made up this amount.

The expenditure from April to November 2009 stood at some \$36 777.47 and the balance is now at \$7 912.53. This amount is not expected to adequately cover the expenses until the end of the financial year, and therefore it is estimated that the expenditure for November 2009-2010 will be the sum of \$34 920. Mr. Chairman, this has come about because of the increase in travel and fees payable to the Chairman and the members of the Film Censorship

Board. In addition, the members were paid the increased fees retroactively.

An increasing number of requests for censorship to be shown at film festivals and also by organisations, including the University of the West Indies and the EU, have increased the financial burden of the Film Censorship Board, and we are therefore requesting the sum of \$28 000 to cover expenses until the end of the financial year.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, the Film Censorship Board stands in the vanguard of protecting the viewing public, especially underage viewers, from exposure to pornographic material and also excessive violence which is shown in films. Mr. Chairman, the Film Censorship Board really provides a buffer between the public and the cinemas.

House A57 Sequence 3

10.30 a.m.

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, the mission of the Film Censorship Board is to provide for the regulation, distribution and censorship of film and for matters such as censorship of film for the viewing public, the collection of censorship fees and also to plan censorship of movies, meetings of the Board, educational programmes at the national and community levels and also training programmes for members of the Board as required. This is an extremely important agency which falls within the purview of the Ministry of Community Development and Culture; therefore, we are supplementing that particular agency with some \$28 000, to the end of this financial year.

Mr. Chairman, in that Supplementary, the sum of \$814 585 was approved by way of Supplementary to settle the outstanding debt for Crop Over, 2008. Of this amount, the sum of \$433 062 was disbursed, leaving a sum of \$381 523 owing to the National Cultural Foundation. This came about because of the late disbursement of the Supplementary provision but this has compromised the budget of the National Cultural Foundation for the financial year, therefore, the sum of \$381 523 is required for the National Cultural Foundation to settle its remaining debts for Crop Over, 2008.

Mr. Chairman, also making up this Supplementary is a sum of \$206 272.50, which is required to meet the cost of electricity for the main library and also eight branch libraries, technical services and also the Coleridge Street facility, for a period of six months, up to November 2009 to March 2010, at an approximate cost of \$34 378.75 per month.

As you know, we are now occupying a relatively new facility at Fairchild Street for the main library and over the last few months we have also brought on stream one additional library at Tamarind Hall, St. Joseph. Therefore, the cost of electricity and other utilities has risen, thus giving cause for us to supplement that particular amount.

Mr. Chairman, for the Commission of Pan African Affairs, they are asking for some \$28 176. Sir, as you know, the late Director of the Pan African Commission, Dr. Ikael Tafari, was attached for a period of two years, effective November 2005 to 2006. Some correspondence was sent to the Chief Personnel Officer recommending that Clause 8 of the contract be invoked and his services were terminated, when Dr. Tafari's contract was terminated on May 30, 2008.

It is estimated that the sum of \$10 000 is owed to Dr. Tafari for one month in lieu of notice. Therefore, this \$28 176 is made up of that \$10 000 and the balance of \$18 176 is being paid to Mr. "Buddy" Larrier, who worked as a Project Officer at the Commission for Pan African Affairs, for the period October 2001 until his retirement January 2, 2009.

It should be noted here that the post of project officer has been downgraded from the particular scale at which it was. Consequently, Mr. Larrier was not paid any further increments and it is therefore estimated that he is owed the sum of \$18 176 for the outstanding incremental credits for the period October 2005 to December 2008. That sum all together for the Commission of Pan African Affairs is \$28 176, which makes up the complete Supplementary of \$1 520 242.50.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I want to say a few words on this Supplementary and to start by acknowledging the good work which the Ministry of Community Development and Culture continues to do in Barbados. Sir, as the Minister spoke, particularly to the Film Censorship Board, to those who have been put in authority in relation to what information that would be made available to our children, we wonder the extent to which this control can be exerted today, given the modern methods of communication that are available.

Sir, only yesterday at an internal launch of our website of the Ministry of Transport and Works - and I want to congratulate the staff for getting that website up and running, I am sure we will have an opportunity to invite the Press - we talked about the question of how people communicate. Sir, internationally, we hear the

debate about the question of protecting our children from the kind of access that is available on television, as you scan the channels of Multi-Choice Television or any other offering and the computer.

Many Barbadians do not now watch films in the cinemas anymore. The cinemas are taken as a special occasion when groups go out but for quiet watching at home, many turn to the different connectivities on the Internet, with which this humble servant is not too familiar, but I am sure that there are others who can speak to the kind of flexibility being offered.

It is these kinds of offerings over which we do not have such easy control, therefore, the Ministry of Community Development and Culture will have to be charged with the responsibility of continuing to investigate methods by which we could try to protect our children from some of this information.

Mr. Chairman, of course, the debate will continue whether there is need for protection. There are those who feel that if the information is out there, we can offer it, and with the proper guidance in the household, children would be able to handle these issues. The facts are, as we examine human behaviour throughout our world, we can see patterns evolving of persons who do things, and I am speaking particularly of criminal acts in the main, as a result of having seen it happened somewhere before. These are challenges with which the Ministry of Community Development and Culture will have to deal, as it grapples with the question of censorship.

Mr. Chairman, in speaking particularly to libraries, and I think a few days ago we had a discussion in this Honourable Chamber about the relevance of libraries, the question of how our libraries are outfitted, how our people use our libraries. Sir, I certainly want to echo the sentiments of the residents of Christ Church South as to the need for us to re-examine the adequacy of the Oistins Public Library. The surroundings are cramped to say the least, but this is an inheritance from the past regime. I know that the Minister would have to take some time before he could get up to full speed in dealing with these issues which confront him.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the day when the library at Oistins could be better outfitted, when we could provide more space for persons to do research. I think there are only four reading pews available at this facility, which are totally inadequate. Sir, even in the existing reading pews, the facility is so cramped that there is not sufficient privacy, so that those persons from the area who may leave home with the intention of doing research, although we may feel are not many, for us to disappoint one person is, in fact, a failing on our part. It may sound difficult but that

is the reality of any service which we seek to provide as a Government.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to working with the Ministry and the Minister, to be able to work with us in Oistins to develop this facility.

10.40 a.m.

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Of course, we are cramped in a lot of ways with our infrastructure so I understand the kind of time it may take. We are going to make sure that when this facility is finally made available, be it in this term of our service to Barbados or either one of our further terms, next term or the term thereafter, we will make sure that we have these facilities outfitted.

Mr. Chairman, it was interesting to hear the Minister speak about the reimbursements to the late Ikael Tafari. Let me take this opportunity to posthumously speak to his contribution in culture and education in Barbados and acknowledge the contribution he did make.

In that presentation the Minister spoke to some \$18 176 being paid to Mr. Buddy Larrier. I want to say how happy I am to finally hear this matter coming to a conclusion. Buddy - you would permit me to call him that, I am sure that Mr. Larrier does not mind - in truth and in fact, is a very interesting person who has worked hard but quietly with the communities both in Barbados and England.

Mr. Chairman, he has spoken to me on numerous occasions and we have made representation to the Honourable Prime Minister, the Ministry of Finance and the Minister of Culture in respect of this pay, and here in Barbados. Sir, it is a situation which happens so often, but to particularly characterise the way things were done by the last Administration, where persons would be asked to do certain jobs and you ask yourself, if you have the high flyers - I am not speaking to Ikael Tafari's time, I am speaking to other high flyers - who present themselves in our public information systems as being the leaders in the Pan African Movement, et cetera, and then we are calling upon other persons within the Movement...

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I do not have to call anybody's name but I hope the Honourable Chamber understands the inferences. Sir, if you are asking a person to do something which is above the job he or she has been recruited and being paid for, then we are duty bound to acknowledge that and either make sure it is corrected early, or if it continues that some arrangements are made to

satisfy the expectation of that person. Sir, that is a very nice way of putting the situation in respect to Mr. Larrier.

Mr. Chairman, I am very grateful, as the Member of Parliament for Christ Church South, to be able to look Buddy in the face and tell him that we have, at least, satisfied that need. Sir, Buddy continues to work for Barbados and for the black Diaspora, particularly in Barbados and in the United Kingdom, where he travels often to speak to certain groups and to help in the development of this cadre of Barbadians and the African people.

Mr. Chairman, as we look to enhancing the contribution in the Diaspora to Barbados' future development, we need more and more to bring on board the efforts of persons like this. Sir, I am sure that the work of Mr. Larrier would be appropriately acknowledged. For instance, I know when we named the fish market at Oistins after Miss Berinda Cox, Buddy was especially congratulatory of the Administration himself for that move because, here we are taking time out to extract excellence from within our communities.

I know that all Members in here like to speak to these occasions but none more so than my good friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. We have to understand more and more what it does to a community when we lift people up like this, and it gives us the opportunity for children in our community to look forward to something special.

Mr. Chairman, we speak all the time about the weakening influence of our family structure in Barbados and what better way can we use to re-develop and re-deploy these energies than to acknowledge the contribution of those who went before us. All of us in here would speak to great peers, to great uncles and great aunts and, to that extent, we need to continue to acknowledge them.

Mr. Chairman, I am very happy to see the satisfactory conclusion of this matter and when I see Buddy again, I will be only too happy to celebrate with him to a satisfactory outcome.

Mr. Chairman, as we observe the end of Carnival in Trinidad and look forward to Crop Over in Barbados, the work of the Ministry of Culture and Community Development will again rise to the fore. We need to look to ways of bringing our activities, through the Community Development Department, into our villages. I know last night there was an election in Christ Church for the Community Independence Council and, Sir, this is an important step.

Mr. Chairman, we like to stay away. Sir, not that politics are removed, because we are not naive, but we

allow the communities to work with each other and work these issues out. I am looking forward to hearing of the results of this election. This group in Christ Church has been extremely active.

There was Mr. Smith before and a former member of this Chamber, Mr. Wendell Callender is playing a very important role in hanging the activities of the Christ Church Community Independence Committee together.

Sir, then there are lots of unsung heroes who make it happen. The Oistins Fish Festival, which we are looking to celebrate very shortly, we have just celebrated the Hometown Festival and all information is that it has been a success. In watching one of the clips on Sunday night on television, again, we have some of our vendors complaining about the weakness in that sector.

Mr. Chairman, when we examine the origins of these festivals, the Minister and his team in the Ministry of Culture and Community Development have the unenviable task of extracting the cultural aspect of our festivals from the financial aspect of the festival.

Mr. Chairman, that separation is important because a number of us still look forward to the cultural aspects of these festivals. Sir, we in Oistins enjoy the fish-boning, climbing the greasy pole, road tennis and all the myriad activities associated with the celebration, but then our vendors, our people in our communities also look forward to the opportunity of concentration of persons so that they can attract sales and make money and, Sir, there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. Mr. Chairman, we have to achieve that happy mix in our community events.

Mr. Chairman, as the Oistins Fish Festival Group work to build this festival, I want to urge them to make sure that the cultural package which is offered, makes a real impact on the society, that it draws on the myriad of talents available from the elderly people and from the young people.

I know there is going to be a special attraction this year where we are going to add a junior carnival and I wish that event all the success in the world. We will certainly support that event so that our young people have an opportunity to express themselves. Sir, this is a junior carnival. I see the Honourable Member for St. Philip North looking at me...

H/A27/10:50

Sequence 5

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church South, I am sorry to interrupt you. You have about 30 seconds but I will give you 35 seconds.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, you are very kind.

Sir, we need to grab from St. Philip this festival culture which they own and rightly so. The history of Barbados Calypso celebrations will tell you that St. Philip has the best record in terms of consistently producing these kinds of artistes.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to you for the opportunity to speak to these few issues and look forward to the continuing hard work of my colleague Minister and his Ministry of Community Development and Culture, as we continue to build a Barbados of which we can be justly proud.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES 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.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Chairman of Committees Acting has reported progress and has asked for leave to sit again. Maybe it has to do with presence of the substantive Chairman. Of course, the motion was that the Acting Chairman be appointed in his absence, and since he has arrived, I am going to invite the Chairman to take the Chair.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House continues to be in Committee.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, first of all I really want to thank the Acting Chairman who sat briefly in the Chair. I think he should be applauded, in his brief time, for doing a job in a relatively short time.

Sir, the last speaker, I never knew that he was a cultural practitioner. I always thought that his skills were really engineering, but listening to his presentation I was forced to make a small intervention in this very important debate. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South surprised me in his presentation. I did not know that he was

a Pan Africanist. The way he spoke tells me that he is very rooted and raised as a black person. I have absolutely no problem saying that because I would want to identify with his delivery this morning.

Sir, while I am on that, the whole issue of Pan Africanism is really part of this most important debate in this Honourable Chamber. I am saying that from the perspective that on November 18 I travelled from Barbados to Ghana, although it was a Conference of social development. To me the most important aspect of that Conference was the opportunity to visit the Gold Coast, where the slaves were held. In fact, I went into the dungeons and it was one of the most heartbreaking and heart-rendering experiences that I would have ever experienced. On entering the dungeon you actually felt the presence of the slaves who were there.

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: The spirits of the ancestors. In fact, there was a libation that was held in those dungeons in terms of a tribute to the ancestors. Sir, it is so impacting that I left that place in Ghana, knowing that it was a transshipment for the slaves who were then shipped to Barbados. Barbados was also a transshipment point for the slaves. Sir, the most horrifying experience about it was, while the dungeon was downstairs, upstairs of the dungeon was a church and only the slaves attended those Church services, not the masters. It was most shocking to learn that the leaders of the tribes - incidently Roots is now being shown on television. I am very glad that CBC would have brought back such a wonderful programme about whom we are as a people.

Sir, the fact is, that experience in Ghana is one that I would like all Barbadians to share in. There is one point when the slaves were brought from the dungeons, the last point before they went on the ships. There is a sign marked "The Point of No Return". Whether you had malaria or whatever disease, they were thrown overboard and fed to the sharks, such inhumanity.

We talk about the genocide in Germany, but what about the African slaves that were brought across the Atlantic to the Caribbean? Sir, I really feel that reparation is an issue that has to be settled. I feel that is another debate for another time in this Honourable Chamber.

Sir, Mr. Buddy Larrier, a Pan Africanist, who would have contributed significantly, and a cultural practitioner, I am glad that his work and worth are being noted in this Honourable Chamber because he is one of the few cultural practitioners, that I know, and one of the persons at the forefront of Pan Africanism that I really believe we should recognise.

In addition, the late Dr. Ikael Tafari, I remember many times sitting under the Canteen of Parkinson Secondary School, in the Pine, having wide discourses as it relates to who we are as a people, taking us back to our historical background. I believe that these two men whom we are talking about this morning, in this particular section of this approval of the Estimates, are persons who we should recognise.

Sir, while in Ghana, a lot has been said. The Government of Ghana spoke a lot about Dr. Erskine Symmonds. Sir, Dr. Erskine Symmonds, who is a former Representative of St. Michael South East, is a person we should also note, from the point of view that he is now the Honorary Ghanian Representative here in Barbados. If you go to his residence you will see the Ghanian colours, flags and paraphernalia. He is also a culturalist. He is also a Cultural Ambassador for Barbados of high merit. In fact, he founded the Marcus Garvey Library that is in the Errol Barrow Park, Pinelands. I really feel that these outstanding men should also be recognised while they are still alive.

Sir, when you talk of Dr. Erskine Symmonds, you could not want a better Cultural Ambassador as it relates to Ghana. In fact, long before the present Government came to power, he was acting as our Ambassador to Ghana. When you go to Ghana and speak to Government Officials in Ghana, the first person they ask for in Barbados is Dr. Erskine Symmonds, how is he doing?

Sir, I speak proudly because he lives on the periphery of the Constituency of St. Michael South East, but he is in another Constituency. He was also one of our Parliamentary Representatives. Sir, within the Marcus Garvey Library, which is in the Errol Barrow Park, this Library, in St. Michael South East, has become an institution.

H57 11.00 a.m. Sequence 6

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

House A57, Sequence 07, 11.00 a.m.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: I must also congratulate the Pinelands Creative Workshop for the wonderful work they have been doing, in terms of fostering community-based and national programmes within the Errol Barrow Library. This is another step towards the area of community development.

The late great Walter Rodney said that identity precedes participation. African people have a history that they must rediscover. When you talk to most young Barbadians and you ask them about their ancestry, who they are, most people say, I am a Barbadian, which is true. The fact is that when you start to do the research to have a

sense of true identity, as long as you are a black man, in my view you are an African. There are so many significant shades of black - if you want to put it that way - which make black in the true sense of the words, "black is truly beautiful".

Mr. Chairman, I am saying that because under the theme of identity precedes participation, I feel, that the time has come when we must find a permanent place, not a temporary place that we do on Heroes' Day, where we put up images and paintings of our National Heroes and then as soon as the week has passed, it comes down, particularly at Independence. No. I really feel that, for instance, in the West Wing of Parliament, an area should be reserved, where we put all of our National Heroes and where visitors to Barbados could go in, obviously contribute a bit to the Treasury by paying a fee, and read the history of these great Barbadians. Sir, Red Plastic Bag put it very well. "This Nation was not built by our Leaders alone, so many Heroes out there in Barbados are unknown." There are many that are known.

Sir, the fate of politicians, in my view, is a very cruel thing because once that person is not selected or elected in this Honourable Chamber, despite the work that they would have done over the years in their respective communities, or in terms of the geopolitical aspect of it in their Constituency, and they served their time, nobody remembers them.

I really believe too, that all the former Prime Ministers of this country, particularly the ones who are alive in the likes of Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford and Mr. Owen Seymour Arthur, that we as a nation have to respect our former Prime Ministers more. In actual fact, I really believe that like in the United States of America where the past Presidents, once that person has served, are entitled to the same level of hospitality and respect as the Sitting President.

I feel we in Barbados have to come to that level of recognition of who contributed to this society in a great measure. I really believe that any future legislation, Sir, we have to look at this whole area of how we treat our leaders because Barbados could be a very cruel society, particularly as it relates to politicians. Politicians do not help to better the situation because at times, politicians tend to be their own worst enemies in how they treat each other. Yet, they are the ones who have sacrificed.

Sir, I am talking under identity perceives participation. We have a situation in Barbados where it is becoming apparent now, in my view, that most communities across Barbados believe that the only people who are to go back to these communities are the politicians, like the politicians are the only ones that are to provide that kind of representation. A politician cannot

provide all of the representation for a community. It has to be a partnership agreement with community organisations, the Church and all of the actors of civil society.

Some of us might not be fortunate to have enough money to develop Foundations or other such institutions. We have to rely on the basis of social participation and intervention and that is sharing and partnering with other organisations. Sir, to me, one of the best cultural exponents and community practitioners, whom I learn a lot from, is a gentleman who recently came out of the hospital by the name of Mr. Ralph Walker.

I believe at some point in time this nation of ours is going to have to review his work and worth, and so encapsulate it in such a way that he too, could be given a National Honour for the work that he has done. He was the first person in Barbados that created a programme on television, called, "Understanding," where persons from within the community could appear and talk about national issues. Sir, that opportunity was given to our present Prime Minister, certainly, other Honourable Members who are in here.

Sir, when I say that and I look around in this Honourable Chamber, we have a lot of what I would consider, expert cultural exponents, and if we are talking in a bipartisan manner, the Leader of the Opposition is also a cultural exponent. Sir, we could also look around at quite a number of other persons, such as the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. Then, Sir, all of us by nature as political representatives of constituencies across Barbados have to be able to manage and become experts in almost every given field.

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

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

Sir, I realise that Honourable Members are called to be doctors, lawyers, social practitioners and community practitioners. They are asked to be experts in almost every field of life. This is the task and responsibility given to us.

Sir, I must say that you have to keep your ears to the ground too, to understand what is going on. There is a saying now that the current Minister of Culture does not miss anything, and he is easily accessible, and this is coming out from the persons on the ground. I really and truly want to compliment him because having such a difficult job as the Minister of Culture, to be able to pull that Ministry together and to reach out into the communities and introduce programmes in these respective communities I really believe, Sir, that he should be complimented.

Mr. Chairman, I am only echoing what has been said to me, lest persons believe that I have some special sentiment with the Minister. Of course not but, indeed, I must tell the truth because that is what we took an oath at Government House to do under the banner of Her Majesty the Queen, something that I dislike, but the fact of the matter is, we have to give a person his due.

Sir, I believe that black history should be introduced as a subject in school and should be made compulsory. Again, identity precedes participation. Too many of our youth believe that they are Barbadians, without a distinct knowledge of whom they really are and it is possibly the basis of some of the criminal developments in Barbados but that is time for another debate.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much.

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

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

I would like, Mr. Chairman, at the outset to publicly lend my support to any effort for libraries to be developed and for the books to be replenished, especially in communities because persons need to be able to read, research and all the other things that go with it to be on the cutting edge. We boast of education and I believe that continuing education is very important. The access, as well, Mr. Chairman, should be available to everyone who has a desire so to do, therefore requesting the funding is not a challenge at all.

Mr. Chairman, I support the comments made by the Honourable Minister, who spoke to the whole issue of film censorship. I believe that even more meticulous work should be done because there are some things I am seeing on the television sometimes and I believe that too, should be censored, but we know it is a very arduous task. The members of those Film Censorship Boards, both past and present, would have been working sometimes three and four times a week doing the vetting to make sure that the best information is shown on our television screens and in our various cinemas.

House A57, sequence 07, 11:10:06

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Miss C. Y. FORDE: Sir, I do have some queries and some concerns when it comes to the National Cultural Foundation. My basic concern, even though it has to do with the funding that is being requested, is in understanding what has been happening at the National Cultural Foundation in the last two years in relation to the developmental programme that the National Cultural

Foundation should be focussing on, as has been the case for many years.

Mr. Chairman, as a younger person in the community in the very early 1980s, I am speaking 1980-1981, even though I had a community awareness, it was that developmental role that the National Cultural Foundation played in communities across Barbados that attracted my interest in community work and the real strong component of voluntary service.

Mr. Chairman, thousands of persons would have developed or honed their skills through the work that was offered by the National Cultural Foundation - Sir, I did not ask your permission, so I would want to request that now - under the then Chairmanship of Elombe Mottley. He sought, with the National Cultural Foundation and the then Government, to have teachers who were involved in cultural activities, particularly the performing and visual arts, to be placed on secondment to work directly with the National Cultural Foundation, not at the National Cultural Foundation at West Terrace but in the schools and communities especially in the afternoon.

Sir, it is as a result of my being in the classroom and being associated with what was happening within the school that I then became more involved in what was happening in the community, particularly at that time the Rock Hall Community Centre in St. Thomas. Peggy McGeary, Tony Thompson, Annette Trotman and a few others worked assiduously within the schools and communities to help with the development and appreciation for not only culture but the heritage of our country.

Mr. Chairman, at that time, every parish in Barbados, through that hard work and the stewardship of those individuals from the National Cultural Foundation, held a festival. It was at that time, Sir, when I developed a keen interest in forming bands for Kadooment with community people being engaged.

Mr. Chairman, it is a pity that we have moved from the T-shirt band effort because that is where most people could afford to buy a T-shirt and communities would do projects to raise enough money to pay for the truck, the goodies that the people would eat and so on and so forth.

It was not any occasion where there was a lot of alcohol splashing all over the place or even any drugs as I see sometimes all over the streets which has helped to diminish the interest that I really have in it at this old age. Mr. Chairman, the fact that these persons were in the schools assisting with the development of the performing and the visual arts generated a kind of interest.

Sir, you would know that there are many children in the schools who may not have a special interest in sitting quietly. Indeed, I do not think I was a child who sat quiet in school, not with the personality I have, so they used to compare me with my many sisters. I was always mischievous, always moving around and so on.

Mr. Chairman, there are many children in the classroom today who may not want to read in the same old way with the chalk and talk approach that most teachers may use, and there are reasons for that. Those children had a keen interest in drama and in making things with their hands. They may not be as intellectually sound as many other children and, therefore, when it comes to Mathematics and Grammar and so, those children would sit back but when opportunities for the craft and the other activities are there, those children were always on top. Mr. Chairman, I feel that we need to get back to what was being offered at that time and indeed what was offered up until January, 2008.

Mr. Chairman, I want to refer to the Youth Development Programme that the then Government placed funding in that was passed on to Culture so that programmes could happen in the schools as well as in the communities particularly in the afternoon and at night time. I am talking about jewellery making, drama, dance, stilt walking and so on. Hundreds of youth and others, Mr. Chairman, benefitted and today I can handpick many of them.

I can talk about the ones in St. Thomas with a little more precision than I can talk about others. There are many I would have met during my visits to the programme who today are self-employed entrepreneurs. They built shoes, did leather craft and so many things on evenings up until January, 2008.

This is my note, Mr. Chairman, but I could give a copy of it to the Honourable Chamber because I am going to refer to it. The Ministry of Youth Affairs under the Youth Development Programme in what we call the National Cultural/Vocational Programme, in 2003-2004, trained 798 persons in the communities in those areas I mentioned earlier. In 2004-2005, there were 771 persons there; in 2005-2006, 782; and in 2006-2007, 902 persons who the Youth Commissioners worked to help to identify as people who indicated an interest in the jewellery making and all the other things.

Mr. Chairman, that is not all. There were programmes that were overseen by the Youth Affairs Department at that time where we had a project called Youth Achieving Results. I speak specifically to this because I know that those young men and women who participated in the programme in painting, drama, voice training and so on are now business people today. There is

a young man who has done so well that he has got his art displayed all across Barbados and he is making really good bucks as a result of the Youth Achieving Results Programme.

Why must we wait for our young men and women to go to Prison then to recognise that they have a skill when we can do it within our communities with the millions or the thousands of dollars that are available for that project? That is what I consider to be an integral part of the role of the National Cultural Foundation.

Mr. Chairman, that was not all. In the CHECKS Programme “Poonka”, “Ifie” and one other individual, I think her name is Shelly, worked on training children in the schools in the landship, which is another aspect of our culture that I think needs more injection. I know that the Pinelands Creative Workshop is doing a fine job with it but Captain Watson is still there struggling.

Mr. Chairman, we felt that if you put training in the landship in the schools as an extra-curricular activity... Sometimes it has to be a core curricula activity because sometimes the children are just not coping with the Mathematics and the English, but that is where their strengths are, that is where they have the greatest potential. The landship, stilt-walking and tuk band were the three areas that they went from school to school with.

Mr. Chairman, I had the great privilege to work on a programme one Independence at Welches Primary and I saw some little children who demonstrated what they had learnt from putting a string through the tots and balancing and from putting on the wooden structures on their legs and strapping them on and doing that as part of the entertainment. As a result, I saw the self-esteem blooming.

Mr. Chairman, when I first met them their heads were in the bosom. I saw a measure of discipline that developed that is second to none. Mr. Chairman, I believe that is another role that culture should assist in getting the CHECKS Programme, I think it was called Cultural and Historical Education for Kids in Schools...

Mr. Chairman, there was a PEACE Programme because people seem to believe that you could only be a middle-class person in order for you to play a violin. Mrs. Joy Knight-Lynch, Jennifer Sealy, Cicely Spencer-Cross and a couple other teachers who are into the drama and music were put on secondment to work in the Ministry in the schools where there is an orchestra of young children at the primary level who came through the PEACE Programme. Mr. Chairman, I know a young man who is now gainfully employed with “Ifie” who is going all over the world as a result of what he learnt in the stilt-walking programme.

House A57 Sequence 8

11.20 a.m.

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Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, there are some young men whom I forgot to mention, who are part of that Youth Achievement Programme. Sir, Government purchased the equipment such as amplifiers and guitars for these youth, on a lending basis. Sir, these young men developed three bands. I know the Electric Band is one of them.

I know that there are four or five young women out there in the local arena, who are singing, performing and making a living as a result of the Youth Achievement Programme. Therefore, I want for the Honourable Minister to give us an idea what the Ministry of Community Development and Culture is doing in that respect because we are not hearing about it on the ground.

Mr. Chairman, I want to commend highly the staff at the National Cultural Foundation for the hard work they have been putting into the development of culture. Sir, I would want the Honourable Minister to indicate what has happened to the funds in the Ministry of Community Development and Culture. Is it a matter of a lack of accountability? Sir, that cannot be, when this Government said to the people that it will be accountable to the people, that it will be transparent, that it will govern and do all the right things. Sir, I do not believe it will be, but the Honourable Minister needs to say it.

Sir, I am speaking from my heart, particularly for the people of St. Thomas, whom I believe were singled out because we did not even get a single cavalcade. Sir, I know in the past that every parish would get a cavalcade which would generate some business among the small people. Sir, you are talking about an economy that is shrinking. People are seeing it hard, and when the people in Bridgefield, Content, Sturges or Redman's Village cannot get a single cavalcade because they were cut, even before the money was available.

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I want to find out from the Honourable Member about that. Sir, as I come to a close, I want to reiterate the significance of the Rock Hall Freedom Village Project. Sir, the Honourable Minister did indicate to me that there was an amount of \$700 000 in the budget this year for the commencement of the Rock Hall Freedom Village Project. I learned that there was \$1 million in the Budget, but not one red cent has been expended on the project.

Sir, I want to publicly thank the Honourable Minister - because I will give him his licks when they are due - because I have written three consecutive sets of letter within the last year to the Ministry of Community Development and Culture making requests as to the status of the project.

Sir, at the end of the day, the people of Rock Hall and St. Thomas are also taxpayers. They have not had the link bridge to facilitate an aspect of the project. There is no interpretation centre. The only thing this Government has done is to decapitate the replica that was left of the slave hut. That was all that was done last year and nothing more.

Sir, that was an important component of the Rock Hall Freedom Village that was destroyed. There are no bathrooms. The amphitheatre for the cultural activities in the communities are not there, having a Democratic Labour Party closed off the Rock Hall Community Centre to make it into a Magistrate's Court before the Barbados Labour Party came in 1994. Sir, there is nowhere in Rock Hall or any of those communities where any of that can happen.

Sir, I know it is a UNESCO project and that the people of those communities cannot get a kiosk to sell fishcakes or a glass of mauby. Sir, every day van loads of people go up by the monument. There is no security. The trees are growing tall, despite what people are saying about the drought. There are certain parts of St. Thomas where the rain falls every day. It is also very bushy and people are lighting fires because of the bush around them.

Sir, it is a disgrace to see that after so much talk, rumour and humour, this Government has done nothing at Rock Hall to be able to help those people to finish the nature trail, to gain employment, or to do anything that would make them feel happy in relation to what we call freedom.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank you. There are a number of things I would have wished to say but I recognise that in the interest of time, it is against my opportunity to do so but I wish to thank you for giving me the privilege to speak.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I rise to make a very brief contribution to this debate. I would first like to congratulate the Minister for the good work that he is so far doing. Sir, I would only say to the Honourable Member to press on with that good work. Sir, it is a fact that with Crop Over under his hands has been a success. We have seen large crowds at the national events, such as the Crop Over festivals.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say to the Minister that we have to take a closer look at the entertainment industry. I believe it is time that we must have a full workshop with the entertainers in Barbados to get a feedback of what they are experiencing and of what they would like to see in the future. It is a fact that the entertainment industry has contributed to the development of this country.

Mr. Chairman, I know I cannot refer to other debates but I know it was mentioned somewhere in this Honourable House that we need to look at the Teen Talent competition organised by Richard Stoute and see in what way the State can play a part in helping to further enhance and develop that competition. Sir, there are good examples out there of the contributions that Teen Talent competitions have made to Barbados. I can name Calypsonian Terencia Coward, Edwin Yearwood, among others. In fact, I can also say that my brother came through the Teen Talent competition and he is now playing on the international scene with KC and the Sunshine Band.

Mr. Chairman, we need to look at ways and means how we can enhance that competition. It is a fact that we have a number of good local singers coming out of that competition. Sir, at the community level, we have community events and some community shows that we need probably to become involved. In fact, the National Cultural Foundation can go into these communities and do a number of workshops to help those persons who have experience and whatsoever in organising these events, so that the National Cultural Foundation can give them advice and give them the support.

In St. Philip years ago, there was a Bayfield Youth Group and that group staged a number of shows in St. Catherine's Club. They also staged the St. Philip competition and for the first time I recall Red Plastic Bag entering as a youngster and singing calypso. Sir, from thereon he went on to the national scene and made his mark where today, to my mind, he is now the number one calypsonian in Barbados.

Sir, there should be some relationship between those persons in the community who organise these events and the National Cultural Foundation. I believe that Community Development Officers can also play a part. It goes not only to assisting but when I examine the Crop Over festival, I believe that we should now take Crop Over back to the communities. Yes, calvacades are a start but we only have approximately eight of them. I know years ago in the area of Belair, there used to be a one-week or two-week festival during Crop Over, which was organised by the local people.

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Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: It is on Rices pasture. The stalls were set up and people from the community came out and sold stuff and they were able to make some monies as a result of these festivals.

Mr. Chairman, the St. Philip Carnival came about as a result of four people getting together without any funds or any assistance. Sir, we got the community together and for those years we had to plan the St. Philip Carnival without any major financial inputs at the time from the Government. Sir, this is still the case today because we have decided that it is the people's festival.

We have worked with it and the National Cultural Foundation has played a part, but I am saying that what we need now is the National Cultural Foundation and organisers of those community events to go into the communities and touch base with them so that we can now bring together these festivals and really and truly have festivals in each and every community thus bringing out the talent and exposing more talent. Sir, we have a lot of talent in Barbados that we need to give exposure to.

Mr. Chairman, I have spoken to the Minister of Education about it. Sir, in some primary schools you do not have an assigned music teacher. Sir, sometimes you have a teacher who is assigned to teach maths but is probably in a church or some organisation and can play music so he has to double up.

I am saying that if we are seriously looking at developing the industry and developing culture and the music industry, specifically, that we could have assigned music teachers throughout the primary schools.

I know, for instance, at Bayley's Primary School, Mr. Thompson, is a musician in his own right even though he teaches other subjects and he did a lot of work in the Junior Monarch Competition. Sir, he arranged nearly all the songs by himself. Mr. Chairman, looking at the music industry it would be good if we could have assigned music teachers to every single primary school.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to speak specifically about the King George V Memorial Park. I will speak to the other Member of Parliament for St. Philip but I think that in terms of cultural activity, we need to have a plan for the King George V Memorial Park and reconstruct the auditorium.

Sir, at this particular moment, if you want to hold a concert in St. Philip, seating at least 3 000 people to 4 000 people, we cannot do it because we do not have a modern facility to stage a proper concert. Sir, even if the schools want to hold a major concert, we do not have that facility, given the fact that we have had so many outstanding persons coming from St. Philip, who have contributed to

the music industry and the cultural industry. Sir, it is a central part of St. Philip and we could look at reconstructing it and looking at a modern-day auditorium for the area of St. Philip.

Mr. Chairman, I am not saying that because I am the Representative for St. Philip North but, certainly, because I have an interest in the development of our culture and the development of the entertainment industry and certainly, we have to look at that. I will speak to the Minister responsible for Culture and the Minister responsible for the Environment to see what we could put in place to develop a modern facility.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, I know the Minister of Culture is capable of doing it and I am asking him to meet as soon as possible with the entertainers to hear their views and concerns, and what they are experiencing at this moment, Sir, not only calypsonians but entertainers through this country.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for the City.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support this matter before this Chamber and to say that I am a little surprised to hear the Honourable Member for St. Thomas talk about the programme which saw Wayne "Poonka" Willot being seconded to the Ministry of Culture so that he would be able to go with Ifie and Shelly Small to various schools teaching "tuk" band, landship and so on. Sir, it was the Barbados Labour Party that had this gentleman so frustrated that he is now back at the Alleyne School teaching languages.

Mr. Chairman, I know about that programme. I was teaching mathematics at Deighton Griffith School and I was in charge of the third form group in the co-curriculum programme that dealt with the landship. Sir, "Poonka" did not get the support of the Barbados Labour Party that he expected, and he is teaching languages, lost to the proliferation and the perpetuation of the 'tuk' band rhythm, which is very important, Mr. Chairman. Sir, I think the last person to be able to make the actual kettle drum, used in the 'tuk' band has expired and that knowledge may have been lost. Sir, this very important part of our African heritage must be maintained.

Mr. Chairman, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Thomas in her three-piece suit and what looks like a karat, because I know the radio audience would not be able to see the Honourable Member, talking about Elombe Mottley, but it was the same Elombe Mottley who is deeply rooted in the Barbados Labour Party that was banned from

the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation under a Barbados Labour Party Government and had to run away to Jamaica.

He was Director of the National Cultural Foundation, but he was frustrated under the Barbados Labour Party and he did not stay there. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas had the audacity to call his name in this Chamber.

Moreover, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas was Minister of State in the Ministry of Education under the Barbados Labour Party Administration - at one stage it was Education and Culture - and I heard the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, as she introduced her presentation this morning talked about her support for libraries to be developed.

Where was the Honourable Member for St. Thomas when the Honourable Member was Minister of State in the Ministry of Education and the Barbados Labour Party Government left the Carnegie Library to the extent that the workers almost had to threaten strike action and the library was closed to the public for a number of years? It took this Minister of Culture and Community Development, the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central, to put a stop to that mess and now we have a public library opened to the public at Independence Square.

Mr. Chairman, talk is cheap and the public must always be reminded of the dismal record of the Barbados Labour Party when they were in office in relation to these issues.

Mr. Chairman, as the Member of Parliament for the City, I grew up in that Public Library, so I am talking from experience and I remember the dedicated members of staff at the National Library Service at the Carnegie Public Library on Coleridge Street developing reading programmes and summer programmes for the young people of the City.

I remember Mr. Callender, the Deputy Director and her daughter Dawn-Lisa. Sir, Lisa-Dawn volunteered her services to have summer programmes in dance and other areas to the children of the City, Mahogany Lane, Lightfoot Lane, Green Park Lane, New Orleans and Greenfields, the bosom of the City, and these people were left abandoned by the Barbados Labour Party as they left the historic Carnegie Library closed and rundown.

H/A27/11:40

Sequence 10

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Hon. P. M. T. TODD: I know that this Minister has publicly stated that he looks forward to the Public Library restored very shortly. This is a historic institution. There are a few Carnegie Libraries around the world, Dale Carnegie the millionaire, who in his Foundation has libraries, for example in St. Vincent and other places, historic buildings.

As we seek to develop Bridgetown and the Garrison Historic areas, as heritage sites to be recognised by UNESCO and other UN agencies that will bring tourists to Barbados in the form of heritage tourism, this Carnegie Library is an integral part of our heritage tourism product.

Sir, I know that the Cabinet is taking it very seriously. Very shortly we will be touring this entire area, Bridgetown and the Garrison, to sensitise the public of the importance of our national drive to get this heritage site designation.

Sir, we have very historic buildings in Bridgetown, be it the various Churches, St. Michael Cathedral, St. Mary's Church, St. Ambrose Church, the Roman Catholic Cathedral, the Jewish Synagogue, just a stone throw away from here. They have just uncovered a very ancient bath that was buried under the car park, one of the few Jewish authentic baths in the world. These are very important heritage tourism sites.

Sir, this Parliament Building, I remember being called by the Clerk of Parliament and his team to speak to students from Martinique and Guadeloupe on their visit to these precincts to learn more about our parliamentary system. There were students from various schools, including Codrington School, and children of diplomats from around the world, and they were in awe to learn about the rich history of our Parliamentary system here. Sir, there is tremendous potential for heritage tourism.

Sir, I remember, last week, acting as Minister of Community Development and Culture meeting at the Warrens Complex, the senior staff, who briefed me on the plans to push the drive towards Bridgetown and the Garrison areas being recognised as heritage tourism sites. Sir, this Administration is not just talking but we are acting.

Sir, those of us who travel know that heritage tourism is very important. Recently, I was in Chita Equador for the Ministers of Education of OAS Meeting. The Host Minister in Equador was proud to take us throughout the Old Chita district, rich in Spanish history, Sir, cathedrals lined with gold that would make your mind boggle with all that splendour, architecture, artifacts, statues and so on. Sir, they took a quarter of Old Chita and rehabilitated it. It is now being heavily used by locals and visitors alike.

I look forward to Bridgetown, the capital of our country, being spruced up to the extent that it is very attractive not just for tourists but for Barbadians, so that we can be proud of our capital. That is why I congratulate the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East and his team within his Ministry, as they in the last year cleaned up Bridgetown in a very massive way and pledged to continue the programme this year, clearing drains and removing the garbage so that you can get the vector that can spread very serious disease and would obviously discourage people from patronising Bridgetown.

Sir, as I go further to look at the issue of Emancipation Day and the work of the Commission for Pan African Affairs, which is included in our Supplementary this morning, I congratulate the work of the Pan African Commission.

In fact, last Emancipation Day, the morning after, I think it was the Finals at the Stadium. The Commissioner of Pan African Affairs, their personnel and personnel from the NCF, the National Cultural Foundation Director, the Minister, other Members of Cabinet and Parliament and myself walked from Independence Square down Bridgetown, through New Orleans, Chapman Lane and Westbury Road to really bring the leadership of our country, the Prime Minister who joined us at Westbury Road. We brought the people together as we celebrated the Emancipation of our slave ancestors.

Sir, again, I congratulate the Commission of Pan African Affairs. They collaborated with our Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development in our annual hosting of African Awareness Day programmes within our schools. We divided the country into zones and you would have seen in the media, just a few weeks ago, I gave the feature address at the event at Harrison College, where we saw children from schools in the area, working-class as well as middle-class and upper-class.

We saw children from St. Gabriel's wearing their dashiki, children of all races, girls from Harrison's College learning to braid hair and being proud of our African heritage. This must be congratulated. Sir, as we seek to develop as a nation we must never be ashamed of our African heritage.

Sir, if you look at - we had physical emancipation but as the late Nesta "Bob" Marley said, we must seek to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our minds.

Sir, we should put behind us the notion that the lighter your complexion is the better person you are. The nonsense when you hear people say, that person has good hair because their hair is curly or straighter than the kinky

hair of the pure African, all of that must be put behind us because black is beautiful and kinky hair is just as beautiful and outstanding as the straightened hair you can find in the purest blue-blooded Caucasian. We must be proud of our history. This is what we intend in these African Awareness Celebrations.

Sir, I remember, last year, going to Coleridge & Parry School where the children would have learned, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East mentioned, about the rich history of the African race.

I am a Mathematic teacher, and Algebra was developed by the black people. The Babylonians, the Hindu Arabic number system that we use today, rooted in the mould of the black people of Africa, Timbuktu. We had a university there.

Sir, you can look at the work of the late Dr. Richard Allsopp, a stalwart in the Caribbean Lexicography Project at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus, where he developed the Caribbean Dictionary of English Usage. Sir, you and I would have sat at his feet at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill in the "Use of English" classes. He would have taught that. When we talk about "back back", that repetition of the word is part of the African usage system, the repetition for emphasis.

Sir, when you say in Barbados, "I yam my food", in Jamaica they say "They yamming my food", part of our intrinsic vernacular coming straight from our African heritage.

Sir, I heard that the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central and his Ministry are looking at developing our African heritage in terms of a national dress. We are not saying that we have to exclude other racial inputs into the diverse cultural heritage of Barbados, but Barbados is predominantly African and we must not feel inferior to any other race, but we seek to work in harmony. People of different races are born in Barbados. We are all Barbadians who must all live in peace and harmony, and respect each other and this is what I advocate.

I congratulate the Commission of Pan African Affairs for taking their work seriously, and educating our nation's youth about the history of their African ancestors.

Sir, I go further to look at the issue of the censorship role. This makes me remember that this is an important role, the development of the local film industry. I am sure the Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. John, in his wisdom was able to create this new Ministry of Community Development and Culture, to emphasise the cultural industry's potential to earn foreign exchange for Barbados.

I know that we have developed a number of local films, Hush 1 and 2. For example, I have seen a mini series on CBC since the 2008 General Elections, I think co-sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism.

11.50 a.m.

Sequence 11

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

House A57, Sequence 12, 11.50 a.m.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, we saw young actors and actresses in really exciting dramas that could rival Dallas, Falcon Crest, Days of Lives and the Bold and the Beautiful, purely 100 per cent Barbadian productions. Sir, the young personnel, the actors, actresses, producers and cinematographers must be congratulated for really pushing ahead this work. I know that the UWI Cave Hill Campus in their Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination is also taking these cultural industries very seriously.

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

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Thank you, Sir.

I am sure that this Administration will give full support to these persons engaged in this very important industry. When you look at the Bollywood in India, Mr. Chairman, they are very successful in the production of films of a high standard. We see the low-cost, low-budget African movies from Nigeria but very exciting, rich with culture and drama.

Sir, when you look at that movie called, "Slum Dog Millionaire" that was produced in the ghetto in India and being a blockbuster in the movie circuit, we can get it. Jamaica has been producing good films over the years and we in Barbados, our culture is unique, our climate is exciting and it augurs well for the earning of serious foreign exchange for Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, Rihanna, our own Robin Fenty, is now about to start being featured in major films and, perhaps, we can get her to make an appearance at a local production. Clearly the potential is tremendous.

Mr. Chairman, I would close by encouraging, as I told the staff of the NCF when I acted as the Minister of Culture and Community Development, that we need to bring back the Baxter's Road Mall to Bridgetown, as an integral part of the Crop Over Festival. We are happy that Oistins is getting developed but Baxters Road is where it all started and the fish is just as good as before, and we

have had the BTII making some infrastructural development there.

I believe they have improved security with the buy-in from the Constituency Councils and the business community. This would facilitate the cruise ships' passengers having a stop off close to the Port. We can get Baxters Road blocked off for Crop Over again, where the people of Bridgetown can make some money, in terms of manning stalls, and the people of Barbados can be proud of our Nation's capital, the City of Bridgetown of which I am very humbled to be representing here.

I thank you, Sir.

Asides.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, I just want to add a few comments to Head 56 and I want to start at a point made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South when he reflected on the Film Censorship Board. Sir, in his presentation, he introduced the whole notion of new technologies as these technologies impact now on our viewership within our domestic space, our homes, and therefore, to some extent, one starts to wonder about the usefulness of an agency such as a Film Censorship Board.

I do not know how many persons access cinemas now in Barbados because I myself have not gone to any of these cinemas in an extremely long time either located in my Constituency, the Drive-in because even though I never did, I know there are some who like the pursuits of the Drive-in Cinema or cinemas in Bridgetown.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Anytime I have gone to the Drive-in Cinema in my youth, I could have told you from the commencement of the movie until the conclusion, every word, who are the actors and actresses, the plot the sub plot, the theme, the sub theme because I was not distracted by any of the behaviours by which that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West might be distracted.

The point I am making is that with the presence of new technologies, where everything can come into our homes, uncensored, persons can use peer-to-peer networks or view Mininova. There are many, and even as those persons use the Courts to shut them down, as you shut down one of them, two or three open and persons are able to access movies.

Sometimes, even before new movies come to our cinemas, they are already being viewed within the quietness of our homes. This is because of the pervasiveness of the technology that I am talking about, therefore the work of a Film Censorship Board, based on the value systems that we would want to encourage in our country, the presence of pornography in many of these movies, the depth of violence and the gore that one can sometimes see in some of these movies, we want to shield our young people from that mind-numbing and mind-dumbing effect of the people from either Bollywood, Hollywood or whatever “wood” nowadays that they are coming from.

One is seeing the emergence of an infant movie making culture in Barbados. This should be encouraged and should be developed. The young cinematographers, directors and screen writers are emerging within Barbados and I know within the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, we are looking to give support to some of these young persons to further their craft in institutions, which cannot necessarily be found in Barbados to develop that particular activity.

I know the Nigerian Film Industry has taken off and we have developed, particularly among many of our females, persons who are now fixed...

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Yes. It is an industry.

Part of the entertainment package offered in Barbados we are connected to the African culture by the viewing of films from Nigeria and from Ghana here in Barbados. I would want to see a more rapid development of our own industry here in Barbados. There is great potential in Barbados and some of the work emerging is very clean work. It is quite good work and should be encouraged in Barbados.

When one sees the Film Festival, where persons bring these to the Barbadian space, even though they are short films, it is quite good work. The original point that I was making relates to how we can, in the age of instant access to movies to this culture, Direct Television, MC Television and all of these things that we can bring down from a satellite, even the pervasive Dream Boxes that CBC tries to block each and every time, and then as they do it now, the technology is sophisticated that what they do is almost essentially a waste of time, so you bring somebody from the British Isles and they come and do whatever and you knock out all these boxes.

I know the Honourable Member for Christ Church West knows what I am talking about because he has so many apartments in Barbados that he makes it possible for

persons to access properly, good television coverage, good movie coverage to keep his business going. I know he does not have any of these Dream Boxes. I knew his father very well, an extremely decent man, and I heard only on Sunday when an Honourable Member who knew his father well said that his father would have shook his head knowing that he would have joined the Barbados Labour Party.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: He did not know, but I knew it would have hurt him a lot. He was a great gentleman that I knew.

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Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, we have to find a way to protect our young people, particularly from the pervasive influence of the negative aspects of movies and films. Maybe we need to relook the work of the Film Censorship Board and see what they could do. We have several places that rent movies across Barbados which provide employment, et cetera, but to some extent we are not really meeting the mark, too much negativity is coming through, and they have to be looked at again.

Mr. Chairman, I join with the Honourable Members who have spoken about the work of the National Cultural Foundation. Even before there was a National Cultural Foundation in Barbados, I used to go to Queen's Park when we had the Cultural Affairs Division and I did some dancing, drumming, wire bending and costume designing.

I see the Honourable Member for St. Philip North looking at me.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: These are a bit of surprising things but I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would know of my own cultural inheritance and cultural heritage, so I am surprised that members of my team would smile. I am not a musician. I compliment the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, talented men who play all kinds of instruments.

Mr. Chairman, dance is also an aspect of the cultural heritage and we should not scoff at it. It is beautiful. In truth and in fact, it is extremely creative. Mr. Chairman, when I go any place in Barbados and I see our young people dancing, who are trained well by the teachers in our schools or by other cultural practitioners across Barbados,

it is an extremely beautiful experience seeing those young movements.

Some time ago I went to Africa I did not see the ladies dancing, but I saw the men with the power, the rigour and the beauty of the dance that in this space some people scoff at when, in fact, we should have this beautiful mix of all of our people dancing.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: You would not know anything about that because most likely you would roll down Horse Hill because you are totally uncoordinated.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: What I am talking about, Mr. Chairman, is that we need to expose many of our people to these cultural forms. What has become almost embedded in many of the young men is that they equate the beauty of dance with another form of behaviour, so we find that a lot of the young men are withdrawing from dance while our young women still go forward, but we need both men and women dancing as an expression of the culture.

Mr. Chairman, some of the unfortunate images that are presented should, in fact, be removed from that space so that we can develop the talents of our young people. I saw only recently, having visited the Christ Church Girls' School, young girls playing the steel pan beautifully. We do not have a plethora of persons who teach pan in Barbados but we have several persons who go around and teach it. We have young Harding at St. Bartholomew Primary, the Garrison Secondary School, Alma Parris School and St. George Secondary...

There are several teachers and other community persons who are teaching pan in this country. Mr. Chairman, when you hear the steel pan it shows you the talent. A lot of persons make the error of not understanding the cognitive capacity, the kinds of talents which are brought to bear on the kinds of cultural expressions and experiences that we are seeing in Barbados.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North has spoken about the talents which have, in fact, emerged out of the rebellious parish of St. Philip, but they are beautiful talents. In fact, they have led the renaissance for cultural upliftment in Barbados. There was a time when that was found in St. Michael, but the people from the East have taken it to a new level and we must applaud that and encourage other communities across Barbados where there is a plethora of talent.

Every time I go to any graduation, speech day or a concert, I hear the beautiful voices of our young people and

it is something to behold. I know that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central has gone to Deighton Griffith School and has heard some young people sing. We celebrate those who have gone on to professional careers but there are so many more in Barbados that it is beautiful.

Mr. Chairman, institutions like the Barbados Community College in their Fine Arts and Cultural Arts Programmes, led by the tutors up there, Mr. Roger Gittens and Ms. Alleyne, must be commended for leading those young people forward. I do not want to hear all the Members of Parliament from St. Philip screaming loudly now, but if they are leading, they are leading, and one must accept this.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, I want to see the National Cultural Foundation pay a keener eye. It is doing a lot of good work. There is Joyanne Knight with the STRINGS Programme across the schools.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: We are seeing many young people playing the violin, a programme introduced some time ago. I give to Jill her jacket and to Jack his pants. I do not want to see a disrobing of any one of them. It is a beautiful programme of young men and women playing the violin and the cello.

I see orchestras in many of our schools. The Coleridge and Parry School has a brilliant orchestra led by a young man who had his genesis at the Christ Church Boys' School who is now with the National Development Scholarship somewhere in the United States of America. He will return and impact on the vibrancy of the cultural space here in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, there are things happening, but we need others to come forward. We need more support at the domestic and national levels to lead that renaissance in the National Cultural Foundation and the cultural exercise.

Mr. Chairman, I wholeheartedly support the Minister of Community Development and Culture, and the efforts of the National Cultural Foundation, and all of those persons who, without pay, help guide young people across this country towards the realisation of their dreams.

I thank you.

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

His Honour K. St.C BEST: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support this Resolution. I must congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central for the excellent work he is doing in the Ministry of Community Development and Culture. I am happy to see how he has taken his staff and gone full steam ahead to ensure that the National Library Service is going forward and to ensure that students can use the library service at Fairchild Street for recreational and educational purposes.

While I am on that, Sir, I would want to see a marriage or a discussion between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Community Development and Culture in relation to the late opening of schools and having various libraries set up at these schools where community practitioners would be able to come in and volunteer to supervise the children in these communities to assist them in their homework, in learning to read and all sorts of things for their personal development so that when this personal development happens, it would redound to the benefit of the society at large.

Mr. Chairman, I will also encourage him to ensure that we work in tandem with corporate Barbados to have the mobile libraries back in operation because growing up we looked forward to a particular day of the week when the Mobile Library would be at the school and you would make sure that you had your library tablets to ensure that you would be able to get your books. Those are two things that I would like to see returned very, very soon.

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12.10 p.m.

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His Honour K. St.C. BEST: Mr. Chairman, furthermore, with regard to the cultural aspect of it, I would want to see where all the various ambits of cultural activity would be more community-based, so that we can have the community centres or any area of dwelling being utilised for that purpose. Sometimes you can have people having their garages converted where persons could have short meetings, then you develop those various community clubs and organisations.

I would like to see some cultural activity taking place at least once a month in each Constituency, where not the politician himself or herself, but the community practitioners take the community and bring it closer together. I would hope that the Constituency Councils would work closer with the community practitioners to ensure that these goals are achieved.

Sir, as you walk around Barbados, you know full well in your Constituency that we have lots of young

people who need to be guided away from the negatives and towards the positives. I believe that the Ministry of Culture can be one of those avenues to point people into a positive direction. Sir, it is no sense coming here week after week and spending millions of dollars in education and culture, yet not getting to the root of the problem. We need to get to the root of the problem. We need to get to the things that affect these young people in these areas.

Mr. Chairman, therefore, if it means, as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North indicated, it can happen by way of having teachers of music in the schools at a very early age, or having cultural officers in the schools, this would be another expense, but we would have to do it. We can also have multi-talented teachers, who might be able to master that talent, where that person can be part and parcel of teaching that talent that he has in the schools. Those persons could also set their timetables accordingly.

It is okay that we keep asking for the extra curriculum activity but one has to understand that there is only so much that can be done after school and so we must look at ways and means of incorporating these various things within the national school curriculum, so that we could nurture those persons who have various talents at a very young age.

I keep hearing people saying that people are gifted with their hands but I believe that one's brains and one's hands must work in tandem. We might not have persons who may have the know-how to get 10 or 12 "O" levels, but we must not send this message to say to people that they only need to be good with their brains. Sir, the coordination of the use of your hands must be coordinated with the brain.

Mr. Chairman, we need to start sending strong positive messages to our youth. Sir, not only to our youth but to both adolescence and adults. There are some adults who can play active roles in guiding both young and adults. Sir, for instance, in Barbados we have an aged population and too often these persons who have made valuable contributions in their lifetime are often cast aside.

I think that the time has come where by way of the Ministry of Community Development and Culture, the Ministry of Education and other Ministries, they can incorporate those persons and encourage them to volunteer their services, since those persons may have worked overseas or here in Barbados and would have expertise in a particular field. Sir, those persons can make a contribution to the lives and well-being of others because of the fact that they would have also been guided along the way by others.

Mr. Chairman, we need to make better use of the community centres. Those community centres can act as a

place where we could take the elderly from home and bring them to these community centres, where there are persons trained to look after the elderly, who are trained in culture or drama, to teach these elderly people.

These older people would be able to relate among their peer. Therefore, instead of leaving them at home to waste away their lives, we need to take a strong and serious look where, instead of having these community centres opened during the day with only the community officer there while waiting until afternoon to have activities taking place, I believe those centres could be used where the elderly and some of the young persons who are unemployed can go there during the day to assist and help look after those elderly persons.

I believe that would be a step in the right direction. I am sure there are situations where persons who are working would feel more comfortable by leaving their mother or father at those community centres. I am sure if the children of those older persons recognise that something positive is happening at those community centres with their older relatives, they might very well decide to make a financial contribution to the upkeep of that particular centre, or to the maintenance of some programme within that centre. Therefore, they would be giving back to the community and saving the national debt in that regard.

Mr. Chairman, those persons would feel extremely happy to know that they can take their parents to a community centre and that they would be properly looked after. Sir, before that can be done, we must also ensure that the community centres are disabled-friendly. Sir, even if these community centres are located upstairs, those older persons should be able to use the facility at these centres. I have urged the Minister to have a tour of all community centres in Barbados with a view of making them disabled-friendly.

Sir, we cannot carry Barbados forward without taking into consideration the invaluable contributions those persons - whom some of us believe cannot make any meaningful contribution because of a disability. That is not the answer. Some of them are making outstanding contributions to the development of Barbados in that area.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying this would be the way forward, and so we incorporate every citizen in Barbados into the mainstream of life in Barbados. Sir, this can be done through the Ministry of Community Development and Culture, where the Ministry of Community Development and Culture can move into the community and develop persons in those communities.

Mr. Chairman, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East would say, we need to pay attention to

those stalwarts who have made valuable contributions, those unsung heroes in the various communities.

12.20 p.m.

4.00 p.m.

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His Honour K. St. C. BEST: Sir, in every Constituency in Barbados, there are unsung heroes who would have done something outstanding in the community by way of their work. Sir, in growing up you would know that the shopkeeper was one of the chief community practitioners and that if you wanted to find out anything about anybody you would go to the shopkeeper and also to have a testimonial done and, Sir, in that regard, we could incorporate all those community practitioners.

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

His Honour K. St. C. BEST: Sir, I am obliged.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to see where it is not a partisan thing but where we have a national thing for the unsung heroes in these communities. Sir, we should now award them for the work they have done. We should now award them when they are alive, not wait until they have gone and then have something in their memory. Sir, that could happen as well, but we must recognise their work while they are alive and it would give them great joy and pride. Sir, you can see the glow and joy on their faces when they receive some sort of recognition that they have done, not only for themselves but for the benefit of the community and for the development of Barbados as a whole.

Mr. Chairman, with those few words I want to say that I support this Money Resolution.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to make a brief intervention on this Supplementary. Sir, I would like to congratulate the Honourable Minister responsible for Community Development and Culture for the outstanding job that he is doing. I would wish to encourage him to continue to stay focussed because of the importance of this whole matter of culture.

Mr. Chairman, one would have to agree that the National Cultural Foundation has responsibility for helping the Government and, by extension, the country, to preserve the national and cultural uniqueness of our country. It also

has the responsibility for helping us to perpetuate our cultural uniqueness or advance it across generations. Of course, the Ministry of Culture has the responsibility for ensuring that we fully explore all the avenues of our cultural uniqueness to preserve our national identity.

Mr. Chairman, the fact is that culture can be considered as the purest vehicle for transiting our national identity. When we talk of culture, we are not talking dollars and cents, we are not talking about programmes, we are not talking about activities only. I would want to proffer that when we engage in a discussion on culture, we are cutting at the very heart of who we are, and we are looking at what defines us as a country, what defines us as a people and what defines us as a society. Sir, we are not talking about mass identity. We are talking about an authentic sense of who we are.

Mr. Chairman, I must applaud my colleagues for how they have handled this subject so far because it presents us with a wonderful opportunity to speak to the country about an issue that is causing significant concern, particularly in some of the expressions that we call our cultural expressions.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that culture really is the expression of our national identity, as I have said before and when we talk about national identity, we are talking about a set of values that we embrace. We are talking about a set of beliefs from which springs forth our value system and our core values about who we are.

Therefore, when I speak of culture, I am talking about the highest expression about what I believe about myself in my society and what I believe that I want to convey to other persons in other societies about who we are, as a people in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, that is of significant importance because when we talk about beliefs, we talk about beliefs in who we are. What do we believe about ourselves as a people. What we do believe makes us unique among other people in the Region and other people on the globe. Sir, those are features of our living, of our thinking, of our cognitive processes, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central reflected on, those cognitive processes that give the highest expression to our identity.

Mr. Chairman, no wonder the founder of Independence, when he expressed himself on the matter of the mirror image, he was talking about how we see us, not based on other people's definitions of who we are but how we see ourselves based on our own cultural journey, based on our own journey from whence we came, to where we are and where we are going.

Sir, these kinds of discussions need to continue to penetrate the hearings of our society, so that our people do not lose track of what constitutes the Barbadian way, what constitutes the Barbadian culture and how we preserve that through the Ministry of Culture and other Ministries, how we preserve that and pass it on to upcoming generations.

Mr. Chairman, you would have to agree that not only do we talk about what we think about ourselves, who we are and how we get our young people to zero in on those kinds of questions. Sir, you cannot go through your lifetime in a society without having settled the question of, "Who am I". Sir, that question has to be answered and whatever the Ministry of Culture does, whatever the National Cultural Foundation does, at the heart of their activities, they must probe the question of how we define ourselves and in so doing, how then do we self-express.

Sir, that self-expressing is through a variety of activities, whether it be Crop Over related or otherwise. Sir, these are all expressions of our culture and our culture is the highest form of expression of our national identity and our national identity gives rise to our own self-definition, what we believe and what we think about ourselves.

Mr. Chairman, identity should also reflect on our expressions of faith and whether we believe we are the products of creation or evolution. Sir, that has a significant bearing on how we relate to one another. It also has a significant bearing on how we relate to our journey of life and where it might end some day.

Therefore, culture is not just some esoteric expression of some set of activities required by the State, but culture is that fundamental process that cuts at the heart of the very philosophy of what we believe about ourselves and about our society. I think that is important to add.

Mr. Chairman, the value system we embrace and that value system reflects upon that national footprint of how we live, move and have our being in a society, a society that we define ourselves but that definition is so tightly managed that we do not get caught up with counter-cultures and subcultures that take away from the essence of the definition of our culture.

Mr. Chairman, we would have to agree that in our society today there is the emergence of these subcultures and counter-cultures that are now challenging the true authenticity of our culture.

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Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Unless we engage in some kind of process, where we begin to remap the

expectations of young people and begin to point them in the direction that best reflects that national footprint of our culture, we are going to find ourselves one day struggling to pull back a society that might be too far gone.

Sir, none of us would wish to bequeath that to generations to come. Therefore, if I were to implore the Minister of Culture, I would say to the Honourable Minister, whatever you do ensure that you reenforce those important tenets of our value structure that however we choose to express that expression of who we are would give rise to a consistency in the practice of our culture in the society.

Sir, values are important and a society should be governed by a set of core values where all of us, regardless of what our political or religious persuasion might be, where all of us can securely embrace that set of core values, the value of honesty and sincerity, the value of integrity and the like.

The value of unconditional love for our fellow man, those kinds of values that were once practised consistently can almost become intrinsic, and I say almost, that we can continue to mobilise efforts through education, through cultural expressions, whether it be dance or whatever it might be. Institutions like the Pinelands Creative and other types of institutions, those institutions can be armed and fortified with the support of the State through its own programmes to be part of the movement of our culture, the consistency of our culture, the transmission of our culture from one generation to another.

Sir, I think it is important that we understand the connection between the national culture and the national identity and try to find modern-day ways of expressing that consistency. I have always said, and I have said it in another place, that I believe the time has come where we should have a bona fide school for the Creative and Performing Arts, which is not just about the Arts, but also has a very high academic requirement where persons who have been identified as individuals with unique talents and so, who are also individuals with tremendous academic attitude, those persons can be educated in a context, where neither their academic qualities nor their cultural and creative qualities are compromised.

I believe that as we go forward and as our Government goes forward, we should focus on that, and certainly, the Minister responsible for Culture, and, of course, the Honourable Minister of Education, to give them the kind of support necessary to work out these kinds of opportunities where our younger people in the society could have a natural outlet for their creative, academic abilities.

I believe it is important because unless we pull back on some of the things we are seeing in our society - I know we blame home. We blame child rearing practices. We blame schools. We blame the "blocks" and we blame everything in the society, but at the end of the day, those of us who have the remit for policymaking in this country, have to be consistent in the expressions of our expectations, as they relate to what kind of Barbados we want to see going forward. Therefore, whatever we propose to do, I will want us to remember that culture is not an industry. Culture is at the heart of expressing our national identity and that identity is at the heart of sustaining a society that we can be proud of bequeathing to generations to come.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, 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.

SUSPENSION

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: 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 Sitting accordingly.

12.40 p.m.

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House A57, Sequence 18, 1.48 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$15 102 395 from the Consolidated Fund and put it at the disposal of Government to supplement the Estimates 2009-2010 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No.9, 2009-2010 which form the

Schedule to the Resolution and that the Explanatory Notes to Head 69 be amended as set out in the Schedule to the Resolution.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member when the Suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply and to that it will now revert.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

(Resumed)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Committee of Supply is resumed.

House A57, sequence 02, 13:50:12

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

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank all those Honourable Members who participated in this particular debate. I just want to address one or two issues that were raised by some of the Honourable Members.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South raised the issue of the Oistins Library and I just want to inform him that an allocation is made in the Estimates 2010-2011 to address that issue of the complete refurbishment of the Oistins Library, which would follow closely on the heels of the refurbishment work that is being done now at the Valley in St. George.

Mr. Chairman, a question was also raised about Crop Over and its expansion. I have given the National Cultural Foundation instructions to expand Crop Over with regard to Kadooment itself. Mr. Chairman, you would see those plans being rolled out very shortly for the expansion of Crop Over.

We are also looking for a new location for the staging of the Party Monarch Competition. Last year, it was held at the Farley Hill National Park and that location has proven to be inadequate for such a competition, therefore we are actively looking at a new location in St. Andrew where that particular event would be staged.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East raised some issues regarding the further honouring of our pantheon of heroes. Shortly, I will be bringing to this

Honourable House new legislation that would look at a tangible way of further honouring our heroes and also establishing a permanent location for the honouring of those heroes.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas raised the issue of the National Cultural Foundation returning to its principal remit, that is, the development of culture. The Board has its mandate from me to pursue the creation of a new festival bureau, which would be principally organising all national festivals and leaving the main apparatus at the National Cultural Foundation to attend to the development of culture as a whole. Mr. Chairman, the Foundation would be segmented into two components, one of development and the other of the commercial aspect, so that would be pursued within the next year.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas also complained about a cavalcade not coming to St. Thomas. Mr. Chairman, because of the financial constraints of the National Cultural Foundation, we have decided that we would have only four cavalcades this year, one in the North, one in the South, one in the East and one as usual culminating on or around the National Stadium. The question of Rock Hall would be addressed very shortly. The Honourable Member has my assurance on that.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North spoke to the issue of community tourism as it relates to events around Crop Over. I believe that most of these events that spring from within the bosom of the community should be organised by the community members themselves because nothing manifests us more clearly than the Community Dancefest which is organised by the communities and springs from within the bowels of the community; therefore, it gets the support of most of the community members.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank all Honourable Members again for participating in this debate and beg to move that Head 56 stand part.

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

The question that Head 56 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 62 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE, INVESTMENT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY

\$4 072 395

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

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, Head 62 speaks to a sum of \$4 072 395 under the Ministry of

Finance, Investment, Telecommunications and Energy to meet the expenditure for the following programmes to supplement the Estimates for 2009-2010.

The sum of \$1 024 012 is required with respect to General Management and Coordination Services, which represent monies to be allocated to CRL, a company that was established to essentially wind up the outstanding loans of the Barbados Development Bank.

Sir, we also need two smaller sums, one for \$35 383 for the Central Purchasing Department and \$13 000 for the General Management and Coordination Services.

Mr. Chairman, the largest sum of the Supplementary, \$3 million, is for Hotels and Resorts Limited, the famous GEMS Project that has been the bulk of much controversy in this country. What is interesting, Mr. Chairman, is that the actual request was for \$6 million for the financial year because of the dire financial situation that now exists within Hotels and Resorts Limited.

Mr. Chairman, I would want Barbadians to recall that this is the same GEMS Project that had caused so much confusion in this country when we were in Opposition that we raised questions about the logic, the wisdom and the feasibility of Government purchasing certain hotels on the South Coast as well as hotels that were owned and operated by friends of the Barbados Labour Party, Members of Parliament of the Barbados Labour Party and their families, as well as Eastry House in St. Peter that we still cannot find the roof.

What is interesting, Mr. Chairman, is that in a time of crisis, this Administration has to look for \$6 million, \$3 million in this financial year in a Supplementary and another \$3 million in the financial year 2010-2011.

Mr. Chairman, I want to explain to Barbadians a couple of things. Mr. Chairman, it is not this Administration that started to sell off the GEMS Project. In 2005, when there was no crisis, the Barbados Labour Party sold Silver Rock, Worthing Court and Eastry House. Mr. Chairman, we have Honourable Members on That Side trying to say to this Administration, that now that we are in a crisis not caused by us, that we should not look to divest non-performing assets when they were selling off the family silver in 2005 when there was no crisis. What is even more ridiculous is that they were looking for a buyer for the Savannah Hotel as well as Time Out and the Hilton Hotel when there was no crisis.

House A57 Sequence 19

2.00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, Barbadians must recall a few weeks ago in the newspapers certain operatives making the comment that we were trying to sell off the family silver. Sir, there was no crisis when the Insurance Corporation of Barbados was sold; there was no crisis when the Barbados National Bank was sold; there was no crisis when its subsidiaries were sold.

Sir, who was selling off the family silver? Now that we have a difficult set of circumstances and as part of our critical strategy we have divestment, all of a sudden it is being stated by Honourable Members on That Side, and by certain trade union members, that we are selling off the family silver.

Sir, I want to make this comment quite clear today so that Barbadians can understand what I am saying. We were not the ones who sold the Barbados National Bank. We were not the ones who sold the Insurance Corporation of Barbados. We were not the ones who sold Silver Rock. We were not the ones who sold Merriville Court. We were not the ones who sold Eastry House. Mr. Chairman, this is why the former Administration loan Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL) \$145 million.

Mr. Chairman, at this point in time the debt of Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL) is \$229 million, on the backs of the people of Barbados. Sir, do you know what is interesting? Sir, what is interesting is, that comprises of a principal debt of \$160 million and has accrued interest. Sir, in other words, Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL) has not even been able to generate enough revenue to pay the interest on debt, it has an accrued interest in the tune of \$69 million, which brings the total debt to \$229 million.

That is not all. They also owe another \$2.3 million to the Barbados National Bank. Therefore, it is an albatross around the necks of Barbadians. Sir, what is even worse is that if this Administration does not pump \$3 million into Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL) this financial year, it would not be able to meet its wages nor pay its creditors.

Mr. Chairman, to come here today for \$3 million to keep Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL) afloat, when it has accumulated debt of \$229 million, is a clear indication why this Government should get rid of Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL). Sir, I am not backing off from that. It is an albatross around the necks of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I remember the Honourable Member for St. George North when he said that the money that was spent on Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL) could have built about 500 low-income houses in Barbados. The Honourable Member said that \$145 million loan could have been spent on housing.

Mr. Chairman, what is even more devastating to us is that this Administration, while we have our difficulties and we struggle to maintain our social services in the country, we have to look to pump money in GEMS at this stage, at least to try to maintain employment of those poor people who are working now like maids, cooks, security guards, middle managers.

We are trying to safeguard their jobs today and even though it is difficult for us, we are trying our efforts best to ensure that Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL) holds on. What is unfortunate for us is that \$229 million in debt. Do you know what is the book value on the property? Sir, the book value is \$74 million.

Mr. Chairman, let us do the mathematics for a short period. The properties are now valued at \$74 million and the debt accumulated is \$229 million. Now come on, even "Gear Box" would know what you have to do. If you do not do it, it will continue to drain the few resources this Administration has to provide for housing, educational services or for road works.

Sir, therefore, I am not in any way going to back off the advice I would give to the Honourable Minister. I will tell the Prime Minister to sell them. Let them over there explain to Barbadians why they sold Eastry House, why they renovated Eastry House to the tune of \$2.1 million and we could not see one new board, after buying it for \$1.85 million.

Mr. Chairman, they must explain to Barbadians how that could have happened when there was no financial crisis in the island; how they could have sold Worthing's Court, as well as Silver Rock, when there was no financial crisis; how they could have sold the Insurance Corporation of Barbados and the Barbados National Bank when there was no financial crisis.

Sir, they would now want to question the wisdom of this Administration to look at assets that are underperforming, assets that are now becoming a drain on the public purse, in a situation where we are saying that we cannot carry these debts any longer in the interest of the country and that we must divest them. Sir, that is the advice I am going to boldly give.

Mr. Chairman, it bothers me because I remember the big debate on Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL) and GEMS. I remember that debate was only for the South Coast Project. I remember one family member of the well-respected former Honourable Member for Christ Church South, whose families' properties were never transported from St. Peter to the South Coast, yet were included and purchased in the GEMS Project. Sir, yet they could have the audacity today after a situation where we now have \$229 million in debt and cannot even now carry out any

audited financial statement because of the botchy and poor nature of the accounting operations.

Mr. Chairman, I know what I am saying. If I have to produce the evidence I can do so today. I will also say with a book value on the property of \$74 million and a debt of \$229 million, even my three-year old daughter understands that is an albatross around the necks of the people of this country, which was created wholly and solely by the Barbados Labour Party, to bail out our other non-performing assets that were owned by their friends and families. I will say that is a fact and the evidence is there to support it.

Mr. Chairman, the reality is that we have two options, and I will now speak to March 2009. Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL) requested \$3.5 million because the company was out of cash and by June, it was facing the possibility of foreclosure. Do you understand what foreclosure means? It means they cannot pay their bills.

After you saddled this country with \$229 million in debt, you cannot pay your bills. Where would the money come from? Would it come from under a breadfruit tree? That is taxpayers' money. That is money that if we had in our coffers today, the amount of things that we could have done to make sure that we can continue providing social services in this country.

Mr. Chairman, it was said that they would have been out of cash by June 2009, facing the possibility of foreclosure, wide-scale layoffs, without a Government bailout, and after millions of dollars being pumped into Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL).

2.10 p.m.

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, in recognising that we have a few more minutes, I just want to go back to one critical factor I want Barbadians to understand because I do not speak to the Opposition, I speak to Barbadians.

Mr. Chairman, I want Barbadians to understand a few things. We did not sell the Barbados National Bank. The Barbados Labour Party sold the Barbados National Bank and there was no crisis. We did not sell the Insurance Corporation of Barbados. The Barbados Labour Party sold the Insurance Corporation of Barbados and there was no financial crisis.

We did not sell Worthing's Court. The Barbados Labour Party sold Worthing's Court and there was no financial crisis. We did not sell Silver Rock and there was no financial crisis. We did not sell Eastry House, without the roof, and there was no financial crisis. Sir, I want to

hear the argument that would now be proffered by the magicians on the Other Side. They are critical of our divestment policy in a crisis when they divested left, right and centre when there was no crisis. Sir, they are smart because they learn from the voodoo economist from St. Peter.

Mr. Chairman, we have a responsibility and we have a duty. Sir, that responsibility, as a Government, is to do whatever we can during this time of economic difficulty to maintain employment in this country. Sir, that is the reason the Prime Minister, in his two Budgets, would have introduced employment stabilisation measures so that even in difficult times we can do our best to try to keep persons employed in this country.

Sir, this is but another example of this Administration working hard to keep employment in this country. Sir, that is the reason we are going to make sure this \$3 million that is going to be used to keep the doors of Hotel and Resorts Limited opened in these difficult times to keep people in that operation employed.

Mr. Chairman, as I have said, I have no fear of the statement that I make that I will continue to advise the Prime Minister that he should get this albatross from around the necks of the people in this country because (1) it cannot be carried by the public purse at this stage, not if it has a public debt of \$229 million on book and its book value is \$74 million. You can rest assured that we will do whatever we have to do to ensure that Hotel and Resorts Limited survives for the next few months. We have allocated a provision coming very soon for another \$3 million for the financial year 2010/2011 to keep it afloat.

Mr. Chairman, I hope by that time, that there are buyers found for the Savannah Hotel and I hope by that time that there are buyers found for Time-Out-in-the-Gap because it would be irresponsible of me to argue to allow the Government to continue to carry and pay that massive debt when it is not in a position to do it. Mr. Chairman, I will not give that advice because I want them gone. Sir, that is the best economic decision under the present economic circumstances.

Mr. Chairman, therefore, the only thing left for me to say at this time is this. We believe, in the interest of maintaining employment that this \$3 million is necessary and, therefore, it will get the full support of this Cabinet. We believe very strongly that in the very near future the Prime Minister will make whatsoever decisions he has to make in the best interest of Barbados, when it comes to Hotel and Resorts Limited in discussion and dialogue with the Cabinet. Sir, as I have said, those matters will be dealt with in a formal manner.

Mr. Chairman, I want to end by saying this so that Barbadians would understand what is happening. Sir, when the Barbados Labour Party was in Government, we warned the Government that it was not wise to engage in owning those hotel properties and renovating them, that it was an unwise decision. We told them it was not the best thing to do but they took up \$145 million, a loan, and when the operations could not pay back its principal, we have now built up \$69 million in interest charges and therefore, the overall indebtedness is \$229 million compared to the book value of \$74 million.

Mr. Chairman, I remember all too well when the former Leader of the Opposition carried my good friend from Christ Church East one morning very early - he does not like to get up very early - down St. Peter. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South was also on that expedition. We went down there with torch lights, hard lights and magnifying glasses. Sir, we went looking and trying to inspect to see how the money of the Government was being allocated.

Mr. Chairman, I think it was a former Prime Minister who said that Barbadians have short memories. The Honourable Members on the Other Side are always criticising the Democratic Labour Party but, Sir, you have to look and explain to Barbados why the money was spirited away and how.

Sir, that would explain the reason we are here today because there was an ill-conceived project at the time and the evidence of that ill-conceived project is now obvious for all to see because we are \$229 million in debt and the Government has to struggle to keep the operations afloat.

Mr. Chairman, the former Prime Minister understood quite clearly. I have him on record and I have the Hansard document when he said that he was never going to sell the GEMS Project. Sir, while he was saying so through the left side of his mouth, he was selling the Silver Rock Hotel through the right side of his mouth, and Eastry House through the other side of his mouth.

Mr. Chairman, essentially, I just want to conclude by saying that as painful as it is under the circumstances, we are going to do what we have to do in the interest of the people of this country, and in the interest of the workers of Hotel and Resorts Limited. Therefore, we are going to ask this Parliament to approve that these monies be allocated to assist that entity to maintain its operation in the interest of the employment and maintenance of employment generation in the country.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I really take the speech of the last Honourable Member who spoke in two parts. Sir, perhaps the larger part of it was seeking to defend his position on divestment. I do not know why he should be so defensive for things that he believes in strongly because if he believes in a matter then he can defend it without necessarily the kind of aggression that we saw, unless it is that he is trying to persuade other Honourable Members of the Front Bench of the correctness of this statement from a few weeks ago.

Mr. Chairman, let me say that no Government can have an absolute line in the sand when it comes to the sale of assets. Sir, that is a fact.

H/A27/14:20

Sequence 21

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The more he speaks, the more convinced I am that he is on the back foot and under tremendous pressure.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Somebody referred to him as a "pig sty" and he corrected to defence.

Sir, the point is this. The issue is not the principle of divestment. The issue is under which circumstances it takes place and how. It is unfortunate, and perhaps the Honourable Member did not hear himself, that he believes it is okay to undertake divestment in times of crises, but the corollary to that is, you are effectively getting a reduced price, an asset that you may otherwise get a higher price for, and that has been our contention both in 1991 to 1994, when we saw the divestment of Arawak, the divestment of Heywoods, the divestment of Cable and Wireless shares and the divestment of shares in the Flour Mill.

It is equally our contention now, when the Prime Minister said that he was going to sell the Barbados National Bank shares in the 2008 Budget. The Barbados Labour Party did not object because we knew then that the shares he would sell, in fact, are worth more now than the entire bank was worth when the Government was the sole shareholder.

Then he flipped-flopped and then all of a sudden in 2008, we are not selling the shares. We want to buy the whole bank, without reference to whether the Government

has money to do that. Now, we hear two weeks ago that the Government is looking to sell the shares again.

Sir, I have never seen a more perfect flip-flop in public policy than this one surrounding the issue of the Barbados National Bank. We heard that it was to refurbish the hospital. I would not be surprised if we are to hear that again, all of a sudden, because when all is done, Barbados needs a new hospital and it is a priority for the people of this country.

Sir, the Barbados Labour Party could not object to the sale of BNB shares in circumstances where it was being applied to that purpose. I will call on the Prime Minister, equally, in respect of the Insurance Corporation of Barbados. The shares remain in the Government's ownership and worth are more than the entire entity was worth when the Government was the sole shareholder.

Sir, the point I am making is, there can be no absolute line in the sand as it relates to divestment. The issue is like with any other property that is owned whether by Government, companies or individuals, when can you get the best returns? When can you get the best price? It is our contention that you do not get it in the midst of a crisis when people feel that you have one hand behind your back, and that has been our contention all along.

Sir, one of the things that frustrates me, and I trust and hope we will get it right as we move forward. There are fundamental issues facing us, but we are not dealing with them. There are a lot of knee jerk reactions. There was no issue of divestment of BNB last year. Last year the Honourable Member told the country that he wanted to buy a bank. Now that we realise that we truly have a fiscal crisis on our hands but we still have legitimate social needs to be met. We have a hospital that is in dire need of support. We have schools that are still in need of support, and we have a debate ranging at Cave Hill what should be the correct admission policy based on the financial expenditure that would be required.

Sir, I say to you that the time is upon us, and I will speak more and more about it this year, for us to make some fundamental decisions as a country. If we want to get into the sideline of the partisan behaviour that is not even separated by a wall in here, the wall is imaginary, but what we have is a country that all of us have to live in, and what we have is a country that has said to us that there must be a way about going about our business, without putting people on the flood line of adjustment.

There are no doubts that there must be fiscal restraint, and we said that last year when the Government brought a set of Estimates, 5.5 per cent of GDP. They said, and we stood up in here and said that was folly. You could not make 5.5 per cent. These Estimates are premised on a

fiction and the Estimates for the deficit would more be in the vicinity of 8 per cent to 8.5 per cent. Sir, what are we hearing today, that the deficit is going to come in on or about 8.4 per cent.

Sir, the foolish Opposition, according to you, we were abused, in here, and the facts now will stand the test of time. Mr. Chairman, you were in the Chair too, Sir, 8.4 per cent, because we recognise that you could not predict revenue growth of 7 per cent this year with an economy contracting at 3 per cent, not when the year before you predicted 9 per cent growth of revenue, got 2 per cent, and the economy grew by 0.2 per cent. You do not need to be a Solomon to know that the two do not equate.

Sir, all I am saying is, the reality is, we are now facing the issue and the framework of divestment, not with our confidence in place, not with ourselves in a good position to meet the market, but against a background and a forced sale. Now, all of us know that a forced sale of any property will bring in less than one that is done in the fullness of time, taking into account all of the factors.

As it relates to the adjustment, we say that we all feel that a wage freeze is a legitimate option. We do not feel that the public servants should be put on the front line in terms of being asked to make that cut and there are other expenditure. It is an effective cut in salary when you give people 10.5 per cent in the last two years in a wage increase and when the inflation is over 12.5 per cent. The person effectively has less money in their pocket because the wage increases are less than the increase in prices.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, clearly, there is a lot of corns being stepped upon.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I am saying to you that the net cost of such an action for a wage increase that is commensurate with a 3 per cent inflation of last year, the net cost to the Government is about \$23/\$24 million.

Sir, we heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip West got up and made much noise, about the fact this money was needed to keep people employed, and this money was needed to pay bills, but nowhere in his discussion about HRL has he told the Honourable House about the status of the plan that was put before HRL in 2007, which was to be determined. We want to know, the turnaround plan which required the conversion of debt to redeemable shares and the finding of a joint equity partner. Now it may or may not work, but he has a duty to tell us.

Sir, nowhere today did he tell us about the letters that went out on December 15, 2009, not December 15 2007, that were written to the employees in the Food and Beverage Operations at Savannah. If I may make this a document of the House, as you are aware...

HA57 14.30 p.m. Sequence 22

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House A57, Sequence 23, 2.30 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is the date of the letter?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, December 15, 2009.

The company that is taking care of the Savannah Hotel and the person's name has been blanked out for obvious reasons.

"As you are aware, the company is taking steps to lease the Food and Beverage operation to a concessionaire, effective January 15, 2010. This means that your employment relationship with the GEMS of Barbados ends on January 14, 2010.

Attached for your information are answers to questions that may arise during the course of the transition.

Please feel free to contact us for additional clarification."

Mr. Chairman, the Minister just got up in here and indicated that at all costs, jobs must be preserved but he did not tell the Parliament that at the decision of the Board appointed by the Government, decisions were taken at a time when people are complaining about not being able to make ends meet, at a time when people are catching hell, at a time when people are struggling to cope that his Government took and endorsed a decision of the Board that led to the dismissal of the Food and Beverage section in the Savannah Hotel at Christmas time.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Can you imagine, Mr. Chairman, on December 15, in these economic times getting a letter telling you, not that the hotel is closing down, but that the Government has taken a decision to give it out to a Food and Beverage concessionaire?

I am not even getting into who it is or who it is not, but the point is that you cannot want a more heartless example from a Government than this. I say to you, Mr. Chairman, that it escapes my understanding how you can

seek \$3 billion of Government's expenditure and what are the facts?

Sir, Barbados' current expenditure has increased \$1 billion between 2002 and 2009, and of that \$1 billion increase in recurring expenditure, only \$200 million has been in wages. Sir, \$500 million has been in transfers and subsidies to state corporations.

Last week we voted more money in here for the National Housing Corporation. The Minister is yet to tell us how many employees they have now, as opposed to how many employees they had in January, 2008. The reality is that there is runaway expenditure at a number of Statutory Corporations.

We believe that combined with programmes, such as Constituency Councils which, if they do not happen, will not take away from the quality of life of any Barbadian tomorrow, \$6 million of that is designed purely as a re-election platform for the governing Party, the Dems...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Absolutely not.

Mr. Chairman, I am not even going to be sidelined by those who believe that the only form of attack is to tell lies because lies eventually come out in the light of day. The Honourable Member must not remember so I am not only going to be sidetracked by that but, suffice it to say that for \$23 million or \$24 million - and I know that if the Honourable Member for St. Philip West was given the opportunity to be in charge of these Estimates, he would find a way that would not include putting the public servants of this country on the front line.

We have not gotten to the issue of other discretionary expenditure that has no real means of return for anybody but in the meantime, we are being told that all must be done to retain employment when the facts show the exact opposite.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I say to you, Mr. Chairman, that I therefore am not going to be drawn in because there is no doubt in my mind that we need to know what is the status of the Stabilization Plan for the GEMS properties. What we must also hear is the fate of the employees, who have already been sent home on the eve of Christmas.

What we must also hear is what are the terms and conditions that this Government intends to look at

divestment under, in the context of a crisis? We do not feel that you can get a higher return in normal circumstances.

Mr. Chairman, the BNB shares are slightly different because those are quoted on the Stock Exchange, therefore, there is certainty for the most part what you can recover from that shareholding. If at the end of the day, the Prime Minister, instead of flip-flopping as he did between 2008, 2009 and 2010, would stick to his original plan, then we might be able to support that, but if you are going to sell those shares and invest them, not in a refurbished hospital but in a new hospital for the people of this country, then we can see that the divestment process will work in that context.

Sir, what we cannot agree to, is the arbitrary determination of assets for sale in the context of crisis, without reference to whether or not you are going to get back the kind of return that is necessary in order to invest for future generations of Barbadians again.

Mr. Chairman, those are my remarks. I look forward, as I said, to finding out how many employees were sent home, why they were sent home and why would you take this group of employees and put them on the breadline before Christmas, in circumstances where the Minister is now telling us that this money is to maintain employment.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I would love to have heard my friend and colleague from St. Michael North West because I know he is armed like a walking razor today, but I am going to say to him, do not worry because I am well sharpened.

I do not understand the argument, Mr. Chairman, being expressed or advanced by the Leader of the Opposition regarding the persons, whom she claimed because the document has not been laid as a document of the House at this point in time. I do not know who wrote it, or where it came from, but this is what I know and I would read it again.

In March 2009, HRL requested \$3.5 million, Sir, because the company would be out of cash by June 2009, facing the possibility of forced closure or wide-scaled layoffs. Sir, without Government's bail out, as a principal shareholder in HRL, the company could not survive.

Mr. Chairman, what is the argument of the Honourable Member on the Other Side? Mr. Chairman, the Supplementary that is brought here today is being used to keep HRL in operation, to maintain the employment and

services that it now offers to the public and tourists alike, but that is the only reason that can be drawn from this so I do not really understand the argument that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is proffering.

Sir, I would say this. Red Plastic Bag is a good song writer. There is a reason why you have a refrain. You go back to it all the time.

House A57, Sequence 23, 14:40:09

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: . . .

Sir, my refrain is: Who sold the Barbados National Bank? Who sold the Insurance Corporation of Barbados? Who sold Eastry House? Who sold Worthing's Court and Silver Rock? Sir, that is going to be a new refrain in the Crop Over season.

It was not this Party who sold those things so they cannot in any way advise this Administration when it comes to divestment policies. Who are the flip-floppers when it come to the hospital? For 14 years they did not take a decision and right before the General Election of 2008, they came out to try to tell Barbadians that they are going to build a new hospital.

Mr. Chairman, I want to conclude by re-emphasising that this Administration, ably led by the Honourable Member for St. John, will go into discussion and will take the appropriate actions that we believe we need to take in the interest of the country; and as a result what the Honourable Members on the Other Side have to say have very little influence on any decisions that we are going to take.

Mr. Chairman, I therefore beg to move that Head 62, as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 19 - TREASURY

\$2 242 036

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 19 stand part.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 28 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

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

The question that Head 28 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 50 - POST OFFICE

\$701 443

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 50 stand part.

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

The question that Head 50 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for five minutes.

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

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

House A57 Sequence 24

2.50 p.m.

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. Honourable Members when the Suspension was taken, the House was in Committee. To that we shall now revert.

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

COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$15 102 395 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. 9/2009-2010 WHICH FORMS THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 69 BE AMENDED AS SET OUT IN SCHEDULE TWO IN THE RESOLUTION.

HEAD 12

PARLIAMENT - \$694 739

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, it is well-known that the air-conditioning system in the East Wing of Parliament was malfunctioning for some time and the opportunity was taken to replace such. Therefore, this money of \$694 739 is to pay the supplier of the air-conditioning system throughout the East Wing, as well as the requisite labour.

Sir, I do not believe this should engage any controversy as we are now seeing an improvement in the air-conditioning systems in this section of Parliament.

I, therefore beg to move that Head 12 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 19

TREASURY - \$96 384

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, the Government Printing Department needs a heavy-duty guillotine to replace the one which has been in use since 1986, twenty-four years ago. Obviously, because of its age, it has now become virtually inoperative and has to be replaced. Sir, the sum of \$96 384 is required to buy that guillotine for the Printing Department.

In those circumstances, I beg to move that Head 19 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 30

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL - \$673 771

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, as a result of the construction of the new Judicial Centre and the movement of the Courts into that Centre, the electricity bills have increased substantially; therefore electricity is going to be a very heavy cost attendant on the occupation of that new Judicial Centre.

As it stands now, we require the sum of \$673 771 to cover the cost of electricity until the end of the financial year. Sir, as I said, over the next few years, it will become evident that insofar as utilities are concerned, particularly electricity, the building is going to be quite expensive but we will have to make proper provision for that.

Mr. Chairman, in those circumstances, the sum of

\$673 771 is required and I beg to move that Head 30 stand part.

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

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

His Honour K. St.C. BEST: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the administration of justice as it relates to the Supreme Court, as was said by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South that the electricity bill in that area would be quite exorbitant, but one of the disturbing features of that new Centre is the lack of proper accommodation for both lawyers and litigants.

If you really look at the whole structure, you would see that the open space is almost about 1/2 acre. Sir, I believe that better usage space and the design of that place should have been done.

3.10 p.m.

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His Honour K. St. C. BEST: Sir, there should have been better usage of that space. I know that because of the design and lack of seating for litigants, as well as for lawyers, that any alteration or modification would be quite expensive to the Administration. Sir, I believe that we seriously need to look at making some alterations to the

seating accommodation for litigants and for attorneys-at-law who go to that centre.

I hope that the Attorney-General would take those few words as encouragement for providing accommodation for litigants. Sir, as the economy picks up, I hope we would do the necessary things to ensure that persons who come to the Court have comfortable conditions. It is really one slab of concrete that is tiled for litigants. There is no support for the backs of the litigants and the space allocated for the attorneys-at-law leaves a lot to be desired.

Mr. Chairman, with those few words, I support the Resolution.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: the Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to prolong the debate. I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael East. I have to confess that I have received complaints, not unlike the complaints which the Honourable Member has just made. I have received correspondence from the Barbados Bar Association but, in any event, rumblings have continued in respect of the accommodation available for lawyers and litigants at the new Judicial Centre and, Sir, these matters are under active consideration.

Mr. Chairman, how much could be done to change the structure in such a way to meet the accommodation needs of lawyers and litigants is anybody's guess and that is a matter on which we have to take advice.

Mr. Chairman, when I was asked when I would officially open the new Judicial Centre, I made it very clear that I was not going to have an official opening until all the issues of functionality had been settled or nearly settled and, Sir, that was before anybody moved in. Sir, I kind of anticipated that there would be some settling in problems and I just wanted to wait to see how that whole process would go.

Sir, there have been complaints about the provisions made for attorneys-at-law and their clients while waiting to have their cases heard. There have also been complaints about the quality of seating provided in certain Courts, particularly the Ceremonial Courts.

In fact, when I went there to do the introduction to the Bar some time last year and I, for the first time, sat at the Bar table, I came face to face with what attorneys were talking about. My first mistake was to assume that a hand rest was there and since I was seated at the end, I nearly toppled over.

Mr. Chairman, lawyers have been complaining about those things. I do not know how much consultation took place between those who are planning the Centre and the Barbados Bar Association but, clearly, there are some issues that have to be resolved.

Sir, I am not insensitive to those issues. They are being looked at and so far as is possible we will try to correct what problems are correctable. Sir, obviously, it is a modern state-of-the-art building and how much could be done to effect the alterations desired to give it the kind of character that would make attorneys comfortable at this stage is anybody's guess, but we will take some advice on that.

Mr. Chairman, with those few words, I beg to move that Head 30 stand part.

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

The question that Head 30 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmation without division.

HEAD 55 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM - \$12 582 501

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, the amount required under this Head is a substantial amount. There is a very small sum of \$1 800 required for the Ministry proper, Programme 365, which is the HIV/AIDS Protection and Control Programme and it simply relates to the salary for the Coordinator of that Programme. It seems as though in doing the original Estimates there was a shortfall of \$1 800 for the payment of the salary of that officer, so that amount of \$1 800 is now requested for the HIV/AIDS Coordinator in the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman, the brunt of the money is required for the Barbados Tourism Authority that is Programme 332 and it is 316 Code. It is a grant to a statutory body and we need \$12.8071 million. This is to provide additional airlift to Barbados as well as various co-op marketing programmes we are doing with our airlines and also to meet the repayment of a loan to the Bank of Nova Scotia under an agreement that was entered with Carnival Cruise Corporation to provide a vessel during April 8, 2007 to May 6, 2007, during the World Cup. Sir, I will get back to that.

Mr. Chairman, if I could just briefly look at the monies that are needed to support the airlift and just speak to that a little bit. We require \$2.6 million to cover the revenue guaranteed with JetBlue Airways.

It should be noted that this would be activated only should specific performance targets not be met. It also includes the shared cost of Barbados JetBlue Marketing Promotions for the period October 2009 to October 2010. Sir, gateway cities such as New York, Boston and Washington, D.C. have been targeted.

Mr. Chairman, I might add that we try to do more of that co-op marketing as opposed to revenue guarantees. We are trying to get away from that for fairly obvious reasons. It is the more desirable way to go when you are establishing a partnership with an airline.

It is better when they bring resources to the table and you bring resources to market the service together as opposed to just giving someone a minimum guarantee where they would get a subsidy should they fall under certain load factors, so we have been moving away from that.

Mr. Chairman, I would also say that there is a similar situation with U.S. Airways and that an amount of \$2 million is allocated to U.S. Airways. Sir, U.S. Airways has drastically reduced its services and we entered into an agreement that saw four flights coming out of Philadelphia starting October 1 last year, the same day as the JetBlue inaugural service and that lasted until December. Sir, then from December 18, 2009, that service, to this day, has been a daily service.

Mr. Chairman, the U.S. Airways loads have been good. It is not as impressive as JetBlue but we are getting good numbers coming from the United States of America.

H/A27/15:20 Sequence 27

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Hon. R. L. SEALY: I will also mention as well we needed \$194 000 to cover an agreement we had with Air Jamaica, during the Crop Over period last year, July 2, 2009 to October 30, 2009. We just basically had a short-term arrangement, 18 rotations with Air Jamaica. That service, of course, would have been very popular with the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market.

As you will imagine, Crop Over, summer, that is a time when a lot of the diaspora and so on will travel to Barbados, and we did not want to leave our flights exposed by only relying on Air Jamaica. Sir, remember this is pre JetBlue we are talking about, so we had to enter into that arrangement with Air Jamaica, and it worked quite well.

Sir, obviously we will not have to do a similar arrangement next year because we have the JetBlue service now and we have the increased flights from US Airways. As you know, at any rate, the whole Air Jamaica question

is one we really cannot hang our hat on anywhere, because of the situation that organisation finds itself in. Sir, that is where we are as far as this Supplementary is concerned.

I just want to mention, however, for the benefit of the Honourable House, since October 2009, we have certainly seen a very steep increase in our arrivals out of the United States. To a great extent the JetBlue Programme has worked. Now you have to understand that American Airlines and JetBlue are fairly hostile towards each other, and there was some concern about entering into an arrangement with JetBlue, but we were able to balance the two.

American Airlines is doing well. JetBlue is doing well and US Airways is doing creditably well. That is why, for example, in January 2009, we had a 25 per cent increase in the middle of a crisis. In January 2010, we had 11 014 Americans visited Barbados. We have not had a January like that in a very long time out of the United States. That speaks volumes for the work that has been done by our team to keep those programmes going.

I will also mention that it is not only the airlifts, it is the work you do around the airlifts. The United States, of course, is a very expensive place to advertise and to promote a destination. Advertisements are quite costly through their electronic medium. We have been carefully deploying our resources, such that we are doing more online. Given the profile of the visitor that comes to Barbados, we find that we are getting good results that way.

Of course, given the reduction in Store Front Travel agencies, and more home-based and online operators, we are very much going into that market. That is why we have revamped the BTA's website. Visitbarbados.org is now much improved and also we are developing the e-commerce platform, in order to build on these tremendous gains we are seeing in the United States.

Sir, remember, we are doing this in an environment that is still hostile. Understand that the economy is not out of the woods yet. Some are suggesting that there are indications that the United States has passed the worst of the recession, but we still have to realise that we are still working in some very trying times.

Sir, if I can go on to Canada - we also require \$2.2 million to support the airlift by WestJet Airlines. That too does have an extensive co-op marketing programme. WestJet was critical to the growing of the Canadian market by close to 20 per cent between April and November 2008, and it is important that we continue to work with this carrier as we continue to expand our performance in Canada.

Sir, I will also say here, it is not, strictly speaking, part of this Supplementary because it will be part of our Estimates for the next financial year. The WestJet service will no longer be only a winter service. We will have the WestJet service year round. There will be a summer service as well. That, I think, is something that as a Government we can feel a great deal of gratification about.

Sir, upon assuming this office in January 2008, we looked at the situation and we realised that arrivals out of Canada simply did not make sense. That used to be the number one source market for Barbados' tourism, and in 2007, we only had 50 000 in the early 1950s in terms of arrivals out of Canada. Through our concentrated work, through the development of WestJet, through the programmes with Air Canada and Air Canada Communications we went from in the lower 50 000 in 2007 to the high 50 000 in 2008. We broke 60 000 in 2009, and we will break 70 000 in 2010. That is the direction we are moving in.

Sir, it is, of course, very gratifying when you set yourself a target and you can achieve it. We are not achieving these targets in normal circumstances. Remember the demand for tourism services globally is still very much very soft, so we were able to see these improvements. I think, again, it speaks to the determination by this Government that we will do better, we can do better and we can get those Canadian numbers up and we are very happy to see that.

Sir, if I can move on now to Latin America. There is a sum of \$500 000 which is required to support the preliminary marketing activity for the service that we hope to start in June, 2010, out of Sao Paulo. That is, of course, with GOL Airlines. As we are having this debate there is actually a team from the Barbados Tourism Authority that is on the ground in Sao Paulo. I need a couple minutes to speak to the \$500 000 that we are requesting. Note what I said, "preliminary marketing activity".

Sir, too often we have seen previous Governments, we go out there, we negotiate an air service to Barbados, usually at a cost, because you must understand that these airlines do not come here because they like us. It is not always the most profitable thing to fly to Barbados. The geography is such, that it is not easy to operate a profitable service to Barbados from a North Atlantic country without having a price point that is fairly high, so when we go and negotiate these agreements they cost the taxpayers money.

I am determined that, certainly under my watch, that we are going to be very pragmatic and deliberate in how we go about acquiring new airlift. We want this Brazil service to work, and that is why we insisted we do what is needed on a preliminary basis.

Sir, the Honourary Counsel in Brazil has been very grand. Of course, there is soon to be a mission established there. I met with the Ambassador designate and we have been doing focus groups. We have been engaging with the travel trade and doing all that is possible to see that this Sao Paulo service works. Therefore, this has actually been many months of work which has brought us to this point, so I can comfortably ask the Honourable House to allocate these funds for this purpose knowing that we will finally get a Brazilian aircraft coming to Barbados, a partner rather, to truly develop that South American market.

We all know what we say about the need to expand our base. I maintain that we need to be careful.

HA57 15.30 p.m. Sequence 28

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House A57, Sequence 29, 3.30 p.m.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Everyone is saying let us just get new markets, but it costs to get new markets and we have existing markets that have been fairly good to us that need some attention and so, it is a case of balancing, maintaining what we have but, at the same time, still trying to get those new markets.

Mr. Chairman, let me just say very quickly, because I know that when we talk about new markets, there is a 900-pound gorilla in the room, but everyone is very excited about China and, maybe, with a good reason. One out of every five world citizens is Chinese. The economy is growing at a tremendous rate.

We have the necessary "Most Favoured Destination" status with the People's Republic of China. Everyone is ready and excited but again, before we rush off and go and support a charter or something like that, approve tourism destination status first.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: I think we have to leverage that fact but we have to do it again in a sensible way. Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford is now a resident in China and we had an extensive discussion about what we can do to promote Barbados over there.

China is a large country. Apart from being a highly populated country, there are certain unique aspects to doing business over there. Therefore, we will gather our intelligence and make our necessary connections so that we can have a relationship that can last, insofar as with the travel trade and bringing the Chinese here for vacations.

We also have to find out what are some of the peculiarities that market may call for. It will call for some work with our products and work with our partners here as well, and so, I think that work is ongoing. The World Expo at Shanghai will also give us an opportunity as well to interact and interface with many of the players over there.

Then we can look to see what we can do that maybe in a 2011 or 2012 we can also have a similar arrangement coming out of China, where we can start to exploit these vast numbers of persons that are moving all over the world looking for vacation experiences. We are determined to do that, Mr. Chairman, because those are the numbers that are required, as far as the airlift is concerned.

Mr. Chairman, we also have with us an item relating to the support of the Carnival Destiny Charter.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: A little background may prove helpful, Mr. Chairman.

In 2006, the Government took a decision that the Barbados Tourism Authority should conclude negotiations with the Cruise Line Company, in order to secure cruise ship accommodation for the period of the World Cup Tournament to augment the island's accommodation pool. It was within this context that the Carnival Destiny Cruise Ship was leased from April 8, 2007 to May 6, 2007.

The vessel was to serve the island for the Super Eight series of matches, as well as the Finals in Barbados and owing to the tournament schedules, it was figured that they could leverage the vessel to provide coverage for matches elsewhere, Grenada and St. Lucia.

As a result of the inclusion of these destinations, the charter was to be more than just a floating hotel but was to also provide a cricketing cruise option, if you want to put it that way. You will well recall that the visitor projections were optimistic and erroneous that we would have had people all over the place for the World Cup. Of course, that was not the case and, as a result, there is now a loan that has to be serviced at the Bank of Nova Scotia for this vessel. The BTII on behalf of the Government has to finance this loan to the tune of \$2.5 million a year for the next 10 years.

What is also interesting to note, Mr. Chairman, is that in November of 2006, coming out of the Government's decision, there was actually a Resolution laid in this House, notice of which was given on November 17, 2006. Sir, that Resolution was, in fact, for a Government guarantee for the monies that the BTA had to pay, \$14.7 million to Carnival. Notice was given and we are speaking US dollars.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Notice of this Resolution was given on November 17, 2006. However, after the abysmal performance of the whole venture, where the Government only recovered, I think US\$4 million, and it had to do so as you know by offering those discounted cruises, giving away cabins and the like, that they were stuck, left over with a bill of US\$10 million.

Sir, after the World Cup event and they had tallied up all of the losses, the Resolution was withdrawn from the House of Assembly so parliamentary approval was never acquired for the loan. However, the loan is there and it still needs to be serviced.

A Letter of Comfort was provided with the understanding that a Government guarantee would have been done. However, for whatever reason, the then Government withdrew. Mr. Chairman, I remember the day that it was withdrawn. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East may remember. I am not sure. She was sitting in the chair, one from the top, a lot of winking and smiling was going on. We got one on them. We do not have to discuss this Carnival Destiny fiasco but as she was saying earlier, it is really not about the partisan thing at all here. It is about the monies that have to go to servicing Carnival.

Carnival is a company that when they are registering profits, they do not talk millions or tens of millions. This is one of the most profitable companies in the world. They make monies in the billions and understand that pay packets of poor Barbadians have to be popped open, taxes have to come out of those pay packets to support this mega corporation. However, this is about Barbadians and we never had that opportunity, of course, to properly discuss this issue.

Mr. Chairman, this is a Supplementary and I just think we need to make the people of Barbados aware of these challenges. Then of course, there is the wider issue of the World Cup and the legacy of the World Cup. The legacy is that all over the Caribbean in Guyana dollars, EC dollars, Jamaica dollars, TT dollars, Barbados dollars and in US dollars - debt. That is the legacy of the Cricket World Cup, 2007. I sincerely hope that we have learnt our lesson.

Mr. Chairman, I have learnt my lesson and what I will assure the House and, in fact, the entire nation that where the 20/20 World Cup this year is concerned, we already have packages in the market in the UK, the USA, and Canada and we are going to deliver just as many tourists as came here for the Cricket World Cup 2007 at a fraction of the cost and without putting the country in

nearly the type of debt that we saw coming out of Cricket World Cup, 2007.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Sir, that is true. We do not even talk about the lights. They refused to put in the lights. I remember the Honourable Member for St. Peter saying that he cut out the lights. They do not need any lights. What they need lights for and look at what happened at the Finals?

House A57, Sequence 29, 15:40:06

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Hon. R. L. SEALY: I would not even get into the Sunset legislation. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North used to double as... The Shadow Attorney-General was in the Other Place, and he would speak on legal matters here, and he warned them that the Commissioner of Police was being reduced to a traffic warden and lo and behold we saw police officers being searched entering venues in Barbados. The vendors were also left out of that Sunset legislation.

This Government is making sure that where the Twenty/20 competition is concerned we would not have those issues at all and that we will have a proper cricket competition that we can all benefit from. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East as a good member of the BCA, would be quite happy to hear that and would come and enjoy some cricket.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, those are the areas that I wanted to touch on as far as the Supplementary is concerned. We obviously are monitoring developments generally in the sector.

I would want to conclude by saluting all of those workers in the sector who worked so very hard. The hospitality industry is physically and mentally demanding. We salute those persons, whether they work in the kitchens of the restaurants, or the hotels, or whether they are working for the tour companies, or at the activities desk; as well as our taxi operators, for the hard work they are doing.

Mr. Chairman, I also have to be fair and to salute the leadership from the private sector. We have not had any major layoffs in the tourism sector. There are other countries in the Caribbean that cannot say the same thing. Even some that bragged of growth have been shutting down hotels and laying off people, so we need to be very careful when people try to shove models down our throats.

Mr. Chairman, I want to salute the private sector, particularly the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association. I note in their recent Newsletter that they have, in fact, thrown in their lot behind the Government and are supporting our efforts to restructure the Barbados Tourism Authority.

I want to thank President Capadelli and his entire crew, President elect Jordan who would be taking over in June as well as to support them in the work they are doing. They are supporting us and we are supporting them. It has been a true partnership. Government came to the table with the \$25 million fund and they responded by maintaining jobs and we have been very satisfied in the direction in which things have been going.

Mr. Chairman, with those few remarks, I beg to move that Head 55 stand part.

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

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, we are in Committee of Supply and therefore I just have one or two questions for the Minister, which hopefully he would answer. The Tourism Industry Relief Fund which the Minister referred to a few minutes ago would have received, on page 210 of the Estimates, an amount of \$10 million. It would have received \$15 million before the end of the last financial year, and hence I believe the sum of \$25 million to which he referred.

My understanding, and that of most of the industry, is that the level of claims on that Fund was in the vicinity of about \$79 million. I wonder if the Minister might indicate to us what was the level of claims and what was the shortfall, if any, from the \$25 million provided, and is the Government going to make up the shortfall, or are they rejecting the claims? It would allow us as well as members of the industry whom correctly he offered praise to but who nevertheless would have incurred expenditure and kept on employment in circumstances where they felt that they had access to this Fund.

I would also like him to indicate whether the Fund is compensating on the basis of a shortfall in numbers between 2008-2009, or a shortfall in profitability, because there are two totally different things as you would appreciate. You could cut back your cost and still be below the year, but be profitable, or you can be unprofitable. Mr. Chairman, I do not think the House has been given a full enough explanation to that measurement in respect of that.

We are happy that the Minister has said that Canada is doing well, but I want us in our euphoria to remember

that the Canadian market is responsible for only 10 per cent of our long-stay visitors. Mr. Chairman, while we are happy that the Minister has been able to see an increase of 20 per cent in Canada from 50 000 to 60 000, the bald reality is that the majority of money from tourism in this country does not and will not come from Canada in the near to medium-term.

In fact, the majority of money from tourism comes from the United Kingdom. After the United Kingdom, I think the second largest market is between the United States of America and CARICOM, and those, therefore, are the ones that must also be performing.

The Minister has not shared the figures with us in relation to January other than to say that it was 11 000. Perhaps he might wish to make that a document of the House so that we are in a position to see the arrivals for all of January and not just for the United States of America where clearly there was an improved performance for which we are happy.

Mr. Chairman, I take it that this is not the first year that we are repaying Scotia Bank and, therefore, one wonders how it becomes a Supplementary in those circumstances since it is a fixed charge on the Barbados Tourism Authority.

Mr. Chairman, in the same way that the Minister constructed an event where he reflected about winking and who wanted to avoid debates, which never happened in this Chamber, and certainly I was not a part of anything that he spoke about, one wonders then how a fixed charge that is three years' old, going into four years, is treated as a Supplementary at the end of the financial year. Mr. Chairman, that speaks to the planning of the Barbados Tourism Authority.

Mr. Chairman, we did not come for a supplementary for the \$1 million to support Polo two weeks ago. We did not come for a supplementary for the \$250 000 to support Brian Lara's events at Crop Over last year. We did not come for a supplementary for the \$500 000 for the Golf Tournament in Tobago involving Mr. Lara, Mr. Yorke and others and we did not come for a Supplementary for a whole hosts of other things but we have come for a supplementary in respect of a matter that is a fixed charge.

Mr. Chairman, it boggles the mind how this Government can treat a fixed charge as the subject of a supplementary in circumstances where when you are budgeting, you start with what your legal commitments are, as the Attorney-General would tell you, and then determine what discretionary expenditure there is so that you could then plan on the basis of your discretionary expenditure.

Mr. Chairman, those are simple questions that the Minister in his initial presentation may not have put before the House, but which I am sure that as a Minister who prides himself from being on top of his Ministry, he is in a position now to provide the House with those answers particularly as it relates to the Tourism Industry Relief Fund.

Mr. Chairman, part and parcel of putting this economy back on a growth path is ensuring that those entities which operate within the tourism sector could keep their heads above water, and if they could so keep their heads above water, then it is easier for them to help lead the path to recovery than for them to have or for us to see new entities having to start from scratch and build up systems and track records before they could even reach profitability.

Mr. Chairman, the state of the industry and the capacity to cope through this crisis is germane to the discussion of how soon recovery could come back to the Barbados economy. There can be no escaping the fiscal crisis without equally determining how soon we can get this economy back on a growth path.

House A57 Sequence 30

3.50 p.m.

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Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, in a sense, the Government learnt it the hard way when they believed in 2008 that they could tax their way out of a recession. Sir, by imposing those measures and by increasing other measures that increased the cost of living, what you effectively did was to retard the rate of growth and any capacity for growth within the private sector.

Therefore, Sir, the state of the Tourism Industry Relief Fund, particularly given the shortfall we know is there, we are surprised that there has been little information on it, but we would like the Minister to give us, and more importantly, the industry an update on the status and whether they can expect to recover 100 per cent, 80 per cent, 40 per cent or 50 per cent. Sir, 25 per cent in 1980 is just about 25 or 30 per cent of what in fact would have been submitted.

Sir, those simple questions should not cause the Minister any great concern. I would only come back if there is a need to do so.

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

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Chairman, I rise to give support to this motion by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. Sir, I would have thought that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, in her comments just now, would have started by giving compliments to the Minister of Tourism and International Transport for the outstanding work he has been doing to date. I believe that one ought to get use to the usual salacious comments and casting aspersions, et cetera.

Mr. Chairman, the reality of it is that the Minister of Tourism and International Transport has been busy at work and we have seen the fruits of his labour. Mr. Chairman, Barbadians, in recent years, have grown accustomed to the Minister of Tourism with a lot of palaver, a lot of flair, a lot of fanfare and hyperboles and such like but was really short on substance.

I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has been very steadfast and focussed in his work in that Ministry and that despite the downturn in the global economy, we have not sat back and thrown our hands in the air and said we cannot do anything.

Mr. Chairman, instead, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and his team at the Barbados Tourism Authority have gone out there and have helped to identify new markets and additional airlifts and have sought to diversify the tourism products and with great success, despite the global economic challenges.

Mr. Chairman, as a matter of fact, when one talks about the economy and what we are doing to pull ourselves out of it and get Barbados back on a sustainable growth path, one can undoubtedly recognise the role of tourism going forward just as it has been over time.

Mr. Chairman, I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East could have been a little bit more complimentary and face reality. I think most Barbadians accept the work that has been done, but to ask questions about the Tourism Industry Relief Fund of about \$10 million, which the Honourable Member honestly already knows the answer, is a little bit uncharitable, particularly when not too long ago we are hearing talk about \$229 million in debt in GEMS alone.

Mr. Chairman, therefore, to talk about a \$10 million relief fund which is going to help the majority of hoteliers in this country, at a time when you cannot even comment upon or defend the fiasco known as GEMS or Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL) is a little bit wrong.

Sir, the Honourable Member also talked about the Canadian market. Sir, yes, it may not be our largest market but it speaks volumes to the work of the Minister of Tourism and his staff at the Barbados Tourism Authority to

have been able to go out there and help get more tourists on the Canadian market.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot put all of our eggs in one basket. The United Kingdom market has been very good to us over time and there is no intention on the part of this Government, as the Honourable Member has stated, not to place any attention to the United Kingdom market and continue to grow it there, but being smart individuals, we said we have to diversify the market. Sir, that is why we are happy to see the results we are getting out of the Canadian market.

Mr. Chairman, \$500 000 of this Supplementary is going to work towards supplementing the Brazilian market. Brazil, which is one of the largest economies this side of the world, notwithstanding any differences in languages, offers tremendous potential for Barbados as a source for tourists. Therefore, we must commend the Honourable Member and his team for seeking to diversify our market into that South and Latin American arena.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Minister of Tourism and his team have done very well. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would like to get into issues of the Carnival Cruise expenditure. Sir, it is a little bit unnerving that at this stage we should be addressing the issue of Cricket World Cup, 2007.

Sir, no matter how much the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and her team may wish, both in this Honourable Chamber and elsewhere, we cannot forget the past. Cricket World Cup, 2007 will haunt Barbados for quite a long time. It was a massive financial undertaking with very little gains.

Mr. Chairman, despite the best possible advice of the largesse that was going on then, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, aided and abetted by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and the entire team, sought to commit Barbados and generations of Barbadians to a massive financial undertaking that is yet to yield any sizeable results.

Barbadians were told back then to go to the bank and borrow money to add on rooms to their homes because they were told that the tourists would come in the hundreds of thousands. Barbadians were told that the tourists would have been so many that they could not fill the hotel rooms and would have had to go into private homes. People were told to expand the hire car businesses.

Sir, all sorts of businesses started to spring up around Barbados in the name of Cricket World Cup, 2007. Sir, really and truly what happened was that ordinary working-class Barbadians found themselves in tremendous debts

which, to this day, they cannot get out of. That is the legacy that Cricket World Cup, 2007 left for us.

Mr. Chairman, I am not going to dispute the fact that we had a duty to step up to the plate and have the matches down here, but I believe we did not need to go to the full extent, or to any of the lavish behaviour, but that is really and truly in keeping with the behaviour of the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Chairman, let us look at what is happening with the Twenty/20 matches coming up. You have not heard all the fanfare or hurrah about the place, but people are quietly and steadfastly working towards it. We are not spending millions and millions of dollars and I am sure that Barbados will gain tremendous benefits from that.

Mr. Chairman, really and truly, I believe that the Minister of Tourism and his team are definitely on the correct path. I like the fact that we are not looking to harp too much on one particular market, we are diversifying and expanding the market. Locally, we are doing whatever we can in this harsh economic situation to ensure that our hotels stay afloat and that employment in the hotel industry is kept at a decent level.

We are making sure that wherever possible, the tourism product is expanded and kept at a certain level. Sir, only last week we officially reopened the Harrison's Cave project in St. Thomas, which is another major tourism product, therefore, really and truly, Mr. Chairman, there is much that we can boast of in terms of tourism development in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to give my full support to this request for these additional funds. I am sure that these funds will go a long way in assisting the work in the tourism industry. I note with some great pleasure the fact that the Barbados Tourism Authority, as the Minister stated, is about to be restructured.

Sir, for years we have been operating the Barbados Tourism Authority, in many respects, as though it is a civil service department, except in the few cases where the friends of former Ministers and Prime Ministers were given little packaged deals and sweetheart deals, much to the annoyance of others around the place.

Really and truly, I think as a very determined and energetic Minister, we are now seeing greater emphasis placed on the marketing aspect of the Barbados Tourism Authority, as opposed to the other operations and ministerial aspects of the tourism sector. I think we really have ourselves poised for growth of development in tourism.

Mr. Chairman, I am quite satisfied that Barbados is going to pull itself out of this economic challenging situation and that it is going to be well-led, in many respects, by a tourism sector. Sir, I look forward to continue discussion on that particular issue.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

4.00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

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

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Sir, first of all I want to say from the outset that I want to give my full support for these sums of money to the Ministry of Tourism. Sir, I am doing that against a background of the fact that our present Minister would have had some extenuating circumstances that he would have faced.

1. There was a downturn in the global economy of the world.
2. There was a threat by the present Prime Minister of England, who was imposing, if he has not, a very serious tax on his countrymen who were travelling to Barbados and the rest of the islands in the Caribbean.

Mr. Chairman, in my mind, this poses a serious threat to the economic stability of our country and the Caribbean. Sir, in my view, this serious imposition on small island developing State economies is one that we have to seriously analyse.

Sir, I would also want to call on the Leader of the Opposition in England to ask the British Prime Minister to retract the idea and the notion of the imposition of this burdensome tax on persons travelling to Barbados and to the Caribbean. It is tantamount to an economic destabilisation of the economies of the Caribbean. Does Britain, through its present leadership, want to recolonise the Caribbean? These are serious questions I have to ask, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, if our mainstay is tourist arrivals, particularly coming out of England, and the Prime Minister and the Government of Britain intends to impose, if they have not yet imposed it, this kind of burdensome tax on the people of the Caribbean, in particular, Barbados, on most arrivals out of England and purposely so, the equation is that it is tantamount to a destabilisation of the economy of Barbados. Sir, when we are talking about tourism growth, we have to understand that the present Minister of Tourism

is operating against a background of trying, extenuating circumstances.

Mr. Chairman, when last have we heard about such a threat by a British Prime Minister? When last have we, in our lifetime, faced a global downturn of these mammoth proportions that we have witnessed and yet, our tourism has still been able to stabilise. You might dislike what I am saying or what you are hearing but, in my mind, I am looking at the facts and how they are.

Mr. Chairman, in a time like this, when we are talking about tourism growth we also have to talk about national development. We have to talk about the national spirit and we also have to talk about all of us on board this ship called the SS. Barbados and we have to start accentuating the positive things rather than the negative things. Mr. Chairman, in so accentuating the positive, let us take a serious look at the positive aspects or what is happening in the Ministry of Tourism via the Barbados Tourism Authority.

Mr. Chairman, I want to compliment the Honourable Minister, who is my parliamentary Representative and, Sir, I am proud to say so because I want to get good representation. Sir, he was always my friend and he visits Chase Gap, Hall's Road, very often. Sir, I am saying that against a background that under his stewardship, community tourism was initiated in St. Michael South East.

Subsequently, that tourism programme spread to other corners of Barbados in St. Lucy. Sir, what are we saying? We are saying for the first time in the history of Barbados that the tourists, instead of going on what I call the proverbial reservation of the South Coast and the West Coast, now have the opportunity to go into the communities of Barbados and interact with the people and the people themselves having a direct stake and investment in the economy of this country through the direct spending in the community by the tourist.

Mr. Chairman, I want to really congratulate the Minister of Tourism for having the courage, in an elitist society like Barbados, to go into the poor downtrodden communities and initiate a community tourism programme. Sir, I am sure that he had to face the challenges of many persons, particularly may be in his own Ministry, who have advised him against doing such and, particularly in an area like the Pinelands.

They asked him if he was really sending white people in the Pine to interact with those vagabonds up there? Sir, those are the kinds of comments that he would have had to withstand. When persons in this country said no, he said yes, that he would take the opportunity and bring the tourist dollars into communities like the Pine, St.

Lucy and others that I cannot remember now. Sir, this is called courage, when you stand, resolve and stand firm.

Mr. Chairman, the hallmark of a great man is not when things are going right, where he has an easy course to run, but facing adversity, when things are wrong and you still survive it and still include ordinary people in the process.

Mr. Chairman, that is community tourism, but let us now look at the initiative of sports tourism. Sir, under his stewardship so far, it is not concluded, we have been able to introduce and to maintain the West Indies Women Cricket in Barbados and that is played every year. Sir, every year in communities across Barbados, particularly the community of St. Michael South East...

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, I am not talking about a figment of my imagination. I am saying that every Easter, the Barbados Tourism Authority supports the West Indies Women Softball Cricket Tournament in St. Michael South East. Sir, some of us feel that only white people are tourist and when black people arrive that they are visitors, but yet all are bringing in foreign exchange to Barbados.

Sir, when cricketers come in from Trinidad, St. Kitts, St. Maarten, Guyana, St. Lucia and Antigua, those are not tourist arrivals, they are just people coming from the Caribbean. They do not count them as tourists, but the sports tourism initiative is really, in actual fact, bringing large numbers and groups of people into Barbados to boost the tourism arrivals.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please address the Chair, please.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am the person, along with a gentleman named Mr. Rodney Simpson, that invented this tournament. Sir, to answer the question, what we are getting now as a result of supporting the tournament, the community never got before in its entire history. Sir, it is a fact beyond any dispute. You only have to go and check the records.

Mr. Chairman, we have a lot of sportsmen overseas doing a wonderful job in promoting this country of ours. I spoke to the Minister of Tourism and told him that it would be a wonderful idea if we could give these people back something in recognition of the work and worth they have given to this island called Barbados. Sir, straight away the Minister agreed.

Mr. Chairman, one of the most wonderful ceremonies accorded to a presentation award was held, not

at a little guest house, but at the marvellous Hilton Hotel. Sir, everyone who attended that presentation awards complimented the organisation. Sir, Eugene Mellinic, who was finished with horse racing in Barbados because of a dispute with the Barbados Turf Club is now back in horse racing in Barbados. Sir, that means that this year's Sandy Lane Gold Cup would have some of the best quality horses in about 50 years running at the Garrison Savannah.

Mr. Chairman, the mere fact that Patrick Husbands was honoured, John Jones and Sir Michael Stoute, you have to understand that the tourist arrivals out of Britain and out of Canada, in particular, have been going up, but Barbados has always had a constant presence in these destinations due to some outstanding sportsmen that we have in this country.

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

H/A27/16:20 Sequence 32

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Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, I am going to wrap up fast in two minutes because there are a number things I want to say.

Sir, certainly, in order that this effort is a success, I really want to congratulate Mr. Hugh Foster and the Board of Tourism officials who worked assiduously to make sure that this event...

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: I am not saying him because I am not supposed to see him. I do not know if he is in here or not.

Sir, later this year we will be having something in Barbados in October, the very first world... I am working secretly on it, the very first "World Kneeling Down Cricket" Championship in Barbados. Sir, do you understand what I just said? It is what we call "Marble Cricket". It is "Kneeling Down Cricket" at the Gymnasium. It is indigenous and it is Barbadian.

Also later in the off-season we are looking at a Caribbean Badminton Tournament with most of the persons coming in from France and Britain. These are programmes that are not a figment of my imagination, but this is what is happening. These are times when Barbadians have to be innovative and creative. These are times when we have to think outside of the proverbial box. We cannot have the same old draconian systems that have been outdated with bureaucracies.

We are coming in here at a time when the country needs all the best hands on board, but we are fighting each other and arguing over this and that, and yet the total was enunciated by the Prime Minister of Barbados when he asked that all of us be on board the ship called "SS Barbados", or words in that context.

Some of the most brilliant minds are in this Honourable Chamber. Collectively, all of us Opposition, Government and a lone Independent, we can make a serious difference in the lives of this country, but we have to be a united front. Parliament must set the lead. Parliament must show that we really believe we can make a difference in the lives of the ordinary Barbadian.

Sir, sometimes people are passionate about these issues because it goes way beyond the political boundaries. It goes way beyond the normal jargon. It talks about the transformation of minds, the transformation of self and a transformation in the way we do things, the way we escape the bureaucratic trap and enter into a new phase called Mental and Physiological Development and put away the old psychological system that keeps us down - Bob Marley, very well. Even this country cannot afford any more devil philosophy. We have to go forward positively.

The Honourable Minister of Tourism, in my view, is doing a wonderful job under extreme extenuating circumstances and this House of Assembly has no choice, absolutely no choice, as a matter of loyalty to this country but to support his effort.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, I will not be very long because I feel that after such a scary presentation by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, any contribution I made thereafter could only devalue that, but I think it is important that we, in addition to identifying the matters raised by the Honourable Member, in relation to the entire body politic of the tourism sector and how we deal with it, in relation to our thrust to get out of this entire economic recession and the downturn in tourism figures, which we have seen in recent times because of the very able efforts of our colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, the Minister of Tourism, has been able to make strides.

Indeed, the Minister has been able to pilot, champion, indeed, design and conceptualise in terms of the myriad initiatives, the drive to get increased airlift out of some traditional markets and now new markets as well, in Brazil, for example.

Sir, I know as a former Minister of Foreign Affairs, I had the distinct pleasure of being in Brazil to meet with our Honorary Counsel, who is very keen about getting that airlift out of Brazil into Barbados.

I also know that one of our Honorary Counsels is very keen to get some airlift out of Panama, through Trinidad and Tobago which the Ministry of Tourism and the Barbados Tourism Authority have been working on.

Sir, if you look at what we call a Stabilisation Fund to help the tourism stakeholders not only as in the past, those who are in the hotel sector but also the ancillary services, those secondary services that are often forgotten, when you are dealing with this, the Minister has ensured that we have extended.

We are trying to do as much as we can in the circumstances in relation to that, and it proves, therefore, that this Government, and indeed the Minister have been watchful and, certainly, mindful of the requirements to both stabilise the situation in tourism, and also ensure that we return it to a solid and sustainable growth path, while not necessarily conditioned by numbers as has been the thing in the past, where every time we heard a speech by the former Minister of Tourism, it was about how many cruise ship passengers landed, how many of this and how many of that, but to really try to get a sustainable tourist product in Barbados backed by visitors who can come to Barbados and spend money, because after all it is the spend that really matters in this way.

Sir, we have also seen, for example, from the Minister and Ministry, and indeed, from the Barbados Tourism Authority, itself, a drive that we have put in additional resources into marketing, which has happened in the height of the recession, and we have not sat back and said we are going to wait when the global economy rebounds. We said that we are going to go in aggressively, and the Minister has gone in aggressively. His Ministry has gone in aggressively to do that.

Sir, even in spite of those efforts, the Minister and his team have found time, as the Honourable Member for St. James South has said, to engage on two matters, and I do not want to steal his thunder, the restructuring of the Barbados Tourism Authority, which everybody has said that was needed for years, but apparently did not have the intestinal fortitude to undertake.

Thank God that we have a Minister who has the foresight and determination to finally turn around those important structures, and instruments in tourism that would allow us to build a sustainable product over time, and indeed a sustainable industry. Also, to have work done, as he said and as the Honourable Prime Minister has alluded

to, in many of his speeches, particularly his Budgetary presentations, to look at the overall tourism master plan.

These are elements. You can see the building blocks of a strategy properly thought out, appropriately designed and clearly being articulated and implemented. Of course, it would be monitored over time. This is what we are trying to do in this industry.

Sir, I am not a tourism expert but I know, for example, when good money is spent and when bad money is spent. These initiatives which the Honourable Member has put in place and continues to put in place are areas in which we can say resources are being well spent. However, much as we would want to forget the very painful issues which we had to deal with in relation to the squandermania of the Barbados Labour Party Government, it is impossible for us to just walk away from it because it affects everything that we do. I am surprised that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East in her very short presentation, and I am very happy that indeed it was as short as it was, because we did not have to go through the continuum of the same speech which we have been hearing for the past year, repeated again but this attempt to hide under a rock by the Honourable Member to escape a visitation on the wastage and the squandermania associated with the very kernel of this Resolution is absolutely amazing, but I am not surprised.

HA57 16.20 p.m. Sequence 33

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House A57, Sequence 34, 4.20 p.m.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Indeed, I am also not surprised that the Honourable Member has, Mr. Chairman, tried to distance herself from decisions taken by the Barbados Labour Party even though the Honourable Member was, in fact, and indeed, a Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Development.

The Honourable Member was even one of the chief proponents of the attempts to both bring Cricket World Cup 2007 here and also to wrap it in a big set of raffia to present it to the people of Barbados as a panacea for all of our economic illnesses, in an attempt to guarantee a fourth term of office but alas, there is a saying that God does not like ugly. Alas, what transpired could only be described as the worst case of squandermania in Barbados.

I am going to touch Kensington Oval because that is not the rebuilt Kensington Oval, against good advice that is not part of this Resolution, and I am not going to waste time on it because it is there and we have to deal with it. Sir, what I hate to think is that we have to deal with, and was most surprised when this Supplementary came by way

of a Cabinet Paper for approval was to deal with paying back a loan to the Scotia Bank in total of US\$14 million.

Sir, when Members of the then Opposition spoke out against this matter and asked for information - and I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East asking for information from the Honourable Minister - we could not get one iota, not a piece of information out of the Barbados Labour Party Government about the fact that they were going to sail a boat up and down the Caribbean, half empty at a cost of US\$14 million. Sir, that is US\$14 million which could be going toward the marketing of the Barbados Tourism market in critical markets during difficult times.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: We are not dealing with the agent because we know. All of that information we are yet to receive - Sir, \$14 million that could be going toward the same Tourism Fund, US\$14 million, BDS\$28 million that could be going toward so many of the critical areas in tourism, we are to come before this Honourable House.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Who would have come up with the brilliant idea to rent a boat, lease a boat, to sail up and down the Caribbean half empty? What great wisdom was there in the bosom of the Barbados Labour Party that would have stirred somebody at night to alight at the dawn of the day to rent a boat to sail up and down the Caribbean, half empty?

Sir, they said that we were going to include other countries, Grenada and St. Lucia but apparently, only Barbados seems to have been carrying the weight of this particular initiative when others would have benefitted from it. Who could have come up with that, and yet the Honourable Member comes in here and speaks so ineloquently about tax increases.

There is a certain degree of political hypocrisy, if I can call it that, about the Barbados Labour Party conceptualising these particular matters. When dealing with the BNB, the Barbados Labour Party Government pretends as though it was not they, who sold the Barbados National Bank. When dealing with Eastry House, the Barbados Labour Party and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, as leader of that Party, behaves as though it was not they, who came up with the brilliant idea, to buy something and then sell it back cheaper than they bought it for, after investing \$1 million in it. Sir, all we could see when we went down there were binoculars, a magnifying glass, a new brand of lawn grass that grows at four or five feet tall, and a couple of sweetie papers.

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

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

Mr. Chairman, when we are talking about the GEMS Project, and this is all in tourism, we are again to be lectured after spending more than \$200 million of the taxpayers' money to end up with assets valued at only \$74 million for which we spent \$200 million. Today, we are to be pasted over as though this piece of bad public policy never happened in this country.

Let the word go out to all Barbadians, Mr. Chairman, that the Barbados Labour Party rented a boat for US\$14 million to sail half empty up and down the Caribbean. Atone for your sins and ask for forgiveness and thou shall be given it.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you, Sir, and I will come back to these matters at another time.

Asides.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, perhaps we can anchor the debate back in the reality of today now. Twenty four hours, one to two days ago, 81 per cent of the British Airways cabin crew voted in an 80 per cent turn out to go and take industrial action. Under the British system, they have four weeks within which they must take industrial action, without there having to be a re-vote on the ballot. They can take action by only giving seven days' notice.

While it may be good, sound and salacious to focus on other things, like a boat up and down, the reality is that the current people in the industry in Barbados who depend on British tourism want to know what contingency plans the Minister of Tourism has for British Airways. We have heard a lot today from the Minister, a half hour speech and we have heard from other speakers on the Government's Side but we just simply want to know.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East can be flippant about leasing another boat because, at the end of the day, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East does not employ anybody in the tourism industry, maybe in others but not tourism.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the simple question is and it is a serious question because, given where our tourism industry is, given that it is still facing declines, given that it is the primary foreign exchange earner, I believe that the sensible thing for us is to be able to hear what is the contingency plan that the Minister is going to have the Government put in place in respect of British Airways.

What is the contingency plan that is going to be put in place in respect of British Airways? I think there was some echo there, so I just repeated the question for the sake of accuracy and for Hansard because it is of concern to all of us, given the decision.

House A57, Sequence 34, 16:30:08

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Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am also aware that British Airways has seen a reduction of some 20 per cent in bookings as a result of the news of the impending strike. Mr. Chairman, given that British Airways, we have Virgin Atlantic and other charters, is one of the mainstays of Barbados' tourism to and from the United Kingdom, that is a serious question.

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

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I would like to support the Resolution and also the Minister of Tourism in his efforts. Sir, the reason for the Resolution is interesting because when you look at it in terms of what some of the expenditure is going to, it shows you the difference between the approach that we need to take, what happened then and what is happening now.

Sir, it was interesting that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East in focussing on some of the activities that need to be looked at, spoke about things like Polo and the Brian Lara escapee, what we would consider to be the normal glitz and glamour events that certain sections of our society seem to want us to focus on.

Sir, we need to get tourism back into our communities and ensure that the people within the communities are able to benefit from the resources that we are going to expend in that direction and from the major tourism initiatives that are being conducted by Government.

Sir, in looking back at the whole question of the Cricket World Cup, it is clear that the previous Government made a very bad decision. To ask this Government at this point not to focus on it in order to explain to Barbadians why we have to take the steps that

we do now is nonsense because, to a large extent, the source of our current problem lies in what we did in the past.

Sir, the fact is that money was spent on projects that are right now generating very little returns to the people of Barbados but, at the same time, we have to pay for them. Sir, at this point in time if we had gone, based on what was said to us then, Barbados would have been in a better position to weather this current economic situation much better than it is doing now. Clearly, Sir, what we did then has put us in a worst position than we would have been in if we had done the correct things in the past.

Mr. Chairman, right now there are a lot of very indigenous events in this country that we need to focus on as part of our tourism product. For instance, we have road tennis events and even the current Agrofest that we are holding at Queen's Park. Sir, we need to incorporate events that are indigenous. Sir, a lot of the events that we have that actually utilise our local strengths can actually help to create an attraction to bring more people to Barbados who would not normally come to Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, when I heard about Trinidad moving to bring Beyonce to Trinidad I smiled because if the Barbados Labour Party was in power, that is what they would attempt to do. Sir, when you look at the results of what has happened in Trinidad, that event has turned out to be a flop. Sir, what has happened is that you encouraged the Trinidad Government to spend money on an event but it did not make any money, which is precisely the same thing that happened in relation to Barbados in relation to the Cricket World Cup.

Mr. Chairman, all I am saying is that when we move forward with our tourism product in the future, it must be based on trying to utilise the strengths that we have in our communities. Mr. Chairman, we seem to think that when a tourist comes here, that he is not seeking something that is innovative, that is attractive and something that he cannot find even in his home country.

Sir, in the past, we have had difficulties trying to get support for some of the events that we have here. Mr. Chairman, I think we have to give kudos to the Minister of Tourism for trying to finance indigenous events that arise within the communities. Sir, I think that we have to give credit to the initiative that we have right now.

Sir, the other thing is interpretation. I heard the Leader of the Opposition talking about why is this matter being raised at this particular point in time. Interestingly enough, it seems to me as if they are trying to say that at the same time that they are not responsible. Sir, I think that it is very interesting that they are trying to do that.

Sir, I want too to encourage the public out there to understand that in truth and in fact we did not create this situation. I think that Barbadians need to understand that what we are trying to do is to make the best of the current situation.

Sir, in terms of moving forward, I think that we should encourage activity that we can actually increase the amount of foreign exchange that we earn. One of the things I note is that many of our people here have skills.

Sir, in terms of our future investment in the tourism sector, I think that Government needs to ensure that the private sector involved in the tourism industry also invest in other sectors at the same time. Mr. Chairman, even for the level of investment, that Government is making within the sector, I am still not satisfied that we are seeing an enough effort being made by hoteliers across the board to link directly with our local productive sectors.

Mr. Chairman, we have put a lot into our tourism sector. I think that the private sector within the tourism industry needs to recognise that they have to do more to link, especially at this point in time when we need to conserve on foreign exchange and to highlight our local craftsmen, because even in terms of cooking...

Sir, one of the things we need to do in terms of our hotels is to ensure that more menus that reflect local products are being offered because we seem to assume that a tourist who comes to Barbados is not interested in local produce but that is not so.

Sir, when we look at the experience in other Caribbean destinations, it is clear that they are interested. Sir, when we look at the fact that in islands such as Jamaica and Grenada there are tourists who are actually seeking out restaurants that offer local dishes, it tells you that they are interested. Sir, in the Constituency of St. Michael West Central we have a place called "Eight Ball" in St. Stephen's Hill that offers excellent Barbadian food. Sir, every time I take somebody there who is from overseas, they are amazed at the extent to which we have good food in Barbados and they enjoy it.

Sir, my point is that when we offer the kinds of incentives that we are offering to the local hoteliers and other persons involved in the local tourist industry, they must understand that they also have a duty to ensure that they also support our local productive sectors, and that is clear.

House A57 Sequence 35

4.40 p.m.

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Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Chairman, in Long Gap there is a nice little restaurant and if you want to, you can get an excellent breakfast. Sir, these are the kinds of things that make up the local tourism product. I think that with respect to hotels, we have seen, in many cases, where local hoteliers form relationships with certain businesses but what we need to see are more local hoteliers engaging in communities. Sir, why would they not try to encourage the guests to go to certain places within certain communities, so that we have partnerships being established within those communities?

Sir, this is not publicity for AgroFest but AgroFest is going to be held soon, but there is something that happened last weekend which I think should come to the attention of the public, what we would call cutoffs, which involved students from secondary schools in this country. Sir, the Minister of Education would probably be pleased to know that we had over 14 schools competing for the final places in AgroFest.

Sir, if you look at some of the menus that were created by these young secondary school students, who are no more than 14 or 15 years old, you would see that we had some excellent menus. I was saying to myself, how it is that we do not have the support coming from our local tourism sector, the hotels, that could use up some of those menus which have been created by bright, young individuals, where these hotels could use the winning menu in their hotel?

Sir, these are the kinds of creative approaches that we need in Barbados today, the kind of creative approaches that seek to say to Barbadians that if they are ingenious enough to come up with something different, that we are prepared to support you.

Sir, it cannot be left alone to Government to do this because when you look at what Government is putting into the pie, at the end of the day, Government expects certain behaviours from hoteliers; that behaviour must say that in turn they will reward Barbadian ingenuity.

Mr. Chairman, I want to encourage the Minister of Tourism not to be distracted by the side arguments because they do not speak to the core of what Barbados needs now. They do not speak to the change of behaviours that we need from the hoteliers and from Barbadians generally, for us to be able to come out of this particular period as a stronger nation. That is what we need to understand.

Sir, I want to indicate my support for this Resolution and to ask the Minister of Tourism to forge forward.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, I want to respond to the contributions of Honourable Members. Sir, regarding the matter of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, who raised some concerns about the United Kingdom, I would say that the only reason I did not speak to the United Kingdom in my original presentation is that none of the funds in this particular Supplementary are related to our United Kingdom programme.

Mr. Chairman, there was no attempt to void anything. The United Kingdom is our major market, 50 per cent or thereabout of our arrivals and, more importantly, 55 per cent or thereabout of our visitor spend comes from the United Kingdom market, so that the British are spending more than anyone else put together. Therefore, it is of concern to us.

Mr. Chairman, I think that we have to look at what has been going on in the United Kingdom because it is our most challenged market as well. The United Kingdom's economy contracted by 4.75 per cent in 2009. Sir, you have to understand that is quite radical. In fact, they have not seen that kind of contraction since the 1920s, so to put it bluntly, the United Kingdom economy is in decline. We have to understand that many of the people who are affected in terms of job losses, in terms of losing their homes, are our core people, therefore, it is a very difficult environment in which we are working.

Mr. Chairman, you would have heard me speaking to the XL Leisure Group, which would have taken away a lot of those charter seats. The XL Leisure Group was one of 70 tour operators that went out of business in the past two years in the United Kingdom. Therefore, we must understand the challenges in terms of the economic environment.

Mr. Chairman, I have not even gotten to the issues of H1N1, APD, terrorism and all those things yet, so I am saying there are these various factors that we are dealing with. I want to say, however, that we have not been folding our arms. I have insisted and have received a plan of action in terms of a strategy for dealing with our situation in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Chairman, I heard talk about the management at the Barbados Tourism Authority but the same leadership that was in place when we were seeing those increases and the last Government was bragging is largely intact, with some additions.

Sir, it is not to say that we have taken out all of these competent people and have put in a whole new set of people. The same leadership is there in the United

Kingdom. In fact, we have added additional human resources there; therefore, we in fact have more resources on the ground in the United Kingdom.

We are dealing with some specific programmes. I already alluded to the World Cup Twenty/20 and at the whole question of sports tourism. We are looking at sports in the context of what it can do to drive numbers, particularly for that United Kingdom market, that does need a shot in the arm. I heard about the Polo and about the money that was invested in Polo but I would have thought that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would have talked about the value of the exposure that we got from that event and about what it augers for the future.

Mr. Chairman, Barbados is well positioned to be one of the premier polo destinations in the world and therefore we have to look not only at the money we spend but we have to look at the returns. I sat down with the Sante Valet people in London and I looked at the figures. I said to them those figures look large, what were they going to give us for it. They indicated the media that was going to come to the event and the type of coverage that we would have gotten.

We are talking about NBC coverage throughout the whole of the United States of America. Do you have any idea what that cost? You must understand that when NBC is carrying the Super Bowl games on television, to get a 15-second spot, you have to pay millions in United States of America dollars. You do not pay a million in Barbados dollars, therefore, we have to look at our programmes, at our events, how we invest, in order to get the exposure that we need to get in the United Kingdom and in the other markets.

Mr. Chairman, the issue of the proposed strike at British Airways obviously concerns us quite a bit. Back in December when there was the threat of the strike around the Christmas period, I insisted that the officers at the Barbados Tourism Authority give me a backup plan.

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Hon. R. L. SEALY: In fact, we have had some talks with a carrier, someone who is willing to step up to the plate and will fill the bridge in the unlikely event that British Airways is grounded.

Mr. Chairman, even after that strike action was called off, well aware of the second ballot that the union was going to be having, and we talked about potential action around Easter, I did tell them not to put those plans too far but to keep the backup in place. Sir, we do have a backup plan with a carrier that will fill the bridge.

The discussion went as far as trying to determine how we would honour British Airways tickets. For example, people come to Barbados for extended periods so it is quite possible you could have people here grounded with British Airways' half use tickets. They may have one portion of it and how will they get back if they do not have the airline in place?

Mr. Chairman, we have looked at that and, of course, we have had a very candid discussion with our other partner as well. Sir, Virgin has been very good to us. If you remember when BMI was taken over by Lufthansa out of Germany and they stopped flying the Manchester/Barbados route, it was around that time that the Honourable Member for St. John, the Honourable Prime Minister, and myself were in the United Kingdom and we had a meeting with Sir Richard Branson. Sir, it was the same day that BMI announced that they would be stopping all of their long-haul flights in a few months time and he indicated to us that he would fill the bridge.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy to say that Virgin has been flying that Manchester/Barbados route and they have indicated to us as well that they will work with us if something was to happen. Sir, I just want to assure Honourable Members of the House and the Leader of the Opposition and, through the Chamber, the entire public that we are not at all sitting and waiting on something untoward to happen with respect to the British Airways' situation.

Mr. Chairman, the reality is, this is an airline that was always considered one of the best in the world and, certainly, used to register profits. Sir, they lost £292 million the first quarter of last year. Sir, these are very trying times and it is not good to put all your eggs in one basket.

Mr. Chairman, this is one of the same reasons I was so motivated to get JetBlue Airways in place and to get WestJet Airways and not to allow one carrier to hold us to ransom. Sir, that is the whole strategy that we are employing as far as our major source markets are concerned.

Mr. Chairman, I wanted to say those few things about the United Kingdom market. The Honourable Member did not mention it but I am sure it would interest the Honourable Member to know that as far as APD is concerned that there is limited capacity for what we can do. The reality is, it is a revenue raising tax and, as I have said earlier, the United Kingdom economy is in all sorts of challenges including fiscal challenges, and they have indicated that they are not going to do anything about the tax.

Sir, the most we can hope for now is, maybe, the planned increases in November, 2010. If you remember, it

was implemented in November last year and that there were plans to increase in November this year and maybe we can lobby and they can consider not doing those increases.

We can also lobby and maybe get the Caribbean re-banded. That is one of the things we were trying to do, to get ourselves on par with the United States of America.

Sir, the way that the APD is calculated is capital city to capital city, so because Washington, D.C. and London are a fixed distance, the tax that applies going to Honolulu or Hawaii is the same as going to New York City because, theoretically, the capital of Hawaii is, in fact, Washington, D.C.

Sir, we have that challenge as well trying to get ourselves re-banded. Sir, those are some of the APD challenges as well that we are also dealing with as far as getting more of the United Kingdom business.

Sir, it is more than just the potential British Airways strike. Sir, there are some of these real trying issues that we are dealing with.

I might also add that the Prime Minister met with Prime Minister Brown on the issue. I met with some Treasury official as well when I was up there in November during the World Travel Market period and there is nothing happening on that tax.

Mr. Chairman, there was also a courtesy call with Mr. William Hague from the Conservative Party and they too are not prepared to make any promises as far as alleviating the APD, should they form the next Government, which I understand is quite likely. Mr. Chairman, we have to accept that reality and operate in that environment. Sir, that is the reality.

Mr. Chairman, as far as 2010 is concerned, we are not folding our arms and we will continue to be quite active in the market. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East actually mentioned it in an aside but it is something I would say here on the Floor. Sir, because it is an election year, that would also affect us. The pattern has been that the British people tend not to travel during an election year. Again, you must also remember that a lot of our British visitors are persons that do come for extended periods.

Sir, for some strange reason as well, when there is a football World Cup they may not choose to travel here as well. Sir, there are those real challenges that we have had but we will continue to build the Barbados brand. We are continuing to work to attract our loyal customer base and we are working with our speciality niche areas. Sir, sports comes to mind right away.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: I spoke about World Cup Cricket, but I really have to make mention of the Fireballs World Championship that would be held here as well in April of this year. This is a yachting event and also is one that has a lot of interest as far as the United Kingdom is concerned. Sir, we continue to work hard in our sports area and continue to develop those niches.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that we need to have events, be it tennis events, golf events, cricket events, yachting events, cultural events, national festival events that help to drive people. Sir, the simple reality is that people are not going to come here to lie down on a beach and take a dip in the sea. It is just not happening anymore. We need to pack our calender with events that can also drive business here as well.

Mr. Chairman, that is the programme we are on. Sir, I just wanted to say those few things with respect to the concern the Honourable Member has for the United Kingdom market. We are not lying down and playing dead. I wanted to posit that. Sir, when I come back in my wrap-up, or in another contribution, I will deal with some of the other issues.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for the City.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Mr. Chairman, I rise to give my support to this Money Supplementary before this Chamber and to remind us all that this is the season of Lent and that as we remember sacrifices made by the Lord Jesus Christ for 40 days and 40 nights, that we must seek to be humble, contrite and penitent. Sir, I appeal to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East to internalise this concept.

Mr. Chairman, I am still in shock that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East so easily dismissed the poisoned chalice which her Barbados Labour Party Administration left for this Democratic Labour Party Government to drink from in terms of the noose around our neck of US\$14.772 million in terms of the total cost of the last Administration leasing the services of the Carnival Cruise Line Ship to house potential patrons of the World Cup, 2007.

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Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, this is made of the initial higher charter cost of US\$13 968 million, but to add fuel to fire, we paid US\$804 000 which was the estimated potential loss on revenue that a cargo cruise ship would have had to forego to lease that ship to Barbados, losing US\$14 727 million.

Sir, when you look at the fact that this is a lot of money, over BDS\$28 million, when economists talk about the opportunity cost of taking a particular decision, because when you go in one direction you forego the opportunity that you could have realised if you had taken another direction.

Sir, I am saying that the opportunity for the Barbados Labour Party wasting US\$14 million of Barbados' taxpayers' money in that fiasco in renting a cruise ship to accommodate patrons of Cricket World Cup 2007, the opportunity cost is, that money, over BDS\$28 million could have done a lot of things to help poor people in Barbados.

Sir, I have the honour of representing the good people of the City of Bridgetown, and during that World Cup scenario the Barbados Labour Party Administration tried to fool the people in the City that Christmas came early and all types of economic benefits would be derived, that the shopkeepers in the New Orleans and Chapman Lane would reap a bonanza.

Sir, the reality of it is, can you imagine that under the Barbados Labour Party Government of the last 14 years, during the Cricket World Cup 2007, as passengers disembarked their shuttle buses at Westbury Road, Cricket World Cup officials with their blow horns were announcing to the people not to go through the New Orleans or Pickwick Gap, but to stay on the front road? So the poor shopkeepers in Chapman Lane and Baxters Road were left holding the bag, and were not able to get the patronage of these tourists coming to our shores to watch the Cricket World Cup.

Sir, US\$14 million could have eradicated pit toilets from the face of Bridgetown. We have hundreds of households, as we speak, enduring the indignity of pit toilets, and that US\$14 million could have gone a long way in the hands of the Urban Development Commission, or the National Housing Corporation, to provide waterborne and bath facilities to these good people of the City, next to Kensington Oval, where hundreds of millions of dollars were spent to spruce up. Yet the patrons could stay from the highest elevation of those stands and look down at people bathing in their yards in the New Orleans and Chapman Lane, under the watch of the Barbados Labour Party, but they had the gall to waste US\$14 million, BDS\$28 million, in the fiasco of a cruise ship.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, the Honourable Minister of Tourism, mentioned that the funds actually realised by that rental were tremendously short of the mark. You had a mere US\$2.15368 million that the tour operators were able to garner from the use of the cabins to customers who actually stayed onboard those ships.

Sir, do you know what really eased the situation? After World Cup, you had the services of a local tour operator being encouraged to ensure that a little money was earned, in terms of Barbadians and other regional persons actually getting a rock bottom cruise, and that realised just over US\$1.15 million, leaving a shortfall of over BDS\$18 million that this Administration now has to pay for a total of 10 years.

This Supplementary is BDS\$2.5735 million in terms of a tranche to be paid to liquidate this debt. Sir, we will still be left at the end of March, 2010, with an outstanding balance of \$12.7433 million that this Democratic Labour Party and the taxpayers of Barbados will have to pay over the next eight or so years, all due to the gross mismanagement and incompetence of that wicked Barbados Labour Party Administration.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you cannot use the word "wicked" in relation to Honourable Members on the Other Side of the House, or indeed any other Member.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, we are all Honourable Members. I am talking about the Barbados Labour Party ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am saying that I do not want to encourage you to even use the word "wicked" in relation to the Barbados Labour Party Administration or any administration once you are speaking in the House.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: I take your guidance, Mr. Chairman.

Sir, the people of Barbados have exercised their democratic right in terms of their opinion of the Barbados Labour Party Administration. That is why they are now in the Opposition Benches of this Honourable House. The people have spoken and we have heard them all.

I would encourage the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East to be contrite. I must confess, I grew up in the Catholic Church. This is the season of Lent and I remember saying, and this is a prayer I would like the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East to focus on. "I confess to the Almighty God that I have sinned

through my thoughts and in my words, and what I have done and in what I have failed to do. I ask Blessed Mary and the All Angels and Saints and you my brothers and sisters to pray for me".

Asides.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, this is what the Barbados Labour Party must do, sit back and reflect.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I am just saying that while the Prayer is fine and we are in the period of Lent, we do have a Standing Order that a Honourable Member is not to reflect negatively on other Members, so I will want you not necessarily to say the Prayer in relation to anyone, particularly any Honourable Member of this House. Perhaps, if you want to say the Prayer in relation to the entire House, but you ought not to reflect negatively on any individual Member of the House.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, I agree with you absolutely. I am aware of the fact I would have alluded to this and reiterate that is something that all of us need to pray. We are all sinners and I am saying that we all must seek forgiveness. I am saying this is what the public expects from the Opposition, that rather than just try to hide away and sweep these things under the carpet, the Honourable Members really should stand up and face their transgressions and ask the public of Barbados to forgive them. We see the errors of our ways. Do not try to sweep them under the carpet. This is the reality.

Sir, if we bring this in the Supplementary for the next eight years, we will remind the public and the Barbados Labour Party of the wastage of that Administration, the wastage of US\$14 million, BDS\$28 million, that could have built a lot of houses in Barbados, solved the issue of drainage in Bridgetown where the Barbados Labour Party Administration left the Pump House at Pelican inadequately serviced in terms of spare parts and new pumps, and as a result the whole of Chapman Lane, Murphy's Pasture, Mason Hall Street and Reed Street were inundated with flood waters.

People had to be rescued by boat due to the innovated Barbados Labour Party, who did not realise that you could not waste BDS\$28 million in a misadventure called rental or lease of cruise ships. I hope that public of Barbados would not allow the Barbados Labour Party to forget about the wastage that has occurred.

Sir, as I continue on this Head, I support the laudable efforts of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, the Minister of Tourism, in terms of the thrust toward community tourism. I was able to attend the Community Tourism Fair which was held at the Parkinson Playing Ground, next to the Parkinson Secondary School.

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Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Sir, it was very well-patronised and we had a mixture of craft personnel, vendors of craft, food, condiments, entertainers and the tourists really interfaced well with the local population. I look forward to similar exercises being conducted in Bridgetown.

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

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We had some lit fields at Emmerton and New Orleans at the Westbury School pasture, Passage Road in the St. Michael West neighbouring and the Bay pasture. These areas are close to the cruise and I believe that we can really allow more of that tourist spent foreign exchange to reach the man in the street, the micro enterprise, be they the craft vendors, the condiments' vendors or the textile vendors.

The Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Commerce have facilitated these exposes, as it were at Independence Square and other venues. I was a patron of the Urban Festival held at Queen's Park, where the vendors themselves do not have the burden of having to spend money that they may not have, in terms of setting up the infrastructure of tents and tables but this is provided for them, so that they just have to turn up with their goods for sale.

They have been flocking in their numbers and really appreciating this hangup as opposed to a handout where we are facilitating their entrepreneurship, in terms of expanding their small businesses. This Member of Parliament looks forward to, as I said, upgrading Baxters Road, Queen's Park and other venues so that we can really have Bridgetown bubbling with activity, both day and night because the last Administration, unfortunately, left Bridgetown as a ghost town, generally speaking.

Sir, while travelling abroad, I remember going to Prague in the Czech Republic and seeing Charles Bridge and a lot of open cafes along the street. Sir, there were also musicians and other entrepreneurs luring visitors to engage in commerce and entertainment in the heart of these big cities.

I was in Vienna, and Baltimore, Maryland and I saw the seafood along the boardwalk. Even in Port Royal, Jamaica, you could get good lobster and this can happen in

the City of Bridgetown. This is the vision I have for Bridgetown and I am saying, Mr. Chairman, this Administration is committed to ensuring that community tourism is perpetuated not just in Bridgetown, but in Moon Town and all the other working-class districts in Barbados.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sir, tourism is such an important part of this economy that any debate on Tourism should receive the unanimous support of all Honourable Members, given its importance to our national development. In that regard, I just want to take a couple of minutes to lend my support to this Resolution and offer a few comments, in terms of where we are in other issues as I see it, that we should be always cognizant of, if we are to continue to grow our tourism plant.

Mr. Chairman, just this morning when I logged on to my computer, one of the things I saw was an article and I think it mentioned six jurisdictions that one should be weary of, if one is travelling as a tourist. I do not remember all of them but I remember some, Negril in Jamaica, Antigua and Haiti. I do not remember the other three. I think there was some mention of Tobago in the article, but I could be wrong.

The point that I want to raise is that because tourism is our business, we must guard the reputation of Barbados zealously, Sir, from the smallest child in junior school, through secondary school. I remember when I was at junior school that, in fact, there were several programmes to teach us the importance of tourism as a people and I just want to take this opportunity to reiterate that and to remind Barbados that tourism is indeed our business.

I am not sure if that is still the slogan, but certainly, in my heart and in my mind, I think in terms of tourism as being our business because of its importance to us, so there are things that we need to do as a people to ensure that it continues to grow.

I heard as an aside, one of my colleagues on the Front Bench saying earlier that, in fact, the days of tourists just coming to Barbados for sun and sea are over. In fact, we need to provide other reasons for them to come and I endorse that considerably that, in fact, we need to provide the Polo, Cricket, Football, even the Jazz Festival. Our Jazz Festival must be looked at now, not only in terms of the local attendance, but how it can bring people to Barbados

so that the quality of the artistes that we bring to Barbados must be of such that they bring people themselves.

There is a cadre of Barbadians that no matter whom you provide at Farley Hill, we will go to Farley Hill on that Saturday and Sunday. We want to see the airport filled during January for people who are coming to Barbados for Jazz. This is why I am saying that it is important to look at the quality of the artistes that we offer.

Sir, it saddens me that when I drive around Barbados it is not as clean a country as I would like. Again, Sir, something is not only important to us as a people, but certainly in terms of the ease that we give tourists when they come to the country. I say that consistent with my theme in terms that tourism is our business. We must all take whatever initiatives there are to ensure that our business is not threatened.

Mr. Chairman, there is an area of tourism that continues to annoy me slightly and my colleague from St. Michael West Central would normally have mentioned it because it is something that I know we are both passionate about. Sir, just last week I saw another ad in the newspaper again advertising for a work permit for a position that I do not see why a Barbadian cannot be a laundry manager in a hotel in Barbados.

Sir, it disappoints me and annoys me that the Trade Union Movement keeps a lot of noise about issues. They would keep noise about the Barbados Water Authority, and anything to do with Government but when it comes to certain sectors and certain players, they are silent. I cannot believe and I say this all the time, that after 60 years of tourism, given the large amount of money that we are spending in education, we are still importing people to do certain jobs in this country.

My colleague also mentioned the fact that we can have young school children at AgroFest producing outstanding menus. Yet, Sir, when it comes to tourism, we import all of our chefs. I do not understand it, Sir, but yet we can have chefs who are so well-recognised that they are sought after outside of Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, that is one area in terms of our tourism that really upsets me.

Mr. Chairman, I go to the issue of linkages. Sir, if you go to the Pegasus Hotel in Jamaica, one of the things you will notice is that the walls are filled with art of various Jamaicans. There is no reason, Sir, when I go into the Hilton Hotel, the Crane Hotel, or any hotel in Barbados that I should not be able to see art displayed of Barbadian artists, whether or not they pay the prices but so they get

that exposure. This is the point of linkages that I want to endorse, as mentioned by my colleague earlier. There are linkages also in terms of agriculture.

Sir, 40 per cent of the beef that we import into this country goes into the tourism sector and beef is not cheap. There is no reason why we should not be encouraging them to use lamb from Barbados or pork, the other white meat. In other words, given the subsidies that we give to the tourism sector, it owes us as a country, Sir, more of a responsibility in terms of bringing along more businesses with them and it must be said.

Sir, when I was a little boy - and it has continued over the years - every time there was a Budget you would always hear asked what is the tourism sector receiving and that has not changed. Sir, it is about time that someone says to the tourism sector: What are you giving in return, and are you giving enough?

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Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, my information is that only 12 or 13 cents out of every dollar that comes into the country in terms of tourism revenue remains in the country. Mr. Chairman, we need to look at that and determine whether or not we are indeed getting good value for money in terms of our investments into the sector.

Mr. Chairman, that is not discounting the recognition in terms of the large number of jobs. All I am saying is that the planners should look at the industry holistically and see whether or not we can get more out of it.

Sir, I want to compliment the Minister and the Barbados Tourism Authority on market diversity. We take comfort in the fact that the British market is so loyal to us. The numbers I heard were 40 per cent and 55 per cent of this spend. Mr. Chairman, we are happy and we encourage the British to come to our country, but it would be foolhardy of us to continue a situation where we have to depend too heavily on any one market. In that regard, I am happy to note that we are looking at Brazil. I am happy to note the subsidies for WestJet and JetBlue.

Mr. Chairman, I encourage the Minister to indeed look at Panama and Venezuela. Persons from these areas go to Miami and there is no reason why they should not come to Barbados. Venezuela is really an hour and a half... If you had a direct flight, it would actually be easier to get from Venezuela to Barbados than it is to get from Venezuela to Miami but they go to Miami because Miami is Miami. Sir, we even go to Miami because we believe that it is a place that one could go to shop and relax. Sir, there is no reason why we should not be able to persuade

them that it is better in Barbados because we all know it is indeed better in Barbados.

Sir, we also have, I am sure that the planners are looking at it, a bit of an identity crisis in terms of our marketing. Sir, I will use the Canadian market as a good example. The ordinary Canadian believes that Barbados is an expensive jurisdiction so when you are in Canada you would see signs of Cuba, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. Sir, there are many small intimate hotels in Barbados that you get good value for money.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is smiling, and I can gauge what he is thinking, but I am not going to go in that direction.

Sir, a good example is the Sun and Sea Apartment in St. Lawrence Gap, which is a self-contained apartment. Some of my friends stay there. I believe the rate is like \$75 a day. Sir, you could go next door and buy your case of banks beer.

Sir, there are lots of places in Barbados that are not so expensive where you could have a good holiday. Sir, we have to find some way to ensure that the world understands that yes we are a high-end brand but we cater for everyone. All I am doing, Sir, is echoing the call of the small intimate hotels in terms of giving them a piece of the marketing pie.

Sir, we know that they have a responsibility themselves to market themselves but we being the Government, and the Barbados Tourism Authority in terms of marketing, must ensure that the message goes forward that we not only want the Polo players and the high-ends but that, in fact, there is space in Barbados for all and sundry because we could cater and we could offer you a holiday regardless of your economic circumstance. We have to let that be known in the marketplace to the large number of tourists who go to Cuba and Jamaica under the misconception that they cannot afford a holiday in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, there are just two other areas I want to mention. Sir, without doubt there are a couple of challenges on the horizon that we need to address in terms of our tourism plant. Sir, climate change is one of them. We have to look at climate change and decide what steps we need to take in terms of its potential impact on Barbados as a tourism destination.

I am sure that the Barbados Tourism Authority has a plan in place, I am pretty confident about that. Sir, I think we should encourage more hotels to go green, to get into recycling. That should be a given in all of our hotel plants. In fact, come January 1 when they obtain their licences, we should look at them to ensure that they are as green as possible.

Sir, the area of disaster preparedness is another area where the Barbados Tourism Authority and where we as a Government, not only we in terms of us as a people, but in terms of our guests when they are here, must look at.

Sir, the Haiti experience has taught us that water is more important than food in terms of our disaster preparedness planning, therefore we and all hotels in Barbados should ensure that at every turn, particularly during the hurricane season, we have enough water that we can keep going for a couple of days in the event of an emergency.

Sir, I am happy after hearing where the Ministry of Tourism is going, I am happy when I hear the Minister because, without doubt, when you listen to the Minister there is a confidence and command of his Ministry that gives you confidence that he is aware of the challenges and that they are, in fact, taking the necessary steps to ensure that when this crisis is over that Barbados, as a country, will be ahead of a curve.

Sir, I lend my support to the Minister. As I would normally say, in the language of the boys, keep on keeping on because that is the only way that we would achieve success.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I feel a duty to join this discussion at this time as we seek support for a Supplementary of some \$15 million for the Ministry of Tourism under Head 55. I want to start by complimenting the Honourable Minister for the detail in which he went to explain not only what the money is needed for but what the Ministry is doing to ensure that the tourism sector is held up and held together as much as we can, given all the impasses, which are working apparently, or it would appear, not in its favour.

Barbados, we have accepted, is an economy now which is driven largely by tourism and by the services sector. Sir, I have the privilege of representing a constituency, which is largely predominated by tourism activity right along the South Coast from Worthing to St. Christopher in the East.

Sir, I therefore come into contact daily with tourism practitioners, both in the form of owners and investors in the tourism industry and also with Barbadians who work in the tourism industry. I believe, Sir, that you too have the honour of representing a number of persons who make their living out of the tourism industry.

The Minister seems acutely aware of the need to continue lobbying the Government of the Democratic Labour Party for support in whatever areas we can. The Minister was at length to speak to the support for airlift out of the United States of America and Canada.

The Minister spoke too of the opportunities we are looking at in Latin America, particularly Brazil. Of course, he also spoke to the more distant opportunities, not only distant in physical terms but distant in terms of the readiness for the implications of visitors from as far away as China and the like.

Mr. Chairman, it is important that this kind of preparation is made especially in light of the kind of missiles that could be thrown at us sometimes in desperation, I am sure, by the Honourable Members on the Barbados Labour Party Side. We heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East taunting almost, asking questions about the United Kingdom market. Every person in the world knows what is happening in the United Kingdom.

House A57 Sequence 40

5.30 p.m.

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, every person in the world knows what is happening in the United Kingdom. Every person in the world is acutely aware of what happened in Europe over the weekend with the strike at Lufthansa. Sir that is going to impact too on our tourism because we have German visitors from all over Europe who come in to London as the first stop on their transit journey to Barbados. So we are acutely aware of the reality of the world economy in which we live.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Members on That Side, of course, do not always appear sincere in acknowledging the reality of this and seek, for some reason, to blame the economic reality of the worldwide issues on a Democratic Labour Party on a two-by-four island in the Caribbean named "Los Barbados".

Mr. Chairman, we constantly have to remind this Honourable Chamber of the realities that we have inherited. Earlier this morning we spoke to the fortunes or misfortunes of Hotels and Resorts Limited (HRL). We spoke to what could be done with an entity whose debt was \$229 million and whose assets were worth some \$74 million. The Honourable Members on That Side had all kinds of recommendations about what to sell, when to sell what. The Government of Barbados would be delighted if it could sell the debt which it has inherited on their behalf for

the Carnival Cruise Liner for nothing. We would be delighted if we could sell the US\$14 million.

Mr. Chairman, we have to stop this confusion of speaking in a Barbadian Parliament of United States of America dollars. If we could sell the \$28 million for nothing, got nothing for it, we would be delighted, a debt that they created for us, and we constantly remind Barbadians, not because we have nothing else to do or not because we would not prefer to be spending all of our energies in planning for the future, but we have to remind Barbadians that we have to constantly stop and reconsolidate the whole fiscal reality of the Barbadian economy based on continued revelations of inappropriate management of the affairs of this economy.

When we speak about the BDS\$28 million for the Carnival Cruise Liner it is not that we do not want to take part in the benefits of the cruise line industry, especially as we benefit from it, but when we can make the kind of decisions that were made around the Cricket World Cup, 2007 to which the Minister spoke eloquently, to the extent that we were unable to deliver a Cricket World Cup, 2007 in the kind of style and fashion which is accustomed to the West Indies Cricket, given the fact that we were not going to perform ourselves, we could at least have produced a Final which the world would have been looking on as a spectacle.

Sir, instead we had the reality of an unfinished, incomplete game because of the kinds of decisions taken by the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, they have to understand that is the reality and the Minister has assured us that those kinds of decisions are not going to accompany the Cricket World Cup, Twenty/20 Tournament carted for the Caribbean shortly, and I am happy about that.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister spoke to the way the Barbados Labour Party handled the question of the monies for Carnival Destiny. He spoke to the fact that the matter was never dealt with in this Parliament. Sir, I have here the record of the events of Tuesday May 29, which bear repeating to the people of Barbados when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East withdrew Order No. 9 at that time which called for a guarantee of some BDS\$28 million for the Barbados Tourism Authority. They took it off the parliamentary agenda for Barbados. That is the way they operate. It was therefore a loan which would have been received by stealth.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East can continue to pretend that she is some scholar but we know where her scholastic talents lie. It is a matter of public record in Barbados and she could grapple with that. Sir, the

Right Honourable Member for St. Peter stays away from her and he knows why. I have never seen that gentleman in this Honourable Chamber while that Honourable Member has been in charge of proceedings on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party. He does not come.

Mr. Chairman, when the Honourable Member for St. Lucy sought to explain that, in his view, we should be making sure that these borrowings were legitimised, he was stopped by the Speaker of the day who said: "Honourable Member, that is not what was said, you will have to withdraw that."

Sir, in other words, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy had said: "Sir, as I said previously, we have no intention of interfering with the business of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. If the Government is of the belief that the original arrangements were successful and that there is no need to come before this Parliament..." In other words, they had made profits, they had made money, they did not need to borrow, they did not need the support of the security of the Parliament of Barbados, then we are in support of it.

Mr. Chairman, the truth is that the Supplementary today, no matter what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East may want to clothe it in, whatever comments the Honourable Member may want to add to whether it should be now or two years ago in some Estimates, the point is that the Supplementary today is to deal with the fact that loan exists, that it has not been properly dealt with by the Barbados Labour Party, and that it is symptomatic of the way they did things during the 14 years of their rule. Sir, we continue to have to clean up, correct all these issues.

Sir, all the Honourable Member could offer, even in this season of Lent -and we were reminded by the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown - all the Honourable Member could offer to Barbadians is doom and gloom about the real issues of the workers of British Airways; and doom and gloom about the highway.

Every day the Honourable Member comes here and taunts this Honourable Member about the ABC Highway because we thought to save the spending or the commitment of some \$154 million more by the Barbados Labour Party. That was their Draft National Strategic Plan.

Mr. Chairman, the people of Christ Church South depend a lot on what happens in tourism from St. Lawrence Gap and Worthing in the south and along the coast. We see developments day after day, new restaurants, new businesses, hotels, condominiums and, of course, the award-winning Oistins Bay Gardens.

Mr. Chairman, I need to spend two minutes on the fact that we need to continue to support these efforts. I am committed to making sure that representation is made at all levels, in this Honourable Chamber and outside, so that a fair deal will be available to all those participants in the tourism sector. We know there are hardships, that is why the Tourism Relief Fund is there.

The Honourable Member spoke about that Fund. That is why that Fund is there for the tourism practitioners to draw from. The details are being worked out and will be worked out, in spite of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. Sir, people have already accessed the Fund and are benefitting from it.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. The Honourable Member has indicated that the details are now being worked out. The Minister has indicated that these details were worked out virtually a year ago, when he introduced the Fund here. Sir, somebody is not telling the truth.

5.40 p.m.

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, those who have benefitted from TURF will answer the questions in this Parliament. The Honourable Member can try to draw any red herring across the buoy of this discussion but the reality is those who have benefitted will benefit from TURF and whether TURF remains in its present form and is expanded to encompass more practitioners, that is a choice Government will make in the full course of time.

Mr. Chairman, the important thing is that the tourism practitioners in Barbados are assured of representation. They are assured of the hard work and his team at the Minister of Tourism and they are assured of the support of the work of this Honourable Chamber that is being done to ensure the livelihood for the practitioners and the people who work in the industry.

Sir, I am obliged to you.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, to put a few things in context. If the speech of the last Member is to be relied upon for any effort to advance the cause of the tourism practitioners, or people benefitting from tourism in this country, then they would truly hold their heads down

in shame because it was an absolute display of a lack of awareness with respect to what is important to the tourism industry.

The Honourable Member, as usual, is accustomed to trying to put forward defences in circumstances where he fears that the Government soft underbelly is being shown, but we will allow him those pleasures, particularly since he has his own challenges in the Minister of Public Works now and the record there in terms of a number of things from the issuance of contracts right back through is not salutary, but day will run as far as night catches it, as far as the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is concerned.

Mr. Chairman, in respect of the amount. What is significant is that the Minister indicated that the amount for servicing of the debt was \$2.5 million. Let us also remember what this was. The Minister would do well - I would let him be the beneficiary of time and doubt - to recognise that in the hosting of the Twenty/20 it is a minor event in comparison to what would have been confronted in respect of World Cup, 2007.

Secondly, in case we all forgot, nobody anticipated that Pakistan and India would be knocked out of a tournament in the first round. Thirdly, the very same officials who he says, in this debate, are still advising him, would have indicated that there was not adequate room stock and hence the need for the lease of the Carnival vessel. Sir, more important, look when he tells you the plans to lease it were made, in 2006, a full year almost in front of the leasing of World Cup, 2007.

Mr. Chairman, if the Minister feels that is an issue to be deprecated, that is a matter for him because Twenty/20 is hindsight, but the reality is that there has not been a World Cup in which the two primary teams that were expected to drive attendance, as well as sponsorship, were knocked out of the tournament in the first round.

Sir, Pepsi in India lost US\$50 million in its sponsorship campaign for World Cup and the Attorney-General has suddenly discovered a voice, sotto voce, to want to know why the Resolution for the loan was withdrawn. The reality is that the Letter of Comfort was given.

Mr. Chairman, what are the facts? Who has been the Government for the last two years, who would have had the responsibility for bringing the Government guarantee, if there was initially to be a letter of comfort and a Government guarantee? Sir, in almost every major capital project that involves the Government borrowing money or guaranteeing money, the first stage is always a letter of comfort. Sir, in many instances, the Letter of Comfort ends up not being converted to a guarantee, although it should,

largely because the money is either being paid back or other arrangements are being made.

Mr. Chairman, if the Government found that something was wrong and that the Letter of Comfort was not sufficient, they have been the Government for 26 out of the 38 months, so that the person whose responsibility it is to certify the Government's guarantee has been the Attorney-General. He has not certified it. It is true that he has certified very little legislation too, but he did not certify the Government's guarantee.

Mr. Chairman, the person whose responsibility to ask for the Government's guarantee to be put in place is the Minister of Tourism, but nothing has been done. Mr. Chairman, the person whose responsibility it is to bring the Government's guarantee is the Minister of Finance, but nothing has been done. Sir, when all is said and done, the Government and the Minister of Finance must have determined in the last two years that there was sufficient coverage through the Letter of Comfort but, Sir, that is another red herring to distract us from the real issues facing tourism.

Mr. Chairman, I would have made the point that the fact of the Tourism Relief Fund...

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

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I just need to have this cleared up. There was a Resolution brought to this House for guarantee of this loan. It was withdrawn by the Honourable Member and no explanation was given. All I have done in here today from my seat is to ask the Honourable Member why was the Resolution withdrawn. Sir, that is all I want to know.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, once again, the Honourable Attorney-General only seeks to reinforce the fact that for the last 26 months he has had the opportunity to perfect the legal irregularity that he asserts and, as usual, has failed to take any action to correct it for 26 months. Sir, if that is what he wants to be in contention in here today...

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I really do not want to prolong this. The issue is not what I have taken action to do or not do. The Honourable Member has said that the Minister of Tourism has to get the guarantee prepared and that the Minister of Finance has to bring it. Those issues are issues for the present. I am dealing with the issue relating to the time at which the Resolution for the guarantee was withdrawn.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member stood up in this House on May 29, 2007, and said:

“Mr. Speaker, Sir, Order No. 9 calls for a guarantee of \$14 772 000 for the Barbados Tourism Authority for the leasing of a cruise line. We are seeking to remove this from the Order Paper as I am informed by the Minister of Tourism that this guarantee is no longer necessary.”

Mr. Chairman, I want to know why it was withdrawn.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member has clearly read his response but what is more important that if it is his contention that there should have been a Government guarantee then, the person to advise the Government to make sure it is corrected is the person who provides legal advice to the Government. Sir, it has been so lacking...

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I have not said that there was any need for any guarantee. I have asked the Honourable Member why was the guarantee withdrawn.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, now we have closure to the issue. The Attorney-General has finally admitted that there was no need for a Government guarantee so that what we had today was a debate based on a construct that was fictitious in nature to act as a separate point to distract people from the real issues.

H/A57/17:50 Sequence 42

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Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The real issues are, how will the tourism establishment face tomorrow knowing that they have put in \$80 million, almost in claims, from a \$25 million Fund? How will we prepare ourselves, as we have indicated, for the continuous unexpected activities such as the British Airways strike?

Now the Minister has started to address that. It is a matter of some regret that other Honourable Members in this Chamber do not feel, at least, like the Minister, that there is a public out there wanting to know what are the issues the Government is dealing with that affect their day to day interests.

Now I welcome the abuse and attacks on the Barbados Labour Party because the truth is...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I remind you that before you proceed, we have exactly 10 more minutes. I recall the Honourable Member for St. Michael

North East undertaking that she would take only five minutes.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Yes, Sir.

Hon. F. J. STUART: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I did not hear anybody in this Honourable House abuse the Honourable Member. Certainly, if somebody did, it would be a reflection on Your Honour because it would mean that Your Honour is tolerating abuse in this Chamber. That did not happen. All we asked is why was the Resolution for the guarantee withdrawn, and we have not received an answer yet.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I thank you for taking action because, as you know, you had to take action to stop an Honourable Member, not on protestations, but from his behaviour in here.

Sir, the point is, the Honourable Attorney-General cannot deflect from the reality that there is a serious state of affairs within the tourism industry, and the practitioners within the industry would want to know when the level of support - they kept people employed, they put in bills of almost \$80 million. The Government has legally voted \$25 million, \$15 million last year and \$10 million this year. When will they be paid? How many cents in the dollar they will get, because clearly what has been voted does not admit a full recovery of their claims.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, of course, I am wrapping up this debate. I have to thank everyone for their contributions and support that we have been receiving for our efforts.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has 10 minutes.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Sir, first of all, I have the figures of the arrivals for January and February, up to the middle of the month, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East requested. I make this a document of the House and it is there for the perusal of all Honourable Members. I never believe in getting too carried away with figures. We were 6.6 per cent up in January and we are 8 per cent for the first two weeks of February, so far. That is overall arrivals and those figures are there for Honourable Members to digest.

As far as TURF is concerned, very quickly, we had just under \$40 million of claims with Phase 1 of which \$15

million was disbursed, and as far as Phase 2 is concerned, we had just about \$45 million claimed, of which \$10 million was disbursed. The criteria was basically looking at a three-month period, January to March 2008, compared to January to March 2009. On that basis, in terms of your losses, your claims were met.

Sir, the methodology used, and let me add, I think it is very fundamental to say this, the Enterprise Growth Fund administered the disbursement, so it is not a case of any minister or anyone just willy-nilly deciding who gets what. The method was very simple, first, to find a cutoff point of the disbursement which would meet the full claim of the largest number of applicants, that level was found to be \$700 000, which met, in full, the submissions of 97 per cent of the applicants, so only 13 per cent of the applicants would have received what they claimed on a pro-ratio basis. In terms of the residual it would have been divided and pro rated and claimants would have had their claims met accordingly.

The reviews were quite good. I have several letters that have been written to me from players in the sector appreciating Government's effort at trying to alleviate in what would be totally unforeseen circumstances and trying circumstances.

I also think that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East may want to be a little balanced in terms of discussing the Government's conduct towards the private sector within the context of tourism. It is not only the TURF Fund which was a one-off, if you want to call it that. Remember that the hoteliers got relief on land tax. They do not pay the same land tax as other people.

Remember there is the TDA that provides duty-free relief in terms of the importation of certain items. Remember there was the National Insurance Scheme arrangements that were made, which the Prime Minister had announced as far as the settling of arrears. There are other things that are happening, as well, in order to try to provide relief.

The Barbados Tourism Authority continues to run a series of systems as well with the hotels. If you identify some softness, we can work together to try to fill those rooms. I think that is always better than holding out your hand and asking for relief. If we can help you to be more profitable as opposed to cutting a cheque, I think that is more appreciated and the direction that we want to move in.

Sir, the issue of the management at the Barbados Tourism Authority, let me say, because the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East tried to suggest some managerial incompetence on the part of this exercise we are engaging in today. The whole issue of the Carnival -

you alluded to the fact that the management at the Barbados Tourism Authority...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. I never accused anybody at the Barbados Tourism Authority of negligence or mismanagement. I said that the very same persons in their best judgment gave a determination that there would be inadequate room stock. These are the people that the Minister indicated, only a new minutes earlier in this debate, that he is taking advice from. The same advisors that have advised him, have advised, that the rooms were inadequate, particularly given the fact that the likelihood of Pakistan and India being knocked out in the first round was virtually known, so there is no reflection of incompetence.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Sir, I was a Member of this Chamber, albeit in the Opposition. I do not remember any chorus of officials suggesting that we rent a cruise ship. It was a very controversial issue. There were several people who felt that it was absolute nonsense and thought, in fact, that we should have been trying to get the people into some of the small hotels and so on. That is what I recall.

I understand what the Honourable Member is saying. Sure there was support for that idea but there was also support against it. I was only saying that we are getting things together at the Barbados Tourism Authority.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West alluded to the restructuring effort. We have an internal auditor who is there improving our processes in terms of the way in which we account, the way in which funds are disbursed and the efficiencies and systems are being put in place.

Sir, the issue of the Letter of Comfort - the thing with a Letter of Comfort, obviously is, it carries a higher interest rate, but the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East knows this. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East took the advice of the Minister of Tourism and withdrew the Resolution in 2007, according to what Hansard says.

What I am doing as Minister of Tourism is, we are engaging with the Ministry of Finance to see what we can do to hive off that debt all together from the Barbados Tourism Authority so that the money can go to market the country. Take it from the Barbados Tourism Authority. It was an issue for the last Government. I know it was discussed, but it was left at the Barbados Tourism Authority, but we are doing our part.

Nevertheless, the fact is, the question in terms of why the Resolution was withdrawn is yet to be answered, but I am not going to get into that. Apparently, the Minister

of Tourism is now supposed to give the Government legal advice on a guarantee like that, but this Minister of Tourism will not be giving any legal advice. We are looking at what is the best way forward in order that we can have those funds to market the country.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to speak quickly about some of the other issues that were raised. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East spoke about Caribbean visitors. It is still our third largest market. We are happy to see so far some improvement. The LIAT air fares are obviously a big issue. We are working with them running some special programmes and we are also talking to some other players. Panama was mentioned, Air Colbert is very keen to come, but we are taking it in bits and bites. The GOL is a little further advanced and eventually we will have air service hopefully from Panama.

HA57 18.00 p.m. Sequence 43

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House A57, Sequence 44, 6.00 p.m.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: The Farm to Table Programme, of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, we are all for it and there are some hoteliers that are participating but more of them need to participate and certainly this Government is committed to broadening the stakeholdership within the sector.

The Manifesto speaks very clearly to the whole feeling of alienation within the tourism industry and our determination to end it, hence, community tourism, hence our efforts to embrace the vendors, hence the same Farm to Table Programme. All of those issues and efforts we are trying to improve and broaden their participation.

I would also mention that the whole idea of restructuring and creating the product company would also create more opportunities for young Barbadians, who have studied tourism management, destination management and marketing, to participate in promoting the important sector of our country.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: It is important that so many of them study and then find themselves working as tellers in a bank or something like that, not that there is anything wrong with being a bank teller, but if you studied tourism, you want to have the opportunity to blaze your trail within that sector.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Thank you, Sir.

Sir, we will do that and we obviously are all for promoting chefs and that was mentioned as well. The culinary experience of Barbados is very much celebrated and we have excellent chefs here. I am happy to say that we are seeing some improvements. There are actually a couple of top restaurants that have Barbadian chefs so we are seeing the transition of sous chefs and assistants moving up, and we need to push that and encourage that because it fits right in with the Democratic Labour Party's philosophy of broader participation and more people getting involved in the sector and not that Barbadians feel alienated within their own tourism industry.

Mr. Chairman, once again, I want to salute everyone who has worked so hard and also spoke to the institutional arrangements that we are putting in place. We know about the marketing company that the BHTA has endorsed in its latest newsletter. We know about the product company.

We are not leaving out cruise, either. We are looking at arrangements for a task force to deal with that sub sector and how we can get more out of it. Sir, we will continue to work hard to see that this industry continues to grow going into the future.

With those remarks, Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 55 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 65 - MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, EMPOWERMENT, INNOVATION, TRADE AND INDUSTRY - \$7 000

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

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 65 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 69 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE - \$1 048 000

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 69 stand part.

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

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Explanatory Notes to Head 69 stand part as set out in the Schedule.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of two Money Resolutions 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, these Resolutions were read a first and second time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today's Sitting and I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

House A57, Sequence 44, 18:08:13

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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. Supplementary Estimates No. 9, Head 55. The Head is printed as 'MINISTRY OF TOURISM - \$12 582 501', but the Minister says the Barbados Tourism Authority alone needs '\$12.8071 million'. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Supplementary Estimates No. 8, Head 62, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley. Speaking of the \$3 million for Hotels and Resorts Limited, the Member is reported as saying 'how you can seek \$3 billion of Government's expenditure'. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Supplementary Estimates No. 9, Head 55, Carnival Destiny charter. The sum recovered from the charter is given as 'I think US\$4 million' (Hon. R. L. Sealy) and as 'a mere US\$2. 15368 million' (Hon. P. M. T. Todd); the year's debt-service tranche is given as 'BDS\$2.5735 million' and '\$2.5 million'. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Supplementary Estimates No. 8, Head 62, Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick's reply. One speech heading for Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick is followed only by '. . .', apparently marking a gap in the record. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Take-slip about 1.50 p.m.. The take-slip after the resumption reads 'House A57, sequence 02, 13:50:12', the same sequence number as the morning take-slip 'House A57, sequence 02, 10:20:12'. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Supplementary Estimates No. 8, Head 28. Head 28 (Ministry of Home Affairs) is printed without the sum sought, unlike the other Heads. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 23rd February, 2010 at 10.00 a.m., with the Speaker, His Honour M. A. Carrington, in the Chair. After the Minutes were confirmed and Standing Orders suspended, Mr. A. D. Brathwaite was appointed temporary Chairman of Committees in the absence of the Member for Christ

Church West Central, and the House went into Committee of Supply on the Resolution to grant \$9 014 038 under Supplementary Estimates No. 8, 2009-2010. When Mr. S. A. Lashley arrived, progress was reported and he took the Chair.

Under Head 56, the Minister of Community Development and Culture, Hon. S. D. Blackett, sought \$1 520 243, including \$70 000 towards the 9th Meeting of the International Advisory Committee of the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, funds for the Film Censorship Board and library electricity, and \$28 176 for the Commission of Pan African Affairs. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, Mr. H. F. Lashley, Miss C. Y. Forde, who raised concerns about the National Cultural Foundation, Hon. M. A. Lashley, Hon. P. M. T. Todd, Hon. R. D. Jones, His Honour K. St.C. Best and Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe spoke. In reply Mr. Blackett said the Oistins Library would be refurbished under the 2010-2011 Estimates, that a new site in St. Andrew was sought for the Party Monarch Competition, that legislation to honour the national heroes would be brought, and that there would be four cavalcades this year because of the Foundation's finances. Head 56 was agreed to.

Under Head 62, Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick sought \$4 072 395, of which \$3 million was for Hotels and Resorts Limited (the GEMS project) to keep it operating and preserve jobs. He said its debt stood at \$229 million against properties valued at \$74 million, that he would advise the Prime Minister to sell, and that it was the Barbados Labour Party which had sold the Barbados National Bank, the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, Easry House, Worthings Court and Silver Rock. The Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, said there could be no absolute line on divestment but that a forced sale in a crisis would not obtain proper returns and read a letter of December 15, 2009 ending the employment of food and beverage staff at the Savannah Hotel. Head 62, as amended, and Heads 19, 28 and 50 were agreed to.

During the suspension Mr. Jones had given notice of a Resolution for \$15 102 395 under Supplementary Estimates No. 9, which was then taken. Heads 12 (air-conditioning for the East Wing of Parliament), 19 (a guillotine for the Government Printing Department) and 30 (electricity at the new Judicial Centre, where Mr. Best and the Attorney-General, Hon. F. J. Stuart, noted the lack of accommodation for litigants) were agreed to.

Under Head 55, the Minister of Tourism, Hon. R. L. Sealy, explained support for airlift by JetBlue (\$2.6 million), US Airways (\$2 million), WestJet (\$2.2 million) and Air Jamaica, \$500 000 for a planned service from Sao

Paulo, and a payment on the loan for the Carnival Destiny charter for Cricket World Cup 2007. Miss Mottley asked about claims on the Tourism Industry Relief Fund and the threatened British Airways strike. Hon. D. O’N. Inniss, Mr. H. F. Lashley, Hon. C. P. Sinckler, Mr. J. D. Paul, Mr. Todd, Mr. Brathwaite and Mr. Boyce also spoke, several criticising the US\$14 million cruise ship lease. Points of order passed between Miss Mottley and Mr. Stuart over the withdrawn Resolution for a guarantee of the loan. Mr.

Sealy laid the January and February arrival figures and said TURF claims had reached just under \$40 million in Phase 1 and about \$45 million in Phase 2.

Heads 55, 65 and 69 and the Explanatory Notes to Head 69 were agreed to, the two Money Resolutions were reported, read a first and second time and passed, and the House was adjourned until Tuesday, March 2, 2010 at 10.00 a.m.