
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, March 18, 2010

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Good afternoon Honourable Members, this Sitting of the House of Assembly is resumed. When the Suspension was taken yesterday evening, the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it will now revert.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resumed Committee of Supply, Mr. J. PAUL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (RESUMED)

ORDER No. 5 (RESUMED)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee of Supply. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, as we continue our look at this very important Head, I just want to touch on some of the other very important work that the Ministry is engaging in.

Mr. Chairman, under the medium-term development strategy of Barbados, we have promised to look at the institutional arrangements that govern the work of this very important sector, and to that extent, the Ministry is engaging in a series of exercises that are extremely important.

Mr. Chairman, I did touch on the restructuring of the overarching institutions, namely the Ministry of Tourism and the Barbados Tourism Authority, and our efforts at setting up Barbados' first tourism marketing company and having a product authority.

Mr. Chairman, apart from that, we have been also looking at the Tourism Development Act, which came into being in 2002 to replace the old Hotel Aids Act. Mr. Chairman, no sooner than it was gazetted, it was found that there were shortcomings and so we have been trying to address some of these shortcomings.

At the same time, we see it as an opportunity to also deal with some other aspects of developing tourism in Barbados. That is why the new Tourism Development Act that we expect to put in place will also have an incentive offered to projects where there is a greater level of Barbadian involvement. Mr. Chairman, depending on the level of Barbadian involvement in terms of ownership of the project, you can qualify for income tax relief. The greater the percentage of Barbadian involvement, the greater the level of tax relief. My understanding is that a similar model worked with the fiscal incentives that are administered by the Ministry of Economic Affairs, so we are working at trying to get that framework in place. Mr. Chairman, it is important that we get that right and we are working to that extent.

Mr. Chairman, we have been trying for some time now to deal with all of the many issues involved in preparing Barbados' first Tourism Master Plan. I am happy to say that the Ministry of the Civil Service has done their part in terms of creating the posts to get the unit up and running and that the Chief Supply Officer is doing what is necessary for us, not only to have the overall management of the Master Plan Unit, but also the various consultancies that would be involved in preparing the Tourism Master Plan.

Mr. Chairman, I think that we really need to understand, if we are going to talk about this industry as being so important for Barbados' development, as an employer, as an earner of foreign exchange and also as a way of life for us as well, that our development within that industry cannot be done on an ad hoc basis. Therefore it is a right thing to have not only the correct institutions in

terms of our public sector but that we have the appropriate Master Plan that we can locate future development in the industry. This has not been done in the past. In fact, much of the development, even in recent times, the investment and so on and the manner in which it has been done, we could have definitely benefitted from having a Master Plan in place.

Sir, some of the areas we expect to cover in this Tourism Master Plan include tourism standards; cruise tourism, accommodation, aviation, tourism product development, tourism awareness, private and public sector institutional roles, tourism marketing, economic, social and environmental impact, human resource development, particularly manpower planning and making sure that we have all of those resources, land use, the environmental considerations that I mentioned already, community development planners, and the whole question of information technology, so that we can continue to develop this sector.

Mr. Chairman, we recognise the point that this Government has been making for its entire life since 2008, which has been repeated in this debate, that it is not only the figures, but that you have to deal with some of the wider issues, the social impact.

Mr. Chairman, the cruise subsector is doing well and therefore we think that the appropriate institutional framework for the cruise industry also needs to be put in place. Cabinet has approved the reconstitution of the Cruise Tourism Task Force. This is a good move towards eventually having those developments located within a framework.

There are some serious challenges with long-stay versus the short-stay visitors on the beaches on the West Coast. We know that there was a problem at Paynes Bay. I understand the problem has subsided a little since the closure of the Blue Monkey, but we still have this problem of the clashes between visitors here for an extended period and the day trippers that come in on the cruise ships, so we need to have a framework to deal with that issue.

Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt that by having the various interests represented on a Cruise Task Force that we can deal with some of those issues; some of the challenges in the Port and some of the other issues of shore excursions and interfacing with the cruise lines to make sure that we can get a greater stake for smaller operators, something that would be near and dear to your heart, and provisioning for these cruise ships based on what you do when you are not here. How can our local agriculturalists and industrialists benefit by supplying these lines? I know you would be very interested in that, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, we recognise that cruise ships need that appropriate framework to operate within and we are creating it. We are dealing with the issues. We are not just looking at them. As much money as was spent on the Bridgetown Port by the last Government, there is still some serious infrastructural work to be done there if we want to be considered a serious cruise destination. We have to separate cargo operations from cruise operations. I believe that the Honourable Member for St. James Central would talk in some more detail about the development plans for the Port and the vicinity of the Port.

We have to naturally deal with the question of how our craftsmen, our vendors and so on would benefit as well. A whole set of money was spent on Pelican Village. Sir, the truth is that sometimes when there is a massive cruise ship in the Port, you could almost play cricket in Pelican Village or run wild bulls through there. That is something that needs to be confronted and dealt with. Again, we now have the framework, the Cruise Tourism Task Force, that would be addressing those issues and ultimately leading to the creation of the appropriate institution.

House A60D Sequence 1

2.10 p.m.

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Hon. R. L. SEALY: I do not want to say whether or not there is going to be a Cruise Authority. I would not want to preempt the work of the Task Force. I want to give them chance to meet, to consult, to create their own Working Group, to do what they have to do. We, therefore, will be expected to deal with some of those other issues, for example, the issue of vessels leaving early.

Sir, if we could convince the cruise vessels to stay a little later, then more people could benefit, for example, restaurants. As it is right now, if a cruise ship is leaving around 4.30 p.m., you come here in the morning early and by 2.00 p.m. you are trying to make your way back into the Port. Even to do a good island tour probably you would have to hustle, certainly after you would have had a meal, to get back into the Bridgetown Port. Therefore, we know there are some challenges and we are dealing directly with those challenges. There is also the question of shops, et cetera, and how we could get these various entities to benefit from it.

Mr. Chairman, I think that cruise tourism has been doing very well. It is one of the bright spots. Even in these recessionary times, we have seen increases in the number of cruise visitors coming here.

I would also say that there is nothing wrong with giving credit. The last Government signed a contract with

Carnival Corporation guaranteeing a certain number of cruises here every year, and it was a good thing.

Mr. Chairman, sometimes you must give credit where credit is due, but this Government has renegotiated that contract and it now has a homeporting component. They did a good thing. We did a better thing. Therefore, there is another component now that encourages the cruise lines to attract persons here, who will be staying a minimum of three days, I believe, on either side of the cruise.

Sir, there is an added incentive there too. Sir, we understand that homeporting is something that we should develop. Homeporting has all sorts of possibilities and greater possibilities than merely being a stop on a cruise itinerary. Therefore, we are determined to develop that.

Mr. Chairman, I know that the Honourable Member for St. James Central has some very strong views, for example, of what we can do to take away some of the seasonality, bringing in cruises out of South America. I again look forward to hearing from the Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Mr. Chairman, before I take my seat, I did not want to respond to too much of what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North had to say. Sir, the truth is, I do not know why the Honourable Member should take advice... We are going through a very challenging period. I have had to deal with tremendous challenges. I have had to dig in and confront my challenges. I did not draft a resignation letter and handed it to the Honourable Member for St. John when the price of oil went to almost \$160 a barrel, and airlines were dropping out of the sky. When Lehman Brothers collapsed, I did not resign and run on the Back Bench and moped around this place, sulking and griping. I did what I had to do.

Mr. Chairman, one of the things I did, as I told the story about JetBlue - You would notice that the Honourable Member wants me to talk about JetBlue because he knows it is really a feather in the cap of this Government in bringing JetBlue to Barbados. Sir, he does not want to see the details on Virgin Atlantic, BA, Air Canada, WestJet or Condor, but wants to see the details on JetBlue because JetBlue is working.

JetBlue has our numbers up out of the United States of America, and that is a problem with the Honourable Member. At any rate, we spent \$1.6 million on JetBlue. Do you want the figure? \$1.6 million is what we spent between October 1 and this financial year.

Sir, as I said, Barbados does not have a national airline, so why is there this comparison with Jamaica? The reason there was so much hue and cry about the American

Airlines contract, in part, had to do with the fact that Jamaica is bleeding and a lot of people did not feel that they should have gone on that American Airline relationship while their national carrier was struggling. Stop comparing Barbados to Jamaica. The issues are different. We do not have a national carrier and the last Government paid for airlift. The Government before that also paid for airlift. It is a constant process.

Mr. Chairman, let me just say and let me repeat this. You cannot get the details. There is a seat subsidy component. There is a co-op marketing component. You cannot get those details because it would be wrong. You can get the figures. You said you wanted the figures and you have them, \$1.6 million for a service that has brought so far 16 875 people to Barbados. Sir, by the way, 74 per cent of those persons stayed in hotels, only 25 per cent were VFR and this service is coming from New York. Sir, you would expect to have a lot of Barbadians getting on a plane coming out of JFK.

Mr. Chairman, since the Honourable Member has asked about the cost of airlifts, for the benefit of Honourable Members, let us talk about the Air India service last Cricket World Cup, 2007, one flight from Bombay to Bridgetown. Let me say that we paid Bds.\$1.6 million for 16 875 passengers. You want to hear? Sir, for 385 passengers on a flight from Bombay, they paid \$1.3 million for that plane. This happened in March 2007, so talk about that.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, I am reading from my notes, I am saying they rented a plane from Air India and then went up to the airport and had all sorts of noise - "O we have opened the new gateway. Flights are coming from India." Sir, not one single plane has come from India since then.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, do you know what happened? Sir, because of the hasty arrangement, they had not even made arrangements for a replacement crew and so all the people here who bought tickets to go from Bridgetown to Bombay had to be reimbursed, so there was more money on top of that \$1.3 million.

Mr. Chairman, I say to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, yes, I went to the Consolidated Fund for \$1.6 million to bring in 16 875 people, most of whom stayed at hotels and guest houses in Barbados, while your Government went for Bds.\$1.3 million to bring 385 people here.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: That is why the Honourable Member for Christ Church West is scampering. Mr. Chairman, I want to put that on the table. This JetBlue thing is causing this great unease. Everybody is hailing it as a success and American Airlines is still doing well. The Honourable Member has not asked, but I will tell him. We spent \$1.5 million with American Airlines for the same period.

Sir, again I cannot give you the details but I think you would appreciate that the loads are very strong on American Airlines, so they can work it out for themselves. Mr. Chairman, we will get into some of those other matters but I just want, for purposes of clarity, to put that on record.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

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

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, there are always a time and opportunity for fairness. Sir, in looking at the course the debate has taken so far, even though it is true that, generally-speaking, the debate is of a high standard, I think that some Honourable Members have not been fair to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

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Mr. R.C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North is a distinguished Member of this Honourable House, well-known to be conscientious in all he does and is extremely cautious. He is not the type that would make an utterance without giving it careful thought. He is also very good at research skills. He is a patriot and he would have taken no pleasure in presenting the negative side of things the way he had to, but what he would have done, he would have uttered all that he said in good faith.

Sir, along the course of my modest presentation I am going to show exactly how in one respect, exactly what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North said really was so truthful as to attract an oblique response from an Honourable Member on the Other Side, who though he did not mention the truth of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North did actually, by his presentation, indicate that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North was on good turf.

Mr. Chairman, by the time this debate is ended, we are going to have to accept certain realities. The biggest

reality we are going to have to accept, irrespective of what we, as individuals say, is the fact that Barbados has become a mature tourist destination.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just one moment, Honourable Member. I am having difficulty hearing the Honourable Member make his presentation. If we can accommodate the Member and have respect for the Honourable Member in terms of his presentation. Honourable Member for St. James North, please continue.

Mr. R.C. EASTMOND: Sir, Barbados would have become a mature tourist destination. In 1960 and 1961, Barbados would have been in the early stage of its tourist development. By 1975, it would have been in the growth stage of its development, but we have had tourism here so long now that we are a mature destination. Sir, by being a mature destination, it means that there are certain challenges that we have to meet, especially when we take into account Regional and international competition against Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, there are countries not far from here that are not by any means mature tourist destinations. If I take into account the state of tourism in Hispaniola, Santo Domingo or Cuba, I would have to say that Barbados would have had a comparative advantage at one stage that was definite and clear but that now, the reality of the situation is that as new competition emerges, tourists have choices and, Sir, in many respects, a lot of tourists are more economical animals than ever tourists were.

Mr. Chairman, when I say that tourists are economical animals, a lot of tourists, before choosing where they are going, reflect on the size and state of their pockets and, Sir, Barbados is not known to be a very cheap destination. Sir, Barbados is not considered to be a cheap destination and there are Barbadians who would suggest that since we are not a cheap destination, that we should not be looking to attract persons who come here who are unable to spend.

Sir, this brings us to another point. We have now to do a balancing act between any increases in the actual physical number of persons and spend. The reason why we have to do that is because we need the foreign exchange while, at the same time, we need the goodwill in the numbers.

Mr. Chairman, the good thing about the numbers is that the numbers, at least, show a consciousness of the existence of Barbados and a willingness on the part of a multitude to come here but, Sir, we want the spend.

Sir, both Administrations, both the present administration and the last Administration have had to take into account where we are in a competitive world and

where we want to get, and if there is any elbow room either to create fresh niches or any elbow room for expansion.

Mr. Chairman, we did not do badly in tourism prior to January 2008, and one of the defining features about our tourism thrust as a Barbados Labour Party Government is that we, through market segmentation and other processes, came up with the concept of the villa market for tourism. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas can put me right if I err.

Mr. Chairman, we recognise that certain types of tourists did not necessarily want to come to an ordinary hotel room, but would have preferred a villa. Sir, that type of tourist was a high-spending tourist, fairly rich, coming mainly from Europe. In fact, at one point, not just the English and the Scottish but the Irish, in the absence of a direct flight from Ireland to Barbados, showed a substantial interest in coming to Barbados. Sir, we did a lot as a Barbados Labour Party Administration to develop the villa side of the market.

Mr. Chairman, this is where I will concede to the Honourable Members on the Other Side that the Royal Westmoreland Investment was an investment with some foresight to it because, quite frankly, a lot of the development that has occurred subsequently occurred around the Royal Westmoreland Investment.

Asides.

Mr. R.C. EASTMOND: I am going to be fair. At my age and stage, as Reynolds Drakes, my mentor, used to say, I have no motive to lie or mislead. Sir, a lot of the development that has followed in Barbados was built around the nuclear area of Royal Westmoreland Investment and, Sir, there are villas like Sugar Hill, giving the opportunity for locals to go and work. There were opportunities at the golf courses down there and the name of the island was spreading all the while.

Mr. Chairman, there are tourists who come here who go to villas and, of course, they go into communities too. I was hearkened by the Honourable Member for St. George North, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, the Honourable Member for the City and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who all recognised that there is a tourist who comes here and there would be all repeat tourists, and who would be all mouth-to-ear advertisers, who say good things about Barbados.

There are tourists who come here now, who do not just come and go to the beach and go to the sea, as the Honourable Member for St. George North said. There are tourists who want to savour the culture.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central, made a deep philosophical contribution to this debate in more ways than one. The people who come here to savour our culture really want to take in every aspect of the Barbadian way of life. Sir, people do not want to come here to carry on their affairs in the same way they would over there. They want things done a la mode Barbadiense. Where the Honourable Member for St. Michael North and the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central agreed, was that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North lamented the fact that we were not doing as well in the summer as we should have.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central, without necessarily repeating what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North said, suggested that he was going to reassess Crop Over and try to improve what was presented at Crop Over obviously with the summer market in mind.

Sir, that is how I took it. I took it in the same way that I took all that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, who made a brilliant speech said in respect of what we are offering tourists.

Mr. Chairman, as I mentioned, the Honourable Member for the City and the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central - I think I heard it more than once - the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central has spoken to the importance of culture in all this.

H/A60D/14:30 Sequence 2

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Mr. R.C. EASTMOND: Thinking about the importance of culture, we do have scope for furthering the interest of our talented people. We have artistes in Barbados and song writers in Barbados that need promotion. Some of our best and most talented people are better than people who reside in North America, but it is just that the people who reside in North America have a big market, whereas our people are listed to a small market here.

I want, before I go to the great beyond, to see a time come, I hope that we will be able to so develop culture - one Honourable Member even suggested that on their way into Barbados, some tourists should immediately be allowed to see the Barbadian way by, perhaps, seeing exhibitions, music shows and such like, anything like that.

I have seen in this country, over the years, on occasions on Sundays, steel band music greet tourists at Grantley Adams International Airport, and the steel band is a West Indian thing. They said that it is the last instrument

that had been created. There are researchers who are of the view that it really achieved exposure and development in Barbados at an earlier stage than some people elsewhere in the Caribbean would want to suggest.

Sir, in all this, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, not inconsistent with the utterances of his colleagues spoke to the question of the social component. He also spoke to the question of land use.

The Honourable Member for St. James Central is well placed to answer this question. In light of my suggesting that there has been some development in relation to the villa market, is it really true that parts of St. James, especially in the Sea View area, will be dezoned out of Zone 1 and made available for the development of villas? I do not know. Sir, the Sea View people have asked me to speak to you, in that I will more readily see you than they will see you. That is what they tell me. The people of St. James are wondering if after so many years of seeing lands being taken and reserved away in a circumstance where no building was allowed, if building is going to be allowed ever in Sea View.

I remember that close to the bottom of Sea View, about eight years ago, they have been contemplating dezoning parts of the old Lascelles Plantation.

Sir, the small man in all of this, and the champion for that category of person has just arrived, arrived about seven minutes ago. The small man in all of this.

Sir, I am grieved when I hear small taxi operators complain that there is a virtual hogging, I am choosing my words deliberately, of the transport business and a lot of people who come on cruise ships into Barbados already are prebooked to get on to certain coaches, and the brother of the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, the cousin of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and my own best friends are unable to reap gains out of this business, because the big tour operators monopolise the situation.

The Honourable Member for St. George North in an excellent speech actually made a very clear call for what he called an integrated approach to the tourist business. The Honourable Member for St. George North has to be commended. He asked for an integrated approach to the tourist business. In light of all that has transpired in this debate, that call is a call that is justified, especially when you take the first 11 minutes of the speech made by the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown whom I have never read through, and will probably never read through you, and his contribution in relation to a variety.

Sir, if you love Barbados you will do your best for Barbados. The substance of what the Honourable Member

for the City of Bridgetown was saying is, notwithstanding our small size, a tourist can be attracted to a diversified experience.

There are those who will be against Barbados in the international world who would tell you to go to Jamaica, or go to San Domingo or go to Cuba because they are bigger, and Barbados does not have much to offer. If you listened to what the Honourable Members for St. Thomas, St. George North, and the City of Bridgetown said, the City of Bridgetown outlined about 18 to 20 things without being exhaustive, that tourists can actually experience in this lovely country of ours.

I will conclude on these notes. We are small. We have limited resources. I do not doubt for once that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has his heart in the right place and really means well for this country. I conclude by making this observation. We have been called upon from time to time to do something called restructuring the economy in a situation of limited natural resources.

Clearly, if we do not have a lot of elbow room, what we will have to do is some diversifications. I would more go for the term diversification than restructuring. We are really constrained, you know. Mr. Chairman we are really constrained in this country. Therefore we have to find the diversification and the variety that will be able to ensure that our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren have as great a share and stake in this blessed country as we have had.

Thank you very much and congratulations on your elevation, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Hon. E.G. HUTSON: Mr. Chairman, I join this debate on this particular Head, Tourism. I want first to commend the Honourable Minister for the work he has been doing over the past two years, and particularly over the last 18 months in the midst of the financial crisis. As several Honourable Members have said over the course of this week, in the last 12 months our revenues have been challenged, primarily, because Barbados is an economy that is centred very much on our tourism product.

Sir, as Honourable Members have rightly said, the area to which I have the honour of representing in this Chamber, St. James Central, spans a significant amount of our tourism infrastructure and properties.

Sir, I am to deal first with a number of the issues that present themselves from a tourism perspective within the

whole Constituency of St. James Central, and indeed other areas along the West Coast. The Honourable Member that just sat made reference to some of the needs for our tourism product to be extended into the rest of the island. I want to start at that particular point.

One of the challenges that we have along the West Coast is the absence of facilities for tourists and locals. It is important.

HA60D 14.40 p.m. Sequence 4

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Estimates - House A60D, Sequence 05, 2.40 p.m.

Hon. E.G. HUTSON: Mr. Chairman, I know that certainly one of the issues that is often raised when we speak in terms of the utilisation of our beaches for cruise passengers in particular and the issues that we find along the Paynes Bay coast, along the West Coast generally and in Hometown is that absence of a public facility that will allow people that are using the beaches to be able to have a shower and change on their way back home, or back to the cruise ships or to use the toilet facilities.

Mr. Chairman, that is one of the things that helped to make the Paynes Bay previously, a problem area because the restaurant there provided all those services and that was one of the only areas along the coast that would provide those services for tourist. Of course, it was a win/win situation because the tourists had the benefit of the facilities and the other restaurant facilities, while they were on the coastline, so I think it is a challenge.

Mr. Chairman, only three months ago, I think on Errol Barrow Day, in going through the country on my way to Bath, about 4.30 p.m. and stopped into Three Houses to find that the public facilities at Three Houses were closed at 4.30 p.m. and persons were locking up and going home. I think that is one of the challenges that we have across the island. We want our tourists as well as local people to enjoy the countryside, the benefits that are being offered outside of the City but we have to make sure that the infrastructure is in place for the full working day and not just during a part of the working day.

Sir, we had discussions with the Minister with responsibility for the NCC to ensure that those facilities are opened longer hours, into the late evening, 7.00 p.m. when people stop using the beach facilities.

Asides.

Hon. E.G. HUTSON: Mr. Chairman, as I said, one of the challenges that I think we have in Barbados, is that we need to have a whole comprehensive beach use policy

that will address how we use the beaches, in terms of the outfitting of chairs along the beach, the vending that occurs along our beaches and the soliciting of services that occur along the beach. Sir, we need to be able to have a policy that could manage that overall beach use situation along our West Coast and extending, Sir, beyond Paynes Bay into the Hometown area and so on.

One of the things we have to be careful of is that we are making sure that the ordinary Barbadian, Mr. Chairman, can benefit from our tourism product. Along the coastline there are ordinary Barbadians who make a living by the work they do along the beaches and we have to make sure that we facilitate that, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot have a situation in Barbados where the hoteliers themselves are muscling in on a lot of this activity. We have small business vendors that put their chairs on the beaches and it becomes an issue, that is, in the Press and so on because of the fact that the hoteliers and so on along that West Coast seem to be of the opinion that the beaches below their property are also part and parcel of their property so we have a number of challenges. If there are a number of persons, if the actual use of the beaches is too heavy in terms of a lot of visitors in areas behind those hotels, there are complaints.

Sir, we have to ensure that our hoteliers are conscious of the fact that small business people have to make a living by the utilisation of services that they provide along our beaches, and so, we need to address that particular issue and a comprehensive policy, I think, will go a long way in terms of clarifying the rights and so on of people who are operating in those areas.

Mr. Chairman, the whole question of sand accretion and beach erosion along the coasts is another one of the challenges that we face as a Government. These are issues that have been neglected by the Other Side and we in this Democratic Labour Party Government are now faced with looking for the solutions and financing to address these issues along our West Coast, in particular.

As a lad, I was able to play beach cricket in the area behind Settler's Beach. I am no longer able to do that, Mr. Chairman, because the sand in that area has all been eroded because of the neglect of the reefs and the environment along the coastline. These are some of the challenges, Mr. Chairman, that we are encountering on the West Coast and we need to address them.

Mr. Chairman, we also need to look at things like exit strategies in the event of coastal disaster, a tsunami, a major hurricane along the coastline that will impact on our tourists that are along our West Coast. Sir, these are some of the challenges confronting us as we look there.

Mr. Chairman, I know my time is limited and I want also to address one of the issues raised by the Honourable Member when he spoke of our tourism development and to commend him on the work he has done, in terms of promoting what I call a South/South Trading Relationship with major countries in the south in terms of Brazil. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North tried to pooh-pooh it, so to speak, yesterday. Sir, before that development can happen, and we can actually have visitors coming up from Brazil, we have to invest in the marketing.

Sir, we have been engaging GOL Airline for a number of months and that marketing effort is in place and we will be seeing, as the Honourable Minister said, the first flights coming into Barbados around June of 2010. Mr. Chairman, that, for me, is particularly attractive as well because it means that our tourism product will not now be centred around just the winter months of November through March. We are now going to be opening up and exposing what Barbados has to offer to those people who live in the Southern Hemisphere where winter will be in the period of June through August.

Estimates - House A60D, Sequence 05, 14:50:14

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Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Sir, that means that we will now be getting two bites of the cherry, two winter periods so to speak, utilising the excess capacity that we have in this country during the course of the summer months. Sir, I think that is a wonderful initiative on the part of the Minister of Tourism in terms of opening that up.

As I said in other forums, visitors coming into Barbados from the South could help to develop our homeporting facility using that stay-cruise programme that we are trying to develop where visitors can come and spend three nights in Barbados and then go on a cruise instead of going through the hassles of having to get an American visa and the different security challenges and so on that they encounter presently in Miami. I think that is a tremendous effort and that we need to put more and more effort into that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have two minutes more.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Of course, there are benefits as well that accrue to our airport because one of the things that happens with that particular flight arrangement coming into Barbados is that those aircraft coming from South America will arrive in Barbados around 11:00 o'clock in the morning, and they are out of here by 1:00 o'clock when our busy period starts.

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Members would know that one of the challenges we have at the Grantley Adams International Airport is dealing with the large numbers of persons and flights that come in between 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon and 5:00 o'clock in the evening. Mr. Chairman, these flights out of South America fit in to that low period, so to speak, both in terms of the Grantley Adams International Airport as well as to our tourism product generally.

Mr. Chairman, I am personally very excited about it. I am looking forward to welcoming those tourists who will come up from Brazil and those other countries in the South. Brazil will only be a hub. There will be passengers coming from Chile, Argentina and other South American countries, so that will be the linkage coming in.

Mr. Chairman, with those words, I take my seat. I will come back again.

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, it is no doubt that we now have a diverse product. A couple of years ago, when you mentioned community tourism anywhere in the Caribbean and also inside of this House, you would have been laughed at.

Sir, it is no doubt that the Other Side felt that the only tourism they could push was all-inclusive tourism, which took the people away from the tourists and the tourists away from the people. Sir, you are now having all-inclusive tourism and community tourism being practised in Barbados. Those persons who thought that we were badmouthing them when we spoke about the negatives as it relates to all-inclusive tourism now recognise that we were doing them a favour, and we were trying to enhance their balance sheets.

There are hoteliers who would tell you that they make more money when the tourists leave their property and go to Moon Town, Baxter's Road or Oistins because on that night they save substantial sums of money in not having to provide dinner, or even sometimes lunch, during the day for those tourists because they would have been paid for that service already.

What you are now seeing is an appreciation now for Barbados. I was happy this evening to hear the Minister making the point that the homeporting agreement is for days before and days after where the tourists will now be able to stay before they go on the ship and before the ship arrives to take them out. Sir, that is significant because I had to beg the Other Side in here to, at least, allow them to go on an island tour.

There was a time in this country... Do not put up your hand, Honourable Member for St. George North. You know that to be a fact. If you did not want them, I wanted them.

Sir, it worried me a lot because I could not understand how we had such a captive market and we allowed them to move from port to port without even knowing Barbados. We now have the opportunity to truly convert those cruise passengers to land-based passengers. The hoteliers should be proud of the Minister for this because what the Minister is doing in this new policy is trying to convert some of the cruise tourism to land-based tourism, and he should be applauded for that.

I also heard a lot this evening about Sea View and how the people in Sea View are worried about the land being converted so that villas can be built. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. James North knows that it is not only the people of Sea View who are concerned, but they want their land to be changed.

Sir, for years, the people of Sea View, especially when I was working at Porter's and Hayman's, and then when I was working in the St. James area, in Holetown and Mount Standfast, always wanted to know how come you could build on the right-hand side going up and on the left you could not build going up. They even asked a further question: "How come one man could get permission to build and thousands of them could not build". The Honourable Member for St. James North knows this well.

Mr. Chairman, I will be honest with you. Any time the Honourable Member asks for the conversion, I will support him because the majority of this land in the St. James area where he represents is in the Zone 1 area, and there is a lot of people who are questioning whether or not it is a punishment for them.

Sir, I thought that the Honourable Member for St. James North would have rallied with me with his supporters in that area and ask the Government to continue to consider the change for those poor people in St. James because it had nothing to do with villas, but with the number of years, and I am talking about from in the 1980s.

Mr. Chairman, I am speaking about people who spoke to me as far back as the 1980s and also in 2010. The Honourable Member for St. James North, as a mutual friend of ours who has some land in St. James North, would like to see the conversion, because our hair-cuts sometimes look alike.

Mr. Chairman, community tourism is not just about feeding somebody fish or anything like that. It is the same product that was given, or the product that used to be given, because I am not sure that the hoteliers now offer

these services, like belly dancing, but in community tourism, you get karaoke, steel pan music and all of that. Sir, if by accident you cannot find it, you only have to come to Moon Town on a weekly basis and you would realise that it is very much there.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, belly dancing is not now only for the tourists. Belly dancing is now part of community tourism for Barbadians. The tourists could come along because we understand our culture, and we understand what we have to offer our own so that we can attract the tourists also.

House A60D Sequence 6

2.50 p.m.

Thursday, March 18, 2010

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am also saying that about two or more years ago, I would have been in here arguing about land and cruise tourism. There is now no need for me to do that anymore. There is now a perfect understanding about what we are talking about.

Sir, I am happy to hear the Honourable Members for St. James North and St. James Central talking about the number of people who have to compete for the beaches in Barbados. Sir, when I heard that, I smiled because just yesterday I proffered to this Honourable House how the solution could have occurred had we had the right policy.

Sir, those who thought I was talking foolishness yesterday had a first-hand example of the problems I was trying to correct and that is when I proffered to this Honourable House that we had made an error when we built hotels near the beaches and that hotels should have been on the landside, instead of the beachside.

Sir, let us think about it now. If all the beaches were free, there would be no competition between cruise tourism and land-based tourism because nobody would have had a claim to the beaches. The beaches would have been there for everyone and there would not have been this mass competition. Therefore, when I am making a point in here, I am saying to the Other Side to take note and that if they do not understand, they could ask me to explain because sometimes when they try explaining it to themselves, they do not even understand what it is they are explaining to themselves.

Mr. Chairman, I am telling taxi drivers again to stop creating confusion in this country. Sir, this is not a tongue lashing for them but an education. It does not make sense

taking tourists and putting them in a hotel, when there are many beaches, whether there be Long Bay, Moon Town, Archer's Bay, River Bay, among others. There are places where people can bathe, where they could have the facilities that they do not necessarily have to go to hotels. Sir, because some people believe when they go to hotels, the hotels will look down and have mercy, they believe that is the only area of Barbados to which tourists can be taken.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying not only are they shortchanging the people of Barbados, they are also shortchanging themselves because the further the job, the more money would be for them. Sir, it is clear to me that in Barbados there are some who prefer to look at others before looking at themselves, ignoring the Bible.

I am saying to taxi drivers, they have relatives in Barbados and their first call will be to their relatives. Taxi drivers must stop being chased out of hotel gates when there are other alternatives, therefore, creating the impression that we do not have other places for tourists to go in Barbados. Sir, I am saying we have enough facilities and activities in Barbados for tourists to be taken.

I am also saying to those persons who have the capacity to stop seeing tourism as a night activity only, they must recognise that they also have to cater to the cruise ships. Therefore, they must start creating some of those activities during the day, so that tourists can enjoy themselves. Sir, the greatest possibility would come from the day tourists more so than the night tourists. When you look at the numbers, the possibility exists that you have a better advantage of attracting them than those who have already been locked into a system in Barbados. Sir, I am also saying to people who do not know Barbados, who market Barbados and do not know anything about Barbados, who give tourists the impression that the only place those tourists can go are to those places that they have locked in because they themselves have an interest, I want these people to stop giving the impression that there are certain places in Barbados that tourists should not go. That is wrong. Sir, any tourists coming to Barbados can go anywhere because once they know what to do and how to do it, they will be protected.

Mr. Chairman, there are some people who would give the impression that going to Oistins or Baxter's Road is wrong and that tourists should only go to certain places in Barbados. Sir, the safest tourists are those who practise community tourism because what happens is that they become part of the people, they become part of the system and they become part of the security network.

Sir, people do not understand these things but because people can use largesse, some people allow themselves to be caught up in these things and shortchange

the tourists, instead of giving tourists the advantage of really appreciating Barbados.

Sir, there is nothing wrong with a tourist going into a rum shop and having a bread and fish. Whenever they eat a bread and fish, the conversion rate and multiplication factor is better. When they go for a T-bone steak or anything like that, all they are doing is exporting money from Barbados. Let them come and drink some mauby or coconut water.

Mr. Chairman, there are also some people on the radio who believe that drinking coconut water, eating dunks or ackees is a crime.

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I have argued that whenever tourists eat local ackees instead of imported grapes, they are keeping foreign exchange in this country, all the while creating real employment, and the multiplying effect is much greater. If you doubt me, ask the economist, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Mr. Chairman, we have to understand that we have now to become foreign exchange hungry in this country. We are not foreign exchange hungry. We are revenue hungry, which is wrong. We have to be foreign exchange hungry and if we are foreign exchange hungry, then they could understand your cassava. Therefore, because they are not foreign exchange hungry, they do not understand your cassava.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I want to make a small intervention in relation to tourism and some of the comments I will be making will be more tangential in respect of it. I feel that it is really very significant at this time that we are focussing on tourism, that we focus on our women in the sector.

We all know that we have a larger percentage of females in the country. There are a number of sectors where sometimes you find the largest as high as 80 per cent females. Perhaps in the teaching service, it is even higher than that. Sir, we recognise that because of our socialisation in this society, we tend to think that women are only carved out to do certain jobs.

Sir, perhaps I should say I was not surprised at the tirade of the Honourable Member for St. John yesterday, when it came to some of the comments that were directed,

according to what I understood, towards women. Sir, that is nothing new because some of the women in that Democratic Labour Party were treated very unkindly and the leaders there were called male chauvinists.

Mr. Chairman, I believe I should take this opportunity to say how happy and proud I am with the women who are working in the tourism sector, particularly at the many levels. There is no point every year at International Women's Day, March 8, to be giving tokenism to women when we know of the profound contributions that our women have made, not only in tourism but in the overall development of Barbados.

Sir, therefore, with your permission, I would wish to make mention of a few of the females in the sector who have done exceptionally good work. Of course, I will not be able to call all names because there are some women working at a number of different levels who, despite whatever their chores are, or despite what level they are at, are making an outstanding contribution to the development of the sector. Sir, there is no point only looking at who are on Boards or who are in high positions, for example, managers, but we need to embrace every individual in the sector.

Sir, at the end of the day, that is what brings in the foreign exchange that helps to go towards a number of other sectors and their development. That also helps to bring in the billions of dollars. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I would wish to look at women at the National Conservation Commission and Beautify Barbados, as well as those women in the Sanitation Service Authority.

Sir, many of them leave their homes early in the morning, some return very late at night, not only striving to make a dollar, but to ensure that our streets, beaches, places and spaces across the island are kept in pristine condition. Therefore, I want to laud them from the bottom of my heart for their outstanding roles.

3.10 p.m.

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Miss. C.Y. FORDE: When our streets are dirty, when there is illegal dumping across the island, it reflects on all of us as though we are dirty people. When we travel overseas and we see how people keep their streets clean, I believe that we should learn more lessons and ensure that we do what is right so that when there is illegal dumping, the rodents and all the other things that would impact on our health and the health of others, would be stymied. Sir, I want to praise those women from the bottom of my heart.

Mr. Chairman, women in the informal sector, those women who go on the streets and sell from the back of

their vehicles, the tourists want that because they want to mingle. Sir, we talk so much about community tourism and tourists want to be able to stop at a location. They go up to the St. Joseph's area and to the St. Andrew's area. They stop down on the East Coast Road in the Belleplaine area sometimes. They go up by Park's Road and they stop there, where people are plying their trade, little souvenirs that they make and bottles of juice that they have made at home, fish cakes, mauby and the small aspects of pottery that they make at home. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I would wish for those women to be recognised because, at the end of the day, it brings in foreign exchange and helps them to be empowered and raise their children.

Mr. Chairman, the food sellers, the handicraft people, those with souvenirs, all of them, and then the women who are actually on compounds. They are in hotels, guest houses, villas and so on and they too make a sterling contribution. They are the ones that see the tourists face to face. When you want room service, they are the porters in the hotel. Sir, I am not trying to minimise the contribution of men but in our society we know that we have always hailed the men.

Sir, I have absolutely no problem because, at the end of the day, we are to be working together as partners. Sir, I feel that this is a time that we single out those thousands of women who work every day honestly to make the tourism products that we are offering better.

Mr. Chairman, we heard a lot about "staycations". Sir, Barbadians who have been going to hotels have been staying at home keeping that money turning over in the country and they too are treated by those women who are working in the sector. I believe that, as a result of that, they must be highly commended. Sir, the women at the airport in the ancillary sector, not only those who make sure our bathrooms are clean, but those who help the tourists to the vehicles. They push their carts and work hard. There are a lot of women and I am very happy to see this because some individuals prefer to deal with a woman than to deal with a man.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, this one is not directly associated but it is very pertinent to our tourism product from the point of view that the National Council on Substance Abuse has been doing sterling work in the entire society, more particularly in our schools and other institutions. I want to laud Mrs. Chadderton-Shaw for the excellent work that she has put into that institution for more than a decade. Sir, the relation is that there are countries in the world where our tourists come from who have already legalised marijuana and a lot of those visitors seem to think they can come to Barbados and the practices they have developed, the same male chauvinistic approach on the Other Side...

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I really hate to interrupt the Honourable Member while she is delivering herself of this intervention but clearly, this speech is not relevant to the debate. We are discussing Head 55. What does the National Council on Substance Abuse or the National Conservation Commission have to do with that? Sir, we really need to stick to the substance of the matter.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Honourable Member, maybe you can link it now at this time.

Miss. C.Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, the National Conservation Commission persons are the ones who work in Beautify Barbados, who when you travel on our highways, wherever they are in Barbados, the National Conservation Commission workers clean up and beautify the island. I was making the point that if the Honourable Member would stop being so rambunctious and listen, that the whole exercise of minimizing the use of not only illicit drugs but alcohol, those two are very significant and if our tourists are not aware, they go on their drinking binges and they drive their hired cars and that is a challenge for Barbados, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, I have thought out clearly what I want to say and no Honourable Member in here will stop me but you or if the Honourable Speaker is in the Chair. Therefore, I am saying that the National Council on Substance Abuse has been very successful in training young people and steering them away from ingesting illegal drugs and even alcohol. Sir, it has gone a long way in helping our tourists to be able to show that respect because we do not want to lose any more lives because of people driving drunk. I want to encourage the breathalyser test to come in but, Sir, that is another discussion.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to laud our women in the National Commission on HIV/AIDS. Dr. Carol Jacobs has been outstanding in her role as well as Miss Alice Jordan, when she was there and Sade Slinger, who has another name, which I cannot remember.

Sir, the point I want to make is that it is as a result of the education of those women and others in the sector at the Commission that we are able to sensitise our people whether they are working in the sex trade or whatever, the training that is being offered and the sensitisation will help us in our tourism sector so that our women and men can protect themselves when they want to engage in whatever activity.

Sir, that is the significant point I want to make because when attention is not paid to what is being taught, then we have bigger problems in the Ministry of Health

with our people becoming very ill and the expensive drugs they have to take which will destroy families.

Mr. Chairman, I want to laud the efforts of those women who are working hard to help destroy that impact that the scourge has on human beings and will also have on our visitors as well.

Mr. Chairman, women in agriculture devote their time and their lives to agriculture and sometimes they bring their families to work. I believe that if we get more women engaging in agriculture, as my mother would, as a lot of other Honourable Members in here, and people on the outside, mothers did or wives did, I believe that too would help to cut down on the import bill and it would also encourage our visitors to try a little banana cou-cou, to be able to use fresh Barbadian lettuce and to be able to try some of our local menus that are so significant to the whole exercise of tourism.

Mr. Chairman, when I travel overseas, I want to eat some of the local dishes and when people come here we should encourage them to do this too. Sir, the Honourable Member who talked about the fish cake cutter and so on, that is significant to the exercise and it helps to empower our men and our women.

H/A60D/15:20 Sequence 8

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Miss C.Y. FORDE: We do not want to wait until Tourism Week and so on, where people call in and vote for you and people's names are put up. Some of them should be singled out for their outstanding contributions and honoured in another way, but that is a matter the Honourable Minister and his team will work on as time goes by, because our women are significant to the continued existence of our society, working in association with and alongside men because we are looking at equality, and I think that is significant.

Sir, the final point I wish to make, there are some locations in rural communities, not necessarily along the beach areas, but, of course, there are areas that can be debushed to become good vistas for locals and visitors. The two I will make mention of are right in the heart of St. Thomas.

At Airy Cot, at the elevation, what we call the "pin wing trees or can lillies", there is such a wonderful vista if only the area could be developed. It is not something that the community can do. It has to be done by an agency. Once that area can be cleared off, visitors to the island, leaving the North of the island, coming to the Highland Tours, Mount Hillaby or even Welchman Hall Gully, can

stop, take photographs and have a drink. People in Airy Cot would get a chance to ply their trade.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have two more minutes.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: The same thing happens for Pond Hill. When you reach Bloombury, there is an area where there is a bridge. When you look over you can see the entire East Coast from Long Pond all the way up to Chalky Mount and so on. If those areas are cleared, I believe that more people would be engaged in the sector.

Tourists will not stop there now because there is an overgrowth of bush, and their security and safety, as well as the security and safety of the locals must be paramount. Therefore, aspects of that kind of development can add to the tourism product with more employment, more enjoyment and, of course, more opportunities for the sector to unfold. I believe the sector has many more years of unfolding, new things happening that give more visitors a strong desire to come to Barbados to make a difference in their lives.

Sir, with those comments I wish to thank you for the opportunity.

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

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, after the last presentation, it is not surprising that I would have a senior moment. I really feel that when Members of the Opposition - we were hearing all during the week, let us get to the Heads, leave out the Second Reading, let us get to the Heads, Tourism, Tourism.

Sir, my ministerial colleague, obviously armed to the teeth, has presented, responded with all of the information...

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: My ministerial colleague has come here well prepared, has presented, responded, armed with the facts, and has spoken eloquently and adequately to the subject matter, yet, the relative level of unpreparedness of the Opposition in this very important sector in our society is very surprising. Actually, it is unbelievable when you think about what we have heard so far. I think that perhaps we need to relook how we do these things because there are so many important aspects of this subject that need to be approached, addressed and spoken of, and I am going to speak about two, only two, and may be three, depends.

Sir, if I wanted to be ridiculous, I could extend the speech of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, pay tribute and ask for an award for the Accountant-General for ensuring that all the tax dollars that come from tourism end up in the Treasury. If I wanted to be ridiculous I could extend that and say, let us pay tribute to the lady who heads up the Immigration Department for the work that Immigration Officers do at source, on first call, in the front line, to ensure that tourists get in and out of Barbados well enough, and we can go on and on. They all play an important role within the context of the tourism sector.

Sir, what I thought the Honourable Member should have done, would have been to pay tribute to men and women who work within and directly in the sector in hotels and villas across this country, ensuring that those very tourists who come to Barbados are treated well.

Yesterday we heard, and this is after 14 years of Government, that we should put a big rock, a boulder she said, somewhere with a plaque on it. Now today we hear we should put another big rock at some other part of St. Thomas that has a beautiful vista to Barbados, and another big rock in some other part that has a beautiful vista. After 14 years of Government and all of the work they gave to JADA, and C.O. Williams and others, they could not get a boulder. Well I am going to ask the Minister of Transport and Works to see if he can find a boulder to give to the Barbados Labour Party, so that they could carry it wherever it is that they want to put it to show that this is Barbados. This is serious business that we are talking about, so let us look at what we are saying.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. James North make a very valid point about the maturity of certain sectors within the context of our economy. We think that the tourism sector has reached a relatively mature point in its existence. It is not unlike in many ways the total economy or the total sector, which many of the theoretical or the academics would call the total institution in plantation society models of the economy.

The tourism sector, because of the way it is structured, even though it does not necessarily in Barbados show an inclusive or go by the name all inclusive has, in fact, become almost all inclusive by itself, without having all inclusive hotels as a predominant feature like, say, Jamaica, or the Dominican Republic. Sir, because of the total nature of the sector, it has become in many ways extremely, and certainly within the last 14 years, when they were in office, exclusive.

Sir, what you have heard from the Minister of Tourism has been an effort by this Democratic Labour Party Government, to remove the exclusivity and the inclusiveness of tourism to ensure that more players are brought onboard, because when you reach a level of

maturity in an economic sector, you usually, by most standards, begin a downward trend in terms of your ability to attract tourists.

Sir, what is it that we have that other people do not have? That is the question you have to start with. What it is that we have that others do not have? We have good beaches. We have sun. We have sand. We have entertainment and culture. Most other tourism destinations either have all of those, or have them variously in abundance. Therefore, Sir, the paradigm has to shift, because we cannot continue to market Barbados only on those things, and expect that we, beyond others, are going to be able to get tourists more than the next place or the next person, so we have to differentiate, desegregate the product, which we have, and to enhance elements of that product. That is why we are trying within tourism, as the Minister has explained, to look at new ways in which to attract people to Barbados, creating a Barbados brand that has certain elements to it.

Asides.

HA60D 15.30 p.m. Sequence 9

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Estimates - House A60D, Sequence 10, 3.30 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: We have to create a Barbados brand that has certain elements to it that when you hear it, you will say, this separates this particular country or island from all of the others. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas made a skirting reference to it, and ought to have developed the point.

Sir, for example - and when I was the Minister of Foreign Affairs we explored this with many foreign Ambassadors - the whole question of making Barbados a centre for tourism learning, because we have been in this business long and we have developed a critical mass of information and knowledge that can be sold as an export service in learning, for persons who are now emerging in the tourism business. For example, Trinidad and Tobago, which is now investing in a considerable amount in tourism, whereupon before, they never did it because they had the oil and the petroleum products.

Sir, Barbados has developed tremendous skills that we can export to other countries such as conference services, not beaches, event planning, protocol and other such ancillary services. This is where we need to go in terms of tourism value added. It is not only about getting one million tourists to come to Barbados, which is

important but we can also export tourism skills to other countries.

Sir, it is therefore for this reason that I believe the Tourism Programme at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus - I see the Minister of Education is here and I know he agrees with this - needs to be expanded and diversified so that we can get the requisite training and skills, in order to export people.

Mr. Chairman, in the Overseas Labour Programme, we have been exporting workers, not only to be grooms and working on farms picking apples and oranges, but equally, we have been exporting persons to work in hotels in Louisiana, Mississippi and other places. Sir, this is how we can also be giving good solid training, not only at the lower end, in terms of the job scale but also in the upper end, persons who have managed properties or who are trained to manage properties.

Sir, there are many properties across the United States of America, even in Latin America where the service is not as high in quality as ours. I am saying that these are new and exciting areas, as we get into being a serious services export economy to try to gain and earn foreign exchange in the external market.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, both you and I in a different dispensation have been working on the linkage between agriculture and tourism. The way in which we envisaged this, as you know, is not just in petty agriculture, as we would call it, not small holdings' agriculture but we are talking about big stuff.

We are talking about creating a firm platform between, not only our domestic hotel industry but all the others across the Caribbean, in which we can produce goods and produce of the highest possible quality to be sold within our hotels, where proper articulated agreements can be made. We have done this already, not just through IECA because that Programme started a long time before they started theirs.

When I was Director of CPDC, we did a project, under the auspices of OXFAM, Great Britain, to do an agricultural tourism project in St. Lucia and it was a resounding success. In fact, we even branded it, "Farm Fresh Products and Produce." It had its own brand. It still has, and it is properly recorded within the Law.

We made articulated agreements with several farms in St. Lucia with hotels there, including the Sandals property, and Rex St. Lucia and some of the other bigger properties in that country. I always said that this type of Programme ought to be brought to Barbados where we can do a similar thing between the Barbados Agricultural Society (BAS) which will be responsible for coordinating

and organising the farmers and ensuring top quality standards with the hotels.

Sir, what we also did in St. Lucia is that, at least, one week or one weekend every year, farmers will leave their farms and go into the hotels as tourists to see the type of quality that is required within the property and to understand the standards that are required within the properties, as guests. This was free of cost, no charge to them which was provided by the hotel properties and that gave them a better understanding of what needed to be grown, what the guests in the hotels wanted and preferred, the type of quality, the handling and how all of these ancillary things associated with the agricultural tourism linkage were provided. I think that is where we need to go in the context of Barbados.

Finally, on the issue of culture, and I heard the Minister of Culture speak on this matter but again, we need to elevate the thing beyond what we are doing now. The basic thing of having a band going to a hotel and play a set for an hour and take a little break, Sir, that is all right, but we need to lift this thing and this Government is looking at this very seriously.

We need to invest in constructing proper studios, giving people the chance to be able to produce good music and our art. Sir, I know that as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, one of the things we have been working on is having the art of the country, from the artists posted in all of our foreign Ministries, particularly in the big centres in London, Canada and the United States of America and in the offices of the Barbados Tourism Authority. Some of that has already been done, so that we can give exposure not only to our Diaspora but to persons who visit the BTA office to ensure that they know where good art can be had, from Barbados. Mr. Chairman, we need to put this thing at an entirely different level.

When you think, for example, in the whole area of events tourism, I am not exactly sure, maybe the Minister can explain - I am sure there is a good explanation - for why we do not go heavier into trying to attract sports teams to the country. Sir, this would be good for their practice sessions, their off seasons and their pre Spring season training.

Sir, we have the Spring Break crowd and we have four county cricket teams here. These are the kinds of areas that we have now to invest in, and we have to market to them not just in a general marketing on a television but we need to have scouts - I think that is what they are called - who go out to teams.

The Minister of Education here, who in a different dispensation is Head of the Barbados Football Association - can work with some of those teams - you may not be able

to get the top teams but you can get a lot of the college teams, the high school teams and so forth to come to Barbados to begin to diversify that catchment of persons that you want to go after.

Sir, this is where we need to locate these types of debates, Mr. Chairman, so that the country can benefit and those tourism planners who are listening closely to us, can benefit from some of the ideas which come forth from us. Sir, I hope that we can continue in this vein and stay within the four corners of this Head.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

Asides.

Estimates - House A60D, Sequence 10, 15:40:14

Thursday, March 18, 2010

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

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I join this debate on the tourism Head first to say how happy I am to hear from the Minister of Tourism, the very innovative programme which he has unfolded to this House in relation to the Ministry of Tourism.

Mr. Chairman, from my vantage point as Minister responsible for Youth, Family and Sports, there is certainly great opportunity for these two Ministries that we are involved in to work together in terms of the new thrust that has been unfolding in relation to tourism in Barbados, certainly in relation to sports tourism which, as you know, is a very large area in terms of developing the landscape for tourism globally and certainly in relation to Barbados.

One of the very exciting features of the Ministry of Sports is the area of how we can blend sports with tourism and the ability to use the sporting industry to earn valuable foreign exchange for Barbados. This, I can say, would be one of the prime areas in which the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports would be positioned. I have already indicated to the Honourable Minister of Tourism that there would be need for close collaboration between the two Ministries in terms of ensuring that we can achieve these very solid objectives.

Mr. Chairman, in the area of tourism and sports, the opportunities are certainly out there in the global arena to attract, not only outstanding sports persons and sports personalities to Barbados, but also to ensure that our sporting personalities in Barbados are able to exhibit their varying talents to the international arena.

Only yesterday, Mr. Chairman, I had the honour of addressing the closing ceremony of the Barbados Secondary School Championships at the National Stadium. What occurred to me, and what I did mention there as well, is that in that particular championship, which featured all of the secondary schools in Barbados, is that over the years there has been so much excitement and that the planning of that activity has been done so professionally that we have right within that championship a product that has the potential to be one of the flag bearers in relation to sports tourism in Barbados.

You would know, Mr. Chairman, that we have across Europe and the United States of America various sporting events, many of them involving high School athletics and other events, which are screened on the worldwide web. Sir, because of the ability of these championships to attract significant sponsorship, they are able to generate those foreign inflows that we talked about earlier in this debate that would be very vital to the development of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, on this occasion, I would like to compliment the Principals and the organisers of the Barbados Secondary Schools' Championship for bringing the event to this stage.

Sir, one of the key strategies of the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports is to seek to join forces with the Ministry of Tourism and other players to see to what extent we can take this championship to a new level and to be able to beam it across the globe, perhaps, via some of the leading sporting networks to achieve those vital tourism dollars that we need at this time.

We have started along the road because we have other events that we have been able to attract and will continue to attract. We have been looking at volleyball. As you would know, Sir, there is pending the volleyball championships. Once we market these events correctly, we can actually use them productively in relation to the earning of foreign exchange.

We would have spoken, Mr. Chairman, of the ICC 20/20 Tournament, which as you know is planned for Barbados for April 25 to May 16. Again, this is an important opportunity for Barbados to be part of the global marketing that will not only expose Barbados to the other opportunities and attracting other events, but to showcase the unique culture and the social cohesion that Barbados has become world famous for.

I believe that the Twenty/20 ICC Tournament should not only be seen as a cricketing event. It is an opportunity for ensuring that our entrepreneurs and other business-oriented entities in Barbados see it as part of the

development of our sports tourism package and ensuring that they take maximum advantage of this event.

We also have, Mr. Chairman, the Amateur International Boxing Association Women's World Boxing Championships, which is scheduled for later this year as well. Mr. Chairman, that event is unique in the sense that we are bringing a number of female champions to Barbados. This championship will generate a lot of attention and will place the global lenses on this small country called Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, to date, there are about 69 competitors who would be participating in that International Women's Boxing Championship. In addition, there will be VIP guests and fans from all over the globe, all of whom would be converging on Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that we need to take these sporting models and mould them by the right type of marketing, not only in relation to the international sporting networks that will be in Barbados, but by our marketeers, whether through the Barbados Tourism Authority and otherwise. Our marketeers need to use these events to their maximum in terms of the exposure that Barbados can obtain.

Mr. Chairman, we could never ever seek to achieve the monetary value of that kind of advertising on our own because of our limited resources. This is just a taste of the opportunities out there for sports tourism and the kind of focus that I believe we have to move to in relation to attracting other sporting personalities.

We have an emerging product as well in the form of model car racing. You would be aware that there are many model car racing enthusiasts in Barbados and this is becoming a huge sport. I was contacted only recently by some of the persons responsible for model car racing in Barbados.

Many of our youth are involved in this sport. It is a very exciting sport. It is an international sport and the good thing about it is that you do not need a lot of space to conduct this kind of sporting activity. Of course, it has the potential of making Barbados a centre of international sporting activity.

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Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think that our ability to diversify sport as it relates to sporting in

tourism will make us even more attractive as a sporting destination.

Mr. Chairman, regarding the concept of community tourism, which I am very excited about, even in my Constituency we have a number of planned events. We have already signalled that we would want the Barbados Tourism Authority to sponsor some of these activities in the community. Sir, for example, in my Constituency, on April 24, we are planning a health extravaganza and community market day at the Deighton Griffith School compound. That event is a community event, but attracted to this event are not only our vendors from the Constituency, but entertainers, persons who live in the Constituency who have been able to so enhance their entertainment talent, that they can perform live on a stage before an audience.

Mr. Chairman, this is authentic Barbadian culture at play and I think what we need to do is to find a way to harness that, to find a way to connect our tourists to these events which happen in the heart of the community. Sir, the spinoff effect of that is that we create employment opportunities for persons not along the coastlines, not in Bridgetown, but in the heart of the community and that we bring much needed revenue to persons who practise their trade right in the heart of the community.

Mr. Chairman, netball is a fast evolving sport which continues to generate a lot of excitement across Barbados. If you were to take a drive on any day of the week, mainly in the evening times when the netball games are going on in the communities, for example, Silver Hill, you would see the excitement, you would see the potential of what netball in the community can do.

Sir, only recently, for example, at the National Stadium we would have had the Knockout Netball Competition in which the Silver Hill Raiders, who come from Silver Hill, were able to win that competition. I was there in the audience cheering on and giving my support. I am very happy to recognise that right in the heart of Silver Hill we can have excellence in netball. I want to take this opportunity to compliment the Silver Hill Raiders and to encourage them to move from strength to strength.

Mr. Chairman, these are mere examples of the kinds of ways in which we can link sports to tourism right in the community and to use it to our maximum advantage. We have not been able to do a lot of what I would call community street fairs in our villages but I believe that we need to reconnect with that.

Most of our communities are calling out for activities. Our youngsters want to be involved in some kind of celebration, particularly around public holidays, and we have the avenue of using community street fairs to generate

the kind of spectacle or interest, so that we can pull our visitors into our communities. Sir, whether those tourists arrive by cruise liners or otherwise, we need to find a way of planning and placing on our tourism agenda around some of these street fairs.

Mr. Chairman, I have already spoken to some of my constituents in relation to trying to get a street fair that will move from Kendal Hill, through Gall Hill, Silver Hill and end at Foundation School, but if we focus on these as viable activities, if we plan them proactively, I believe that we would certainly help to connect with what the Minister of Tourism is seeking to do and create a vibrant community tourism product that would cause our residents at the community level to be involved as players in tourism.

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

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, from the vantage point of the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports, although I am still in the process of reviewing much of the activity in that Ministry, certainly one of its priorities would have to be the whole issue of sporting tourism. That priority would be to connect in a meaningful way with seeking to move the programmes in that Ministry and to work very closely with the Ministry of Tourism.

I believe there is the avenue to link our forces and to achieve significant results in relation to tourism and how sports can assist in generating that valuable exchange. Mr. Chairman, with those few remarks, I am obliged to you.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I want to lend my congratulations to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central for his sterling performance as Minister of Tourism in this country. Sir, we are after lunch and I would want to say that I am a soup man. I love soup. I had one bowl. It was very good and so I had a second, with two dumplings. Sir, while being pulled along the road to "niggaritis" the statement from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North spurred me into action.

I was instantly revived, largely because I could not believe that an Honourable Member of this august Chamber and an Honourable Member who served as Minister of Tourism for a very short period of time - who was fired - could have come to this Honourable Chamber and attempted to dismiss and discredit the good work of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and the Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. Chairman, I want to put a few things into perspective. I believe that Barbadians are intelligent and

reasonable people. Sir, as a result, I want to dismiss, very early, the comparisons that are made between the type of crises that faced this country in 2008 and that which Barbados faced post September 11. Sir, let me explain why it was important.

Sir, I heard reference to the two funds that were established to stabilise the tourism industry in both debates from Both Sides. Let me go back to explain something. In September 11, what we had was not a financial or a credit crisis that went into an economic crisis. It was a situation where people were afraid to fly. Sir, people did not lose their homes, jobs were not being lost, businesses were not closing, left, right and centre.

Sir, anybody who has a modicum of commonsense can reason that, therefore, if such happenings are occurring in our United Kingdom market, which is our fundamental source market, where businesses are now closing, millions of people are now losing their jobs, the pound sterling is losing its value, then you are going to have a reduction in your tourist traffic to Barbados from that destination. It is not rocket science.

Mr. Chairman, the same is also true for the United States of America, so what is the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central to do? He did the right thing, recognising that the United States of America market is in difficulty, recognising that the United Kingdom market is in difficulty, he concentrated on the Canadian market which did not have the same level of contagion with respect to the financial crisis.

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Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: He also understood that what you need to do was to provide a support for your domestic sector. Sir, that is what the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central did, that is what the TIRF did and that is what the Supplementaries did.

What the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central also did was that in recognising that he would have to look for additional market thrust, this Cabinet not only supported the Barbados Tourism Authority with increased support for marketing, but we gave the Minister the opportunity to go out there and not only try to encourage new tourists to come to Barbados from non-traditional markets in Canada, which was what you call Western Canada, which was non-traditional markets, and that is the reason why the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central can boast of WestJet coming to Barbados, can boast of WestJet bringing additional tourists to Barbados from Canada, and that has redounded to a stabilisation of the numbers in this country.

Mr. Chairman, I am not going to get into the dispute or the statement whether there is a reduction in spending by tourists. Sir, anybody who comes to Barbados in a recessionary period, unless he is a multimillionaire, would have to cut back on the amount of money he would have to spend in the first place.

Sir, it does not take a rocket scientist to understand that. Therefore, I do not understand why they are faulting the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central for the sterling work that he has done so far. Sir, it just does not make sense to me.

Mr. Chairman, furthermore, when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central recognised that we still had to try our best to pull tourists to this country, he started to look at the planning of special sporting events in Barbados. Sir, as a result of that, what are the events we have coming on stream? The Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central would have spoken to a number of them but we have a 20/20 cricket competition that has been planned coming on stream in order to keep tourists coming to Barbados.

How can the Honourable Member be faulted for that? How can the Honourable Member be faulted for having the yachting event, the Fireball Event, that comes off in Barbados very shortly? Sir, he has to be credited for that. He also has to be credited for the activities coming on with respect to the Women's World Boxing Championship. Sir, these are initiatives that the Honourable Member, recognising that he still had to look to bring tourists to Barbados put in place, so what is wrong with that?

Mr. Chairman, I really need to understand what it is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North is so critical of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central for. I would want to know what it is that the Honourable Member St. Michael South Central and this Cabinet could have done so differently that the Honourable Member on the Other Side would have been happy to see.

Sir, however, it has always been said that when you are in a recessionary period, that is the time when you restructure and you reorganise the efficiency for competitive gains. What has the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central done during this period? He is going through the restructuring of the Barbados Tourism Authority to develop a product development company and a marketing company. Sir, what is wrong with that? Sir, this is precisely when you are supposed to do that so that when you come out of the recession, you come out with a better structure, more competitive and more efficient to get the job done. What is wrong with that, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman, if there is one statement that is used almost ad nauseam in the international economic arena is

that you do not waste a recession, you use a recession to reorganise, redesign and restructure towards enhanced efficiency and competition. Sir, that is what the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is doing. Mr. Chairman, I am really still at a loss to appreciate what it is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has been doing so wrong.

Mr. Chairman, interestingly enough, the Barbados cruise product has remained resilient during the recessionary period. In fact, apart from the growth within the tourism market, cruise tourism remains stable and actually had shown increases. If you were the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, what would you do in a situation where you have an area that is showing stability and growth? You try to build on that. Sir, that is the reason why the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is responsible for the development of a new cruise ship pier in Barbados and a new set of berthing arrangements in Barbados. He is also responsible for developing a homeporting arrangement in Barbados so that we can take greater benefit, domestically, from the homeporting exercise. Sir, that is, people from around the world come to this country, originate a cruise here and they end a cruise here.

Mr. Chairman, that is not all. What the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has done is that he has moved aggressively to develop a broader aspect of that, that is, he is moving to ask tourists to come to Barbados and spend a few days before they cruise, or spend a few days after they cruise, so that there would be greater benefit to the economy. Sir, what is wrong with that.

Mr. Chairman, I am still at a loss to understand why the Honourable Member is being criticised because all the steps that the Honourable Member has taken so far are the right steps to take when you are in a recessionary period.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is not like the Honourable Member for St. Michael North because I understand from a few Members on the Other Side that he has gone home to take his two Viagra and a Red Bull. Sir, that is what I was told. I do not know if there is anything unparliamentary about it.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member knows it is unparliamentary and it needs to be struck from the record. Sir, it is not only unparliamentary but it needs to be struck from the record. He did not even try to nice it up. Sir, I am awaiting the ruling of the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Philip West, could you just take that particular piece out of it?

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I withdraw the statement about the two Viagra. I would say two blue pills and a Red Bull. Sir, that is to keep him alert.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, if that is going to be the tone of the debate...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just one moment, please. I would just like to ask the Honourable Member for St. Philip West to rephrase the comments and we will move on.

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Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: If that is where they want to carry this debate, what is more, there are school children in uniform in the Gallery.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, I have ruled on the matter. I believe I asked for the comment to be, at least, rephrased. The truth is, I did not hear it in that particular way, as you put it. I have asked for the comment to be rephrased in another direction and he has agreed. So that is my ruling on the matter, proceed.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, for the record, you have not indicated what your ruling is. Sir, on the issue of it being struck from the record, I am asking for a ruling.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have ruled. I have asked for it to be rephrased.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, it has to be struck from the record.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have asked for it to be rephrased. Move on.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, have you given me a ruling on it being struck from the record, yes or no?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, you have not heard me.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, no, I have not heard you. You have not yet addressed the issue. It should be struck from the record.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Yes. Put me out.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, would you please take your seat? My ruling on this matter is that the comment will be rephrased.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, that is not what I am asking. I have asked for it to be struck from the record, not only for it to be rephrased. I asked for it to be withdrawn. Sir, you ruled on the withdrawing part by saying that you are only asking for it to be rephrased. I am asking for it to be struck from the record. I deserve a ruling.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, I have indicated that I have asked for it to be rephrased. That is my ruling.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am not finished. I will really ask you to cooperate in this regard and show respect for the Chair. In the first instance I have asked for it to be rephrased, and if you understand what I mean when I say rephrased, you will see it means being rephrased. I have made a ruling on the subject and I am asking the Honourable Member to move on.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I respect the Chair, but respect flows both ways. I have as a Member of this Chamber asked for two things to be done. You have addressed the first thing, Mr. Chairman. It is your right to refuse to address the second thing, but I am asking for it to be struck from the record. You have not ruled on that, Mr. Chairman, and respect flows both ways by ignoring my request. I am being also the subject of respect.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, your request is denied.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I will take your lead and I will say that we have steered the course. None of us have left our seats after leading off a debate on behalf of the Side of the Opposition. I am saying if he needs a high caffeine drink, and if he needs "Blue Bulls" in order to have the energy to stand the course, well, then I am saying I can prescribe some for him, Sir. If the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East wants some, she can get some too. That is what I am saying. Do not jump about in here today. I was in a very good mood.

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

Mr. R.C. EASTMOND: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is speaking about prescribing. As far as I understand, if he did not pay his registration by January 31, he cannot practise.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Sir, I will continue.

Sir, the points that I tried to make this afternoon are very simple. From an economic perspective, we all agree that the tourism industry not only because of its impact on the

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Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: He has had them already. There are well digested, Sir. He now has some energy. We can now have some fun, Mr. Chairman.

The points that we were trying to make were, we understand the importance of the tourism industry to the development of this country. Sir, as a result of that, it was necessary for the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and this Government to not only look to stabilise that sector, but while we were stabilising that sector, it was necessary for us to look at the sector in terms of how we can re-engineer that sector to come out of the recession a more efficient, a more competitive, a leaner and meaner sector to function within the 10 to 15 years. Those types of provisions are outlined within the Medium-term Development Strategy of this Administration.

It is important that we go back and understand two critical things. This is not the statement being made from This Side. The Head of the Barbados Hotel Tourism Association is on record, on Brass Tacks congratulating the Government for the stabilisation of the job sector within the tourism sector because of the Tourism Industry Relief Fund (TIRF), 1 and 2. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North had the audacity to get up in here and say that it was a blatant failure, and the Head of the BHTA is on record indicating totally opposite.

Sir, I know why he would have made such an error, because he did not go home that time.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: No, he did not go to the conference either.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have three minutes.

Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: In the remaining period I would just summarise the essential points that I

wanted to make, that is, there can be no effective or logical comparison of the impact of the tourism industry between the 9/11 event and the recession of 2008.

Secondly, the response from this Administration has been to protect the domestic tourism sector and while protecting the domestic tourism sector, to try to maintain and stabilise the movement of tourists from our traditional markets, the United States and the United Kingdom.

While we were doing this, we concentrated on moving tourism traffic from areas where the recession was not affecting the country as fundamentally, because the financial sector was not as badly affected, for example, Canada. As a result of that, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central would have moved into Western Canada, and through the airlift from WestJet was able to move a large number of tourists from that area into the country.

I also went on to indicate that apart from the stabilisation of the domestic sector through the Tourism Industry Relief Fund (TIRF),¹ and 2, increased the marketing support through Supplementaries. We also concentrated on non traditional markets. As a result of that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central concentrated heavily on the development of airlift from Latin America and South America, so as to open the gateway through Brazil to Barbados, so as to enhance and diversify the tourism traffic into the country. That is something he must be lauded for.

Furthermore, in terms of seeking the new markets and new activities during the recession, I spoke to trying to introduce a number of local activities, for example, the 20/20 Competition, the World Boxing Competition, the new yachting events, all these being sports tourism activities.

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Dr. the Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, then I spoke to the activities that enhance cruise tourism because that was one of the recession proof businesses within this period of time, and to enhance that by separating cruise tourism from cargo tourism by redesigning new cruise ship piers and other type activities. These things were done by this Administration and were piloted by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Mr. Chairman, it is based on that evidence that I think the inference that one can make and the only reasonable inference, is that the Honourable Member for

St. Michael South Central has done well in Barbados as the Minister of Tourism to keep such a vital sector stable in this country.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

His Honour K.St.C BEST: Mr. Chairman, I enter this debate to give my kudos to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central for the excellent work that he is doing in respect of tourism. Sir, clearly, this Government has recognised that tourism is one of the key pillars to keep this economy afloat and we must do all, as Barbadians, to ensure that we protect small Barbados and that is what this Government is doing.

I, Sir, would like to see us start to look at tourism in the form of the green economy. When I speak to that issue, I would like to see that there is greater cooperation between the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Tourism. I say that in this regard, Sir, that our gullies can be beautiful sites for persons coming to these shores, as well as for Barbadians to really traverse and enjoy the beauty.

How, Sir, do we get those gullies beautified? By letting Barbadians know that Barbados belongs to them. Therefore, the illegal and indiscriminate dumping in the gullies in Barbados creates serious problems, so if you can say that this is your gem and you love it so dearly, you need to protect it because if you have a jewel at home you will ensure that you secure it, so treat this country as your jewel and protect it. Sir, this is what I am asking all Barbadian to do.

Mr. Chairman, we talk about global warming and all these sorts of things but I am sure, Sir, that if we really look after our gullies, and the various different nature trails, Sir, we will have great benefit. Sir, persons who believe in the green economy, would at least ensure that they get to these shores because Barbados would not only be marketed now as just sea and sand but a country which is thinking green. I believe, Sir, that is the way forward.

Again, Sir, we need to start to look at the whole question of extensive career showcases, in respect of tourism and the various benefits and opportunities that exist within tourism. That is why this Government, through the good efforts of the officers of the Research and Planning Unit of Economic Affairs, under the section of Tourism, came up to conduct a tourism awareness survey to measure and thus to increase the awareness of the general population of the tourist industry, so you could understand, Sir, that this Government understands the benefit that can be derived from a tourism industry. Sir, we must start at the

primary school, because we said if you should nurture the child from down there, it will grow with it, Sir, and that is what I would like to see happen.

Sir, the link between agriculture and tourism has been spoken about on many occasions in this Chamber, but it is critical that we must repeat it, Sir, because persons come to these shores, not only for sea and sand but to ensure and to taste what we have to offer.

I am saying, Sir, that if we start producing and growing more of our produce, and getting them into the hotel where we can have arrangements with the various hotels to say that Farmer X or Farmer Y is producing a particular product and you can join with him to ensure that those products form part and parcel of the menu, Sir, I think we will be achieving a great lot in respect of agriculture, because that farmer will feel proud, because he would be able to tell somebody I am supplying produce for the Crane. I am supplying produce for the Savannah. Sir, I am saying that we need to show that link.

I want to join with my colleague to call on the taxi operators and drivers to stop, look, listen and ask themselves what service are we providing for Barbados and the tourist industry? How can I improve the industry? How can I improve myself?

Sir, I am asking for extensive training, not just a one-off course, but continual courses to make them aware of the important role they play in respect of tourism. In that regard, I am also calling for a fair distribution in the industry.

Sir, the Minister of Transport and Works has decided that we will increase the taxis to a particular level. I believe that everyone would say, I need a permit but those who can survive in the industry will survive. Sir, persons who return to Barbados would request a particular taxi driver because that person understands his role in tourism.

Sir, I want the taxi drivers to understand their role in tourism and understand the part that they play for the development of Barbados, not to be fighting and chopping one another, but in that other forte, I am asking that they have proper facilities.

Sir, I am saying that if you go down to the taxi stands in Lower Broad Street (Lower Green) the conditions there need to be looked at, for the operation of those taxis. They have been crying out for years, but what I have seen is that one or two chemical toilets have been placed in the area. One of their greatest concerns is that there was a manhole that is causing great problems.

I am asking that the Minister of the Environment, Water Resources and Drainage, in conjunction with the

Minister of Transport and Works look at that area to alleviate that problem for those taxi operators in that area. They provide a valuable service to Barbados for the development of Barbados and I am really asking that this area, if it has not been drawn to their attention as yet, to please pay attention to it because when they come from the Port, that is their second stop when people get to go on island tours and wherever.

Sir, what disturbs me is that it is almost like when you travel on Trevor's Way. You have Pelican Village on one side with all the vendors plying their trade but the traffic through Pelican Village is not as great as the traffic in Trevor's Way.

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His Honour K. St.C. BEST: I am asking that at least one or two tents or kiosks be placed there so that they can ply their trade because some of the tourists travel along that side because of the closeness to the sea. Sir, we need to reroute some of those tourist.

Sir, I also believe that greater usage can be made of the Police Band in the Pelican Village area so that the tourists who come to Barbados would be able to really enjoy the lovely music by our Police Band because that is something that is indigenous to us. Sir, I am saying that the Minister of Tourism could speak with the Attorney-General, the Minister of Home Affairs, to see what arrangements could be made to have the Police Band play in that area at least once or twice a week when the cruise ships are in.

Sir, as it relates to the whole question of tourism in Barbados and what we are doing in these trying economic times, we can say that the Minister of Tourism is doing a fantastic job. I have heard all sorts of accusations levelled at him by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North and I am wondering if he is really a Barbadian.

Mr. Chairman, how can you be a former Minister of Tourism, whether it was for three weeks, three days or whatever, and who at one stage was marketing a country and asking persons to come here and, in the next breath, you want to destroy the same country that you were begging people to come to? I really do not believe that he is a Barbadian. I do not know if his complexion has a problem with it. I heard him. According to him yesterday, our Prime Minister is the worst creature that ever came into the House of Assembly to lead Barbados.

Sir, when we get up in this House of Assembly and start to speak, we must remember that Barbados belongs to all of us. No matter which political party you belong to, or

what political persuasion you have, Barbados belongs to all Barbadians. Sir, if we want it to be said that we are true statesmen, we must behave and act responsibly and what comes from our mouths must represent that we are true Barbadians and that we love our country.

With those few remarks, I want to support this Head. I thank you.

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

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I reenter this debate against my better judgment so I am going to be very brief. I had to leave to go and pay my last respects at a funeral service, I thought I would have seen you there as well, Mr. Chairman, and then I had to do some parental duties, which I have always done, for the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Philip West. No one has ever had to put me in Court for any child maintenance or to enforce my carrying out any of my parental duties.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: I reenter this debate against my better judgment because I find that repeatedly...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, please.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I do not know why my good friend is so upset about a simple statement. If it offended him, I would apologise to him.

Sir, I re-enter this debate as I said, against my better judgment because simple advice that I am seeking to render is just being rejected and I do not know very simple advice would be so constantly rejected. As well-intentioned as you are, sometimes you feel as though you are going up against a stone wall.

Sir, I really thought that we would have seen far more serious debate at this time, not just the engaging on That Side of a lot of mutual adoration and mutual congratulation when, in fact, all the indicators indicate to the contrary.

Sir, I would not have believed that we entered this debate at a time when the Minister of Tourism would select the stats that he would want to reveal, and not disclose the ones he would not want to reveal, at a time when for February, based on figures that the Minister himself showed me, and the Honourable Member for Christ Church

West on Tuesday, there was a decline of 2.4 per cent on 2009, which was also a decline on 2008.

Sir, equally, for the month of March, there is a further decline on last year's which is also a decline on the year before. You would not believe at this time that we would have this debate when our foreign exchange earnings should be going up.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: On a point of order. Just to correct the Honourable Member. The figures that I showed him are actually for March, year-to-date, and we are slightly up. It is correct that we were down in February. As you know, I do not like this up and down figure thing. We understand what the situation is. Just to correct the Honourable Member, February is down but March is slightly up, which is what I showed the Honourable Member yesterday, in case he did not get to look at it properly.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member showed me a chart that showed March to-date is down and February is down, but overall January to March is up because of a somewhat modest increase in January last year. The trend has resumed where we are going downhill again in our tourism. I would have thought that at this time when our foreign exchange earnings are declining when they should be increasing, that we would have seen a far more serious debate coming from Honourable Members on That Side.

Mr. Chairman, I am not going to be long because everything the Minister has said so far I have refuted. I am not going to get into a tit-for-tat when the facts speak for themselves.

Sir, my simple request and advice to the Minister is to work. That is all I am asking the Minister to do. I would have thought that he would have taken that in good faith and promised the country that we would actually start to get off to some work. That is all I wish for my country. Contrary to what the Honourable Member for St. Michael East said, I am not from Mars or anywhere else. I am from right here in Barbados. All I want to see is some work done by the Minister of Tourism.

Mr. Chairman, right now we have a situation where there is no planning, no strategising, no policy and no leadership in our tourism. All I am asking the Minister to do is to provide that, especially in these challenging times.

Sir, this is not the first time Barbados has had to face challenges in our tourism. The former Minister of Tourism would tell you that he had to deal with Foot-in-Mouth

Disease, the Avian Bird Flu and 9/11. Sir, we weathered all of that to hand over to the Democratic Labour Party a tourism sector that was performing at record levels.

Sir, I do not know why the Minister believes that words equal action. All we get from the Minister at all times is words. At no time at all when the Minister produces any data do we see anything that would make us happy.

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4.40 p.m.

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, I do not know why the Minister has decided that he must roll over and die. I do not understand why but as he has chosen to do that, I think the time has come when the Prime Minister needs to intervene in this matter.

Mr. Chairman, the Prime Minister must really stop using the excuse that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is the only one on That Side who has the social standing to be Minister of Tourism. The Prime Minister has to stop taking that approach and recognise that is not going to make our tourism go any further. The current Minister of Tourism has shown that he cannot do the job, irrespective of the social standing that the Prime Minister professes he needs to have in a Minister of Tourism.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is obviously misleading this Honourable House. Sir, never has the Prime Minister of Barbados said that the the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is the only Honourable Member on this side who has the social standing to be Minister of Tourism. The Prime Minister has never said it. It is really a malicious statement and should be withdrawn.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, are you withdrawing the statement?

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: No, Sir, not at all, Sir. If I am saying that the Prime Minister said it, while the Prime Minister is saying that he did not say it, so be it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No, the point is that you have made a statement and I am asking that statement be withdrawn.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I am not withdrawing it. If you wish to have it struck from the

records, it is in your power so to do. I am not withdrawing it. You can strike it but I am not withdrawing it because I know that to be a fact. I was in a forum yesterday where another individual told me that the Prime Minister told him that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I have asked that the statement be withdrawn.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, if you are directing me to, well, then I suppose, subject to verification of the relevant Standing Order, if you are directing me to withdraw it, I will have to. Okay?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please take your seat. I am asking that the statement be withdrawn, without any qualifications.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I withdraw it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, very much.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, what I will say is that only yesterday I was in a forum where an individual said to me that the Prime Minister told him that the only reason the current Minister of Tourism is the Minister of Tourism because he is the only persons he sees on That Side who has the social standing to be a Minister of Tourism. Sir, I have said that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, that shows gross disrespect for the Chair. After I have asked you to withdraw the statement, you proceeded to make it another way. It shows gross disrespect for the Chair and I have asked you to withdraw the statement.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, if the first statement I made indicated that I was saying it for a fact, I have withdrawn that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, just a moment, I am saying to you that I will now ask you to withdraw the second statement.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, with the greatest respect, I am saying...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, no, please.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I cannot be asked to withdraw what I was told. That is what I was told yesterday morning.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have asked you to withdraw the second statement.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I am very sorry. I am entitled to say what I am saying. I am merely saying that yesterday morning at a tourism forum, I was told by an individual that was what the Prime Minister said to him. Sir, it is hearsay, but I am entitled to say it. I am not saying it as a fact, I am merely saying that is what I was told yesterday morning.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I have asked that you withdraw the statement.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: If you ask that I withdraw the statement and you are directing me, contrary to all that has ever occurred or I know, that I cannot make a statement in this Honourable House, then I have no choice but to withdraw it. Sir, but it is a fact.

Mr. Chairman, I am wondering why it is that the Prime Minister would have to intervene in the case of a Minister who is so obviously a letdown to his Administration.

I do not want to get back into the JetBlue scenario, although the Minister has again chosen what information he would reveal and what he would not reveal, but it will all come out in the fullness of time.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister sought, in his way, to

refer to 2007. He said that the former Administration paid \$1.3 million for an Air India service. I really would have thought that the Minister would have stayed away from the year 2007. The year 2007 has already brought serious embarrassment on this very Minister in this very Honourable Chamber.

It was that year that caused the Prime Minister, for the first time I have ever seen in this Honourable Chamber after 16 years, to openly chastise and correct, only falling short by a tad because of the Rules of calling the Minister a liar in relation to the figures he gave, in relation to the year 2007.

Sir, the Minister had got up in a debate we had, when I produced information from the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, that the year 2007 was a record-breaking year in relation to tourism receipts. Therefore, all the money the Minister would now wish to say we spent in 2007, did not prevent the year 2007 from being a record year, both in terms of arrivals and tourists spend in this country.

Mr. Chairman, I want the Minister, having pronounced upon this financial arrangement in relation to JetBlue, to give us the assurance that last year was a

record-breaking year in relation to tourism receipts, or that this year is going to be a record-breaking year in relation to tourism receipts as the year 2007 was in relation to tourism receipts. Sir, as I said, I am not going to prolong this debate because the facts will speak for themselves. In fact, the facts are speaking for themselves.

Sir, I would want to ask the Minister, because the Minister has a habit of somewhat repeating himself and believing that repetition and verbiage represent performance. The speech the Honourable Member gave in relation to the Tourism Master Plan today was the same speech the Minister gave before March 2008, that we will be having a tourism master plan conducted.

I want the Minister, when he gets up to speak, to tell us one single finding of that Tourism Master Plan. He cannot tell us one. Sir, \$300 000 was put into the Estimates for the year 2008-2009. The Minister said he was going to begin to conduct a tourism master plan, which would have taken 18 months. It is now 24 months since then. Sir, I do not want the Honourable Member to tell me the same things he has been telling me before March 2008. I want to hear one single recommendation or position from a consultant or anybody at all, in relation to the Tourism Master Plan.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: No, I am leaving that for when I get on television. We do not get coverage in here. The Nation covers them. They do not cover us. When the television is on, we will deal with those issues.

Mr. Chairman, I want to hear when there was one single step forward, one substantive move forward in relation to the Tourism Master Plan. Sir, that is important because the Minister was talking about restructuring the Barbados Tourism Authority and carrying out port expansion. Sir, I suppose these are things that would never happen under him, at least. Sir, there is no overall plan yet to determine how we are to proceed.

Mr. Chairman, you would have thought, when the Minister was speaking to the Tourism Development Act, that it had gone forward. You would have thought that this Act has gone before Cabinet. It is still in the same pipeline. It is still in the same works. It is still under preparation. Let the Minister speak on those things. The Minister must understand that I mean him well. All I am asking him to do is to work. I do not like the idea of everywhere I go...

Sir, yesterday was an extremely hurtful day because I was in the heart of the tourism players in this country and to hear in every circle that I went that our Minister was being ridiculed and being made fat.

4.50 p.m.

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Sir, it really hurt me, and it is not only there, but that was the most recent experience I had, so I had found myself in the invidious position of not wanting to, but having to defend the performance, or lack of performance of the Minister of Tourism.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I believe you should wrap-up.

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, I am just asking the Minister to work on things. Sir, things are not dead and hopeless but there should be proper planning and strategy, as in the case of Jamaica.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to urge the Minister to stop knocking jurisdictions that are performing. Sir, there is no point in that. He should stop knocking high performing destinations. He should talk with them, work with them and get some concepts and ideas, in particular, the Minister from St. Lucia. The Honourable Member should try to have a word with him because these are people who can teach him things about tourism. Sir, he needs to stop knocking places that are performing well.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, your time has expired.

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Sir, the Minister should recognise that Jamaica went to the IMF, not because of, but in spite of, tourism service and in Barbados we are where we are not because of, but in spite of, our tourism performance.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

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

SUSPENSION

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.10 p.m.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 5.10 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

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Estimates - House A60D, Sequence 20, 5.10 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Me. SPEAKER: When the Suspension was taken, the house was in Supply, to that it shall revert.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resumed Committee, Mr. J. PAUL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee.

Honourable Members before we had the break, there was an incident which I really believe it was unfortunate that it happened, but what I would first like to do is just to go through and read the Standing Orders No. 38, No. 39 and No. 40.

The reason I want to read these Standing Orders is because I know that this being my first time as Chairman of Committees I would want, first of all, to let all Honourable Members of the House know that I intend to abide by the Rules of the House and to, at least, enforce them fairly.

“38 CHAIR TO BE HEARD IN SILENCE

When the Speaker or Chairman rises during a debate, any Member who is then speaking, or offering to speak, must resume his seat, and the House or Committee must be silent so that the Speaker or Chairman may be heard without interruption.”

That did not happen just now.

“39. DECISION OF THE CHAIR FINAL

The Speaker in the House and the Chairman in Committee shall be responsible for the observance of the rules of order in the House and Committee respectively, and their decision upon any point of order shall not be open to appeal and shall not be reviewed by the House except upon a substantive motion made after notice. Notwithstanding Standing Order No. 22 (Manner of giving Notices), such a motion shall not require more than two days’ notice.”

“40. ORDER IN THE HOUSE AND IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

1. The Speaker, or the Chairman in Committee of the whole House, after having called the attention of

the House or of the Committee to the conduct of a Member who persists in irrelevance or in tedious repetition either of his own arguments or of the arguments used by other Members in debate, may direct him to discontinue his speech and resume his seat.

2. (a) The Speaker or the Chairman shall order any Member whose conduct is grossly disorderly to withdraw immediately from the House during the remainder of that day's sitting.

(b) If, on any occasion, the Speaker or the Chairman deems that his powers under the previous provisions of this Standing Order are inadequate, he may name the Member, in which event the procedure prescribed in paragraphs 3, 4, 5, and 6, of this Order shall be followed. (c) The Marshal shall act on such orders as he may receive from the Chair in pursuance of this Standing Order."

Honourable Members, I would want to say that I truly enjoy debates of the House and I recognise that in Honourable Members' enthusiasm to make points that sometimes the enthusiasm trips upon itself. However, I really believe that we still have to conduct ourselves in a manner where we show respect for each other. I really do not believe that the manner in which the last Honourable Member who spoke in respect of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, did not show the Chair due respect, in accordance with the Rules of the House. I will hope that this does not occur again.

I will repeat myself because, as I said before, we are all here representing people. I have heard speeches before this House where we are supposed to be representing the best of whom we are as Barbadians. I hope it does not repeat itself again. As I said, I will be enforcing these Rules without favour.

Thank you.

We proceed.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

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

Mr. Chairman, I choose to participate in this debate because I believe that this debate is of central importance and of concern to the majority of Barbadians who, whether they work in the tourism sector or not, will be concerned as to the performance of the sector.

The truth is that 2009 represented one of the worst years of performance of tourism since Independence and it came upon a very difficult 2008 as well. Its performance in 2009 was characterised not simply by reduction in

numbers, but by a reduction in the earnings of the sector, with a fall of almost \$200 million occurring in the sector. I believe the exact figure may be \$170 million or somewhere thereabouts, but almost \$200 million, and this has had a devastating impact on the general economic environment in Barbados.

The other sectors, the non traded sectors, whether it is in construction, whether it is in retail, whether it is in the supply of goods, everybody is feeling the decline in tourism. Therefore, it must come as no surprise that we in the Opposition will be critically observing what the Government has proposed to do this year. I do not forget the fact that we are in the Committee of Supply engaged in the discussion of the Estimates, not so much as a historic activity but as to the plans that are intended for execution in the upcoming year.

We find ourselves today, Sir, in the middle of great uncertainty. Just now, when the House broke, there was much discussion in the Members Room as to the value of the pound sterling, and whether the pound sterling had, in fact, reached its base, in terms of where and how it will drop. I believe that it is now \$2.98 to the Barbados dollar and there is the distinct possibility that it will continue to drop.

The reality is that if it continues and even with the drop that has occurred, it makes the cost of coming to Barbados and enjoying a vacation in Barbados that much more expensive to a British tourist.

Why is this important to the average Barbadian? The United Kingdom market, Sir, currently occupies 42 per cent of our long-stay visitor arrivals. The Canadian market - and we are happy that is doing well - represents 10 per cent of the Barbados long-stay arrivals. Therefore, a 20 per cent increase in the Canadian market will not offset a 20 per cent decline in the United Kingdom market. The dollar spend that comes from the United Kingdom tourist, will be far greater than any dollar spend that comes from the Canadian market.

Now, what has been the performance of the United Kingdom market for the year? I want to thank the Minister for sharing the figures with us down to March 11, but by his own admission, and by that of the Government, there is no single policy initiative that is going to restore growth in the market but this debate, I understand, is to assist us, in extracting more information from the Minister, as well as putting forward our own perspectives, whether as Back Benchers, Opposition Members, other Front Bench Members, in order to be able to steady what is an awful decline that is being experienced in relation to the United Kingdom market.

I would like, in this first intervention, because I signalLed that I may make one or two more, to focus on that United Kingdom market.

I spoke just now about the depreciation of the pound sterling as it relates to the United States of America dollar and, by extension, to the Barbados dollar. That is a matter of great concern. It immediately means that the cost of the vacation will increase by X percentage points for the British tourist, who may be planning or considering coming here.

Estimates - House A60D, Sequence 20, 15:20:11

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Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: That tourist might decide to stay in the United Kingdom instead because for the same £1 000 or £2 000 that they would spend outside of airfare, they would get a greater return than if they came here and spent it here. I will get to the investment in the next speech.

Similarly, we are speaking, in the middle of great uncertainty, as to what would happen with the British Airways strike. The last time I spoke, about four weeks ago, in this House in relation to a Supplementary, the ballot had just come down and shown that the British Airways workers were going on strike.

We knew that they had 28 days within which to signal what were the dates for the strike. We now know what those dates are. We have been told that the strike should not affect long-haul flights from Gatwick and we are hopeful that would stay because that would mitigate against some of the difficulties.

Mr. Chairman, the bald reality is that we also have tourists who come from other parts of the United Kingdom like Scotland. We also have parts of Europe that are serviced through British Airways, and indeed, people generally coming over from Paris, Holland or from other parts of Europe will come through London, so it is likely that there would still be some dislocation to the Caribbean tourism product.

Mr. Chairman, the Jamaican Minister, I think yesterday, has painted a far gloomier picture than most of the tourism Ministers in the Region. He has facts. I do not know what facts he has access to. The Past President of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, a Mr. Peter Odle, was less negative about it and felt that we would face some dislocation, but not necessarily to the extent as we had feared because of the Caribbean flights being part of those long-haul flights that may not be necessarily affected in the first direct tranche. Mr. Chairman, we knew three weeks ago that there was already 19 per cent cancellation

in bookings on British Airways. The combination of the depreciation of the pound sterling, the occurrence of the British Airways strike and, of course, what we knew we had to face with the passenger tax that came into existence late last year means that there are particular difficulties in the United Kingdom market that, in my view, require a marketing programme, but also a special effort dedicated to the expansion of airlifts.

What is the other point that affects airlift? As I understand it, both BMI and Excel are no longer in the market. Virgin Atlantic Airways may have taken up some of the excess during the winter but in taking up some of the excess, Virgin Atlantic Airways also reconfigured their planes. In reconfiguring their planes, they had less seats coming into Barbados because you had more premium seats than you would otherwise have had which would take up more physical space in the aeroplane.

Mr. Chairman, I wish that the Minister would detail to this Honourable Chamber and to Barbados, what have been the specific measures taken to alleviate the impact of the decline of the British pound against the dollar, the impact of the British Airways strike and the impact of the loss of passenger seats. I know, as I said, that some efforts may have been taken with Virgin Atlantic Airways for the winter season but that was constrained by the reconfiguration that took place in the planes that were actually coming.

I believe as well that we need to discuss what are the views of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association as it relates to the United Kingdom markets specifically. Is it likely that we would seek some kind of limited discount programme similar to the Best of Barbados, whether called that, Bountiful Barbados or whatever name you ascribe to it, that will offset the increase in cost to the individual tourist such that we can hold numbers? Mr. Chairman, we all recognise that the most important task that we face is to keep the establishments in tourism, be they hotels, villas or ancillary providers, taxi owners, watersports operators and attraction providers, in business during these difficult economic times such that when growth returns, we are not having to start new enterprises that will of necessity take a longer time to be able to exploit the growth opportunities that are there. That is the kind of serious focus that I want to bring to this debate in my participation.

Mr. Chairman, I believe as well that the Minister can indicate whether, in his view, the \$92 million which has been provided for the Barbados Tourism Authority in these Estimates would be sufficient to meet the programme bearing in mind that he is going to have to, and his colleagues would have to support it, develop special initiatives to stabilise this level of decline in the United Kingdom market.

Mr. Chairman, we had declines of 4.8 per cent in January, 21.8 per cent in February, and 24.3 per cent in March. The Opposition would have to support any efforts that allow Barbados to be able to stabilise that decline in what is 42 per cent of our tourism market.

Mr. Chairman, upon providing the details to us, and upon telling us whether the \$92 million would be sufficient, bearing in mind that the Barbados Tourism Authority would have received \$102 million in this financial year closing next week, how will he deal with the continued incurring of losses by the tourism providers and ancillary establishments in this year because this trend for the first quarter shows that losses are up and dollar spend is down in terms of numbers.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has three minutes.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir. In relation to that performance, will he have to go back to the Minister of Finance to put some money in the Tourism Industry Relief Fund, because the difficult times experienced last year, which saw a slight improvement in November and December, have returned in February and March at a time when we are in the middle of the winter season, and at a time when most hotels, villas and attractions would earn the majority of their profits for the year.

The Tourism Industry Relief Fund, as I understand it, was capitalised with \$25 million last year and there were \$79 million in claims, which shows that even the \$25 million while appreciated was no way near sufficient to meet the extent of the claims across the sector.

Mr. Chairman, let us think it through. If these enterprises do not receive any further support, if they, as part of the domestic companies in Barbados, have been drawing down on their savings and retained earnings to stay afloat, how likely is it that they can continue to do so for a third successive year? If that is the case, should we not be ensuring that the Tourism Industry Relief Fund receive some input in terms of support from the Government? Should we not also, as I indicated earlier, be seeking to develop urgently and quickly - I believe the key is speed - some limited discount programme?

Mr. Chairman, I understand the disadvantages of an across the board discount programme, given Barbados' positioning in the market.

There are a number of questions which have been put to the Minister. I have not done it in a contentious manner because I believe that at this stage in this Committee of Supply... I have gone on record as saying that I much prefer the Jamaican system where the Minister

comes and answers questions as opposed to hearing speeches in relation to the details of these Estimates and the intended programmes, because what we are really deciding in these Estimates is whether the money should be voted, and how it should be allocated in the coming year.

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5.30 p.m.

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Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, to that extent, those first sets of questions have been asked. I have more in relation to the investments. I have some more in relation to the programme of the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. Sir, I trust and hope that we could have a constructive engagement and that there could be a clear discussion on what it is that must be done urgently, to stem this unfortunate decline in the United Kingdom, which is responsible for almost half of our tourist arrivals in Barbados.

Sir, I will come to cruise tourism separately because I noticed there is a decline in cruise tourism for the year too. I thank you.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, I rise to deal with some of these issues that have been raised by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. I suppose I should thank her as well for entering the debate in such a sober manner and for asking some very serious questions. Sir, I want the Honourable Member to understand - I am not certain that she was in her seat - that the very first contribution I made, when I was asking that this Head stand part, is that I discussed the United Kingdom situation up front.

Sir, I do not want the Honourable Member to believe that there has been some effort to diminish the importance of the United Kingdom situation. I discussed it during my first contribution and all of the points the Honourable Member raised, I also raised. I discussed the fact of the APB, the declining pound sterling and the overall issue of malaise in the United Kingdom economy.

I also went on to make a number of points about some of the things we are doing. The one specific initiative which I did not mention, which I will mention, relates to the British Airways' strike. Sir, whereas, it is a fact that the Gatwick long-haul flights are not affected and, therefore, we will not see any direct loss of flights from the strike, all things being equal, we still have a backup plan in place.

Mr. Chairman, I did tell the Barbados Tourism Authority and our officials there, and I may add that we have an aviation consultant there working for us, who keeps in very close contact with the airlines, that we need to have that plan in place because what is happening at Heathrow could easily filter across to Gatwick. Sir, we do have a plan with a carrier and the idea is that the British Airways tickets will be honoured in the event that there is a strike.

Mr. Chairman, you would be aware of the nature of a lot of our visitors who come from the United Kingdom. Many of them come in November/December and stay until Easter. Therefore, it is a case of where not only is it bringing in people but you may have people here stranded with half of a ticket. Sir, we are well-aware of that and I would like the Honourable Member to be conscious of that fact.

The Honourable Member said that she is putting the perspective and I appreciate that because the truth is, until that contribution, I had not heard any advice coming from the Other Side. I heard talk about who is not speaking to whom, I heard talk about social standing. I heard talk about a lot of irrelevant issues, for example, calling a Minister a half idiot.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: I am complimenting the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and I would suggest that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North would forget that insurgency movement that he was a part of on Sunday and line back up behind the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

I would advise him to beg for forgiveness. Do not mind what went on up there in St. James Central, but to line up behind that kind of contribution.

Mr. Chairman, I am not allowed to see strangers but I see other tourism voices, sober ones, aspirants to come here and maybe that also would have helped.

Sir, the United Kingdom situation is troubling. What are we doing specifically? Yes, we have taken a look at the traditional approach we have taken with respect to discounting and the discounting programmes. Sir, I heard the suggestion that I do not have any relationship with the hierarchy of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Authority. I meet with them twice a month and we have very candid discussions over a desk. We discuss many issues. Yes, I do not get involved in the public harangue. That is not my style but we sit down and discuss many issues.

Mr. Chairman, insofar as this decision Government has taken to relook our approach at discounting, I actually

went down to them. I do not think it is beneath a Minister to go to a key partner to sit down and have a discussion. I went to the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Authority Headquarters and we are looking at a joint programme in which they can have some more say.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would have been at the consultation, and we heard the private sector state that they spent \$45 million marketing Barbados. Sir, if they are spending that kind of money and Government is coming to the table, why have a state-sponsored programme when we can have a joint programme? Sir, to that extent, that is what we are doing.

Mr. Chairman, there is some suggestion that it may be branded the "Spring to Barbados Programme," but I am not interested in the nomenclature. It could be called anything, but we do see the need for a sensible programme. It cannot be the blanket discounting that we have seen in the past.

Sir, it is very ironic that some members of the same Barbados Hotel and Tourism Authority seem to be resisting that approach when they had a guest speaker at the meeting yesterday. What was his advice? You will notice a report in today's papers. His advice was that if the tourism sector continues to live off subsidies, it will end up just like how sugar ended up.

Sir, I do not think Dr. Persaud has an interest one way or other. He is well-known to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and he is highly-acclaimed internationally. Let us understand that we are not trying to punish any programme.

It is true that the Best of Barbados programme was heavily criticised, and legitimately so, but I think we have to move to another phase of how the State funds are used to promote the entire destinations and how we could help that sector.

Mr. Chairman, I think, and I said this earlier in this debate, that as opposed to cutting a man a cheque and say go keep your doors open, it would be better to get people coming off planes and coming through the doors, so that the businesses could stay open. I think everyone would prefer that approach. I understand that the USA and Canadian markets cannot replace the United Kingdom market but, at least, if there are a few numbers coming in, you can still keep people employed. You can still keep things ticking over.

Sir, we have no control over the United Kingdom situation. Yes, we are going to put a special out there. Yes, we are trying to get some more airlifts. Yes, we are also having a series of events, and I am directly answering the

questions from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East on what we as are doing.

The 20/10 Cricket World Cup Series has some very encouraging bookings. As a matter of fact, the forward bookings on both of those carriers coming out of the United Kingdom, Virgin Atlantic and British Airways, are both up for April to December. Sir, I recognised 2009 was a bad year.

Mr. Chairman, I am not gloating - for the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, I am just sharing facts. We are having a sober discussion, but any time I say something is up, I hear I am gloating. I am saying they are up, but that we have also lost a lot of seats out of the United Kingdom. Those flights are sometimes 90 per cent full, even though the market is down, so clearly we need to get more seats. That is the issue.

Mr. Chairman, Canada responded well when we gave it more seats. The United States of America responded well when we gave it more seats, never mind the Honourable Member for St. Michael North suggested I should not have gone with JetBlue. The Honourable Member has all but suggested it, the way he has been attacking it in here for the last two days, but I believe some more seats and some creative programmes like what we are talking about will be the answer to sorting out the situation with the United Kingdom.

I also think that we have to gird our loins to a similar incident happening in the future and that is why I believe that the emphasis we are placing on Canada, albeit the numbers are small, is still so important. The emphasis that we are trying to place on Continental Europe where the numbers are even smaller, is also important.

5.40 p.m.

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, I do not agree that we should spend the money that we are spending in Brazil on the United Kingdom. I think we must start to diversify our source market base so that we do not have a situation like what happened in 2009 in the future. There are going to be other recessions and it probably may not be my problem to solve, but a future Minister of Tourism, down the road, may have the issue to handle it and, at least, you have a diversified source market base. Sir, that really is the thinking.

Mr. Chairman, I also think you should be made aware that, whereas, we cannot do anything about the APD, we are still doing our part through the High Commission and through the Diaspora.

Sir, as you know, in 2009, it went in and there are increases that are scheduled for this year, in 2010, and our hope is that the new Government, be it Labour or Conservative, or as I am hearing, a possible coalition, we are hoping that new Government would, at least, delay the scheduled increase for the APD on the basis of the hardship that it will cause, not only the Caribbean but other long-haul destinations as well from the United Kingdom.

Sir, this is a very serious lobby on at the level of the High Commissions and also at the level of the Diaspora. Mr. Chairman, I think the Honourable Member needs to be aware that we are very conscious of that United Kingdom situation and we are trying our level best to get it back on track. The numbers are not yet on the upswing but we think we can get there.

Mr. Chairman, in terms of the resources allocated to the Barbados Tourism Authority, as I have said, I have to compare like with like. It is true that we did come for a \$12 million Supplementary recently. I think the point was already made that we are discussing Draft Estimates here. Sir, tourism is highly dynamic and is moving quickly.

My own view is that, *ceteris paribus*, if all things remain equal, we may be able to get by for the entire financial year on the \$92 million but, then again, we do not know because things are happening too suddenly.

I am told that the Bank of England is talking about measures to halt the fall of the English pound and to stabilise it but that, in itself, could still lead to some other contagion, and something else could happen because things are so delicate in that United Kingdom situation.

Mr. Chairman, a lot of people are nervous about the General Election so I am not going to stand up here and make a statement as bold as the Honourable Member for St. Peter made years ago, that there will be no Supplementaries in Tourism for this financial year.

I cannot do that, but I can say that we can certainly try, and we are grateful that, at least, the Barbados Tourism Authority's Head has been increased over its last year amount - the original vote - and so, we are dealing with those issues.

Mr. Chairman, the Tourism Industry Relief Fund (TIRF). I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North call it a joke but I did not take him seriously with that, no pun intended. I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East made the point that claims naturally outstripped what was available.

Sir, I have a series of letters from persons who received benefits from the TIRF and there was no indication from them that it was a joke. They were

appreciative and they understood that the Government still has schools to run, it still has eight polyclinics and four hospitals to run. It still has roads and so on to pave and they appreciated the fact that they were able to get some assistance.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have three minutes more.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, I am sincerely hopeful that if we can continue doing our various measures and we can have our events as well that the United Kingdom market will respond. Sir, the pool festival, the enhanced face of Barbados that we are talking about having, is something that will have appeal to British tourists and, Sir, the Fireball Yachting Competition also has appeal to the British tourists. I am not sure how many are scheduled to come in for the boxing but, certainly, the 20/20 World Cup cricket, we are supporting these events in that context.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say quickly on the TIRF that, again, we heard it said by the Shadow Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North - it was a joke - but I would just like to share with this House that we were told to look at other people in the Caribbean and see what they are doing, but the Government of St. Kitts has actually consulted with the Ministry of Tourism in Barbados because they want to implement a TIRF. They want to see how we give it so our TIRF has now become a standard for the Region that other people are trying to emulate.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: You did not have a TIRF. That was a Hotel Relief Fund. We redesigned it and now others are looking to copy it, so we are doing our part.

Mr. Chairman, I think I have tried to respond to all of the points that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East raised and I did it in the same manner with which she tendered her contribution. I have responded in like manner.

I want to say to her that I hope she recovers from her blows the other night, and that she should not worry about the insurgency movement because I think the rate at which she is going at that she will be okay.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much.

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

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member cannot obviously help himself, but

that is more a reflection of him than of the rest of us, so I will leave that where it is.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying this for the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Philip West too, because the Honourable Member for St. Philip West paraded a host of things which he attributed to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. It would have been better if he has stuck to the fact rather than seek to ascribe to the Honourable Member. Sir, I have the words here.

He said that these are the initiatives that the Member has put in place and he was referring to the 20/20 Cricket Competition. Sir, the 20/20 Cricket Competition was decided upon before 2007 World Cup even took place. Sir, mercifully the Minister has now indicated that we do have a difficulty with respect to the fact the Government really cannot realistically meet all of the claims put on the TIRF.

What he declined to say just now, based on the specific question I asked is that given that you are now into a third year of decline, will the Government put in place funds in the Tourism Relief Fund again, because the people and the entity, clearly, do not have the capacity to carry themselves in these conditions.

Similarly, the Minister has indicated that programmes are going to be put in place for the United Kingdom market. Sir, my concern is that we have known about the British Airways strike for some time. He says he believes there is a carrier that has been identified and I take it that those contractual arrangements have been put in place on a contingent basis to be secured as is required.

Sir, if so, is he in a position to give this Honourable Chamber the details of those arrangements because this is a contingency that in fairness, when these Estimates were prepared, would not have been known to the Ministry of Tourism. The question is, who is going to assume the cost? Is it going to be the Barbados Tourism Authority and what is likely to be the scale of the contingency? Is it going to be £1 million, £2 million or £5 million, so that we have some idea what is the scale of the dislocation that has been put before us as a result of the British Airways strike.

Mr. Chairman, if you have put a programme in place, you obviously must know the cost of the programme before signing off on it and, in those circumstances, it would give us a better idea how to treat to the \$92 million, which has been provided because, in fairness, the Ministry would not have known about a British Airways strike when the \$92 million was allocated.

H/A60D/17:50 Sequence 23

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Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, we would have to assume that the Minister of Finance is prepared to put \$92 million plus that contingency, plus as I say, funds in the Tourism Industry Relief Fund (TIRF), because if you do not support the enterprises in the sector, then you have no one to exploit growth when growth returns. It is a serious question, because the deficit that we are facing is just under \$1.5 billion.

The reality is, whether we like it or not, tourism is responsible for the largest amount of revenue in terms of the earnings from services of any sector. Therefore, we have to make sure that it is appropriately provided for, such that we can keep the multiplying effect that it brings into the domestic economy as we move forward.

In relation to the investments, I think we had enough discussion in here yesterday, to suggest there is the distinct possibility that Four Seasons would lead to other investments being restarted, but we need to see Four Seasons started, and that is now the subject of, I believe, awaiting decisions from the Government.

Sir, separate from that, what are the other concrete investments stalled that the Ministry of Tourism anticipates will resume in this calendar year? For example, Beachlands and the Regent, Holetown, were stalled. There are a number of other projects that were stalled and the Ministry of Tourism, like the Ministry of Finance and Investment, must have an idea of what those investments are.

As the Prime Minister said, he went to the United Kingdom and met with them. So they must have a timetable of what they expect to start back in this calendar year, so that we can have an appreciation as will the members of the sector, what will be there.

Thirdly, in relation to the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc.'s programme, what are the details of that programme? Let me step back a second. We always saw the BTII as important to help with the renewal of the general product offering in Barbados, the general infrastructural development of Barbados. That is why it has underwritten programmes in St. Lawrence, Speightstown, Oistins, et cetera.

It is, therefore, important for us to understand what are the new initiatives, or the continuing initiatives. We know, for example, of the work that was being done with the Constitution River. What else is going to be done there? What are the other initiatives to enhance the overall environment in the country, to make it more attractive as a tourism destination, particularly given Barbados' location in the brand, as an upmarket destination?

I think if the Minister can provide that information, I believe I might have put him on notice yesterday, so that

should not be a difficulty for him to do, because I am aware, although I disagree with it, that the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. no longer is in the Ministry of Tourism, but is now in the Ministry of Finance and Investment.

Quite frankly, I think that its linkages with the tourism sector are too great for it to have that kind of ministerial separation, but that is not a decision for This Side. That is the reality that has been delivered to us, but I expect that even though it is in a different Ministry, this Minister must be kept aware, and must, in fact, be entitled to know what is happening and to have an input into what is happening, because there is a direct correlation between relation to the quality of the built infrastructure, and, indeed, the product that he has to sell to the rest of the world.

Sir, the issue in relation to the pipeline of investments that can be restarted, that is expected to be restarted. What is the programme of the BTII for this year? Whether funds would be put into the Tourism Industry Relief Fund (TIRF) for this year, and, indeed, what are the contractual arrangements or the contingent liability for the carrier, which have been put in place in order to meet the contingency of the British Airways strike? Those four areas, I believe would assist.

Sir, I would only say to him that his effort is not assisted by those who would try to get up and to suggest that things had no source. If we are going to be serious, the reality is, do not try to take praise where praise is not due. Ask for help where help is needed, and at the same time take praise where praise is due, but to get into false political debate, and the throwing of shots at this stage, does not help the country, does not help the sector, and certainly does not help this Minister to discharge his duties in relation to the difficulties in the sector.

Sir, the fifth question that I had was, what is the legislation which was left there, the preparation for the legislation which was left, not only in relation to the Tourism Development Act, but to the critical issue of timeshares and condominiums? We do have examples of timeshare products in the country, and there was to be a legislative framework developed for it. Is that still a priority for the Ministry of Tourism, and do we expect progress on that legislative framework in this financial year in relation to the timeshare properties?

We were also going to develop dedicated villa legislation. Is that the route which the Minister is going to go, or will he seek to incorporate the villa framework within the amendments to the Tourism Development Act? If he can please answer those questions, then I may come again depending on his responses, Sir.

I am obliged to you.

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

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a few comments in this debate as we have obviously sobered up since the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North. We are at the point of discussing the major difference between the approach that we are taking to the marketing of Barbados.

I think the points being made are points which this Administration has been working with, and which the Minister has pointed out on a number of occasions has engaged his attention almost daily. Interaction with agencies that operate within our different Ministries as a result of the activities that we carry out are always challenging, and we always have to be moving in terms of our thinking of time.

I do not think that sly references to how a particular agency may respond to one or another situation is necessarily a major point. It is a point of discussion for work in progress, and it is something we have to deal with.

Sir, the point must be made that we have been over dependent, although we recognised the value of the British market, and it is very important that we work with this market and we continue to work this market. The Minister made very clear the contingency plans in place in the event the strike occurs in Britain.

The Diaspora supporting the position, we expect that as a large group of voters in that area they will be merely able to influence future policy. We know that these things are in place and ready, and it is a position which a sovereign State has taken.

We, therefore, have gone deliberately into other markets. The Minister has been at pains to point out the success of the work in Canada. He has also been at pains to point out the new markets in South America, and in the reaches of Continental Europe which we are tackling and which we want to see developed, so that as the country moves back into a growth stage, we expect that we will see the benefits of this kind of approach. Indeed, the message to the local tourism players, the question of discounting is one way, but it is something which is difficult to recover from.

As I said, yesterday, I operate and represent a constituency which has a number of hotel properties and I discuss these issues with the owners all the time. I understand the pressure under which they are put. We have to fight this. The source of our market, whether it is Canada, South America, the United States or Britain, the

course of our market has less discretionary spending power, and we have to get accustomed to this reality. This is, I think, what we are tackling.

SA60D 18.00 p.m. Sequence 24

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Estimates - House A60D, Sequence 25, 6.00 p.m.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: We are changing the product in Barbados. We are diversifying the product in Barbados to continue to make it attractive. We have had discussion during this debate on the question of the cruise tourism for improvement, but we are working even in that area to make it better, in terms of improvement at our Harbour, the cruise terminals, and this is the point that has to be made.

In particular, at the constituency level and the question of the community tourism, I am buoyed by the fact that there are so many young players in the industry who, from day to day, express an interest in participating in the tourism industry. There is growth, Sir, in sports tourism we hear all the time, but even in special sports tourism, and I refer this time to wind surfing, boggy board surfing and belly surfing.

Sir, if you visit the South Coast on any day, once the surf is up, you would be amazed at the number of locals and visitors who are now making it a regular source of recreation, a regular sport.

In the case of the wind surfing, of course, we have our own former olympian, O'Neal Marshall. He and his partner now operate out of an arrangement in Silver Sands, but they are looking to establish a school for wind surfing in Barbados.

They are looking seriously at another venue in the Oistins area and we look forward to being able to work with them, to fashion a project which would not only create a new and sustainable area of interest for young Barbadians, but it would also create a new attraction for visitors to our island, who come to Barbados and who engage in these kinds of sports, who interact at the community level, who spend less money, yes, but in real terms are prepared to spend that money in much more diversified areas.

They may not go to the traditional restaurant and the traditional hotel, but they sit and have dinner by Rita, "Chicken Rita" or they go to the "Sticky Wicket" at the bottom of Silver Sands, or they go, as we have already spoken about and we continue to speak at length, to the ever attractive and growing experience of Oistins Bay Garden.

Sir, these are the kinds of realities we have to work with, the whole idea of building our tourism, recognising that there will be peaks and valleys to work our way through. The provision of funding to support these valleys, is not something that Government can just go and dip into a bottomless bucket and lift up and say, here is \$92 million, here is another \$92 million.

It does not work like that. Therefore, we have to fashion our response. We have to fashion the way we build and rebuild our very important tourism industry, which affects every one of us. We have to fashion that, Sir, in a very structured and responsible way.

Sir, I want to give credit to the approach of the Honourable Minister. I want to give credit to the approach of this Administration as we tackle these urgent and very important issues. I look forward to, as I said, working with the new initiatives that keep evolving in the Constituency, the new activities and the new businesses, which our people are looking at getting into, and this is going to redound to the benefit of our people at the end of the day because everybody would be taking part in the vision and the sharing of the economic pie which we call a Barbados economy.

I want to go back to the very important message which we have made in this debate. The Honourable Minister of Finance, Prime Minister made the point that yes, the economy is important. It is extremely important, but the society also has to be nurtured. It has to be shaped because it would all be for naught if we have an economy, an infrastructure which is there, but it is begging for visitors because of incidences which are not acceptable in the business place.

I need to join the call that in tourism, we need to continue to address the issue. We are constantly in discussion with the police at Oistins about issues, instances of violence against visitors, violence against locals. The point I am making, Sir, is that we have to make sure that we understand, as Barbadians, the overarching message that tourism is our business. We all have a part to play. We have to make sure that discipline is paramount, Sir, and that everyone understands that the success of this business, at the end of the exercise, will depend on how much we understand the part, the role we play in its continued development, and sustaining a useful tourism product for all of us to enjoy.

I am grateful to you, Sir.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I want to make a second intervention in this important topic. I believe a lot

has been said about the role that tourism plays in a total economy. First, I would want to recognise that this \$92 million in tourism is a lot of money, even though we notice that there is a falloff of the revenue received by this Department over the last year, a cut of almost \$8 million.

We have been speaking about the marketing strategy of the Government and how it helps. Yesterday, I made the point that we have spent a lot of money in airlifts. We have spent a lot of money in destinations, especially Canada, the United States of America and Great Britain. Those two latter markets are important for our tourism product and we have seen, Mr. Chairman, a lot of resources being spent in Canada and in the United Kingdom.

I want to focus not so much on the marketing because I believe more has to be done, not only to develop our local facilities, but we need to look at activities, Sir, because most tourists come to our destination and to destinations throughout the world, based on a reason. Why am I coming? Why am I going?

The whole notion of sun and sea is not a big thing now because I do not believe that we have the same types of resources as most Caribbean countries. Sun and sea are almost everywhere in the Caribbean. They come for a reason. Most tourists will come here for sports, vacation, business, an educational programme but I believe we have a direct edge in the field of sports.

I believe that over the last decade or so, we have seen a number of activities, meaningful programmes being put forward by the Ministry of Tourism and the BTA and to some extent, the Ministry of Sports and the local agencies.

Mr. Chairman, we have seen the Banks Hockey Tournament in the summer. We have seen also the cricket tournaments that are put forward by the Barbados Cricket Association.

Estimates - House A60D, Sequence 25, 18:10:13

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: We have local cricketers going backward and forward, for example, the Police Association has a tournament across the globe. I think they went to Australia last year and they have teams coming from those countries back here to us as well, so there is a on/away basis tournament.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that more has to be done in marketing this concept of sport tourism. I spoke last evening of how we tried to develop the grounds of many of the sporting teams and we need to continue to look at these things.

The Minister of Health spoke about a tourism wellness programme to attract persons who are sick. This was started some years ago. I do not know if the Minister could share light on what resources would be put into this wellness programme.

I believe that there is a need in our vicinity to spend a lot of money in helping to develop a wellness programme. A number of persons in North America sometimes want to travel to the Caribbean in order to recover from a number of illnesses and we have to be able to put, not only the programme in place, but to ensure that our medical facilities are first world ready.

We have talked about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as a hospital that can assist and we need to develop that resource. I believe that if we could get a number of persons putting money into developing our medical facilities, it would attract persons from North America and Great Britain, so that the Government needs to focus on this.

While we were in Government, we spent a lot of money and resources on retirement villages. We have encouraged a number of private initiatives in order to promote that activity. Mr. Chairman, I believe that more and more time and research can be spent in terms of how we develop that niche market. There is a need for it.

I believe that we could look at developing a wellness programme where persons from North America and Europe could come here to recuperate and that their families could come to have long extended time in order to promote such a programme.

Mr. Chairman, I think that more can be done in developing those two markets, Europe and North America, which are the ones that traditionally help Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I also felt, based on what the Prime Minister said, that we need to wrap ourselves in the flag. That is a concept that is being branded around quite frequently. Mr. Chairman, we need to pay tribute to a number of our sportsmen.

Sir, over the years, our Administration helped a number of sporting organisations as well as persons who have done well in their respective fields. I speak of persons like Obadele Thompson, the 3Ws, Frank Worrell, Everton Weekes, Clyde Walcott, and Sir Garfield Sobers.

More recently, we have tried to help young persons who have helped their sports, for example, Ronald "Suki" King. Suki King is the world's Go-As-You-Please Champion. He is a poor individual who came out of a poor community, but he has helped to develop sports across Barbados. We have recognised him, not only in naming a

field in St. George after him, but in many other ways. We know that he has a tendency to work hard.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: We did not only help Suki, we also helped a number of cricketers because we believe that sportsmen have a right to live, to exist and to earn a living in this country, that is why in 2005-2006 Suki was hired at the National Sports Council. Today, I am being told that Suki's job is under threat. I wonder why is it that Suki is being threatened by the Ministry of Sports.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I do not know but I want the Government to tell me.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, we have to understand that if we want to wrap ourselves in the flag and we want our sportsmen like Obadele Thompson, Suki King and Everton Weekes... These are people who for a large extent bring in a number of tourists here. They wrapped themselves in the flag.

Mr. Chairman, when Ryan Brathwaite won the 100m hurdle he did more for Barbados in terms of marketing than most of the large sums of money we spent. We have to understand that these sportsmen and sportswomen do contribute to the success of our tourism product.

Mr. Chairman, despite the fact that they may not go to work every day, they should not be threatened, because they have to go out and raise funds in order to do the things they do best. When we gave Suki King the job at the National Sports Council, it was never envisaged that he had to go to a desk from 8:00 o'clock to 4:00 o'clock.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Yes, he has to work but a programme should be developed. Today, his job is under threat because he cannot work a 9-4 job.

Mr. Chairman, when we spoke about Everton Weekes' job being threatened, it was just a little thing. You cannot tell us on one hand to wrap ourselves in a flag and to go out there and do this and then our people who are dynamic in sports, who are bringing people to Barbados, who are out there doing things for Barbados... Sir, whether or not we like it, people like Sir Gary and the 3Ws have done work for Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, we have to understand in this country that it is those people... We cannot allow persons who have

excelled in sports to be on the streets. It is wrong. Mr. Chairman, while we were in Government we provided an opportunity...

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: We gave him a house in St. Philip and we never put him out.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, please.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am addressing you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You did not appear so just now, so please address me.

House A60D Sequence 26

6.20 p.m.

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that when this Administration was in Government, we provided a number of jobs for these sporting people because we recognised that they had to live and that we could not ask them to work from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., the normal working hours. We recognised that we had to provide a programme for them where they could work, but could still perform in their respective sport. Sir, to ask a person to go to work and he has to travel up and down...

Sir, "Suki" travels all over the world promoting Barbados. He is the world's Go-As-You-Please Champion. "Suki" is a king in his own right but now he is being threatened by the Ministry of Sports.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I said threatened. I said threatened.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is seeking, by deliberation, to use rumour and gossip to mislead this Honourable House. Sir, if the Honourable Member has evidence that somebody is being threatened, the Honourable Member needs to produce that evidence.

Sir, first the Honourable Member said that he was fired, then he said that he is now being threatened. Sir, the Honourable Member cannot do that. It is not a responsible thing to do and I am asking the Honourable Member, through you, to stop making those innuendoes in here.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am not saying that he was fired but that his job is being threatened. I am saying, as I speak to you, "Suki" is attending a disciplinary hearing at the Ministry of Sports. What are you saying? I am saying that he is attending a disciplinary hearing because he cannot go to work from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, it is unfair for a Government to come here, pretending that they like black people and then threaten their jobs.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, first of all, I cannot hear myself. I believe that if an Honourable Member is making a presentation on the Floor, he has a right to be heard. If that Honourable Member is making a point that is in error, the Honourable Member who wants to address that error must first rise on a point of order.

I will also ask that Honourable Member to state the nature of the point of order and then I will decide whether or not it can be allowed. We need to do it properly, so that we can have some order.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that the Honourable Prime Minister has said...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central is on a point of order.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House by saying that the Ministry of Sports is conducting a disciplinary hearing in relation to the individual mentioned. Therefore, that inaccuracy should be struck from the record. I am stating as a fact that it is inadequate.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, we have had clarification on the issue from the Minister. I would advise that you move on. You are being repetitious and I will advise that you move on as far as that is concerned.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I have been in here for 16 years and I am categorically saying to you that “Suki” King is attending a disciplinary hearing at the Ministry of Sports at the National Sports Council. Sir, what kind of foolishness and madness is the Honourable Member saying?

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you were not here at the beginning of this particular Session where I indicated I will not allow Honourable Members, no matter how senior they may be, to utilise my perceived inexperience but the Rules are clear where constant repetition, first of all, is not to be permitted in speeches and secondly, I made a ruling in respect of the fact that a point of order has been raised and that it has been clarified, and I am asking you to move on.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I have made my point and I am sticking to my point. Whether you think it is repetition or not, repetition is good for people who cannot learn and who will not learn.

I am further saying that the Honourable Prime Minister said that we must wrap ourselves in the flag. How can we ask sports people in this country to wrap themselves in the flag, to go out and market Barbados as a destination, to be a part of the team but whenever they have to work, whenever they have to travel, they are under tremendous pressure, not necessarily from the Ministers, but from persons who have been put in place?

I am saying that we have to be careful with persons whom we put on these Boards, who cannot understand, who do not understand that sports persons travel. Sir, sports persons must raise funds in order to be able to promote this country.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: On a point of order. It is misleading for the Honourable Member to make a representation in the manner in which he is doing, to cast wide, to indicate that the Government has been unfair in relation to any particular individual, without speaking to any specifics. The Honourable Member cannot do that. It is misleading and it is an abuse of the Rules of this Honourable House.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I have to make a ruling.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: A ruling on what?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please sit. The point is that you are casting aspersions and I believe in

that regard you need to move on. I made the point that Rule 40 (1) which states that:

“The Speaker or the Chairman in Committee of the whole House, after having called the attention of the House or of the Committee to the conduct of a Member who persists in irrelevance, or in tedious repetition, either of his own arguments, or of the arguments used by other Members in debate, may direct him to discontinue his speech and resume his seat.”

Honourable Member, I consider what you are doing to be tedious repetition.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I have said before that the Government’s intention is to ask persons to wrap themselves in the flag. I am further saying that there are lots of sports persons in Barbados who have done just that but because of certain circumstances, there are some persons who cannot perform their jobs from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

I am further saying that it is unfair for Government Boards not to understand that these people have to live, that they deserve to live. Mr. Chairman, I am saying that it is unfair for Government Boards not to understand that the people market Barbados and that they help to develop the tourism product.

Sir, when Sir Everton Weekes was fired because he could not go to work from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m., it is a similar case to what is happening with “Suki” King at this stage. Sir, “Suki” King is a national hero. I am also saying that we have to do the same thing for persons like Ryan Brathwaite, persons who are young sportsmen and women, who continue to promote Barbados. Sir, if a Minister does not know what is happening in his area, he could check.

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

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House, first by saying that if a minister does not know. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member really does not know what this Minister knows.

The next thing is that the Honourable Member is using the names of individuals and is calling their names and their official capacities without having followed the Rules of this Honourable House. Sir, the Honourable Member mentioned two names.

Mr. Chairman, being a senior member of this Honourable House, the Honourable Member should know better, therefore, for the Honourable Member to have raised the names of persons in this Honourable House in a manner

in which he is saying those persons are subject to some kind of disciplinary proceeding, is very prejudicial and should not be allowed in this Honourable House.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I know that if you have not mentioned a name in a derogatory manner, you can mention still mention that name.

Asides.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Rules do not say anything about derogatory manner. You are not permitted to mention anyone in their official capacity, except you get leave of this Honourable House. Sir, in this case, the Honourable Member is raising certain matters that could be extremely prejudicial in relation to the individuals mentioned.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, I have clarification. As far as I know, if a matter is sub judice you should not mention it first of all.

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Mr. CHAIRMAN: The other point is that I did ask you to move on.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I want to make the last point. The Government now believes that is all in the tourism sector. They have made the point that tourism is our No. 1 industry, which is true.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you should wrap-up.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I understand when the Government is under pressure and I understand when the Chairman is pulling weight. Sir, I understand what is happening.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am sorry. I said you should wrap-up. Honourable Member, you have been on your feet for close to 25 minutes. I allowed for the interruptions but you have had more than your adequate share of time.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, I will come back again.

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

Mr. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to take a couple of minutes just to clarify a couple of things that have been said this afternoon. Sir, I believe we

have been on this Head for the last two days and if one listened to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East earlier, one would believe that many of the mouthings that we hear were all new.

Sir, in truth and in fact, as pretty as the Honourable Member sounded and looked, in fact, she raised no new issues. In fact, all the issues that were raised, even though raised in sometimes a more heated manner by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North were, in fact, asked and answered.

Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt that there are some challenges to the tourism industry. Sir, we accept that, but we also accept that one of the difficulties in our industry is the fact that we have to diversify our markets. We have been over-relying on the United Kingdom market and there is no doubt about that. What we are trying to do now...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I cannot hear the Honourable Member speaking and I am asking the Member to be heard.

Mr. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, I know you would want to hear me clearly. I want to make that point again. What we are trying to do now is to correct a situation, ideally, that should have been corrected five years ago. We have a situation, where admittedly, the United Kingdom has been kind to us. It represents 40 per cent or 45 per cent of our market share.

We are trying to move towards an ideal situation. We would want to be less dependent on any single market because whenever there is a tremour in that market, the ripple effect through our tourism industry is hard. Sir, that is what we have been trying to do for the last two years.

Mr. Chairman, that is why the Minister is at pains to point out that we are going into new markets. I do not know how many other ways we could put it so that Honourable Members could understand. Sir, that is why we are tapping Brazil again, and that is why we want to bring tourists out of Argentina and down the road, out of Chile. Sir, that is why we are paying more attention to the Latin American market. Sir, that is why we are putting more energy into the Canadian market.

Mr. Chairman, we accept that the Canadian market, in terms of numbers, will not bring the dollar spend but, at the end of the day, we also want to bring bodies through the door. Sir, unless there are bodies through the door, people will not be employed and we will build capacity and increase the numbers.

Sir, at the end of the day, what we are trying to do, just to make the point again, is to diversify our market as much as possible, so that it would be more resilient towards

shocks in the international market. Sir, there is nothing wrong with that. It is a sensible approach.

Asides.

Mr. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, the British Airways situation is a fluid situation. Last week, we were told that British Airways may have a full blown strike. Just yesterday, listening to the BBC News, we were told that they may be able to carry at least 65 per cent of their load.

Sir, on our way home tonight that may change again, but the point is, it is a fluid situation, so the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East to say that she wants to know which dotted line we have signed on, we cannot sign on a dotted line in such a fluid situation. Sir, it would be irresponsible.

Mr. Chairman, how can we have arrangements with other airlines feeding into Gatwick Airport or Heathrow Airport to bring tourists to Barbados? How many airlines are there? How many people are coming from the different jurisdictions? Sir, there is no way that we could know that immediately and respond.

Sir, my point is, it is all right to look pretty but, at the end of the day, when you dive down to the contribution, there is not a lot to it because all these questions have been asked and answered.

Mr. Chairman, we have said that we are looking at Europe. We have said that we are looking at Sweden, Germany and hopefully we are going to have an agreement in place so that we can bring more tourists out of Germany to increase our European capacity. Sir, there is a Shanghai Expose that all of us are going to this year.

Sir, we saw recently in St. Lucia that the Asian market has been good to St. Lucia but we also know that the Asian market is a heavily discounted market, so we cannot just jump into numbers without looking at our brand and looking at the impact of where we want to position ourselves as a tourist destination. Mr. Chairman, that goes towards the issue of whether or not we will have a discounting programme in the United Kingdom market.

Mr. Chairman, I have to say to you that whenever I am in the United Kingdom and I see advertisements saying that flights to Barbados cost \$190 and that you can stay in a hotel in three days for \$100 I do not believe it is sending the image that we want to send about Barbados. Sir, we have to be careful, if we do go into any kind of a package, how much, how long, when and where. We cannot just jump into it because the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East says to do something. Sir, it has to be planned.

Mr. Chairman, we are fairly confident that, at the end of the year, when one looks at all the things we have in place, when one looks at World Cup Cricket, when one look at sailing, when one looks at boxing and when one looks at the plans for Crop Over that, at the end of the day, when everything is put into the wash, that our numbers will be better than it looks at this point in time.

Mr. Chairman, we have to look at the things holistically. Yes, we are down and we know why we are down. We know we are down because of the pound sterling, for example. There is nothing that this Minister of Tourism can do about the pound Sterling. He cannot take it up or he cannot take it down and he has no impact upon it. What we can do is react to it and, Sir, that is what we are trying to do. We are trying to position ourselves so that while recognising the importance of the market that we can bring persons from other parts of the world.

Mr. Chairman, before I close there is something I omitted yesterday, which I want to speak about. I think we need to recognise the contribution of the smaller stakeholders in the tourism sector. I know that we have earmarked \$300 000 towards the small sector and I just want to urge the Minister to ensure that we are bringing them along as far as possible.

Sir, I will give an example. There is a plant that has been finished at Oldbury, St. Philip by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West and, depending on whom you speak to in Barbados, whether or not the proprietor is a good individual or a bad individual, an outstanding business person or otherwise, the fact is, that plant is a significant plant and to invest millions of dollars into the plant, as they have done, signals confidence in this economy and signals confidence in Barbados. They have placed their money where their mouths are.

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Mr. A .D. BRATHWAITE: I believe that projects like that and individuals like that deserve our support in terms of giving them back something.

Sir, one of my concerns has been the dollar spend, in terms of how much money goes out of the economy when money goes into certain hotels. That is why I will urge the Minister, and I will continue to say, we must ensure that more money stays in this economy, and where possible, if it means assisting the smaller intimate hotels, where we know that more money will be retained, then that is where we should place more of our emphasis.

Sir, where we support projects, such as the one at Oldbury, let us give them that support. In fact, it is not easy

to invest the millions of dollars into Barbados, at this point in time, unless, of course, there is confidence in us as a people, and certainly in us as a Government, that there will be a return on their investment. I want to compliment them and want to say to the Minister that wherever possible, you can assist projects like that, please let us do so, so that they can reap some reward from their contribution.

Finally, we recognise that at all junctures, there is always a possibility that the Minister of Tourism can come back for a Supplementary. We have accepted that. That is nothing new. Again, the situation is fluid, so if it requires us to have more money in terms of marketing, then we will have to produce it. Tourism is too important to us as a country, too important to us as a Government, so we will not sit idly without making whatever adjustments are required.

Sir, I am saying in closing, yes, it is all right to sound pretty, like some people are apt to do, but when one looks at what needs to be done, I am fairly confident, in fact, let me change that. I am confident that this Minister understands what is required to tie us over. I express confidence in him when next we discuss tourism that, in fact, we will see what I am saying in terms of all our projects, we will see that there will be a smoothing out and a better landing for tourism.

Thank you.

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

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, there were a number of questions that I asked the Minister earlier. If he is proposing to answer them, then I will give way, because I have some other questions as well and some other comments that we want to make.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: It is not my understanding that you can ask a question to a Member across like that. If you are getting up to make a speech or presentation, please do so.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I was not asking a question. I said that I was prepared to give way if the Minister wanted to stand.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Have a seat. I am giving guidance as Chairman. If you are getting up to make a speech, proceed and make a speech, if not...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I will continue to ask questions and to make statements. Suffice it to say that we do not know - I am told that the Government

wants to carry us into the Ministry of Culture and to shut down this debate. I find it difficult to believe that in the middle of the most difficult economic crisis that the country is facing since Independence, that we are now to be railroaded into a culture debate simply because the Government wants to go there. Therefore, if that is the case we will continue.

Sir, the reality is...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please. We have to be very careful about the language that we use.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: English Language now is...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Hold on. You are also reflecting on the Chair. I will want you to resist from those comments. I have afforded you the opportunity to speak and I will like you to speak, but please do not use those comments to cast negative aspersions on the Chair.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I was not referring to the Chair. I was referring to the Minister. The Chair cannot shut down the debate so unless he is shutting down everybody. The reality is, I am referring to the fact that we have been told that they want to shut this debate down to go into Culture. I am saying to you that the Government is at liberty to do that if they want to, but we are at liberty to speak.

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

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: On a point of order. As Leader of Government Business in the House, I am the person working with my colleagues. We determine when we are ready to close a debate. If in the context...

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Do not get tied up.

If in the context of this House, the Honourable Member wishes to speak on this Head, then the Honourable Member is free to speak as often as the Honourable Member wishes, but the Honourable Member is not dictating who is to speak over there. That is not going to happen not when I am Leader of the House.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member has now tried to correct the big "boo boo" that he made as Leader of Government Business, because he cannot shut down no debate on any Head. The guillotine is the only thing that can shut it down tomorrow evening at 6:00 O'clock. So we can speak from now until 6:00 O'clock if we wanted to on tourism.

Sir, having realised that he obviously misadvised the House just now, but we will give him that because this is his first week as Leader of Government Business.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I give you permission to speak on the Head that we are dealing with, which is Tourism. I will let you proceed to speak based on the fact that you are rising to speak on the Head, which is Tourism. We have resolved that you can speak. Would you please proceed?

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I was getting ready to speak and the Honourable Member got up on a point of order, and I am allowed to respond to what he has put into the debate. I do not know what has happened all of a sudden. Clearly, the Rules have changed in the middle of everything. I have never known that the Leader of Government Business has the power to shut down a debate, or to tell people when they can speak. He said, "I am the person who would decide with my Members who will speak". I have never known this in this Chamber before, and the Honourable Member knows that he is wrong.

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

Hon. F.J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. I understood the Leader of Government Business to say that if the Honourable Member wants to speak, speak, that we are breaking at 7.00 p.m. for dinner. Nobody is standing in the way of the Honourable Member's right to speak. That point has been clearly made by the Honourable Leader of Government Business in the House.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I am not sure if he is the Acting Prime Minister. He is sitting in his seat and I am not sure if he is the Acting Prime Minister. The point is this. I thank him for his sober reflection and also the fact that he will not seek to repeat the errors of Government Business in these matters.

Sir, coming to the matter of...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I would have hoped that we would have had responses from the Minister of Tourism in relation to the matters that have been asked in the last intervention. He cannot necessarily do it in the wrap up because we are going to keep talking.

The reality is, if the Minister chooses not to respond to facilitate constructive engagement, that is a matter for the Minister. That truly is a matter for the Minister. I do not know what he has to hide. I do not know whether he is not

in a position to answer us on the pipeline of projects that are to start back this year in the tourism industry that is of concern to all of us in this country, not just in relation to what is happening in the Ministry of Tourism. Investment is a critical component of tourism, and unless we are capable of earning more foreign exchange in this country through both the inflow of private capital inflows.

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Estimates - House A60D, Sequence 30, 6.50 p.m.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, do not mind all of the talk on That Side. They know that the private capital inflows are critical to building our tourism infrastructures in this country. It is also critical in respect of the earnings, once those entities are built. Now, we had the unusual situation where a number of large projects were put on hold. We have asked, what projects are likely to resume this year, because it is critical for us to understand whether there is going to be a flow.

We know about Four Seasons. We have asked about Beachlands. We have asked about Regent. We have asked about Lakes, Phase 2.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: If that is the case, then the Minister has a duty to tell the country, so the reality, Mr. Chairman, is that it remains up in the air. What also remains up in the air, Mr. Chairman, I indicated that there are a number of timesharing properties in Barbados and it is, therefore, important that we know what is the stage of the preparation of the Legislation, in respect of the regulation of time share properties, because you are effectively taking a large number of people's money to be allocated against a period of time that they will have access to a hotel room, over a period of years.

Sir, we have always said, and we would have made the position clear, that there needed to be a legislative framework to properly guide it. We accept that it was started without it, in most jurisdictions in the Region. but we do feel that there is a greater level of investor protection, if a legislative framework is put in place for the protection of time share units. We say so against the background of the experience of people who are losing money in the Executive Flexible Premium Annuities with people because, at the end of the day, they are all investments.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: There are Members in here whose families have been told that they have lost yesterday, \$63 000, so that those issues are pertinent. Timeshare properties is just another vehicle for investment, in the same way that Executive Flexible Premium Annuities is a vehicle for investment. Unfortunately, the Leader of Government Business may feel that it is only about allocation of blame - This is not about allocation of blame, this is the protection of the right of investors to be able to invest in an environment where there is certainty and that is the reality.

We have, obviously, to recognise that the political election campaign is over, and that when we get up in here to make legitimate commentary, and to ask questions on what is in this Book of Estimates, it is in the interest of understanding.

The reason that the Constitution provides for the Estimates to be approved before March 31 is to allow the Honourable Members of this House, the ancient right to be able to determine both revenue and taxation, expenditure and allocation. Government is about choices and we have a right to say, yes, we agree with you, no, we do not.

I have already said in this debate that we believe tourism does deserve to get the first claim on the resources of Government because the reality is that it is the one sector that is going to deliver the largest amount of revenue for the country. It is also the quickest sector, in the same way that it is the first, to be affected in a recession, and it is also the quickest to recover.

Therefore, the fact that numbers are down in our main market must be of concern to us because it means that the point of recovery will be delayed, until we see the recovery in tourism. I think the Minister understands it but clearly the other Members on the Front Bench and particularly that one on the Back Bench, does not understand, but that is not an improbable fact, given historical behaviour.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, even if the Minister is the laughing stock of the tourism industry, the reality is that something must rub off, and I believe that something has rubbed off in the last two years. I am going to be charitable to that extent, but I say that it is important also, not only for us to understand the pipeline of investments, the need for protection because the more people you can get to buy time share, the more investment capital coming into the country to build out the systems.

Mr. Chairman, because there has been a global financial crisis, because there has been the demise of CLICO, which has covered aspects for vehicles for

investment, it is important to give people who may have cash in hand reassurance, that we have a regulatory framework to protect their investments should they want to invest in the building out of a significant asset that would earn foreign exchange for the country.

Mr. Chairman, I asked about the Barbados Investment Incorporated projects for a reason because, I believe, and it may not be possible immediately, that first for the purpose of meeting the needs of our differently abled community we must make sure that all primary highways, buildings, sidewalks, et cetera are friendly to those who are physically challenged.

I really believe that but I believe that there is an added benefit beyond what we do for our domestic population and that added benefit is that it then gives the Minister of Tourism and the Barbados Tourism Authority to particularly market Barbados to that niche market which spends significant sums of money. I believe in the UK alone more than £2 billion a year and we have not started to touch Europe, where there is a vast market and invariably when a person who is differently abled, physically challenged is travelling, there is usually a caregiver who has to come with them, so you are getting two persons in respect of that one decision to travel.

Mr. Chairman, the truth is, our tourism will be made more resilient by finding niche markets. In truth and in fact, the international business sector is an allied niche market of tourism. In truth and in fact, sports tourism. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central spoke in here about the linkages today between sports and tourism and that is another niche market. Educational tourism is another tourism niche market.

We left a study in Government that CARICOM Export did with us, in relation to the six service sectors that are appropriate for development in Barbados, and one of them was the whole issue of medical tourism and medical allied businesses. That is why we went into medical transcription but I am saying to you, Mr. Chairman, that I would like to know whether the Minister had been able to identify any particular investments that are already dedicated to medical tourism.

The Leader of Government Business as is his want, is pumping up his chest saying I said that this evening but let the Leader of Government Business tell us the location, the size of the investment, how much it is intended to garner and who is the market it is being targetted to, in terms of the geographical location.

In here is not just a talk shop. We are asking for concrete information and it is legitimate information in relation for us to get a sense of where we are repositioning

the tourism sector because if there is one correct thing that the Minister said, we must come out more resilient in this.

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

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

There is one significant point of departure between us and the Government. We do not believe that now is the time to engage in the restructuring of the Barbados Tourism Authority and I say so for a good reason.

When people go to work, they have to focus on what is mission critical. If they are then required to split their time between trying to stave off the decline in the UK market, the CARICOM market, in the other European market, the German market, at the same time they are trying to encourage and remove the blockages for investment to take place, trying to prepare the legislative amendments for the Tourism Development Act and the other pieces of legislation that we spoke about.

Sir, you cannot realistically expect them to do so, while focussing on a restructuring. First because they are only human and there are so many hours in the day, and only so much you can expect of an individual.

Second, because there is already an underlying anxiety. Am I preparing for my own demise? So that is going to affect the level of productivity as well.

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Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thirdly, when we end up with a product development company, because we have not seen the information or the paper, and a marketing company, are we going to end up with more administrative overheads, because in the end you still have to have two separate boards; two separate corporate secretaries; two separate sets of stationary; two separate sets of auditors; two separate sets of lawyers; and all of these other things, at a time when there is a shortage of money.

Government does not have the cash. People do not even get back their income tax returns. I was told by the Prime Minister day before that there are 2 000 tax returns that have not been given back. There are people who are crying out because of the fact that they cannot get money. In every statutory board by statutory board and in every Government Department by Government Department, the lines waiting for cheques are long. We are simply saying that when there is a shortage of money that now is not the time.

Hon. F. J. STUART: On a point of order. I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member but I do not recall the Prime Minister saying that people did not get back their tax returns because of a shortage of money. I think the Honourable Member is misleading the House on that. I heard the Prime Minister in here and I did not hear him say that people did not get back their tax returns and that there were 2 000 returns outstanding because of any shortage of money.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Is the acting Prime Minister saying that there is no cash flow problem in Government? If he is, then there is a significant departure between the acting Prime Minister's words and the experience of the majority of persons who have provided services to this Government in the last six months.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member should wrap up.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The reality, Mr. Chairman, is that these are only some of the issues.

I will come back, Sir. I am obliged to you.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, it is really amazing.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, let me address you because I think you are whom I have to address.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I am speaking on Head 55. It is amazing...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Both you and I could do without the dinner.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, just a moment, please. Honourable Member, I would want that when you get up to address the Chair that you address the Chair. I think that you need to ignore the diversions.

Again, I am asking Honourable Members of the House to please desist from the loud noises because it is detracting and I really believe that we can proceed with the business.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: That is true. My apologies to you, Sir. I really should ignore the cacophony of noise.

Mr. Chairman, one has to ask oneself... I have heard in this House from the Leader of the Opposition on many issues and there is always... They say that hindsight is 20/20 vision. We just heard a plethora of things, including legislation which this Government and this Minister should put in place to assist tourism. Sir, one has to ask the question: Was the Leader of the Opposition not the Attorney-General in Barbados? All this legislation to facilitate this and to facilitate that. Where and when in 14 years did the Honourable Member think up of that legislation?

It is almost comical to hear the Honourable Member speaking on these matters as it was when we heard, after eight years as Minister of Education, that the Ministry of Education should not have put fencing around schools but should plant sweet lime trees. When the Honourable Member was Minister, she did not know that they should have been sweet lime trees.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member should stick to things he knows about.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member is misleading the House because he would then know that certain schools were chosen as a pilot in order to have bougainvillea and sweet lime trees put in, so stick to things that you know about.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Proceed, please.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, calypsonian "Malik" has a song called "A Madman". Any person who would put sweet lime and bougainvillea trees with pricklers on them to stick people's children would have to be a madman.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: We are getting back to the point of tourism. If the Honourable Member, meaning me, were to check the facts, I would see. Mr. Chairman, I checked the facts. I know that the Government of Barbados, under the Barbados Labour Party...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Do not get sidetracked with them. They do not want this to go out. What I do know is

that the Barbados Labour Party, when they were in Government contracted, we dealt with it only two weeks ago, with Carnival Cruise Lines for a boat at a tune of US\$14 million to float half-empty up and down the Caribbean. Where was the legislation for that?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Once again, the Honourable Member is using language to mislead this House. When the boat was contracted...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you rising on a point of order? Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: That is what I said, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I did not hear you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is using language to mislead this House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you and proceed to outline where you are.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am saying to you Mr. Chairman, that the Honourable Member must know that when the boat was contracted, it was not contracted to be half-empty. It was contracted to provide accommodation. When India and Pakistan both got knocked out...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have made your point. You are making a speech at this point, so please proceed.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I was in the middle of making the point. I do not know what the ruling is. First of all, I was in the middle of making the point...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you cannot speak while the Chairman is speaking.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I was speaking and you started to speak while I was speaking. If you tell me you are speaking, I will stop.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Honourable Member, proceed please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I have not gotten the chance to speak.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: There is an inalienable right for Honourable Members to be able to speak in this Chamber.

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

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am asking for your ruling on the point of order that I did not finish giving.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I have ruled.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: May I have the ruling, Sir? All I saw was the Minister get back up to speak. Can we have the ruling please, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you gave a clarification to what the Minister was saying. I heard the clarification but then you went on to make a speech so at that point.... It is not for making speeches.

Proceed, Sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: It is either that you say that you accept the point of order or you reject the point of order, that is all.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: All I am saying is that I do not consider it to be a point of order.

Proceed Honourable Member.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member's tactics are not going to bully me into not making the point and letting Barbadians know that the Barbados Labour Party rented a boat to float half-empty up and down the Caribbean sea on the backs of the taxpayers of this country for US\$14 million.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. The

Honourable Member cannot say that the Barbados Labour Party Government rented a ship to float half-empty. The Government rented a ship for accommodation. The fact that it may have been half-empty ended up because Pakistan and India were knocked out of the Tournament. Many businesses then faced a loss as a result.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thanks for confirming what I was saying. Did you not arrange to guarantee a loan to rent a boat to float half-empty? Yes or no. Answer the question.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I would like you to please address the Chair and you can proceed on the Head.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

House A60D Sequence 31

7.10 p.m.

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, we had to come in here and look for US\$14 million two weeks ago.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House again. What this Honourable House approved two weeks ago was not US\$14 million but was a stage payment on a loan that was raised. Sir, the Honourable Member wants now to mislead this Honourable House and cause the people to feel that Bds. \$28 million was voted for.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please proceed.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: A loan for what? For a boat to flow half-empty? That is the point.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, we will go back and forth until we go to dinner. On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. The reality is that the Honourable Member cannot say that it was contracted for a boat to float half-empty. If the Honourable Member is not acquainted with the English language, the Honourable Member should turn to the Acting Prime Minister and take some tutelage.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Let me rephrase it for you then. The Barbados Labour Party Government contracted

for a boat as an accommodation to float full, but floated half-empty. Sir, this Government now has to look for that money, just as we have to look for the money for the GEMS Project into which \$229 million was the initial cost, where now the value of these properties to be sold is at \$72 or \$74 million. That is the value of that property.

Sir, that is what I knew. That is what this Government knows. Of course, when we were in Opposition and we raised the issue of GEMS, we were made to look as though we did not know what we were talking about, but it has come back to haunt the taxpayers of Barbados. Sir, the only people who have benefitted from GEMS are the friends and families of the Members of the Barbados Labour Party Government which was in office.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House again. The Honourable Member knows that there are members of the Democratic Labour Party, who previously were in high positions, who benefitted from the GEMS and who have just been recently knighted. Sir, if we want to talk, let us talk.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, I repeat, the people who benefitted are the friends and families of members of the Barbados Labour Party, just like when they sold Eastry House. Mr. Chairman, they first bought it, then they sold it for less than it was worth, after spending more than \$1 million on it. Silver Rock Hotel. You want to talk tourism? Sir, must we then come here and be lectured by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition with this sanctimonious intervention about the Minister of Tourism needs to come here and tell us when Beachlands is going to be restarted, and the Minister of Tourism has to tell us this and that?

Mr. Chairman, the Minister has said that all over the world, which we know, tourism is in decline. Sir, people are not travelling. Money is tight and this Minister has managed, even in the face of all that, to get tourism stabilised and back on a growth path for this winter season. Sir, yet the Honourable Leader of the Opposition wants to come to this Honourable Chamber and give the impression that absolutely nothing is happening. The Honourable Member is asking the Minister of Tourism when is the Four Seasons project going to be restarted.

Mr. Chairman, the Four Seasons project is a private project, which the Government of Barbados is trying to facilitate, to see that the investors could have the project started again. We know that. That was told. We are doing the same thing with Beachlands. Beachlands is a private project. The people are trying to get themselves together to get the project started. That has been said, but they want us to come and say, with certainty, that a private developer is

going to restart the project on April 17, 2010. Sir, that is not the place of the Minister to say that, that is rubbish.

Mr. Chairman, the Prime Minister has said that he has met with every major investor and that they all have put their cards on the table and said what had to be done to restart those projects. Sir, the Government of Barbados has said that whatever we can do, within reason, to facilitate it, we will try to do so.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: But you were updated yesterday.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House by suggesting that we were updated on projects yesterday. We were not updated on Beachlands. We were not updated on the Regent. We were not updated on Lakes Phase 2 and there are others that I could go on and on about. The Honourable Member obviously feels that it is an affront to ask the Minister of Tourism to account to this country as to the state of projects, but that is his approach to public life.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, for the whole day, the Minister of Tourism and International Transport... Sir, while the Honourable Leader of the Opposition was busy arguing and tussling with the Honourable Member for St. Andrew just a while ago...She was there arguing and quarrelling.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member has now reached the point of manufacturing lies.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East were ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. Chairman.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, I am going to wrap up.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, not only is the Honourable Member misleading this Honourable House, he is also looking for an argument and a tussle. Sir, in that case, I am asking that those words which the Honourable Member spoke with reference to the Honourable Members for St. Andrew and St. Michael North East be struck from the record. Sir, there has not been any tussling or struggling with any Honourable Member from This Side. This suggests improper conduct on the part of Honourable Members on This Side. Sir, the Honourable Member should know better.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please withdraw the remarks.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, if it gives the Honourable Member for St. Andrew comfort, I am prepared to withdraw the remarks.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. Sir, the Honourable Member cannot say if it gives me comfort. He has to withdraw it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I like to be even. Please withdraw the remark.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, I withdraw the remarks I made earlier about the two Honourable Members.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has misled this Honourable Chamber when she said that there was a "having out" between the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West and myself over the Honourable Member for Christ Church East. Sir, no such discussion took place between the Honourable Member and I, today nor on any other day and I am, therefore, calling on the Chair to have the Honourable Member withdraw those remarks and have them struck from the record.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I withdraw those remarks.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute more in which to conclude.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, I think the point has been made that we are trying our best in very difficult circumstances.

Asides.

7.20 p.m.

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: I am not going to go there tonight but the point I am going to make it this. This Minister is not a Minister of superlatives. He is not the best ever, highest ever, greatest ever, all of that hyperbolic language Minister. Sir, he is a working Minister of Tourism and he has demonstrated that.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the test of a man is not when times are good and everybody is travelling. The test of a good tourism manager is when times are tough. Sir, that is the test and this Honourable Member has shown that he can deliver in difficult times and has been delivering.

Mr. Chairman, I will close with this comment because the Honourable Member for St. Thomas spoke about many different areas of tourism and I laud her for that. She spoke about areas that women were involved and areas pertaining to small businesses, she spoke about HIV/AIDS and made the connection to tourism. Sir, I think that is a very important point on which to end because, as you know, we have a major problem with prostitution in Barbados.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North knows it and he knows it a lot better than I do. We have to make sure that we reposition our tourism in a way that it does not fall into the death that some countries around the world have. I am proud to say tonight that successive Governments have worked and that this Government will continue to work to ensure that even though that sector, which is one of the oldest professions in the world continues to exist, that it will not determine the character of our tourism product.

I want the Honourable Member for St. Michael North to join me and join this Government in ensuring that does not become a characteristic feature of the tourism sector. I am sure he will, because he is very familiar, as a lawyer, with the Law in relation to prostitution in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

On the motion of Hon. C.P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour, Mr. SPEAKER, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: I beg to move that this House be suspended until 8.25 p.m.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 8.25 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

H/A60D/19:25 Sequence 33

Thursday, March 18, 2010

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, when the House was suspended we were in Committee of Supply, and to that we shall continue.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House resumed Committee of Supply, Mr. J. PAUL in the Chair.

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

Hon. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, since I asked for this Head to stand part of the Appropriation Bill, let me begin by thanking everyone for all they have offered on this very important subject matter. I mean that in a very genuine way.

Sir, I cannot claim to have been in this Honourable House for 16 or 20 years, as some other Honourable Members, but I have been in here going on seven. I think it is one of my regrets when I was on those Benches over there that we never engaged in debates on tourism, in the total sense of the word. We always found ourselves restricted to airlift arrivals and forward bookings.

I think it is very good and healthy when we can have a discussion that considers the product elements. Community tourism was discussed at length. Now, some people would “pooh pooh” that, but if we are going to be in this business it cannot be the reserve of a few. It has to be seen as something that involves all of our communities. Therefore, the Democratic Labour Party is genuinely committed to that effort, and I say that in a very genuine and total sense of the word.

I would like to see far more community-based efforts aimed at our tourism industry. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas raised the Heart of Barbados Project which, unfortunately, has suffered a reduction due to budget constraints and we look forward to when things improve. Now that the Cave, of course, is going into new incarnation, we can have that project back on stream. I think it is important. St. Thomas, as was mentioned, is an important parish in the context of Barbados’ tourism attractions. Therefore, it is important that we do that.

I therefore also think the credit that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy received, for being the pioneer in that particular effort was appropriate, because he at times has been a lone voice speaking about that element of our tourism experience. Of course, I go on, but we had good and varied contributions in respect of the community tourism concerns. We had a very robust debate indeed.

Sir, just to mention a couple of queries that were put to the Government. There was some concern over the niches, and I say that is precisely what we are doing. I think I spoke about sports tourism at length, and I also spoke about cultural events and festivals used as vehicles to promote tourism.

Let me hasten to make the point that I know that there are probably Honourable Members on Both Sides, certainly members of the public, who when they hear the word “festival” they may think that the Minister of Tourism is some sort of Philistine and believes we should just have parties and bring in tourists. That is not true. A festival needs not always be about loud music and dancing. You could have a religious festival.

There is Gospelfest. You can have a food festival, which we are having. You can have a beach festival, that is on the cards for Carlisle Bay. We are not only referring to the festivals by the way the term is used, I suppose, euphemistically, in day-to-day language, but we mean it in the general sense of the word. I can assure the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East that we are seriously looking at the niches.

The Honourable Member raised a very interesting topic, those visitors who are physically challenged. Clearly, we need to do a lot for the physically challenged, full stop, the Barbadians. Improving access and those issues to our public buildings and our public spaces for Barbadians are natural, obvious and a logical consequence.

The collateral benefit of that obviously is that visitors who may be physically challenged can then look to this destination to enjoy everything that visitors have been enjoying for years. So it is a niche that can be looked at. Sir, we have studied the fact that sometimes these individuals are the recipients of insurance claims, with some disposal income. Therefore we would want to be available to everyone.

Now, the Opposition is concerned about the fact that we are pushing ahead with the restructuring. There was a suggestion that maybe we should delay the restructuring. I simply do not agree with that. The restructuring was talked about for 14 years, under the last Government. I do not think that, yes, we have a crisis scenario, but it is because we are in a crisis scenario and when we come out of the crisis scenario we need to be strong, ready and raring to go,

that we have to get the restructuring done now. We have to be ready for the take-off.

We heard about all of those product issues that were raised in here today and yesterday, and we need to have our product entity raring to go. The Honourable Member need not worry. It is going to require legislative work. It will have to come to the House. We cannot stay home late at night. It is nothing secret. Even before we bring it here, there will be widespread consultation with everyone who is interested in it.

We need to really look in a more closely clinical way at what it is we are offering, and what we can do to improve the experience. When we are talking about product we are not only referring to bricks and mortar, not just the raw investments, but those experiences. Sir, Barbados is a very peculiar product.

Sir, people like to call us an upmarket destination. I do not like to hear that. I think we are a quality destination. The fact of the matter is, yes, people will come here in a private jet, park it in front of the jet centre, get in a Bentley and go to Sandy Lane to pay thousands of dollars a night to stay in Barbados.

We are glad to have them but we are just as thankful for the individual who is going to pull this valise across the Arrivals Hall and stand up at the bus stop, catch a bus and go down to Maxwell, to stay in a little guest house for US\$50 a night. We have both of them, and that intermingling makes us different. It makes us special. Sir, we are trying as a Government to focus on those things. Sir, I am not afraid of statistics. Sir, I am a trained engineer. I have done statistics up to university level. I do not have to prove to anyone that I understand arithmetic. I do not have to prove that I know how to add, subtract, multiply and how to work a percentage, that I know a numerator, when you put a denominator under you get a quotient. "Cud dear", that is why I have tried, honestly, for the two years that I have been in this portfolio, to deal with some of the more fundamental issues. We need to have a different definition for tourist.

Sir, tourism is not simply about money earned outside of Barbados being spent in Barbados, it is more about cultural exchanges in such a way that we all become more sensitive to human concerns. That is what it is about.

HA60D 20.40 p.m. Sequence 35

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Estimates - House A60D, Sequence 36, 8.40 p.m.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: There is a reason why Barbados is one of the most heavily resisted destinations in the

world. It is because I really do believe that tourism has become a part of our culture, our understanding and our everyday way of life and people appreciate it, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, if I could just briefly also discuss the work we are doing on the Tourism Development Act because I mentioned earlier that we are amending it and it is true, yes, the last Government did plan to deal with some of the aspects of the Act.

Sir, there were issues relating to the list of items that qualified for concessions and so on but what we also decided was that since there is also the 67B where through the Ministry of Finance, you can also get concessions, and you have developers who are cherry picking, deciding whether they want to go to finance our tourism, switching and so on between the Acts, that we need to look at that. There is a need for some careful programming and looking at the framework within which we do offer concessions to this sector.

I mentioned this before, but I am going to restate it, in light of what I was just saying. There should be a gradation of concessions to tourism related investments, on the basis of local value added that accrues to Barbados. We believe very strongly that it is not only about foreign direct investment, it is about domestic investment as well, and encouraging everyone to have a bigger stake in the tourism industry. That is also what we are looking at with our work on the Tourism Development Act.

Asides.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: It is also important, and our consultant has had meetings with the Manufacturers' Association because we also believe that the beneficiaries of concessions must openly, transparently and competitively seek to acquire domestically produced goods, materials and services as well. This is the kind of thing that we are engaging in, and I am anxious to see it happen. I believe it will happen, yes, during the course of this year. I am fairly certain that it will but we are working hard on that, Sir.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East asked about when the projects are going to start back. I can say that the Prime Minister did make the point that he did use his good office to re-canvass many of the developers. He used suasion to encourage them to come back to find out what the issues are. Barbados sometimes can be a little bureaucratic. There can be some concerns with a regulatory body or two, and it is appropriate that you have a Ministry of Finance and Investment that can deal with those issues or, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East will say, that can treat to those issues.

Mr. Chairman, we hope to have Beachlands. I understand it is supposed to start next month and I think it would be wonderful for all of us. That is a wonderful project. Some of the others that were mentioned, we look forward to seeing those start as well but, as you would understand, these are private projects. We cannot exactly make them start like that.

The Four Seasons Project: I suspect that her information may even be better than mine but the truth is, we are quite anxious to see that one come on stream too, because of the importance of that project.

BTI: The CDB programme is still alive and real. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East may be aware of it, where there was counterpart funding that was provided. I believe it was \$15 million the CDB had and so we hope to see the Close Circuit Television (CCT) project for Bridgetown and St. Lawrence, a very important project because we know we have had a few incidents in terms of petty crime and so on against our visitors and locals so we want to see that done.

There is also some work in Speightstown as well also under that project that is supposed to come on stream, but just to assure the Honourable Member that the BTI programme that she was working to improve products in those areas, St. Lawrence Gap, Bridgetown and so on is still very much on stream. Sir, that is just to respond to that particular element.

Mr. Chairman, the issue of time share and villas and Legislation that deals exclusively with those issues, we took the decision that within the context of the Master Plan, we would have a consultancy and receive some advice for Specialist Tourism Legislation. A time share is a very funny issue, as you know and it does present a natural legal challenge because you are not really buying a piece of real estate as such. It has some challenges, for example, if a project goes in arrears and has to be liquidated in terms of going after the owners.

There are many challenges with it. St. Maarten, I think is probably in the jurisdiction that is further ahead with that but I believe that the appropriate group of consultants sitting down and looking at the best practices that may exist, and then looking at what is peculiar about our own situation, is the way to go and not simply to just adopt a boiler plate from someone and put it in place like that, so this is where we are going. It is very much on the cards and we would expect to see some movement in that respect.

Mr. Chairman, let me just say that I, to some extent, understand a lot of what was said in the debate. Some of it I do not really understand, but I would not try to understand. I need to say that all in all we realise the United Kingdom

is very challenging. We realise that Canada is performing well and we realise that the United States of America is recovering. If you look at the situation of our three major North Atlantic countries, there is one that is challenging, one that is performing and one that is recovering.

All in all, I think we can say that we have a base for pulling out of this recession and, with the other institutional arrangements that we are putting in place, we can also see to it that we cannot only pull out of the recession, but that we can then have a platform to build on to go to even greater heights with this sector.

Sir, this is going to be my final point. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North - cannot say the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said it, but perhaps the Honourable Member spoke about the fact, or tried to suggest that the relationship between myself and the hoteliers was not the greatest. Let me make it very clear. I said it already that we consult regularly and there are cordial consultations. I think I should do that because they are important people.

However, let me make it clear. I met with the Hill Top Taxi Co-op., which has been providing taxi services at the Hilton Hotel since it opened in the 1960s. They are important too.

Asides.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: Make it clear. The hair braiders are important too. Let us understand that. The red caps at the airport, they are important too, let us understand that. Those persons working in the restaurants sometimes at odd hours, they are important too. Let me make it very clear. The housekeepers, the maintenance personnel, persons working in the attractions, people working in Bridgetown, people working in the Port, they are all important as well.

Asides.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: I do not make any apologies for it. Mr. Capaldi has my telephone number. He has this number as well, so does Mr. Springer. As a matter of fact, Mr. Capaldi will be replaced by the gentleman called Mr. Jordan, very well known to the Honourable Member for St. James North.

Estimates - House A60D, Sequence 36, 20:50:15

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Hon. R. L. SEALY: I do not even know if he is aware, but Mr. Jordan, the Honourable Member for St. James North's constituent, would be taking over as President of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association in another couple of months. They all have access to me.

Mr. Chairman, let me make it clear, they are important and I work with them but this Minister is no wholly-owned subsidiary of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association. It is as simple as that. That was the other fellow. He came out of them and he has gone back to them, and there is nothing wrong with that. He chose that route. That is the bed he made and he chose to lie on it.

I came out of the Democratic Labour Party. That is the bed I have chosen to lie in and that is the one I will die in. It is as simple as that. For that reason I want to see the hoteliers do well but I want to see all of the other players do well also, and that is the difference.

Mr. Chairman, we are not daunted when I hear statements, oh, this particular group, is laughing at you or whatever. I do not need to be caught up in that because I understand why I am in politics. I understand why the people of St. Michael South Central sent me here and also why the people of Barbados voted for the Democratic Labour Party. They voted change.

Mr. Chairman, I am actually going to offer some advice to those Members. I have in front of me the official Report of the House of Assembly of Monday, March 20, 1995. I can quote from it because it is not from this Session. I have here a contribution by a gentleman, the Honourable Sir Harold St. John, and this was what he had to say. This is the Honourable Member on the Other Side.

“It is important that we all recognise that with tourism in Barbados, we have a very peculiar history of a tremendous number of lobbyists whose sole aim is to ensure that the major proportion of Government’s subventions to the industry is spent in the direction of their own particular interest.”

That is what the late “Bree” St. John had to say.

He said:

“I have 10 years’ experience of having to fight this matter and it still exists.”

He spent 10 years fighting it and I spent two years so far. That is the reality.

Mr. Chairman, you have to watch these special interests lurking in shadows like ninjas. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West could lend you a ninja movie. He has a very wide collection. They are lurking behind columns, squeezing up themselves and calling you in a corner, come here, we want more, more, more. It does not work that way, Mr. Chairman, and that is the position of this Government. We are interested in all of Barbados and all of the players in the tourism industry.

Mr. Chairman, on that note, I am going to ask in the name of everyone, all of those who have played their part in the most trying times of Barbados’ tourism industry, when everyone has had to dig in deep to make sure that we could get through this period, that you allow Head 55 to stand part of the Appropriation Bill, 2010.

I thank you.

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

The question that Head 55 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 56

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE

\$20 877 710

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, in moving that Head 56 stand part, I am pleased to say from the outset that we are approaching the next financial year for the first time with a National Policy for the cultural industries laid in this Parliament to provide a comprehensive road map for all mainstream cultural practitioners, those on the periphery of the cultural setting and the perspective investors in this exciting new economic sector.

Mr. Chairman, we are only weeks away from enacting the legislation. I am pleased to say that in that time we will be preparing the necessary enabling legislation to be introduced to this House.

Just last weekend, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Peter travelled to the northern parts of this island and made a comment that he got no credit for his contribution to the formulation of the international cultural policy in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I certainly do not know what credit he was looking for. He did not lay the policy in this House. He did not bring the final draft legislation to this Parliament. There was no debating of the Bill and certainly there was no passing of the Bill. It has now fallen to this Honourable Member to bring this exciting sector that was languishing under the Barbados Labour Party for 12 long years to this House.

Since 1996, this policy was being tossed about by the Barbados Labour Party and it has fallen on my broad shoulders, and Mr. Chairman, I am taking it manfully, and we would soon see the National Cultural Policy being legislated in this House.

Mr. Chairman, I will not deal in any in-depth detail with the National Cultural Policy because like I said in a matter of weeks we will actually be debating that Bill and, therefore, I would leave it for that time.

Mr. Chairman, we have some \$20 127 217 allocated to the Ministry of Community Development and Culture for the financial year 2010-2011. The main objective of our ministry in respect of culture is to implement the National Cultural Policy.

This implementation would include the creation of an enabling environment for the development of the cultural industries, the preservation of cultural diversity, the preservation and protection of a cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, the pursuance of an equitable treatment of cultural goods and services in the international trade agreements; maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with foreign Governments, international, regional and local organisations and with non-governmental, cultural and heritage institutions; increasing public awareness and an appreciation of culture and the importance of the role of the cultural sector in international development; and also the carrying out of research in areas relevant to cultural developments in general and the development of the cultural industries in particular.

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9.00 p.m.

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, the activities that will surround all of this is the implementation of the National Cultural Policy. It would require the execution of a wide range of programmes and projects, some of which have more than one goal or objective. They have been set out in the following categories:

1. The protection and preservation of our tangible and intangible heritage;
2. The development of the cultural industries and the development of culture, generally speaking.

Mr. Chairman, we have set certain performance indicators in the Ministry of Community Development and Culture, and those broad categories will be benchmarked by the same performance indicators over the year 2010-2011. We have benchmarked them and these are our performance indicators:

1. The celebration of the year 2011 as the international year of culture;
2. The enactment, implementation and enforcement of the Cultural Industries Development Act, which I spoke to earlier;

3. The establishment of a regulating agency to administer the same Act;
4. The implementation of selected components of the National Cultural Policy;
5. Conducting of surveys to establish the contribution of culture to the national economy, generally; and
6. The development of a strategy for collaboration between Government and COSCAP.

Mr. Chairman, we will also be looking at the advancement of the implementation of the terms and conditions of international conventions for the protection of cultural heritage and related activity; the commencement of the physical establishment of a National Art Gallery by the end of 2011.

We envisage; the acquisition of art work for Government buildings; the continued support of the Caribbean Lexicography Programme; the continuation of the process required for the eventual acquisition of the archives of the Barbados Advocate Newspaper; the continuation of the process of securing the nomination of Historic Bridgetown and the Garrison, for inscription in UNESCO World Heritage List; the coordination and management activities to celebrate the season of emancipation; the continuation of the coordination of the publication of BIM Magazine; the participation in the execution of a project on Barbadian place names; the carrying out of research in areas of relevance to cultural development in general; the development of cultural industries in particular, and the creation and maintenance of a website for the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman, we are also looking at plans for the financial year 2010-2011. The activities of 2010-2011 will be based on the creation of an environment to enable us to achieve a wide cross-section of goals. Sir, I will detail those goals and these activities are identified in the next financial year, 2010-2011.

I will start first with the coordination of the national historic celebrations that will cost us some \$210 000 over the next financial year. Sir, in collaboration with the National Cultural Foundation and the Commission of Pan African Affairs, my Ministry will coordinate the 2010 Season of Emancipation, which runs from National Heroes Day, April 28, to UNESCO International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition on August 23.

Mr. Chairman, it is vital that the celebration of the Season of Emancipation should reflect a closer relationship between the Ministry and its Departments, vis-a-vis, the Community Development Department, the National Cultural Foundation, the Commission for Pan African

Affairs, and the Department of Archives, which all fall within the purview of the Ministry of Community Development and Culture.

In respect of collaboration with the National Cultural Foundation, it is important to note that there are greater efforts to be made to strengthen the strategic link between Crop Over and the Season of Emancipation, and we have been striving to create that nexus between those two seasons. Sir, as a matter of fact, we have always had plans of making Crop Over part of the overall Season of Emancipation and we have been working in collaboration with the Commission of Pan African Affairs to make this come to fruition.

Mr. Chairman, the emphasis will be placed on the involvement of the communities and schools in all of the Emancipation celebrations. Sir, while the Ministry has overall responsibility for the coordination of the Season of Emancipation, the conceptualisation and the organisation are done by the Planning Committee, which comprises of a wide cross-section of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and Governmental agencies, of which I have taken the role as Chairman.

Sir, traditionally, the Ministry has given grants to the National Cultural Foundation and to the Commission of Pan African Affairs for the coordination of the Day of National Significance and the UNESCO International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, respectively.

It is proposed that during this financial year, however, that the Ministry and the Planning Committee take responsibility for the staging of these particular activities. The recommended activities for 2010 during the Season of Emancipation will include things such as the official launch of the Season, which will cost us some \$35 000; the National Heroes Day, April 21, costing us \$6 000. We will spend \$20 000 on the Day of National Significance, July 26; \$75 000 on Emancipation Day, which will be celebrated on August 1; and \$20 000 on UNESCO International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, on August 23, costing us some \$210 000 for that entire Season of Emancipation.

Mr. Chairman, the third aspect of this activity will be that Barbados will shortly be a signatory to a number of International Cultural Conventions, especially with UNESCO. We have the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 1970.

We have several other conventions that we will be signing on to with UNESCO. We will also be signing on to the World Heritage Convention, the UNESCO Convention

for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003, and several other conventions that we will be signatory to during the coming financial year.

Mr. Chairman, it is anticipated that some financial and technical assistance for the activities required by the Articles of these Conventions will be available from international organisations such as UNESCO. However, during this financial year, it is proposed that the following be undertaken:

1. The establishment of the International Ministerial Committee to coordinate and oversee activities, to ensure that the Articles of the various Conventions are respected;
2. The implementation of related public education training programmes, where possible, for persons employed in the judiciary, the police, Customs Department, tourism industry, in respect of illicit trafficking in cultural property.

Mr. Chairman, the sum allocated for this year is some \$20 000 and this is requested to start on the implementation of some of the activities to which I just spoke. Sir, the force is the nomination of Bridgetown and its Historic Garrison for its inclusion of UNESCO World Heritage List. This nomination requires the compilation of very detailed technical and historical information on Bridgetown and the Historic Garrison, in order for the necessary dossier to be compiled. In this regard, suitably qualified persons were contracted to do the research and to compile the dossier.

Just about two weekends ago, I had the privilege of taking most of our Cabinet Members on a tour of Bridgetown and the Historic Garrison and they were quite surprised at the kind of historic values that lie within Bridgetown and the Garrison. Sir, recently I got some correspondence from UNESCO and it read:

“Dear Minister: As you know, according to paragraph 140 of the Operational Guidelines for the implementation for the World Heritage Convention, the Secretariat has asked to check the completeness of the nomination received and forward to the relevant advisory bodies only those nominations that were complete at the deadline at February 1.”

Mr. Chairman, it went on to say:

“The nomination of Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison met all of the technical requirements outlined in the Operational Guidelines concerning completeness and check of nomination in the World Heritage List.”

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Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, that is a significant first hurdle that we have crossed in having Bridgetown and its Garrison inscribed on the World Heritage List. I, daresay that I want to compliment all the people who have worked, the Task Force and all the research people, who have made a sterling and stellar contribution to the compilation of our dossier.

Sir, as I have said, it is the first hurdle. We will be pursuing this noble venture very assiduously and, I am sure, at the end of it all, that we will be listed on the World Heritage List as a world heritage site. Sir, we are moving in that direction.

The fifth on the area of activity is the preservation of the nation language and dialect of the Region and it is critical to the presentation of our intangible, cultural heritage. Therefore, I propose that Government should continue to work in partnership with the Lexicology Department of the University of the West Indies and continue to make an annual contribution to the programme to ensure the sustainability of the Lexicology Programme. Sir, we are contributing some \$30 000 to that venture.

Mr. Chairman, we are also assisting our artistes this year. Sir, the sum of some \$60 000 is requested to assist with artistes and with the development of cultural projects. It is proposed that the sum of \$40 000 should be provided for general assistance to artistes and specific contributions made to some organisations like the Holder's Season and Gospelfest in particular. We have several of our artistes who approach us on a yearly basis, all year round for small contributions to assist them in one way or the other, and we have set aside some \$60 000 this year to meet those requests whenever they are made.

Mr. Chairman, normally, if the requests are more than what we had allocated within the main stream Ministry, we refer them either to the CAF Fund, which is run and administered by the National Cultural Fund, or the Arts and Sports Fund, which is administered by the Ministry of Finance but we always keep some funds within the Ministry that we can help artistes who are desirous of obtaining that assistance.

Mr. Chairman, the seventh area of activity is the purchase of local artwork for display in Government buildings and we have allocated some \$30 000 towards that. Sir, it is proposed that we continue this programme for purchasing artwork for display in the lobby of Government Headquarters and other Government buildings throughout the length and breadth of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I must warn you that this artwork will form part of the National Art Collection and it falls very

much in synch with a component of the National Cultural Policy where we propose an Art Integration Programme, which will earmark at least one per cent of the cost of every new Government building to go either towards the purchase of art or rental of art from our artists in Barbados. Sir, I believe that will open up new vistas, new avenues and new horizons for our local artists.

Sir, that is a component of the National Cultural policy. Sir, it will be given some legal standing by the enactment of the Cultural Industries Bill and it will firmly assure our local artists of some revenue either by rental or by direct purchase.

Mr. Chairman, we also give grants to public institutions. We have earmarked some \$1.9 million for these grants to public institutions and the largest chunk of this allocation will go to the Barbados Museum and Historical Society. Sir, some \$1.8 million will be given to the Society on a yearly basis and it goes primarily toward the administrative cost of the staff at the Museum.

Mr. Chairman, the Land Ship also benefits significantly on a yearly basis from contributions from the Ministry, some \$25 000 this year. The Barbados Dance Theatre will get \$5 000. The Barbados Arts Council will get \$25 000, the Craft Council will get \$8 000 and we contribute \$10 000 to the Barbados Workers' Union May Day Celebration. Sir, the Hometown Festival and the Oistins Festival will get \$8 000, bringing a total of \$1.944 million to the festivals.

Mr. Chairman, these are just a few of the mechanics of the operation of the Ministry of Community Development and Culture and with these functions, we intend to assure the continued existence of our cultural kit and kin.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, with the introduction of the National Cultural Policy, the Ministry's officials, with my leadership, will have to carve out a clear path to take the cultural industry forward. Sir, we intend over the next year, even before and after the cultural industries policy that is being debated in this august Chamber, to change the mindset of many Barbadians who have not accepted this as a viable, potentially lucrative sector.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say at this juncture that many of the practitioners in the cultural industry are still seen as buffoons and sometimes as spineless characters who are sometimes taken from the dregs of society. I want to ask Barbadians in general to see our cultural practitioners in a new light.

As a matter of fact, this new Cultural Industry legislation and policy should bring them into the forefront of economic activity in this country, and for the first time,

put them right up there with all of the other engines of growth in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, we also intend to develop a cadre of persons trained to work in the cultural industry and open up again whole new avenues of opportunities and professions, especially in stage management, makeup artistes, trained in techniques for theatre and film and entertainment lawyers especially.

Sir, I believe that there is a dearth of this particular segment of the Law and this will open up opportunities for young attorneys-at-law who come out of Law School and are looking for a lucrative form of practising the Law. Therefore, they will have an opportunity as an entertainment lawyer. Mr. Chairman, we have set builders, artistic directors and people in those groups. Sir, this will definitely turn the soil, so to speak, and bring new areas of endeavour into the fore.

Mr. Chairman, there is also the critical need for trained conservators, library scientists and archivists. Again, there is a real paucity of these professions in Barbados and I am hoping that the Ministry of Education will soon recalibrate their curriculum and offerings with the Ministry of Education to offer courses and scholarships in these areas.

Sir, whenever we need a conservator in Barbados, we have to go overseas either to one of the Latin American countries, including Cuba, to bring some person here to do our conservator work, our library scientists and archivist work. Just recently, we commissioned some local people to look after the statue of Sir Grantley Adams and we were told that some people approached it with some Clorox and some other cleaning materials.

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Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: You just cannot clean statues or monuments like that. It is a specialised area and, therefore, we have to find people to fill these gaps, especially in the area of conservators.

We also will be pointing the Ministry of Development and Culture, and we must work closely with the Ministry of Education, and with the Trade and Administration to place the appropriate emphasis on trading in these particular areas.

Sir, emphasis must be placed on the Arts in the education curriculum. We must partner with agencies like COSCAP in the interest of promoting knowledge and the importance of copyright and intellectual property. That is another vital area. We must also encourage our artists to

come together and form a union. I do not know if there are any real legitimate unions that are presently formed by our artists, but we need to bring them together and form a union to represent their interests.

In the context of the Team Barbados concept, we in the Ministry of Community Development and Culture, would endeavour that our overseas Missions would be encouraged to work to promote the cultural industries, identify opportunities for our artistes until such time as it is possible to have the Cultural Attaches.

I believe that each and everyone of our overseas Missions should have a Cultural Attache in that particular Mission, because with the opening up of the introduction of the cultural industries, I am sure that our artistes, or the works that will emanate from our artistes will be in demand, not only in Barbados and Regionally, but internationally, so it is extremely important that we have those cultural Attaches attached to our Missions wherever there are located.

We will also work on the concept of economic partnership.

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

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We will also work in the context of economic partnership agreements to take advantage of what is offered by the European Union. We will also look at the implementation of the international conventions for the protection of cultural heritage, and we will also focus on the cultural policy and research section of the Ministry to focus on conducting research in culture and the cultural industries.

Sir, I am really happy at this time to be leading the Ministry of Community Development and Culture into a period of immense excitement and hope for our cultural industry practitioners. We will be opening in new vistas. Wonderful horizons are unfolding before us, ushering in a spectacular opportunity for Barbadians and others alike.

I really implore all within the area of my voice and all others who will equip themselves with the new policy and the enabling legislation which would follow shortly, to garner as much information as they can and fully exploit the offerings of the national cultural policy.

In Barbados, we are witnessing the advent of a new and potentially vibrant and exciting economic sector.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

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

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I rise to participate in this debate. I must confess I am not sure what it is when I look at the various documents that have been laid before the House. Perhaps the first thing that stands to be counted on is the inappropriate information being given to this Chamber.

I have said before that these Estimates constitute the Schedule to the Act. Therefore, one would expect that in the preparation of them, it is one of the most important tasks that a Minister has, to sit down with his officials in his Ministry. Therefore, thinking that you may have to come before the Floor for the funds which are being asked from this Chamber, you would expect that there would be a level of careful meticulous approaches being pursued by the particular Minister. The reality is, that is not the case.

Sir, I can well understand that the Minister of Culture when these Estimates were submitted would never have imagined that his Head might have been called for debate, but in truth and in fact were it not for the fact that the Ministry of Transport now have to deal with the ZR people seeking to take their own action, therefore, you are not debating Transport or the other Heads, the poor Honourable Minister has been thrown in at the deep end to defend a set of documents that bear no relationship to reality.

I am going to speak first about that before coming to the issue of some of the substance of the sector.

Sir, on Page 197 of the Estimates, which are before us, there is a provision under the Creative Economy Initiative. The Minister made a Ministerial Statement in here last week, making much ado about a cultural policy framework. On Monday, at the beginning of these Estimates, a National Policy for Cultural Industries was laid before this Honourable Chamber.

The Creative Economy Initiative is the enabling framework you would have thought, the first thing you notice is that it has been cut. In 2008/2009, it had \$244 000; in 2009, this year, it had \$350 000; and this wonderful new major thrust in the creative economy is now to be supported by \$80 000, in this financial year, so that is the first indication of their priority for the creative economy.

Sir, if you went a little further and read the Explanatory Note for that \$80 000, I think we have to move a Resolution in here to congratulate the Minister of Culture on obviously being the most cost-effective Minister that this Government has had, because, if he is to achieve all of this with \$80 000, he deserves a national award, because he would have succeeded where the Prime Minister has failed

to make cost the most relevant part of his Ministry, and to reduce cost to all of the practitioners.

Sir, here is what it says. For \$80 000, includes the provision of the setting up of a Secretariat for the Film and Digital Media Commission; (2) the establishment of the National School for the Performing Arts.

I am the happiest person in the world, because I would have laid out the framework along with others for the National School for the Performing Arts. So I am glad that this Minister is going to achieve it, but even more so that he can achieve it for \$80 000, while establishing a Secretariat for a Digital and Media Commission.

He goes further. The commencement of the implementation of an Art Integration Programme, the strengthening of the Arts Council and the Barbados Craft Council, and then to cover the cost of research activities and private and public consultation. Well, if this Minister can achieve all of this for \$80 000, then he will have succeeded where the Prime Minister has failed, and the Honourable Members on the Front Bench may want to reconsider his position in the Cabinet so that they can take leadership from him.

Sir, let me also go further. I am not being wicked at all. I was prepared to be charitable in this debate to the Honourable Minister until the Minister started to go down the line that nothing happened in the last 12 years in Culture, and that there was no achievement in the last 12 years in Culture. Now, if we want to start at that ridiculous point, then it is necessary to show him the errors of his ways.

Let us to go the next document, which is perhaps the most embarrassing of them all.

HA60D 21.30 p.m. Sequence 40

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Estimates - House A60D, Sequence 41, 9.30 p.m.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On Monday, while we were listening to the Prime Minister deliver the introduction of these Estimates, this document was laid, A National Policy for Cultural Industries in Barbados. All jokes aside, Sir, we are happy that this document is finally being laid because we believe that it is important to have, not just a cultural industries' policy, but we recognise that it is important to bring together the disparate pieces of Legislation all of which were made to extend to culture in the last 15 years and this document refers to it, The Small Business Development Act, the Special Development Act, the Tourism Development Act, the Income Tax Act. All of the incentives are there and recorded explicitly in here.

Where I take offence, Sir, is that there was a Committee chaired by Mr. Adrian Cummins that did all of the work for these cultural industries initiatives, not a word of acknowledgment to Mr. Cummins, not a word of acknowledgment in the Minister's speech.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: You can curse the Members of Parliament on This Side if you want. You can say that we did nothing but there were people who gave of their time freely, not under any consultancy, not for profit, not for money but who, for the first time, put together a document, not only in this country but in the eastern and southern Caribbean that is a framework for the creative economy and the cultural industry.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: It is historic, and to have a Minister rise in this Parliament and make it seem as though he is the author, spoke with all of the enthusiasm of original discovery and then to dismiss it and say that nothing was done in the last 12 years, only to be pushed further in that direction by a loud aside from This Side of the House, and foolishly to be taken up, was an invitation for the Minister to catch himself in a trap.

What is it that I am referring to? You know, documents are a terrible thing when you have disparate documents hanging around. This document at the beginning - you know you start at the beginning, let us start at the beginning - after the introduction which is An Economic and Social Overview of Barbados and data in the Introduction stops at the year 2004. You do know why it stops at 2004. I asked myself. The reality is that when we picked it up, what happened to the last six years?

Then I realised what has happened. The wording in this document is taken lock, stock and barrel, not even from Mr. Cummins' Report, but from a document that this Government has told the international community that it has repudiated, is no longer the policy of this Government and has been replaced by another document laid in this House last week, The Medium Term Development Strategy.

Where does the language come from? Do you know how I know it so well, because I read this document and this language over and over for months. There were six Town Hall Consultation Meetings. I even wrote the Prime Minister when he was the Leader of the Opposition inviting him to it. We would have gone through this over and over. This is the language of the National Strategic Plan of Barbados 2005-2025.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, if you want to doubt me, they did not even have the wisdom to remove the marks, the fingerprints off the document and as you reach page 7 the mystery of the 2004 data unfolded. What does it unfold to?

Hon. F.J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I hate to interrupt the Honourable Leader of the Opposition but to give the impression that the Minister sneaked information from the National Strategic Plan into this document, at page 2 of the document in the footnote, it is stated clearly where the information came from. There is no stealth here. It is stated in footnote 1.

"This overview is taken verbatim from the National Strategic Plan of Barbados 2005-2025."

This is what is said here. This was not sneaked into the document so to give the impression that the figures are sneaked in and she recognises the language and so on, is really to mislead the House.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I never said it was sneaked in. I said I would never believe that this language would be taken from a document that this Government has repudiated. The language in the IDB Country Strategy sets out clearly that they received information from this Government, that the National Strategic Plan of 2005-2025 is no longer the policy of this Government of Barbados. They went further.

Hon. F.J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member must not continue to mislead the House on this. The Government has made its position very clear on the National Strategic Plan. We do not feel bound by the National Strategic Plan, page 1 to whatever the final page is.

We reserve for ourselves, the right to select from the National Strategic Plan, those aspects of it that are consistent with this Government's objectives. I said so in the Senate when I was there too. I said so in the Other Place when we debated the National Strategic Plan as well. There is nothing new about that, Sir.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, that would make perfect sense, if what was in the Medium Term Development Strategy was the same thing as what is in the National Cultural Policy, or the National Strategic Plan, but it does not even equate. So that here you have a Government hither, thither and yonder, not even capable of developing their own policy. Then, to add insult to injury, to have it introduced by a Minister of Culture, on the basis that nothing has happened in Culture in the last 14 years.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, it goes further. You would think that even if they imported the overview at page 7 the headline is...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: You do not only now take what you approve of. They outlined the exact six goals of the National Strategic Plan.

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

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir. I will have to come back.

The Strategic Plan had six goals. All six goals are in here. What is important, Sir, in the National Strategic Plan our first goal was to effect a cultural transformation - That was how important we felt culture was to the development of the Barbadian people and that is why it is reflected here.

In the Medium Term Development Strategy, there is no similar placement for culture. Culture comes down at page 54, somewhere down there, so you immediately begin to see the disparity in priority in relation to it. What is even more, Sir, is that the attempt to be able to make Barbadians feel that this is a document...I came back and saw the Minister - I was not here the Tuesday in Parliament - on TV reading this Ministerial Statement, as if this was the product of wonderful work originated by him and his Ministry. I said to myself: Wait, it looks like they have rejected all of Mr. Cummins' work and the other work that was done. The reality is, Mr. Chairman, there has not even been the change of a full stop.

I say to you, Mr. Chairman, that I was prepared to be charitable in this debate and to go straight to the substance of the sector, and I will come back to the substance of the initiative.

Estimates - House A60D, Sequence 41, 21:40:07

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, when a Minister gets up in this Honourable Chamber and seeks to make allegations about nothing having been done in Culture, when we presided over a sector that mushroomed for the first time in this country's development...

When we became the Government in 1994, there were not people living and deriving their income exclusively in the performing arts from culture. For the most part...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, the Honourable Member should seek to wind up.

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

I will come back on the point because for the most part the majority of musicians - I know, I had a band managing - had to work two jobs, that is a fact, and most people were able after 1995/96 to give up their second job and work exclusively. I will give you chapter and verse on it. I will come back, Sir.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, once again it is clear that the Opposition, having blown hot and cold all week about calling Heads, call this Head, call that Head, and we tried to oblige the Opposition by calling the Heads and getting into the meat of the matter of the Estimates, were not properly prepared for the debate.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: As a student of Political Science and Government for many years, I have always been tutored that Government is a continuous exercise. Even as Government comes in and some go out, some policies from the previous Government are kept, some are repudiated and others are reviewed and held in waiting until the new Government can clearly identify what was the direction, if at all that is possible. The Leader of the Opposition really wants to claim credit for the Cultural Industries Policy.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I cannot claim credit for the Cultural Industries Policy because it was not mine. I made the point that Mr. Cummins and his committee developed it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I did not hear on what you rose.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Sir.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: If the policy is therefore as we are told Dr. Cummins' and others, and the policy is, in the view of the Leader of the Opposition, a reasonably good policy, why then would any sensible Government composed of sensible men and women just out of hand repudiate a document, which...

On the very same page 2 on the contentious matter of the repudiation of the Strategic Plan of the Barbados Labour Party Government, it says in the footnote that this

overview is taken verbatim from the National Strategic Plan 2005-2025 prepared by the Research and Planning Unit of the Economic Affairs Division of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. You know what makes this even more ridiculous... The Honourable Member is misleading the House again. There is no Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs since this Government has been created. This document was prepared when the Honourable Member for St. Peter was Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs. This document was prepared before 2006, so the attribution that was here was made by the previous Government, and therefore when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South suggested that the attribution was put there by the Minister of Culture, he was misleading the Chamber.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, proceed please.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: This is the point. We all agree that it is a useful policy. From the time we came to Government, we always said that there must be a Cultural Industries Policy. We took the document...

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

Hon. F. J. STUART: On a point of order. The Honourable Member again misled the House.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: No, no, you. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, ruled on these matters yesterday.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will Honourable Members take their chairs, please. I have acknowledged the Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I read from the footnote of this document. I said that the footnote says, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West just read, this overview is taken verbatim from the National Strategic Plan of Barbados 2005-2025 prepared by the Research and Planning Unit of the Economic Affairs Division, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Government

Headquarters, Bay Street, St. Michael, Barbados, June 2005. We were not in office at that time so I could not have been saying that this Minister is claiming it. This says June, 2005. I did not say it. It is right here.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Okay.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order. I rule that out of order. Please sit. I rule it out of order. Thank you. What I will...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: What is your ruling on the point of order?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I said I rule it out of order. There is no point of order.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment, please. I will take it that we will move on from this section. We have dealt with it and we will move on. Thank you.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South is misleading the House. Clearly, the footnote relates only to the introduction and not to the rest of the document. Clearly you see, Item 1, relates to the Introduction only and not the rest, so if the footnote itself relates only to the Introduction, maybe what we should have is the whole document being attributed to the National Strategic Plan and not just the Introduction. For the Honourable Member to get up and suggest that the footnote relates to the whole document when it relates only to the Introduction, is clearly misleading this House.

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

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, it is very difficult in these circumstances... I believe it is getting a

little late and the Members of the Opposition are tired. They have been here for a long time and perhaps...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. We are not tired and the fact that he has not been able to get over the fact...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, on what basis do you rise?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: That the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is not anything to hear. On what basis do you rise?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: That the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Madam, I do not know that. On what basis do you rise?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I said on a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I did not hear you. You can now proceed to lay out the point of order.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. It is not a case of...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: One moment please. I want to be very clear. You rose first of all on a point of order and now you are indicating the basis upon which you rose, which is that the Honourable Member is misleading the House. Can you outline how the Honourable Member is misleading the House?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I was trying to do so.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, no, no, hold on. I am trying to introduce respect for the Chair, so I want you to keep in time with me. Do not rush ahead okay, so that I know exactly what is happening, so you would please wait on me.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I have the utmost respect for the Chair, but as I indicated to you the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber.

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9.50 p.m.

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Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, now I ask you to proceed to indicate specifically how that is. Honourable Member, let me just say this. If you are dealing with a matter that was dealt with before, I will not, I will not deal with it. We will proceed, so go ahead.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am not dealing with a matter that was said before. The Honourable Member is trying to suggest that Members of the Opposition are too tired and cannot read the document properly. The Honourable Member cannot say so because for the most part, if anybody's eyes have been affected by tiredness at 9.45 p.m., it has clearly been the Honourable Members on the Front Bench.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Okay, I strike that. Let us proceed.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, I am trying, that is the honest truth, I am really trying. Mr. Chairman, do you know what bothers me about this whole matter? Sir, I have made the point that Government is a continuum. We continue from Government to Government.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East should point out to us which part of the VAT that was developed under the Democratic Labour Party Government, that the Barbados Labour Party Government changed when they got into office.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: None. No, no, you cannot get up.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is your point of order?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please state how.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member indicated that there was none, that no part of the VAT...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: No, he used the word "none". That is why I did not jump up before.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, hold on. Please stop. I did not hear that.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, you did not hear the word “none”?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I did not hear that.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, you did not hear the word “none”?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I did not hear that.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Well, Sir, I will ask for a copy of the transcript because I heard the word “none”.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Well, we can deal with it.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: And I not only heard the word none, I have a tape downstairs taping these proceedings, so I will ask for a copy of the transcript.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Proceed.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. I am asking for a copy of the transcript. Is that being agreed to because I do not know how I could be told that words which were just said in here by an Honourable Member for all of us to hear, for all of Barbados to hear, and I am asking for a copy of the transcript.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: That is true. He said “none”.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I will give instructions, but until I get them, please proceed.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Can I proceed, Sir?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please proceed, Honourable Member.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, I know what is the problem and it stems from a very basic philosophical weakness in the Barbados Labour Party, particularly under the leadership of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Sir, the view has been expressed in here today, because I think the people of Barbados need to be very clear.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East has been sitting very quietly, but I know the Honourable Member has been observing what has been said and done in here today. Sir, one Honourable Member made the point very clearly that the Honourable Members on This Side do

not have the pedigree to be in certain Ministries, and to be in certain places of Government. This is the problem. Sir, any point that we make...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber again.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I said on a point of order twice, and I said the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Would you please wait. I will acknowledge you first. I have said before when you rise on a point of order, let me acknowledge you. Please wait. Thank you. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, what is your point of order?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please state how, Honourable Member.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member is suggesting that an Honourable Member in here said that certain persons on That Side did not have the pedigree to hold Ministries. Sir, that is not true. The Honourable Member said that he was told that the Prime Minister indicated to somebody that was the case. It was not attributed to any Honourable Member on This Side, and the Honourable Member knows that.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please proceed, Honourable Member.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, they cannot hide from it. They believe that the Democratic Labour Party Government is a second-rate Government, that we are not deserving to be in office, and that the Barbados Labour Party has an entitlement to run Barbados for as long and however they like.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is not going to get away in here tonight. The Honourable Member is misleading this House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please, I asked you to observe the Rules.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am waiting until you acknowledge me.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. Please state your point of order? Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please state how.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: By suggesting that the Barbados Labour Party feels that it has an entitlement to lead this country. That is not true. It may be true that we feel that the Government is totally incompetent and incapable to do what they are doing. That is the truth, but we do not feel that there is no entitlement on the part of any party to lead this country.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please proceed, Honourable Member.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, that is as much truth as it is that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition made a very interesting revelation here only a while ago. Sir, I would like for you to ask, either now or after this meeting, whether or not it is proper for the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to admit that she has somebody downstairs taping the proceedings of this Honourable House.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, for St. Michael North East, please proceed.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order, the Honourable Member is imputing improper motives. Sir, there is nothing improper about taping anything, once I use it for my personal use.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, wait. Honourable Member, please. I do not, I do not know but I do not agree with you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I find that you are not allowing me to make my statements.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No, you said the basis was improper motive and if you said the basis was improper motive, I did not hear improper motive, so what do you expect me to do? I am the Chair.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, you cannot make a judgment without allowing me to finish my statement. It is the most basic rule of natural justice. The Attorney-General can tell you that whether in this Honourable Chamber or out of this Honourable Chamber, a person has a right to be heard. Sir, I am saying to you, this is the third time for the day that I have been in the middle of making a point of order and have been stopped.

Sir, in respect for the Chair, I have stopped on both previous occasions but I have a right to be heard and for my point of order to be completed. You have a right to rule against me, and that is clearly what has happened consistently for the day, so I do not expect otherwise, but my voice will be heard.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I thank you.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, I do not want the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to get high blood pressure tonight, so I think we should move on from this point. I did not come here to play little boys' games, so let us move on.

Mr. Chairman, the fundamental fact of the matter is that when we came to office, we found draft policies on cultural industries. In fact, the policy was all over the place and under the Social Policy Committee of the Cabinet, the Cabinet Subcommittee on Economic Policies and on the Governance Committee of the Cabinet, we went through the policy. We spoke to the public officers. We met with them several times with the Minister because issues pertaining to the incentives in the Cultural Industries Policy had to be dealt with by the Economic Policy Committee. Indeed, we instructed the Ministry, under the leadership of the Minister, to divide the two policies, to do an overall Cultural Policy for Barbados, on the one hand, and the Cultural Industry Incentives Bill on the other hand, which is to come to this Honourable House soon.

Mr. Chairman, that is what we did. Sir, I do not subscribe to the theory that anybody in the world has original thoughts.

11.00 p.m.

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Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Sir, the only people who had original thoughts were Adam and Eve and everybody else after that borrowed something from the other person and, therefore, you have a policy which the Honourable Minister has brought to this House.

Mr. Chairman, in 1992, the then Democratic Labour Party Government adjusted the Severance Payment Act to facilitate different payments of entitlement and the Barbados Labour Party, that campaigned against it, came into office, did not change it and it still exists up to today.

Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Labour Party campaigned against the 1974 Constitutional Amendments...

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member now is going into a form of intellectual...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, on what do you rise?

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber again. The Honourable Member is trying to suggest that the Barbados Labour Party found a severance payment draft Bill and would have brought it exactly as it was left by the Democratic Labour Party. He is seeking to compare apples and oranges and input the wrong thing.

The reality is that the Severance Payment Act was already passed. The Constitutional Amendments were already passed and the difference was, this passed through an entire Cabinet. It is not even the Minister alone, and an entire Cabinet clearly did not read what came to Cabinet.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Sir, that is the point...

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

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West is misleading the House because in his perview he said there was no original thought, and it was clear that you could draw from the National Strategic Plan.

One would have expected the common courtesy then that it would have been mentioned in the references at the back of the document so that it would not be a plagiarism of the National Strategic Plan. In no part of the references...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you are making a speech now.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: No, Mr. Chairman, I am not making a speech. I am making this point.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have heard the initial part. Unless you are making a speech at this time.

Dr. W.F. DUGUID: No, Sir, I am just making the point that if you had borrowed parts for making the

document, it should be referenced in the end so that it would not be plagiaristic and it has been plagiaristic.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please proceed. You have two minutes more.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Sir, I know what the strategy is. The strategy is to try to get me not to speak on these matters.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please address the Chair.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: I know what the strategy is but I do not mind. The fact of the matter is that the cultural policy is here. It has been brought by this Government. The Barbados Labour Party Government could have changed the Severance Payment Act, as they put a constitutional amendment to stop the cutting of salaries, and if they wanted to change it, they could have changed it but for 14 years, they ran an economy, basically, on the economic policy of the Democratic Labour Party.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. For the Honourable Member to say that we ran an economy for 14 years from the economic policies of the Democratic Labour Party is for him to say the most untrue thing.

Sir, if I start alone only at the energy policy, the Democratic Labour Party's energy policy was to tax people on energy. The Barbados Labour Party's first act was to remove the majority of taxes and to reduce the excise. It is as true as me saying to him that he is a Chinese, elected to the Parliament of Barbados and does not speak the English language.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much for ignoring that non Point of Order but I would say this. We have to understand certain things in Barbados. There are, and will always be, over the course of several Governments, as they change, policies that are carried forward and policies that are enhanced. We have enhanced this document to the extent that it reflects what the Democratic Labour Party wants to have happen in the cultural industries which we will pursue.

Mr. Chairman, the truth is, when I became Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, we completed the negotiations for the Economic Partnership Agreement with Europe that was started by the former Minister of Trade and substantially brought to a completion. There could not have been an EPA Agreement if the Democratic Labour Party did not agree to complete that. They could not be these benefits in here that can be accessed under EPA for persons in the cultural industries, if we did not complete

that agreement, so this is not the first time this would have happened.

Mr. Chairman, if we are going to be serious about having a discourse on development in the cultural industries in Barbados, let us get on with the debate and stop pretending that you can lay claim to everything and the Democratic Labour Party would have done absolutely nothing.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber by suggesting that the Barbados Labour Party is trying to lay claim to everything. Our simple point was that the Minister started his speech by saying twice that the Barbados Labour Party had done nothing in the cultural industry policy for 12 years and that is the pure basis upon which we responded. We have never sought to say that we have done everything, but let it be put back in context after the last 15 minutes of red herrings.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: I will wrap-up now by asking one simple question of the House, through you, Mr. Chairman. Has the Barbados Labour Party come into this Chamber and laid a cultural industry policy at any time under their Administration? The answer is “no”. Therefore, any cultural industry policy that comes here is the policy of the Democratic Labour Party while in office.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, with that, I conclude my speech.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

On the motion of Hon. C.P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, Mr. Chairman reported progress to His Honour, Mr. SPEAKER, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until tomorrow, Friday, March 19, 2010 at 9.30 a.m.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until Friday, March 19, 2010, at 9.30 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

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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. Opening. The record begins with the resumption of a Sitting suspended ‘yesterday evening’, with the House going back into Committee of Supply on Order No. 5 (Resumed); no PRESENT list, prayers or earlier business are recorded for 18th March, 2010. Please confirm.

Q3. Committee, Standing Orders Nos. 38-40. When the Chairman reads Standing Orders Nos. 38, 39 and 40 after the suspension, the titles are set in the source as headings with an opening quotation mark only (“38 CHAIR TO BE HEARD IN SILENCE”), and No. 40 reads ‘shell order’. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Committee, Head 55, points of order. At two points a speech of Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley is run into the Chairman’s words in the source (‘Are you rising on a point of order? Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: That is what I said ...’ and a similar passage under Head 56). Printed as in the source.

Q5. Resumption, 5.10 p.m.. Mr. Speaker’s speech heading reads ‘Me. SPEAKER’. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Committee, Head 56, Dr. W. F. Duguid. In a point of order Dr. Duguid refers to ‘the Honourable Member for St. Michael West’, apparently meaning Hon. C. P. Sinckler, Member for St. Michael North West. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed on Thursday, 18th March, 2010 the Sitting suspended the previous evening, and Mr. Speaker left the Chair for the House to resume Committee of Supply on Order No. 5, the Estimates, with Mr. J. Paul in the Chair. The record contains no other business for the day.

On Head 55, Tourism, the Minister, Hon. R. L. Sealy, continued his presentation: a new Tourism Development Act would give income tax relief according to the level of Barbadian ownership, a Tourism Master Plan unit was being staffed, and a task force was considering

cruise matters. He said \$1.6 million had been spent on the JetBlue service, bringing 16 875 visitors, against Bds.\$1.3 million paid by the former Administration for one Air India flight in 2007. Mr. R. C. Eastmond spoke on the maturity of the destination and on culture; Hon. E. G. Hutson, Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, Miss C. Y. Forde on litter and illegal dumping, Hon. C. P. Sinckler on a Barbados brand, Hon. S. A. Lashley on sports tourism, Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick and His Honour K. St.C. Best, who asked for kiosks for vendors, also took part.

Mr. R. St.C. Toppin, Member for St. Michael North, criticised the Minister’s performance and his selective use of statistics. After a point of order from Hon. F. J. Stuart, the Chairman required him to withdraw a statement about what the Prime Minister had said of the Minister; Mr. Toppin withdrew it, then repeated it as something he had been told, and was again asked to withdraw. He asked what had come of the \$300 000 provided for the Tourism Master Plan in 2008-2009. Progress was reported and the Sitting was suspended until 5.10 p.m.

On resumption the Chairman read Standing Orders Nos. 38, 39 and 40 on order in Committee. The Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, said that 2009 had been one of the worst years for tourism since Independence, with earnings down by close to \$200 million; that the United Kingdom supplied 42 per cent of long-stay arrivals, with declines of 4.8, 21.8 and 24.3 per cent in January, February and March; and asked whether the \$92 million for the Barbados Tourism Authority, against \$102 million this year, would suffice, noting that the Tourism Industry Relief Fund had \$79 million in claims against \$25 million. Mr. Sealy replied that he would not shift spending from Brazil to the United Kingdom and might manage on the \$92 million. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, Mr. G. A. Clarke on employment for sportsmen, and Mr. A. D. Brathwaite on British Airways followed; Hon. S. A. Lashley rose on a point of order against Mr. Clarke, and the Chairman told Mr. Clarke he was casting aspersions.

Miss Mottley spoke again on private capital inflows and timeshare investment, and Mr. Sinckler, amid repeated points of order from her, accused the former Government of contracting a boat that sailed half-empty with Carnival Cruise Lines; Miss Mottley said that the sum approved two weeks earlier was a stage payment on a loan, not US\$14 million. After a suspension until 8.25 p.m., Mr. Sealy replied on community tourism and his consultant’s work with the Manufacturers’ Association, and Head 55 stood part.

On Head 56, Ministry of Community Development and Culture, Hon. S. D. Blackett spoke of the National

Policy for Cultural Industries laid in the House, legislation to follow within weeks, and the inscription of Bridgetown and its Garrison on the World Heritage List. Miss Mottley said that the policy drew on the National Strategic Plan and work of the last twelve years without proper acknowledgment; Mr. Stuart replied by points of order that its footnote cited the source, and Dr. W. F. Duguid that the

footnote covered only the introduction. Mr. Sinckler's speech was interrupted by repeated points of order from Miss Mottley, several ruled out of order by the Chairman, and an exchange in which she asked for a transcript. Progress was reported, and on the motion of Mr. Sinckler the Sitting was suspended until Friday, 19th March, 2010 at 9.30 a.m.