
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, February 22, 2011

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly
met at 10.10 a.m. on Tuesday, February , 22, 2010.

PRESENT

His Honour MICHAEL A. CARRINGTON, B.A.,
LLB. (Speaker)
His Honour KENNETH ST.C. BEST, LL.B.
(Hons.), L.E.C.
(Deputy Speaker) Mr. G.W. PAYNE, Q.C.
Mr. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P.
Mr. H.F. LASHLEY
Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)
Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B.
Miss CYNTHIA Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P.
Hon. RONALD D. JONES, J.P., B. A. (Hons.) M. A.
(Ed.) (Minister of Education and Human Resource
Development) (Leader of the House)
Dr. the Hon. DAVID C. ESTWICK, B.Sc.,
M.B.,B.S.
(Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries, Industry
and Small Business Development)
Mr. D.D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B (Hons.), L.E.C.
Hon. M.A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.)
(Minister of Housing and lands, Urban and Rural
Development) Dr. WILLIAM F. DUGUID, B.D.S.
(Comm.), F.D.S., FDRCS. J.P.
Hon. R.L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of
Tourism)
Hon. FREUNDEL J. STUART, B.A., LL.M.
(Prime Minister, and Minister of National Security)
Hon. JOHN D. E. BOYCE, M. Sc. C. Eng.,
Minister of Transport and Works), (Leader of the
House) (Minister of Transport and Works)
Hon. E. GEORGE HUTSON, F.C.C.A., C.A.

(Minister of International Business and International
Transport)

Hon. STEVEN D. BLACKETT
(Minister of Social Care, Constituency
Empowerment and Community Development)
Mr. JAMES D. PAUL, B.Sc.
(Chairman of Committees)
Mr. ADRIEL D. BRATHWAITE, LL.B. (Hons.)
(Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)
Mr. STEPHEN A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.),

L.E.C.

(Minister of Youth, Culture, Sports and Family)
Hon. PATRICK M. T. TODD, B.Sc.
(Minister of State, Ministry of Housing and Lands,
Urban and Rural Development)

Hon. DONVILLE O'N. INNIS, Dip., B.Sc.,
M.B.A.

(Minister of Health)
Hon. CHRISTOPHER P. SINCKLER, B.A., M.Sc.
(Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs) Dr. the
Hon. ESTHER R. BYER-SUCKOO, M.B.,B.S.
(Minister of Labour)
Mrs. M-J. MARA THOMPSON, B.A., M.sC. (Ph.
Ed.)

*Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan
Harewood.*

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is in Session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, Minutes of
Tuesday, February 15, 2011.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Sir, I beg to move that the
Minutes of the Honourable House of Assembly for its
Meeting of Tuesday, February 15, 2011, which Minutes
have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I have with me the Accounts and Statements for the month of July 2010, as prepared by the Accountant General.

PAPERS

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Annual Report of the Barbados International Business(Promotion Cooperation or Invest Barbados) for the year 2010.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Immigration (Validation of Functions) Bill, 2011 be read a first time.

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

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders, 6,16,18,20,42(5), 43 and 44, be suspended for the rest of this day's Sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 6 – IMMIGRATION (VALIDATION OF FUNCTIONS) BILL, 2011

Hon.F.J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I rise to move the second reading of the Immigration (Validation of Functions) Bill, 2011. As it is generally known under the Immigration Act of Barbados, Section 28 to be precise, the Minister with the responsibility for Immigration is empowered to delegate the functions which he is statutory authorised to perform to such persons as he considers it necessary from time to time to carry out those functions. Therefore, pursuant to Section 28, the late Prime Minister,

then Minister of Immigration, had delegated those functions to Senator Harcourt Husbands in the Other Place. Of course, even though the Minister delegates the functions, he can still exercise the functions himself so that both the Parliamentary Secretary and the substantive Minister were able to perform those functions. As of October 4, 2010, another Minister was appointed in the Prime Minister's Office, Senator Darcy Boyce, and he was given specific responsibility for matters relating to Immigration among others, so that once he assumed responsibility as Minister in the Prime Minister's Office from October 4th, he too began to perform the functions of Minister of Immigration. Senator Husbands, of course, continued as well.

On October 23, 2010, a new Prime Minister was sworn in and by that fact the delegation which had been made to Senator Husbands ended. Senator Husbands for all practical purposes functioned officio, he could no longer perform the functions that had been delegated to him by the late Prime Minister because the person delegating was no longer around so the delegate could have no authentic mandate.

Sir, Senator Husbands had continued to perform the functions which had been delegated to him and as a result it is now necessary, having regard to those changes, which I have just described, to have this piece of legislation passed to validate any actions taken by the persons named as Senator Husbands and Senator Boyce under the Immigration Act. Sir, that is the short purpose of this Bill. Of course, at some time in the foreseeable future Parliament will have a chance to have a full debate on Immigration. It is generally known, Mr. Speaker, that this Government, since coming to office, has circulated a Green Paper on Immigration which has been discussed in the public domain at a series of Town Hall Meetings and it was also made available on line. The finishing touches are now being put on a White Paper which will be reflective of Government's policy on Immigration and that White Paper will be brought to Parliament in the very near future so that Parliament will have a chance to debate fully, matters relating to Immigration in Barbados.

Of course, Government's policy on Immigration has to take account of the fact that we have obligations under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and particularly, we have obligations under the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. Therefore any policies to which we give expression, in relation to Immigration have to take account of those realities but the time is coming, not too long from now, when Parliament will have a chance to discuss all those issues.

Sir, for the purposes of this Sitting and for the purposes of the piece of Legislation before Parliament, all we are trying to do today is to have the acts performed by

the two persons named, given the circumstances in which they performed those acts, to have those acts validated and therefore I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

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

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, we on this side do not object to the validation of this Bill. It is very important that the Government however, sets out a clear path. We believe that since 2008 we have seen three or four Ministers of Immigration and I wonder if the policy of the Government is being pursued as they first saw it in 2008 when there was an election. But the time will come when we will have to discuss the full Immigration Bill. We will have to discuss the White Paper when it comes here.

I notice that over the last couple of months there have been a number of changes but we on this side are very watchful of what is happening around us and we would not want at this stage to preempt the discussion on the Immigration White Paper when it comes.

Sir, we just want to tell the Government that the Government must be certain and sure, since we have recognised that in validating these actions taken by a Senator and a Minister, we are validating an action taken by the former Prime Minister, action taken by a previous former Minister, who is now the Chairman of a Statutory Board and we are validating also, actions taken by Ministers within the Prime Minister's office. Sir, we would want the Government to be sure and we expect further changes to come in the next couple of weeks but we would wish that the Government be more surefooted on this occasion.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Asides.

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

His Hon. K. St.C. BEST: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this validation. It is amazing that the Honourable Member for St. George North, in one breath said he has no problem with supporting the validation but yet he would want to make this House believe that this is first time a validation is coming before this House.

I remember, Sir, when this Government came to power, we had to validation all the actions done by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. Sir, like the

Prime Minister said, there will be a full debate on the Immigration but I just want to say one or two things, as we are on the whole question of the Immigration.

I think, Sir, that we really need to have a serious look at the working conditions of the Immigration Officers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, let me caution you that last week I had to speak to the whole question of relevance and I repeat my directive then. This Bill is seeking to validate actions taken and I would expect that the debate would deal with things relevant to the validation of those actions. We will not accommodate, because it is not on the Floor, a general debate on Immigration in Barbados on Government policy so please be guided accordingly.

His Hon. K. St.C. BEST: Mr. Speaker, I am guided.

Sir, this whole question of validation is one where one must look at it in its true context. Sir, Government continues after Government and there are situations that would occur during the passage to time, where through no fault of the Government, circumstances of this type would occur.

Sir, I would want to ensure that when persons are making statements in respect of validation, would make sure that what they are saying in respect of the Validation of the Act that they would be in the same boat at sometime. In that regard, with those brief remarks, I support the Validation.

Asides.

Hon. F.J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I am indebted to Honourable Members who have contributed to the debate on this Bill. I am specifically referring to the speech made by the Honourable Member for St. George North. As far as I am aware, since January 2008, there were only two substantive Ministers of Immigration in Barbados, the late Honourable Member for St. John and now, myself. It is true that Ministers in the Prime Minister's office or Parliamentary Secretaries in the Prime Minister's office have had immigration responsibilities delegated to them under the Immigration Act. The substantive Minister, the Prime Minister could assign responsibilities for Immigration to a Minister in his office but the substantive Minister remained the Prime Minister. Therefore to suggest that the Government is not surefooted and we have to be certain is consistent with the paunshaw of the Honourable Member for St. George to create just a little mischief to keep debates in this House alive.

I can assure the Honourable Member that the Government is very clear on the way forward for Immigration as, of course, the White Paper will

demonstrate and that within the context of our obligations under the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and the fact that we have lead responsibility for the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, we have to be surefooted on matters related to Immigration so the Honourable Member need have no fear on that issue.

With those words, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

On the motion of Hon. F.J. STUART, seconded by Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Mr. J. PAUL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee.

Clause 1 - 2 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. F. J. STUART, seconded by Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of Hon. F. J. STUART, seconded by Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Immigration (Validation of Functions) Act, 2011.

ORDER No. 7

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

On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. J. D. Paul in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

(a) Resolution to grant the sum of \$49 400 000 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 2010-2011 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 11 2010-2011 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

HEAD 15 - CABINET OFFICE

\$100 000

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$100 000 is required by the Cabinet Office to supplement the Estimates 2010-2011. Of that sum, the sum of US\$10 000 is required to make a contribution to the Republic of Haiti to assist with the Cholera epidemic of which there was an outbreak known now to all Honourable Members of this House. Since the earthquake hit Haiti, the House has debated another contribution to Haiti to assist with its problems and we are pleased once again to make our own small contribution to the alleviation of that country's distresses so far as the outbreak of Cholera is concerned.

Of course, we hope that country could soon get itself back together. It has had a very turbulent history as we have discussed in this House over and over again and whenever it looks as though the country is on the way back to some kind of stability and solid recovery, some other misfortune befalls it, calling on and summing up all the resilience of the Haitian people who have over time demonstrated a strength of character and a resilience that is the envy of most of us in the English-speaking Caribbean. Mr. Chairman, that is the main item in this \$100 000. Of course, an amount of \$20 000 is also required for the installation of security systems at the residences of Ministers and the balance is for any emergencies for which provision was not made.

Mr. Chairman, this is for all practical purposes an uncontroversial request being made of Parliament, and with those few remarks I therefore beg to move that Head 15 stand part.

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

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, we have absolutely no problem at all in lending our support to this Supplementary especially the aspect of it that refers to Haiti and the US\$10 000 towards the country in relation to the Cholera epidemic.

Mr. Chairman, even though that sum might look like a drop of water in the sea, I believe that it is going to have a profound effect on what is happening to be able to assist the people of Haiti in this their really serious time of need.

Sir, we know that a lot of what has come to the fore and what leads to this whole Cholera epidemic would be associated with the earthquake of last year January and the challenges that the people of Haiti would have experienced, indeed, more than 300 000 persons being dead, and then of

course the rupturing of the various mains, though limited, in the country.

Mr. Chairman, I had the opportunity to actually witness what was happening on the ground in Haiti last August. It is really a heart-wrenching experience for any human being to witness how these people have been able to continue to exist. I must confess that they are resilient people who try in every way to look after themselves but the conditions are so poor, unfortunately, the devastation took over the rest of what would have been left but we knew that there were always very poor conditions especially for the working class people. Even the President's residence would have been destroyed in the earthquake and therefore I know the poor sanitation would have had an impact as well on the livelihood of people. The tent cities alone add to their sad experience where you are talking about more than a million people living in spaces that are limited with no proper sanitation, no proper food, no proper housing, women being raped and all kinds of challenges.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy and proud to be a part of the Barbadian society that seeks, through this Resolution, to allocate funding to assist with the cholera epidemic and the stymieing in that process that has taken the lives of more than 3 000 of our Haitian brothers and sisters. I believe we must continue as a people to look out for others. They do not have the facilities such as we do but they are human beings who deserve the dignity and respect necessary, especially in a time such as now where they cannot help themselves. Mr. Chairman, the rate of unemployment is so high and their level of illiteracy adds to it, that is why a committee has been set up in Barbados, including some secondary and primary schools "Helping Hands for Haiti." Indeed, that was why a visit had taken place with schools in Barbados donating stationery and made visits with the Salvation Army and make contributions.

Sir, I want highly to commend the Salvation Army in Barbados and in the other territories but more so in Haiti because they are the ones who are manning schools, they man just about 50 schools, and that is how most of the children receive their education and get something to eat. I believe we must continue this venture. Sir, I trust that this

BDS\$20 000 will go towards the cause because sometimes funds are donated, or aid is offered to countries but that aid does not always meet those persons who require that aid or those projects that required that funding, that will help to bring them out of their distress.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, I hope it would be used to the benefit of the people of Haiti in helping to stymie the process. Sir, as time goes on, I will update not only this Honourable Chamber but also the people of Barbados with

that Committee of very competent individuals, as to how the helping hands for Haiti is going and what is being done to assist with a venture similar to what is happening here, where we are looking at the various tablets that would be dropped into the water, et cetera, that we could assist with to help those brothers and sisters in the country Haiti. Sir, I want to highly commend this Government for this gesture and trust that at some other time when the economy gets better...Sir, Haiti's standard of living will be a slow process of recovery and I hope that we would be able to give a heftier amount when that economy gets better, because they are reliant on every agency in the world to help put them back on their feet, so that they could go to the next level to raise their generations in good health, good education and everything else that goes to good living. Sir, I support this particular Supplementary.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, as was said by the Honourable Prime Minister and by the Honourable Members on the other side who have so far spoken, gestures such as the ones we are looking at, might, in fact, seem small but if we can add small contributions together, eventually we will have large contributions. Sir, I know that this effort is not the only one by citizens of the Caribbean, as we look at our brother CARICOM Member State, as we try to in our small way, ameliorate some of the harshness and suffering of tens of thousands of citizens of the first black republic of the world.

We would have spoken in other fora about the harshness of their conditions and I am hoping desperately that as citizens of that country try to find their purpose and being in the world, that Haiti does not become further engulfed in bitter warfare or into a very difficult set of circumstances, as a result of the re-emergence of previous political leaders of that state. This is a country that has gone through previous meltdowns. We then had the very terrible and horrific experience of an earthquake that left tens of thousands of persons dead, maimed, paralysed and without food and without shelter. Sir, even though the world at large came in on their white horses, we know that the suffering is still very prolonged, because recovery out of such hard circumstances tends to be quite slow. We can talk about it, we would want to do everything possible but recovery tends to be slow. Therefore, it will take some time for the infrastructure in Haiti to get back up into any semblance of order. It will take some time for the productive sectors to get going. It is a very long period.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, in the midst of that chaos, in the midst of those difficult circumstances, there was an election, still to be resolved, so the issue of governance and leadership are, in fact, real within Haiti. Sir, on top of that, one has seen the re-emergence of "Baby" Doc Duvalier, and I am reading the papers and

following the internet also the re-emergence of former President Bernard Aristide, therefore, the pot is being boiled.

Mr. Chairman, in Macbeth, they were boiling their cauldrons and in those cauldrons they were adding all kinds of things. If Haiti is to find its place in the modern world of the 21st Century, we do not need those types of melting pots, we do not need those cauldrons being boiled, with all kinds of things being added to those pots. Sir, we have to be conscious, we have to send messages, we say that we do not like to interfere in the domestic affairs of Member States or Member Countries. I have thought that to be a craven outlook, I think as citizens of the world that is what we are. We have some times to speak to circumstances and situations which exist that impact on God's children, wherever they are and right within our space we have these very terrible and tragic circumstances being wrought upon the people of Haiti, then to add on that the governance and political uncertainty.

Sir, this small gesture of US\$10 000 by the Government and people of Barbados can help provide medication or some measure of relief to the people of Haiti. Sir, I am not aware, maybe the Minister of Health can tell us about cholera outbreaks in Barbados in the last 50 to 70 years. As a nation, we have conquered those things but next door, because of the harshness of the conditions, young children who have not yet started to experience life, who might not have even said there is a God or to praise their God, are already buried. Sir, the world has to take on as a major project the true and genuine liberation of Haiti, a Haiti that said to the world as a black nation way back when, can continue to watch that nation's life blood being spilled, its breathe being choked out of it and feel that somehow we serve our God in good faith, that we could bow down on Saturdays and Sundays, that we could drive or fly about with millions of people in this type of circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I commend this gesture by the Government, it demonstrates really how we in Barbados respond to things, where out of our meager resources, we provide some help and some assistance but we have to move beyond that. We have also have to add voice in the UN, in the OAS and across the world in CARICOM to help Haiti find a governance model, an education model, a social model, which would help guide that country towards a greater and a brighter future. The darkness is too much. We need to help give light in the darkness that surrounds that great nation.

Mr. Chairman, I support this Head.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. James North.(1:30)

Mr. R.C. EASTMOND: Thank you very much. By way of a few brief remarks, I will commence by going back in time when between 1791 and 1804 what was then Saint Dominique became Haiti and asserted itself as the first black republic in the world. Sir, of note, the United States of America after the Treaty of Versailles had won independence between 1776 and 1783 and the Treaty of Versailles heralded from the United States of America a period of unyielding, unending independence. Sir, as we put this thing in its historical perspective, there can be no doubt, Mr. Chairman, that when Haiti became the first black independence republic in the world, it attracted a particular reaction. Some historians, unfortunately, not all historians, have carefully recorded that when Haiti became independent, having fought for it, that France, naturally the colonial master, Spain, England and the United States of America immediately imposed a trade embargo on Haiti. Sir, I want to repeat that France, Spain, United Kingdom and the United States of America, the United States of America that had just fought for independence imposed a trade embargo on Haiti. Sir, Haiti had no markets for its export of tobacco, coffee and sugar, and the poverty started then and the desperation started then. Sir, because of the fact that a lot of the persons who had high expectations consequence upon the independence of Haiti did not see these expectations materialised, then all hell has literally broke loose in Haiti over the years.

Mr. Chairman, to look at the post 1900 period prior to Papa Doc Duvalier, who was a terror and a dictator (3:55) but who brought a curious measure of stability, not the perfect type of stability, the consummate type of stability that one would normal encourage but since 1990, Papa Doc Duvalier at least did not see riotous, tumultuous rebellion to the same extent as could have happened, so post 1900 Haiti, where are you? It is a country of abject poverty but, Sir, why the poverty?

Mr. Speaker, we in Barbados know that by the 1950s, we had a system of health care at the public level whereby babies and infants were immunised, whereby public health facilities were made available to the poor and the suffering but the question is: Has Haiti ever, since 1900, had a proper system of health care to embrace the vast majority of citizens and, Sir, in this debate that has to pointed out, that it is highly doubtful that Haiti has a system of proper health care.

What is the life expectancy of Haitians? The average Haitian is not expected to live beyond 47 years in a scenario where, in this hemisphere, there are countries where life expectancy for female is 77 and for male 75, and increasing. Sir, life expectancy is unacceptably poor but there is more that pains. Sir, we are speaking of a country that a member of CARICOM. It is an Anglophone CARICOM country but it is a member of CARICOM, and CARICOM does have some obligation to assist in Haiti

even when CARICOM countries themselves are by no means the most opulent countries in the world.

Mr. Chairman, I am concerned at the low level of literacy in Haiti. If you have bad health standards and low literacy the two combined to poverty but, in addition, the housing stock is incredibly poor.

Mr. Chairman, drinking water. If you see pictures of human beings beside the road using a waterway for washing clothes, for drinking and such like, then you would have seen it.

Mr. Speaker, I am advised and I verily believe that unemployment in Haiti is no more than 80 per cent of the workforce. I am advised and verily believe that 80 per cent of the work force is unemployed. It, therefore, means either that there is a huge informal sector or that they are practices among nations that are undesirable. (7:40) Sir, I remember the days when Haitians were actually selling blood plasma to raise money. You, yourself, Mr. Chairman, have an avid interest in agriculture and you would deprecate any measure by which a people cut down trees wantonly to make charcoal just because that provides part of their sustenance. Sir, politics of Haiti has been turbulent and traumatic. We, in the Caribbean, do have a moral and great responsibility to do our utmost but, ultimately, something has to be done. The last Honourable Member who spoke invoked assistance beyond CARICOM and, Sir, one of the enemies of politics is that if a given country is highly anti-communistic, (8:52) if a country is seen not to be communist, then there are certain powers that deal with them, whatever their circumstances are entirely. Sir, one American President once said a tyrant, "Well, he is a tyrant next door in Santo Domingo but he is" (9:17) Sir, did you get the message? Sir, this honourable side has commanded me, in its discretion, to be the sole participant at this stage but I do not know if Honourable Members would revise the position

Mr. R.C. EASTMOND: I am told that my predecessor would have been the Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Asides.

R.C. EASTMOND: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. It seems as though we are coming to a situation where in the interest of advancing Government Business today, we would want to just make more salient points about conditions in Haiti. We want to see something done about infant mortality. We want to see life expectancy increase. We want to see better health care. We want to see better opportunities for housing and employment and we want to the destigmatisation of Haiti. Whenever people want to 'lick up' or curse a particular entity, they point to that entity's weakness. Sir, when HIV/AIDS first emerged,

certain lobbyists were claiming that the principal carriers, possibly creators of HIV, were Haitians. I think that myth has been debunked.

Sir, the position now is, the country cries out for help and what compounds a bad social and economic situation is that Haiti is very much prone to natural disasters, prone to earthquakes and prone to hurricanes. In any active hurricane season Haiti could expect a visit however unwelcome. I am told that geographically speaking it lies on a fork line which means that it is prone to more earthquakes than most places, but ultimately something must be done where the will of the Haitian people is so mobilised that they put the negatives behind them, that they work closely with real friendly countries to achieve progress, and that they find ways and means to reverse undesirable behaviours.

Sir, deforestation has led to an environmental degradation in Haiti has impacted heavily on agriculture and on the general atmosphere of Haiti. The tendency for crime to emerge is not unknown and one reason for that is that if you have 80 per cent unemployment, the devil, and I speak of the devil, Sir, will find work for idle hands to do.

Asides.

R.C. EASTMOND: From first hand experience I have been exposed to instances where I am sure there is a devil the same way there is a God, and that such a devil finds hands work for idle hands to do.

Mr. Chairman, with those few brief remarks, I am deeply obliged to you. Thank you.

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

Hon.F.J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, I am indebted to Honourable Members who have contributed to the debate on this Head. There is never a divide in this Chamber when the issue is Haiti, since of course, even though using the route of a different language we in the English-speaking Caribbean consider Haiti as an essential part of the Caribbean. It is now a member of CARICOM and CARICOM from all of the information available to me is determined to do whatever it can to ensure that the lives of the people of Haiti are made more tolerable and more abundant.

Sir, arising out of the earthquake, the former Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Honourable P.J. Patterson was detailed by CARICOM to devote full attention to Haiti and to report to CARICOM Heads of Government, and that he has been doing quite commendably, but that alone cannot solve the problems of Haiti.

Sir, I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central advert to the fact that Haiti needs a proper governance model to guarantee its stability. That is to a certain extent true, but what Haiti needs even more than that is for larger powers to stop interfering in its affairs.

Sir, when the Haitian people choose Governments, they choose those Governments because they think that those Governments can promote their best interest as they perceive their own interest. In the 21st century it is still true that if the choices made by the Haitian people are not consistent with metropolitan and big-power interest, there is undisguised interference in Haitian affairs to ensure that the leaders chosen can be cashiered and got rid of. Until that stops, Haiti is not going to settle down. It has been correctly stated that it was punished and has been punished for the last two hundred years for being daring enough to be the first black Independent Republic in the world and in history. We want to think that the time will come, and come very soon, when that punishment will end and that the Haitian people will be allowed to get on with their lives and to promote their model of development that is consistent with the interest and with the geographical location, and with the history of the Haitian Republic.

Sir, it is a country with a miscellany of challenges, all of which are very serious challenges and we in the Caribbean owe that country a moral duty to wherever we can try to contribute to their alleviation of their very pressing problems. This particular Resolution in which we made a contribution to the Cholera outbreak in Haiti, which is fluid largely as the Honourable Member for St. Thomas was so kind pointed out, from the horrible conditions under which Haitians have had to live ever since the earthquake. We sincerely hope that this small contribution will go somewhere towards helping to deal with that problem.

We all hope that by now the reconstruction process in Haiti, after the earthquake would have been much further ahead, but it seems as though that process has been limping along as well and large numbers of Haitians still live in very dilapidated conditions, with no obvious prospects as to how soon they will be relieved of those conditions.

Sir, again, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central pointed to the fact that the situation is complicated by the fact that the results of the last election is still being inconclusive and there are some new elements coming into the political picture that could complicate the problems in Haiti for the foreseeable future again, but we hope that a process of dialogue between Haiti and CARICOM, and a process of dialogue within Haiti itself will contribute something towards guaranteeing the stability and the eventual growth and development of the Haitian Republic.

Sir, with those few words, therefore, I beg to move that Head 15 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 40

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS

\$49 300 00

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

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I rise to open this discussion on Head 40, the Ministry of Transport and Works, and indeed, to support the request of the Transport Board through the Ministry for the provision of \$49.3 million to support the operations of the Transport Board.

Sir, the Addendum to the Resolution states that the sum is required to meet operational costs for the remainder of the current financial year, liquidate the overdraft facility and honour outstanding debts. This is a very brief summary, Sir, but a very broad statement which really encompasses a number of the facets of the operation of our Transport Board.

There is no question in the minds of Barbadians and certainly there is no question in the minds of this administration in respect to the role that the Transport Board plays in the overall economic development and maintenance of our country. The provision of safe, reliable transportation for our workers, for our children, for the elderly when they recreate or for our visitors is essential to maintain that balance that is so urgently required.

A feature of the Transport Board has been, since its inception really, has been of course its operational cost and the attendant issues that one faces as a result. These costs are mainly attributed to the cost of employment of staff through the ranks, managers, drivers to general workers and today that complement stands in the region of 900 employees at the Transport Board.

Sir, other very large costs attending the operation of the Transport Board, of course, is the maintenance of its fleet and that has always been a matter of debate and discussion in this Chamber. As you recall, we will even reflect on the creation of the UCAL Corporation which was formed in the early 1990s and the purpose of which was to provide a private sector solution to what then was the Transport's Maintenance Problem. I will get back to UCAL if time permits as we go on in this discussion but I would

like to say broadly, that it is clear to me that we may have, in going forward, to look at a more meaningful contribution by this agreement to the Transport Board, if we are to contain the cost. I think the crafters of that Memorandum of Understanding were indeed thinking of ways in which they could contain cost at the Transport Board, utilise existing expertise and create a natural relation, which could redound to the benefit of the organisation as a whole.

This has not always been as successful as we would want and as a result, a lot of the attending maintenance costs to date is as a result of obviously requiring services additional to what UCAL offers by way of the replacement of body parts and there would be our specialised garages which deal with bodywork repairs in a more extensive manner than the UCAL Corporation may be able to at this time.

Sir, of course, there is also the question of what contractual arrangements or understanding we may have attended or attend the purchase of new vehicles, our new fleet and, indeed, the use of the Mercedes bus and the latest purchases that were made, obviously meant that the suppliers and providers of that equipment would have an actual first call, in respect to the provision of spare parts and, indeed, expertise that would be required to carry out the repair function. Sir, that is a very large cost and these are, as I said, the wages and the maintenance of our bus fleet are the predominant cost factors in the operations of the Transport Board.

It is not enough, Sir, for us to continue and I say, continue, because a brief examination of the history the Board again, will show that even recent history indicates how strongly the Transport Board has been dependant upon support from the State, from the Consolidated Fund, from the Treasury, from Government whatever we want to say, from the taxes that we pay how strongly the Transport Board has depended on that support.

I think it may be useful to just briefly look at the last ten years or so, the Supplementaries, the bonds and the loans, which the Transport Board may have entered into, creating what is now its present debt profile, which you know we understand but we need to appreciate the time lines in the creation of that debt profile.

Sir, on the 17th December, 2002 for instance, there was a \$5 million Supplementary, on the 17th February, 2004, a \$12.5 million Supplementary, on the 8th November 2005, there was a \$32.1 million supplementary, on the 11th August, 2006 there was a bond issue of \$22 million for the purchase of some 70 new buses and on the 16th January, 2007 there was a \$33 million Supplementary which was voted to the Board. Sir, it is a history which is not foreign to the Members of this Chamber.

Sir, I took time during the last couple of days to have a look at some of the debates that took place surrounding those loans and bonds and borrowings, the debates that took place in this Honourable Chamber, Sir, and some of the contributions that were made. I must admit that it is clear that we need now to move away from the normal issues that jump out when we deal with the question of how to make the Transport Board a more acceptable, viable unit.

As I started by saying there is no question about the importance of the Transport Board in our mass transport solution. This is where, Sir, I think we have an opportunity for takeoff in this discussion. If we start to look at transport as an industry and we look at the question of the movement of people around Barbados both in private vehicles, in private vehicles that is when we refer especially to the private sector vehicles, which are familiarly known as the BTs and the ZMs and Zrs, the Zrs being more popularly referred to and then the Transport Board's contribution. Sir, here is where we need to sit, as a people, and work how best we can form that alliance for the effective and suitably economic solution.

We have heard the pleas of the Minister of Finance in this administration and the administration before. We heard the comments of the major lending agencies in respect to...and the rating agencies around the world when they look at our deficit and our cost of doing business, and their reference to the transfers to public institutions and the Transport Board, of course, the

Transport Board is linked to or is a major item in terms of those transfers and these are the ones that we want to tackle.

The solutions that we have heard so far from the other side have been very, very scarce. Beyond the call to sell our interest in public operations like the airport, the seaport and the Transport Board, we have really had no suggestions about how we could take this industry forward.

Sir, I believe that the Transport Board needs to sit with the major players in transport in Barbados, that is, people like the Association of Private Transport Operators better known as APTO and the Minibus Association because it still exists. There are other smaller groups within the ZR operation and the minibus operation who need to be brought together in a master discussion, if we want to put it that way, to create a major dialogue on the question of transport in Barbados.

I am pleased, Sir, to report to this Chamber that we are on the verge of starting our deliberations in this regard with the main goal being the production of the Transport Master Plan for the Barbados.

Sir, let me read from the Transport Authority Act, which was passed under the last Administration in its dying days.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. It appears as though we do not have a quorum in the House. I noticed that the Government Benches have been depleted.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, as I was saying, the opportunity arises immediately for us to utilise the Transport Authority, as is its mandate, and I read from Section 22 of the Act:

“The Authority shall prepare a 5-year development plan for the public transport system every few years.”

It goes on to say:

“May make contracts by way of tender with operators for the provision of public transport services.”

Mr. Chairman, this is where we distinguish between the Transport Authority, and yes the Transport Authority... I see the Honourable Member for St. George North smiling because he had one meeting of the Transport Authority of which the former Honourable Member for St. Philip North chaired. I think it was his farewell political activity. He is reputed not to have done much politically before and very little since. The former Honourable Member for St. Philip North chaired that meeting.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. I do not like to disturb the Honourable Member when he is flowing but the former Chairman of the Transport Authority was not only instrumental in helping to establish the Act over the last ten years but he was the first Chairman and it is not fair to say that he was not effective because he was very effective in establishing...and I am glad that he is reading from it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Proceed, Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, that is all I said about the gentleman, so I do not understand. I think that is jelly being lavished on a peanut butter sandwich by the Honourable Member for St. George North.

Sir, the point is that the Authority has the opportunity to set about its business with the full support of the Minister, a business which would bring together all the parties who provide transport in Barbados. I spoke about the private sector, the private vehicles that we know as E this, X that and P that because they are partners in this solution also because when an efficient, reliable, comfortable public transport system is created, then the private vehicle owners can exercise the option or can safely exercise the option of using their cars for their normal activities or leaving their cars at home and using public transport. Sir, that is the model which I think the Transport Authority and the Transport Board would have to take forward.

Sir, we are trying to tackle the question of the direct cost to Government of this operation. We must explore all avenues in trying to ensure that we do not need to lean on the coffers of Government so heavily and so consistently, as I pointed out earlier, in trying to bring about this very noble and necessary solution.

Mr. Chairman, people in Barbados need to recognise that the Transport Authority is not limited to the issuing of ZR and Z permits. Yes, that is part of its very important role because it takes away from the Minister that cloud of uncertainty in respect to the issuing of these permits. Mr. Chairman, I am happy to be able to say that yes, people call me about permits all the time but I am happy to be able to refer them to the Transport Authority to have their matter sorted out because it does not need then to take up the Minister's direct time in dealing with that.

Sir, let me get back to the very important under other facility which the Authority has at its disposal. In the Act, Section 14 speaks to the question of funds for the Authority, in other words, the moneys which the Authority can have access to. It says:

“The funds of the Authority shall comprise of amounts as may be voted for the purpose by Parliament - like we do at Estimates or any other moneys that we may vote for the Authority from time to time - amounts as may be borrowed by the Authority for its purposes and such other amounts as may become available to the Authority from any other source approved by the Minister.”

The point here being is that it allows the Authority the flexibility of entering into arrangements, partnerships, business plans and developmental plans with members of the private sector, local or even international, who are prepared to invest in the mass transport solution for Barbados.

Sir, since we been addressing this question over the last two weeks, I have made the point that I wish to see the Authority move aggressively in this direction and I want

see them take the Transport Board hand in hand with them on this journey. I believe that this way we can negotiate some successes.

We can call upon experts. There are at least two Barbadian experts that I am aware of, both of whom are working in the United Kingdom, who are prepared to offer their services to us as a country. These are the ones outside of Barbados. There are other experts here in Barbados who have either studied transport as a direct discipline or have been part of the transport operation in Barbados for a long time and therefore have a lot of experience.

Mr. Chairman, in terms of the composition of the two subcommittees which the authority is establishing to start looking at this master plan, we are seeking to bring this kind of talent on board, so as to ensure that we get the best counsel at this time. Mr. Chairman, I am sure that when we look at a master transport solution for Barbados and we start to move away from discussing the Transport Board and start to discuss the transport industry in Barbados, we have started to see the real economics of transport being touted in the Barbadian society. Sir, our call-in programmes will move away from the question of missing a bus or a bus being late or not at all, to one where we begin to appreciate the beauty and comfort of a solution, which is effective and does not burden the State with the kind of charges which we contemplate, from time to time, which we are dealing with today.

Sir, this need is ever more urgent when we look for instance at the most recent published study by the National Initiative for Service Excellence (NISE). They spoke to the performance of our departments. Mr. Chairman, it is very difficult, when a Minister gets up in public in Barbados and speaks to deficiencies in any public department, we are immediately hounded down and found guilty of the most heinous of crimes to speak to inefficiencies. Sir, it is a relief to hear the echo of the voices of the people, through the report of National Initiative for Service Excellence (NISE). Sir, I am telling you that my Ministry receives letters day after day, we receive telephone calls day after day about the question of a service or the ineffectiveness of the Transport Board. It is no secret. There are other departments of the Ministry where I receive calls about too but that is not the debate here today. Mr. Chairman, any report which tries to focus the Board's management on the areas of improvement are necessary and must be taken on board.

Sir, if you examine the reports which the Board itself generate, you will see there is no reason for the Board's management to be surprised at the revelations of the NISE study because the facts are there, as we look at issues of late trips, missing trips, buses that break down, and all the other factors which serve to make the service unpopular. Mr. Chairman, enough said on that but I think the point has

got to be made that we have a target for which the board needs to focus on. It has a performance target to meet, which certainly has been enunciated in this report, and is one which I believe they have frequent information, frequent reporting, frequent knowledge of the kind of issues which contribute to the ratings, which the NISE organisation has put its finger on. We have had a lot of discussion at Board level on this matter, myself and the management team, and I am convinced that the attitude of the management is one in which they will seek, over the immediate future, to improve this situation. Sir, they have already started, in some way, to improve the image of the Transport Board, in terms of reliability, in terms of making sure that the persons who we put in charge of our terminals are doing the job they are supposed to do; that they are out there observing the need of the people.

Sir, we have advertised time schedules but we need to make sure that these time schedules are being met and when there is a need to make a change, in terms of the deployment of our resources, our bus drivers or our fleet, we need to make sure that happens. Mr. Chairman, this can only be done by the people on the floor, the managers in the terminals and the drivers themselves, the persons who interact with the passengers in the terminals. These are the ones who are the first call to bring about that change. The policy set by the management team is one thing, their ability to monitor the situation is another thing, but the ability to make a difference and to make an immediate impact to touch the human character of the service that we provide is the first call at the terminals, the managers at the terminals, the checkers at the terminals and those who deploy the services of the Transport Board.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, the point is that as a team we recognise some of the approaches which will be necessary in bringing about a more reliable Transport Board service in the short term, even as we contemplate the master plan of the Authority and as we contemplate any intervention that we can make towards mass transport solution.

Mr. Chairman, let me talk about another improvement and this is where we are going to have an opportunity to see how best the private/public sector relationship can be strengthened to our benefit. Very shortly the tenders will be closing for the construction of terminal at Sea View, also known as Cheapside or Princess Alice. I want to think this will be an opportunity to demonstrate to the people of Barbados the attitude of the Democratic Labour Party, with respect to how we feel about the service we provide for them. I look forward to the construction of this terminal and to the opportunity to bring about a kind of operational dynamic at Sea View, which

sees the two sectors, the Transport Board and Private Service Vehicles operating in a better managed process.

Mr. Chairman, because I have had a number of visits from operators in these terminals, I want to make a call for assistance and the continued vigilance of our police at Sea View, where operators of the private sector vehicles are reporting that there is not enough regard for the law and that there is not enough regard for order and the Transport Authority can try as they may to have even more secure monitoring of this terminal and, indeed, all of our terminals, as we need to be so careful as we move around large numbers of people from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, I recognise that my time is up at this stage and I know there should be opportunities for me to sum up. I know that there are Honourable Members who will want to contribute to this discussion. I felt that I should throw the gates open and broaden this discussion as wide as it is allowed by Your Honour this morning and move away from the direct consideration of who borrowed what, what money is this about now, and that kind of thing to a more philosophical and concise approach to a mass transport solution for this great island Barbados.

Sir, I am grateful to you.

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

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I have an educator for a long time and I have always known when my students are begging not to be punished. I recognise the Minister has been very warm in his opening remarks and he has asked us not to be very hard on him for the last two years. Sir, I can assure him that I will not be hard on him but there are a few questions that I have to ask.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I was at pains to point out to my side recently that if there is one thing that is needed at the Transport Board and, indeed, the transport sector is a new ethos. I am not sure that the management of the Transport Board is really bringing this type of discipline to the transport system and, in fact, I daresay, Mr. Chairman, that the Government continues to show the uncertainty that we have spoken of a couple of times ago. There is still some uncertainty in Government and I can see the uncertainty in the transport sector. You moved away from the private sector and one moment the private sector was not supposed to be involved with the transport system at all, especially in the carrying of school children and the next moment, they are involved in it, so the Government is uncertain about what they are doing. The Minister of Education came out and banned the school children from getting on Minister buses. Sir, the Minister of Education is not the Minister of Transport and Works, but the Minister of Education came out and told the school children not to get back on mini

buses but then he came and reversed the situation, so that we have a situation of confusion at the Transport Board. Sir, there is confusion in Government and there is confusion all across the length and breadth of the Boards, and the Transport Board is no exception. Mr. Chairman, I wonder that having effectively, ceremoniously or unceremoniously dismissed a general manager, are you better off today. Sir, that is a question we need to start off with today. We need to start off by asking ourselves today, Mr. Chairman, are we better off today? The revenue in 2008 was \$37.1 million, that is the revenue up to March 2008.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House deliberately. He knows that there was no dismissal of any general manager at the Transport Board. The person to whom he referred had completed two illustrious terms as General Manager of the Transport Board, two contracts, the final one which came to an end and was not renewed. There was no dismissal of anyone so that has to be record. The Honourable Member has to withdraw the comment about the dismissal of a Transport Board General Manager. Is the Honourable Member for St. Thomas the Chairman, Sir?

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member has to withdraw the comment referring to the dismissal of a general manager. I want to humbly submit that, Sir.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, in saying that he was dismissed, I mean that his contract was not renewed. The Honourable Member knew why it was not renewed. He was doing a good job and he had raised the spirit and level of cooperation at the Board. We have seen the type of security that he was talking about was being put in place. We have seen a person who has effective management. A man who came through the ranks, from clerical officer to financial manager, who had worked his way up to become General Manager and then his contract was not renewed and, Sir, I wonder why it was not renewed.

Mr. Chairman, the substantive point is that the Transport Board would rake in \$8 million in revenue, so \$38.8 and \$8 million is \$45 million and you are asking Government now to bring a subvention of \$60 million. Sir, the Supplementary is \$60 million, \$10 million was given in March this year at the Estimates and you are asking for \$49.1 million, so Government is really putting \$60 million in the Transport Board, so the Transport Board now is \$105 million to run this year. Sir, I wonder if the Transport Board can justifiably say that based on what know if the public is getting its due reward for this service. The Minister has pointed out that he has received a number of complaints about the Board. The Minister has said this, that a lot of complaints are coming to his desk every day and I want to find out what measures are being put in place to

ensure that there is effective management at the Transport Board.

Mr. Chairman, we know that there has been increased expenditure at the Transport Board. I wonder if we have taken on more than 20 per cent in new drivers, cleaners and the like or, again, is the Government hiding under the fact that they can bring in consultants at the Transport Board. We do not know but something is happening that the expenditure is increasing and the expenditure has gone from a bad situation to worse. Sir, the Minister rightly said that when he came to office, and it is true, that every Government has given the Transport Board a subvention from its history. Sir, from 1955, when the Transport Board was set up, it was a nationalised institution, and all Governments have given subventions to the Transport Board but, Sir, I am saying that for 14 years we have decided that there would be no increase in bus fares. Sir, we took the decision based on the assumption, based on the programme and belief of the then Government that Transport Board is an economic tool. Sir, we never sought to increase the bus fares at the Transport Board so, therefore, Government provides a subsidy but today, Government has increased bus fares and yet still giving more subsidies, so something is wrong. You are increasing subsidies, you are increasing revenue but, Sir, the expenditure has gone wild.

Mr. Chairman, I am asking the question: Has it gone one wild because Government is now paying more for diesel? Sir, talking about diesel, I must remind the Minister, because the Minister must be aware of the Act. Sir, under Transport Board Authority Act, at Cap. 11.3(a) it states... and the Minister must be aware of this, that they are not supposed to trade in spare parts, accessories, petrol or oil for road vehicles except by way of carrying on any activity as mentioned in sub-section 1 and 2. Sir, the Transport Board should never be involved in the sale of spare parts or diesel unless the Minister change the Act. I am sure the Honourable Prime Minister would definitely appreciate the point and should have a look at Section 11.3(a) and ask the Transport Board what is causing this wild expenditure at the Board. What is causing this expenditure? You will be receiving \$8 million more in bus fares. You are receiving more subventions from Government, what is happening to the expenditure? It has gone wild and you have nothing to show for it.

Sir, we were committed to providing fifty new buses every year under the last administration. The last administration committed Government to providing fifty new buses per year. I am sure the Minister has that on his desk. Sir, a report came to me as former Minister in 2007, in which we agreed that fifty new buses would be provided over the next three years, 2008, 2009 and 2010, 2011. Not one new bus has been provided yet the expenditure keeps going up. The overdraft at the Transport Board has now

moved from \$10 million to \$15 million. The Minister said that this is part of the cleaning up the mess. We want to find out, and we had new buses in 2007, if the warrantee for those buses are out, and if so, who is being paid to service the buses? I am aware that there are a number of contractors known to the Minister and known to the Government who are now servicing these buses. At what price are these people being paid? Are we paying exorbitant fees for the spare parts? Are we paying mechanical fees where Simpson Motors should be paid to service the buses? I know that they had a warrantee. So these are questions being asked.

Sir, at the same time, thanks to the generosity of Simpson Motors, because Simpson Motors have extended open credit to the Government yet the Government had discontinue sending the buses there...

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber when he seeks to speak to a warrantee and to mix it up, I use that term, with normal maintenance and the provision of spare parts. Sir, the provision of spares and the replacement of parts, or the normal wear and tear is not part of a warrantee service. Any arrangement by the Board to have other contractors do work to facilitate and expedite, if you want, the provision of buses is laudable. They will have to be able to account for any cost which is incurred there. I would expect that there would be a line with the standards which we set.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I still have a little time.

The Minister must put the facts here today. He must tell us about the revenue of the Transport Board. He must tell us about the expenditure of the Transport Board. The Minister must tell us because the last report that was laid here was in 2007, and under the law the Minister is supposed to bring a report after every financial year, three months after. The last report was in 2007. We do not know exactly what is happening with the Transport Board. We need the facts. The Minister must tell us if it is true, because I do not know, if the confusion and the morale at the Transport Board are at its lowest since 1955. The Minister must tell us this. I do not know. So the Minister must tell us today, because I notice that he went on to deal with the Transport Authority, which to my mind is another debate. We understand why the Minister has moved onto the Transport Authority, because that is an Authority that was set up by this side and it is doing well, under a competent person, although I think the Transport Authority needs staff to carry out its mission. Sir, I want the Minister to tell us why it is that under his mandate there are more pirates operating on the road, when the Transport Authority was supposed to do it.

Sir, there is so much that we can ask about the Transport Authority and the transport sector here. We want to find out if there are any new routes. The Minister must tell us what has happened to expenditure. Have there been any new routes since 2007? There was a bus service from Dash Valley to Constance that was supposed to be extended, the bus time is still two hours down time. Sir, I have not seen any new routes. The only one that, as far as I am aware, was introduced was the ABC Highway, and that was planned before the Minister came to office. The ABC route was planned. There is no new route. There are no new buses. We have nothing new to show at the Transport Board. The only thing we have to show is high expenditure and low morale at the Transport Board. I am sure the Minister is unhappy. The Minister cannot be happy today with this in mind. The Minister cannot be happy because he said so. He said that he is not happy. He said that he would prefer to talk about the Transport Authority which is making head roads, and he is happy with the Act. He is happy that we were able to bring the Act in 2007.

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: He said so. He said it is a good Act and he praised this side for bringing the Transport Authority Act after we found it lying in awaiting when the Democratic Labour Party was in Government in 1991. It took long. It took long because we had to provide good Act and he is proud of it. He read from it this morning and he is happy.

Sir, I want to find out from the Minister why is it, after three years, and the Transport Authority is now set up, why he has not been able today to deal with the pirates?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: What is causing the problem. What about the staff at the Transport Authority? What is happening? You were supposed to set up also a new building for that Authority. What has happened and where is the money being spent? Sir, we want to find out all of these things.

Mr. Chairman, we do not have much time because under the rules I have only fifteen minutes, but I shall be back.

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

His Honour K.St.C. Best: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support this Money Resolution in respect of the Transport Board. Sir, I want to say a good beginning makes a good ending. First of all we must holistically look at the whole transport system of Barbados. Sir, we must look at the

value, attitudes and the goals. One recognises that the Transport Board provides a social service and we must incorporate and look at all the transport systems as a whole. That is vested in the powers of the Transport Authority.

Sir, today, what is alarming is, the Government needs to revisit the arrangement with UCAL and the unions if you really and truly to get anywhere as to reducing the expenditure at the Transport Board, we must revisit the arrangement with UCAL and the union.

Sir, I will continue to say that what is necessary is a proper maintenance programme at the Transport Board. Sir, I look at it in this light. If we have 225 buses in operation, we can be very divide a certain amount every week. The buses are being rotated, Sir, which means that your maintenance cost will be down because if the buses are working well, it means that the breakdown period would be reduced. Sir, it is absolutely necessary that we must look at that. If there is an arrangement with UCAL which prevents that, all it means is that you should put your heads together and revisit that whole issue, so that at least the rolling stock will always be there.

Sir, I am also asking for consolidation of routes during the off-peak period and late at night. Sir, you would have during the off-peak period buses traveling to St. Andrew Church. There is nothing wrong with that bus in the off-peak period diverting at Sharon and come around and connect back on the route and go up Crab Hill. It means, Sir, that there will be no reason to have a bus traveling to Jackson with three or four persons.

In addition, Sir, late at night the same situation could occur, where the buses that are going to Silver Hill could divert and travel through the Pine or any of those areas. I am sure that persons would be very much appreciative of having that type of service, Sir, than be not sure whether or not there will be a bus because there are mechanical problems or sickness by the other driver late at night but if you have such an arrangement, I am sure that the commuters of this country would be very happy to see that we are going forward in a positive way. Sir, this could only be achieved, if we have proper attitudes. If we have the proper attitudes among management, worker and the commuters then we could really reach our goal because it is necessary to achieve the goal and I believe that the goal of Government, when it comes to a transport system is to have an effective, efficient and a high quality transport system. This is the goal, Sir, could only be done, where we set values, where we look at the attitudes and the end result, Sir, that we would have those goals being achieved and every member of the society must play their part when it comes to achieving this goal.

I am saying, Sir, that the Transport system of this country needs a serious overhauling.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. George North spoke about the pirates. I am concerned about the pirates but I believe, Sir, that you would find that a fellow will pirate, you gave him the appropriate licence and he would complain, the appropriate licence on the same route and after two or three weeks he would say that he does not want that route because it is not profitable anymore.

It is not fair, Sir, to the persons who are paid the full rate for a guy who only pays about three or four hundred dollars then to ply that route. I believe, Sir, when you flip the coin on the other end, you also have to look at the frequency of the service on that particular route. Sir, you would find that despite the whole question of the pirates, then the commuters of themselves, you must ask yourself, are these commuters satisfied with the service on that route that would make them to resort to catching these pirate vehicles.

Sir, we have tried and, I believed the police have tried and everybody has tried in respect of seeing how they could eradicate the pirates. Indeed, Sir, it is a difficult task and we all need to put our heads together to see how best we can deal with this problem before it gets out of hand. Sir, I would probably come back later.

Sir, with those brief remarks, I support this Resolution.

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

Hon. R.D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am not surprised at all about the tenor of debate being brought to this particular Money Resolution. Sometimes

when persons are guilty of certain levels of behaviour, then you will find that they will seek to machinate and in this instance, the Honourable Member for St. George North, not in his own capacity, Sir, because he is a good gentleman. But going back to 1979, let us understand the history of the machinations that went on under the Barbados Labour Party, when they made promises in 1976 to do all kinds of things across Barbados found themselves in a difficult set of circumstances and they eased in their friends and neighbours into the provision of transportation in Barbados by all kinds of two door cars. They took over every single lucrative route and completely disembowel the Transport Board.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: The record is absolutely clear. They completely disembowel the Transport Board. Look at the routes that were lucrative, Grazettes, Silver Sands, the route that I used to travel everyday to get home, the Pine,

the Ivy, Bush Hall, Bank Hall, Eagle Hall, Eden Lodge, every Hall they took over and they did not have any Christian behaviour, even as they went into the Halls. They completely disembowel the Transport Board and now the Honourable Member for St. George North can get up in this hallowed Chamber and seek to ascribe all kinds of nefarious behaviour to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, a members who has been trying with the staff of the Transport Board and the intervention of the Transport Authority to bring back some sense to transport in Barbados. Because, as part of it, the chaos which ensued, it was being rumoured all over Barbados and no one denied it, that even car carrying members who ran for office owned buses to transport people across Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: I know you do not know, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. They do not allow you to get into anything so you stay out. They and their friends peddle licences all over the place. Sir, that is what they are doing and I cannot deal with the hypocrisy.

Sir, what are talking about and I am willing to forget and to forgive. Sir, between 1979 and 2000 were 21 years. Between 1994 and 2008 were 14 years. They did nothing at all in that 14-year period to bring about a resurrection of the Transport Board.

We knew and I am willing to confess that between 1991 and 1994, a new thought process was brought to bear on the Transport Board. It was at a time of severe difficulty and the Government at the time wanted to change the total framework of the Transport Board. There was a move to go through major privatisation of the Transport Board and that was the emphasis. We moved from two persons on the Transport Board bus to one person.

We moved to the development of UCAL with the cooperation and support of the Barbados Workers' Union. They established that entity to provide the servicing and the maintenance of the buses.

Sir, there was a trajectory. By 1994, that trajectory changed under the leadership of the Barbados Labour Party. This is the history of the process. Previous to that time, we used to have yellow Rocklyn buses and green Elite buses around here. There was always a process of private/public transportation in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, what ensued in 1974 could only be considered as totally chaotic. In truth and in fact, it almost led to civil disturbances. I remember the former Honourable Prime Minister punitively punishing the same people that they unleashed on Barbados by imposing a high level of taxation.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: You all unleashed them on the people of Barbados. You changed the structure where you pay a man a salary or wage to drive a bus along a given route to go in the laybys, deposit and collect passengers and travel that route. They were stopping everywhere. They were being encouraged. When the police stop them, the next minute they are off and gone again because some high ranking person heavily connected whispered in somebody's ear...

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: He was still in school. He is still in school even now.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: No, I never taught with you. I am a good teacher.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Ask the colleague who you tried to praise just now, who you literally ran away from school, who you did not allow to become a Headmaster or Principal at the school because you called your friends and you undermined him, do not let me get into it.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I am talking transport. I know what I know. You wickedly and glibly undermined him when he was the best you all had. You go along. I tell you to leave me alone. You are my good friend.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: The point is we need to completely restructure transportation in Barbados. You cannot give up the best you have, the best land, the best routes, the best of everything and expect the Transport Board to operate at a profit. We have to take a decision as a nation that we will support this service in order to boost economic performance in this country. There must be some measurement to look at the contribution of transport services in Barbados to the gross domestic product of this country, that is what we have to do. Mr. Chairman, if providing \$49 million at this time is to generate a greater return to the GDP, then we have no quarrel with that.

Mr. Chairman, Transport Board drivers are some of the best paid drivers in Barbados. None of these people who move tourists across Barbados are paid like the Transport Board drivers. Transport Board drivers are guaranteed employment day in and day out. When the

tourist season is over, people put down the buses or the coaches and go home. The Transport Board workers, even if they drive an empty bus, are still employed. We need to change that dynamic.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: The point is that we need to change the dynamic. We need to make the transport service relevant to a 21st Century Barbados. If we do not increase the passenger tariff, there would be declining revenues to the Transport Board. Every young boy and young girl from the time they get a job, they want their own private transport. The population is not expanding ten-fold in any two or three years, it is barely growing and you are taking more and more of those persons who would have been using the Transport Board services and moving them towards private transport either ZM or ZR or whatever else you use and your own private vehicle, donkey cart, motor bike or motor cycle, bicycle, car, bus, whatever and so there would be declining resources of human beings for the Transport Board.

Mr. Chairman, let us not get into the kind of wide ball criticism of the Transport Board, let us seek the solutions to make it a reasonable viable entity. This is not about a General Manager's contract that has not been renewed. Nowadays if you have a contract, you cannot decide if you are going to renew it or not renew it, what madness are we getting into. If you are talking about persons who want to maintain the status quo based on friendship, what are we going to get. We need to stop this kind of foolishness that we are talking about.

We are also talking about the expenses being carried by the Transport Board. When an entity has to repay loans after loans, that is the first cost that you are dealing with. You have to repay all of those costs. You did not honour your commitments as a Government through the Welfare Department for persons that you have given certain facilities to, you have not paid a cent in years, so all of the \$10 million that was passed in here some time in this financial year was used to pay national insurance that you did not allow to be paid in 2005 and 2006.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Do not just sit down like Lumpen and tell me that it is not true, it is the truth. You did not pay the national insurance for the workers so any moneys passed in here is garnish. This is the reality. Let the people know the truth, Honourable Member for St. George North. If you see it staring before your face, you do not recognise it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has three minutes.

Hon. R. D. JONES: It is paint so you should smell it rather than be concerned with all kinds of silly little things that are not relevant to the reality that the Transport Board faced.

Mr. Chairman, the investment in the travelling public of Barbados for persons who cannot afford motor cars and motor bikes to take them to the factory yards, to work and all across Barbados, cannot be denied. We cannot implode the Transport Board therefore what we have to do is to work harmoniously together to ensure that the Transport Board remains a reasonable viable entity. We have to do what we have to do to strengthen the Transport Board.

The dirty past started in 1979, which has corrupted this process, should be gradually removed and the Transport Board, its leaders, its management, its Board and all of those should be given a chance to make it a functioning and viable entity.

Mr. Chairman, I support this \$49 million.

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

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.30 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 1.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, Honourable Members, this Sitting is resumed. When the Suspension was taken, we were in Committee of Supply, and with leave having been granted to sit again, to that we shall now return.

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

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence while I respond to a number of matters raised

by Honourable Members on the other side, the Honourable Member for St. George North in a presentation which was scattered in the least to be as complimentary as he can be. Sir, in that presentation, the Honourable Member spoke to the fact that he had not heard of any new ethos for the Transport Board, he has not heard of any new routes for the Transport Board, he felt there was uncertainty of direction.

Mr. Chairman, the Transport Board has been able to boast a number of achievements over the last three years under the Democratic Labour Party administration, Sir, not only have we introduced new routes, not only have we introduced free school rides for our school children, not only have we introduced a new ethos in management and direction at the Transport Board but the statistics are there to support these things. Sir, the ridership on the ABC route has been increasing almost daily. The only dissatisfaction would be the fact that some times we cannot provide enough buses for the route. Sir, the question always is, and Honourable Members on the other side have got to embrace the whole question of viability in all of these exercises. The whole question of profitability and so we have to measure our expansion by way of what suits the moneys that are required to carry out these operations.

Mr. Chairman, you can adopt the attitude on that side of simply talking for talking sake, Honourable Member for St. Thomas I am sure when she gets up would have a mouthful for this Honourable Chamber but when it is all put together, you would not be able to take it to the shop, because the Honourable Member is going to ask for buses in Bloomsbury, in every conceivable corner of St. Thomas, as if the Honourable Member is the only constituency in here that has a need. Sir, credit to the Honourable Member but the point is that you have to measure your desires with what the State is able to provide and the Honourable Member has to appreciate that, the Honourable Member knows better. If the Honourable Members did not know any better, I would have responded. Sir, in terms of new initiatives who can speak against the initiative to introduce free school rides for our children, only the Honourable Member for St. George North, every week the Honourable Members gets an opportunity to come here and criticise the fact that the Democratic Labour Party in extending its thinking and philosophy towards education for all in Barbados and not for a select group, the Honourable Member find fit to provide the initiative of free school rides for our school children. Sir, the figures are there for every one to see.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Sir, I have never criticised the introduction of free bus fares for school children, if there is ever such a thing as free bus fares. Sir, we know that this notion of free bus fares have a cost to

somebody, though free to the children. I have not criticise it and I will not criticise the issue of bus fares for children.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I know. The fact are that the figures are there to show that the ridership for school children is consistent and that it serves the purpose as set out in the Budget of 2008 by the Honourable Member for St. John when he spoke to the fact that we had to provide a safe, suitable atmosphere for our children to go to school and to return home. We provided that serviced. It relieved parents, and you need to do the math, Barbadians need to do the Arithmetic. At \$2 per bus fare, with two children per household, which is probably the lowest average in most of our communities around Barbados, that amounts to \$8 a day per household or \$40 per week. Do the math and extend it to a year, it amounts to \$6 000 a year.

Mr. Chairman, the point is that you must talk to the parents, the Honourable Member for St. George North needs to go talk to the parents in his constituency who benefit from this service and stop coming talking about no new ethos, no new initiative, no new programmes, the Honourable Member did not think of them. He could not have cared less. All the time the Honourable Member stood here debating.. I mentioned this morning about six times on which large items came to this Honourable Chamber for discussion, led in the main by him, the Honourable Member for St. George North and never has he announced any new initiatives for the Transport Board nor anything else.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, yes, the Honourable Member worked on the ABC Highway, although he denies that too. It is only when I provide photographic evidence of his involvement that he quietly sneaked away and refused to participate. Sir, the point is that the ridership by our school children is consistent and we have met that need. Of course we still have problems with some issues with some children who continue to abuse the system, some who would want to ride once or twice on morning, rather than going to school or in the evening and certainly the management of the Transport Board will be looking at ways to make sure that this service meets the need for which it is set up and that it is not in anyway abused.

Mr. Chairman, I felt I needed to intervene at this early stage in this debate before the Honourable Member for St. George North got further out of hand, and put some focus and measure of reality on the discussion with respect to the Transport Board operations, per se' because when I spoke earlier, admittedly I tried to widen the whole scope of this discussion to involve the question of a mass transport solution to which we will have to return anyhow, because therein lies the ultimate answer as to how we go

forward in transport in Barbados. Mr. Chairman, I am obliged.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I want to focus this debate on looking at the transport policy because it seemed to me the Minister said in all his checking across Barbados and the Caribbean that he came across one person or two persons who have studied transport systems in London and, Sir, that is not totally true because within his own Ministry there are persons . . .

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House again and probably deliberately. I said and I repeat, and we can go to the records if it is necessary, that there transport experts in Barbados and I know of at least two who worked in the United Kingdom and are prepared to offer their services to Barbados. Sir, that is the simple statement I have made but the Honourable Member is going to try to twist this. He has to turn the truth into a lie, that is my only conclusion.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, the Minister said that in all his checking across Barbados and the . . .

The Government has to learn to work with what it has. We served in Government 14 years and we have not sent home people. We work with the Dems, we worked with NDP's and anybody. We never asked persons to subscribe to a party ticket, as this Government is currently doing. We need to have a policy to work with Bajans regardless of whoever they are.

Mr. Chairman, I want to ask the Minister a few things and it relates to the issue of diesel. I have made the point that the Transport Board is selling diesel contrary to law. The Minister has not addressed that matter and I hope when he gets up that he would address the fact that under the Transport Board Act you are not supposed to be selling diesel or spare parts. Even if you have started within three months, you should bring the law here to change the Transport Authority to make them eligible to sell diesel. Sir, this whole notion of a special pump...

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, it seems to me that the Democratic Labour Party has not got over none of their history. This special pump was introduced in the 70s. Sir, a special privilege pump was introduced in the 70s and they have once again introduced a special privilege pump at the Transport Board. I want to ask the Minister who has benefitted from this...

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: You have to do your own history. Do you want me to do your history for you? I am saying that there is a special privilege pump at the Transport Board. I want to know if it is true that this special pump is catering to the Chairman and the Board of the Transport Board and I want to find out how much money is being made from it and if any money is being made from it. I want to find out what they are paying SOL and who is making the profit and if, indeed, SOL is making a profit because it is now an exclusive pump, where is the supply by a dealership.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, remember the former Prime Minister said that he was not into making diesel any special arrangement. We had a system here in this country where persons from the mini bus, where anybody who wanted diesel, because we felt that diesel helped the industrial output of a country...

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, we felt that diesel was important to drive the economy and, therefore, the Government has to point out, because apparently the Government tried to reverse its decision and its policy from time to time, if they have now realised that, indeed, there is a special role for diesel in our economy. Sir, the Minister must point this out to us.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House when he speaks to the special privilege for diesel expenditure. The point is that when the rates on diesel sales were changed, the special people we chose were the mini bus operators, ZRs and BT. Sir, those were the special people and those are the persons to whom the diesel is offered at Weymouth at a discounted price. Sir, that is the arrangement. The Honourable Member is fully aware of that but he wants to give some kind of spin about somebody using a pump for petrol. Sir, it is nothing of the sort.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, on this side, we are not privileged. I know that the Board of the Transport Board meets after most workers have gone home, so that management of the Transport Board does not know what is going on. Sir, this is a Parliament and the Ministry must tell us who is benefitting from this special pump.

I want to find out too if the Minister is aware that five special buses were bought by us in 2006 for the disabled community. I want to find out from him if the fleet has been increased because it was supposed to be increased by two buses every year to help the disabled community and what has happened to this arrangement and if, indeed, it is still functioning. If the disabled community stills benefits from the concessions that were put in place. Sir, in

this committee the Minister must tell us if those persons over 65, who are traveling on the buses, if there is a subsidy for these people. We notice that the Welfare Department has provided a subsidy of \$3 million last year and this year for those persons who are traveling. In other words, if a person 65 age and over, this money is paid for by the Welfare Department and so too, the school children. Sir, in 2008, \$3 million were provided for the Ministry of Education to help subsidise the school bus fare even though the Minister would want us to believe that for the very first time school children were traveling free and, for the very first time, that Government is subsidising the travel of school children. The Minister must understand that for the last 14 years, under our Government, that children paid \$1 but the subsidised rate of fifty cents was done by the Ministry of Education and a sum of \$3 million was provided up to 2007.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. Sir, nobody is contesting what was the arrangement under the Barbados Labour Party. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The point is that the Democratic Labour Party in the Budget of 2008 introduced free travel for school children throughout Barbados. You had it at \$1, well, it is now free.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: No, it is not the same thing. It is three times as much.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, the Minister has expressed himself and he has said that the Ministry of Education still provides the subsidy for the school children but when we look at the whole question of subsidy, we notice that the Ministry of Education provides a subsidy, the Welfare Department provides a subsidy to cover those persons who are either under 16 or over 65 and this has always been provided for by Government. The Government said that they will realise \$8 million by increasing bus fares. I have already asked a question: Can the Minister tell us anything at all about the increase bus fare which was supposed to realise \$8 million? I just cannot understand, as I said before, why is it that the expenditure keeps climbing while the revenue keeps falling, even though there has been an increase in bus fares. So the Minister needs to get his technocrats to explain this matter which cannot be seen with the naked eye. It bothers everybody's mind that you are increasing revenue, you increased bus fares, but yet you have not increased wages for workers.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is really misleading the Chamber. He really must give someone else who has a contribution to make an opportunity to speak. Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. The increase in bus fares took effect from January 1st. The position is, we have to give

the system time to work. The truth is, we expect to realise a certain amount of revenue by \$8 million, but the point is you have to wait and see how much of that actually trickles down to the bottom line. We expect, in a simple arithmetical extrapolation to realise that difference in revenue. The Honourable Member knows that. It started in January. Sir, as they say, "Cud God have mercy." How would you expect to present to this Chamber, at this time, the impact of a measure that took effect on January 1st. Oh! My dear.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, continue.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, the Minister must understand that this is a Committee and we have the right to ask him any question based on the financial projections of the Transport Board. I am saying that the Transport Board is on gallop. It is galloping away and if it is not checked, or reined in, this time next year we will come back here for twice as much as we are asking for, because you could see what is happening at the Transport Board. I keep making that point that the revenue would increase, in terms of collection. You said that the ridership has increased. Your own words, the ridership has increased. You increased bus fares but you have come for more money and the wage bill for the workers has not increase. Maybe you have taken on a lot of staff. Maybe you have taken on 100 or 150 new staff at the Transport Board, so we need to know. We want to find out what is really happening at the Transport Board, which the Ministry of Finance needs to know, because this is the people's money.

Sir, so when the Government talks about free this and free that, this \$49 million is coming out the backs of hard working Barbadians and we need to ask questions. No plane will stop me from asking these questions. I want to know. So we want to know how many people have been taken on by the Transport Board over the last year. You said your current staff is 927, and how many buses do you have? You have 927 workers at the Transport Board. I want to find out from the Minister...

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Did you say 900? Let us give the Minister the benefit of the doubt. Transport Board now has 900 workers.

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: It has gone from 800 to 900 workers, an additional hundred persons have been employed. You have not increased the wages of workers. You have increased rather than a cut in the management staff. I notice you have a large Board. You have no management. Even though they may not be effective at this stage, I hope that this time next year the Minister can report

that we have collected more money. I hope next year that the Minister can realise efficiency in the rolling stock.

Sir, my people complain every day that they cannot get a bus at the terminal. They complain every day that the bus to Redman Village which should to leave at 5 O'clock, sometimes leaves at 7 and 8 O'clock. There is no schedule even though we have taken pain in the last 14 years to provide a scheduled bus service, yet today we have an unscheduled bus service. They will leave at anytime, depending on who is in the bus terminal. You have a situation where there is no control in any of the terminals. The buses will go at anytime. This is what the management must tell us what is happening at the bus terminal with regard to those persons traveling in the afternoon and in the morning. Sir, there are still too many people who are kept waiting for buses in the morning and in the afternoon.

Sir, I also want to ask the Minister if he has increased security. He spoke about security at the bus terminals. We recognise this as a problem.

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

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, we recognise this as a problem. There is still a number of persons who have problems. Sir, all over the world transportation is a problem as far as security is concerned. The Board has to put increase security at the bus terminals, and on the buses. There are a number of drivers who have complained that they fear travelling in the country areas at night. So security systems need to be put on the buses to protect those persons who drive.

Sir, if the Unions are doing it, then we have to do it, as I said, to ensure that the workers not only those from my constituency, but across Barbados are secured. We need to put a security system within the bus, either cameras or some other security for those drivers who now travel alone across all parts of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, finally, I want to see a secure reliable transport system, for not only the public system but an integrated system between the public and the private sector. If this is going to be the Government's philosophy, then the two must work hand in hand towards a system that is based on fairness, a system based on equity, a system based on reliability, and so on. I want to tell the Minister that this transport system is here to stay. It represents Barbados. I understand the nature of the transport sector, because we have always had a subsidy but we need to curtail that subsidy, and he needs to let this Parliament know what is happening to it.

I thank you.

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

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support this Head, this Supplementary provision for the Transport Board and to say that I am very proud of the work that this administration, in particular the Minister of Transport and Works, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, because it is this Democratic Labour Party administration since assuming office in January 2008, that has been able to ensure better maintenance of buses to the extent that the rolling stock available on a daily basis averages to date 225 buses, which are therefore available for usage by various groups. Although we have not been able to buy any new buses, this contrast with the whole track record of the Barbados Labour Party, although spending millions of dollars of taxpayers funds to buy dozens of new buses, were unable to prove daily, rolling stock to service the routes of 200. Sir, this Democratic Labour Party has been able to improve the efficiency there and it must be congratulated for this. As a result we have been able to have more buses available to date, and therefore more opportunities for employment of drivers. Sir, even within my constituency they were able to refer constituents got jobs as drivers at the Transport Board. I am grateful to this administration for being so professional, in the delivery of this vital public transportation service to the masses of our country.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. George North, in his last presentation gave, in my view, an impression which really from my own experience as someone who takes public transportation, that really does not connect with my experience. Mr. Chairman, there is generally a scheduled service available by the Transport Board to the traveling public. We know you can get an Edey Village bus at a quarter to the hour. You can get hourly or half hourly services on many routes. I know what some the inspectors do, as a means of support to the travelling public is that if there are any delays, then they may have the initiative to ensure that persons do not have to wait an inordinate period of time waiting for a bus and can take the initiative to ensure that a bus service is provided as a matter of urgency on that route. Generally speaking, the service is scheduled so the Honourable Member for St. George North is speaking from second hand knowledge. This Honourable Member is speaking from first hand experience, taking public transportation on a daily basis.

Mr. Chairman, let me also state that I support the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central who made the point that it was the Barbados Labour Party when they were in office, that moved all of the lucrative routes.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, please let me hear the Honourable Member in silence. Thank you.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Sir, the truth is really causing the Honourable Members on that side to be uncomfortable but this Honourable Member will press ahead.

Asides.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Sir, the Barbados Labour Party administration removed most of the lucrative short-haul from the Transport Board and gave them, lock, stock and barrel to the private concessionaires. They had kisses and kin in that sector and I am saying that they sold the public short therefore putting pressure on the Transport Board, leaving them primarily with the long-haul routes which, obviously in the off-peak period would not be profitable. And so, I support the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central in stating, as well as the Honourable Member for St. Michael East that we can look...

Asides.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: It was the Democratic Labour Party for example that introduced the City Circle Service. It is very popular among the senior citizens in particular but the general public in that urban corridor.

Sir, all I will invite the Transport Board to do is to ensure that we have sufficient buses to service that route so that delays that may occur as a result of traffic congestion on an afternoon that can cause the bus to reach the final destination at the Princess Alice Terminal a bit late and so it could cause delays but if we have buses on standby then we can ensure that the service is not in anyway put out of sync.

I therefore support the Honourable Member for St. Michael East in suggesting that we can have other loops and similar City Circles to encompass and service the short-haul lucrative routes.

For example, a Transport Board bus may be able to along from Bridgetown the Rendezvous Garden Route and then swing down on the Highway 7 Silver Sands Route en route to Bridgetown or make a circle in the other direction to come down Wildey or go through the Pine area to service that short-haul route as well. Sir, you have the Grazettes/Wanstead Drive area, where you can go up on the Deacons route and then come down on the Black Rock route and Barbarees Hill/Spooners route area. We can be creative, thereby making a more scheduled service available on those short-haul routes and allowing the Transport Board to compete in an equitable manner with the private, ZR and Minibus operators.

Mr. Chairman, this would go a long way if, in my view, we ensure that the Transport Board could get back on to those short-haul routes to improve the quality of service available to the travelling public. Because again, as a practitioner who takes these public modes of transportation on a regular basis, I know that persons who have to take, for example routes to Wanstead Drive, Fords Road, Bush Hall and those shorter routes, after a certain time, the operators pull their vans off the routes so that when coming close to after 10 o'clock going towards midnight, you cannot get a service. You have to rely on a taxi service and those working-class persons would find it very difficult to afford that on a regular basis. I believe the Transport Board should have at least on those short-haul routes, that last bus, 11 o'clock to midnight, so that people are not left stranded along the route.

Mr. Chairman, I would also suggest therefore that now we have the Transport Authority, which has oversight over the operations of the various terminals that they look seriously at extending the opening hours of the washroom facilities and seating facilities available at the River Bus Terminal so that they remain open up until midnight, which is consistent with what occurs with the Transport Board terminals, be it at Fairchild Street, Princess Alice, or Speightstown so that those commuters waiting for those services from the River Bus Terminal will be able to have washroom facilities and waiting areas to shelter from the rain and so on. Sir, I look forward to that initiative being implemented shortly.

Mr. Chairman, I would also wish to take this opportunity to frown upon bad practices that I see occurring in the private transportation sector, not in all cases because you have some owner-operated services that are very disciplined but I am talking about the speeding, what some people call rebelling, where the ZRs and minibuses are going helter-skelter above the speed limit, competing with each other to get passengers or even driving too slowly because there is another ZR or minibus a minute or two ahead of them and they are holding back to get passengers.

I believe all of these problems can be solved, thereby reducing the need for limited police resources to be deployed to manage that situation, if we simply put these private operators on a fixed wage or fixed salary basis. I know that some private operators actually support this because in the current arrangement where these conductors and drivers are given a commission so many cents per passenger go to them or you give the owner so many hundreds of dollars at the end of the day and all the rest is yours. Sir, that rat race as it were, to get passengers, resulting in untenable situations occurring in some instances where school girls are asked to sit on the laps of school boys or even adults, just so that the crews can squeeze in people like sardines in those vans.

I am saying that I have been to St. Vincent and other countries in the Caribbean where they have private/public transportation and this does not occur. I am saying the salary structure, give them a fixed wage every week, a decent wage, of course, and then there would not be no need, whatsoever, to have that rat race. It does not mean that the crews would not work properly.

I know some people are afraid that the crews would park the vans and the owners would not get any salary but I am sure that this can be monitored, even if they organise inspectors to monitor the way in which the crews operate the buses.

I know that the Honourable Members on the other side are very familiar with the call in some quarters to privatise this and privatise that. The last thing we heard from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East before she was dethroned by her colleagues on that side, was suggesting that the Government should privatise almost every public service in our country.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that the Barbados Labour Party privatised the lucrative routes in the Transport Board so I would not surprise me if they would supporting privatising the entire Transport Board but I am sure that this administration would not do such a thing because there are certain essential services that must have some public sector involvement, in terms of the decision-making. In the interest of the national securities stability and good governance, do we render the State impotent by not having any sort of control of any of the sectors of our society?

Mr. Chairman, there could be partnerships but I am saying that the role of Government to ensure best practices in the public transportation system and to ensure that the safety of the traveling public is maintained is critical. We can have joint ventures but certainly, I would not go back to the dark days.

I remember as a young lad, Mr. Chairman, going to the Lodge School and we had the Transport Board owned by Government and we had the Elite Bus Company and Lucas used to run the route up to Lodge School, the Blaze Hill, College Savannah route. We had Trotman running the Elite buses from the River Van Stand and then you had Rocklyn running the St. Andrew and that area. Sir, after a certain time again, when I was at Lodge School, after 6 o'clock, if you did not get that last bus, you had to sleep in St. John because private sector found it not feasible and lucrative to operate late night services. Sir, we have gone passed that with Government increasing the size of the Transport Board to ensure that a certain minimum standard of public transportation is available to the travelling public.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to make a quick suggestion that the Transport Authority should really insist, in my view, that the ZR and the minibus operators must issue tickets to the commuters taking their services because if there is an accident, the insurance companies are concerned that you could have people claiming that they were in the vehicle and they were injured as a result of that accident but they do not have any receipt to show that they actually were on that bus. Similarly, a conductor could argue that a person did not pay them and the person may very well have paid them but because they do not have a receipt you could end up even with violence, so these simple mechanisms I believe should be mandatory. The Transport Board requires this so why should the private sector not require this to ensure that the passengers have rights and that they are at all times respected.

Mr. Chairman, I talked about best practices. I frown upon ZR drivers and conductors using alcohol and still working those buses. Obviously, that is a danger to the public and must be stamped out. I really urge the travelling public to understand that they have a right and if they see crews engaging in this very dangerous practice, then do not take their vans, use another one and they would get the message. This will hurt them where it matters, in the pocket.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, I wish to congratulate the Honourable Member for Christ Church South for working assiduously to ensure that the quality of service available to the travelling public by the Transport Board goes up and up. I remember this Honourable Member making a suggestion that we incorporate the terminus at Cheapside, what they call Seaview, to include the Princess Alice Terminus, where the Barbados Labour Party did a terrible job, where they provided these shelters that were no shelters because the commuters got wet, they were ineffective.

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

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This Administration is looking to incorporate the Seaview Minibus Terminus with the Princess Alice Terminus to improve the quality of service available to the travelling public at Princess Alice.

I thank you.

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

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Chairman, I rise to make a contribution to this money Resolution before this Honourable Chamber and to offer my support for it.

I want, Mr. Chairman, in the short time that is left just to make an observation in respect of the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. George North. Mr. Chairman, this question of subsidies to the Transport Board has been an ongoing thing for several years. This Supplementary before this Honourable Chamber for \$49 million is not inconsistent with the several years of Supplementaries for the Transport Board presented by the previous Government.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make the point that going back into the financials from as far back in 2007, which is the last available financial statement that is before this Parliament, the payroll cost at the Transport Board was in excess of the gross revenue of the Transport Board. At that particular time, I believe that there were over 700 persons being employed by the Transport Board. Mr. Chairman, you would recall that 2007 is an election year. By the end of 2007, that payroll which was already in excess of 100 per cent of gross revenue... The previous Government under this former Minister, the Honourable Member for St. George North, further increased the number of persons employed by the Transport Board to over 800 persons by the end of December 2007.

Asides.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: We have not sent home any person. Those are the facts.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I have not contended the fact that the payroll or the workers at the Transport Board had increased to about 800 in 14 years but within one to two years the Government has taken on over 150 workers at the Transport Board, so it is now about 950 workers.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, proceed.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Chairman, I think that the Honourable Member for St. George North should just plea guilty and sit. He caused this problem. The Barbados Labour Party Government over the 14 odd years that they were in control of the Government in Barbados created this massive mess. Even at March 2007, the excess of the assets of the Transport Board was a shortfall of over \$12 million over the liabilities. This is the point.

Asides.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: The point is that you had an opportunity over the 14 years to restructure the Transport

Board, which you did not do. You failed to restructure the Transport Board.

We listened this afternoon to a lot of rhetoric in respect of a new ethos for the Transport Board. What was the problem 14 years ago when you had the opportunity to set a new framework for the Transport Board? These are the facts. You had an opportunity to restructure the economy when there was a wash pan of money floating around Barbados and you failed to do anything. You failed to restructure the Transport Board, failed to restructure the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and failed to restructure the tourism industry. You failed on all those productive sectors. These are the facts.

Sir, I just wanted to set the framework clear as to the direction that we have. The Honourable Minister in his presentation made the point that we need to look at transport in Barbados as an industry and look for an overall solution to that, that is what is before the Government and that is what we will do. We will attempt to restructure transport as an industry, that is what we are going to do.

Mr. Chairman, I would be remiss of me before I sit not to draw to the Minister's attention that I have had several complaints from persons within the Paynes Bay area to have that Holders Hill bus, instead of stopping at the Upper Holders Hill, coming down to Lower Holders Hill onto Highway 1 so that the persons living in Lower Holders Hill, Olive Lodge and those sorts of areas will have access to a bus transportation besides having to walk down onto Highway 1. Mr. Chairman, the way that constituency is cut up, there is no linkage between Highway 1 and the central areas of Hoytes Village and so on except one has to go via Bridgetown and that is really not an appropriate situation. Mr. Chairman, I want to encourage the Minister to get that Holders Hill bus to come right down from Upper Holders Hill onto Highway 1.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that I was able to put the case for this money Resolution in the context of...

Asides.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Chairman, with those words, I thank you for this contribution.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I wish, in supporting this Supplementary, to raise a few additional points to those raised so far in the debate. I would only say, Mr. Chairman, that it is usually expected that in such a debate, such as the Transport Board, that the House would use it in a purposeful way to plot or to help to plot the path

for the future development of the Board and not to seek to dwell, as the other side has, on past failed performances.

Mr. Chairman, I note a number of points made by the Honourable Member for St. George North and the Honourable Member has sought to paint a picture of the Transport Board to make it seem as though the only thing that has happened at the Transport Board is high expenditures and disgruntled employees. Sir, the Honourable Member said there is low morale and the only thing that happened at the Transport Board is that expenditures are wild. The Honourable Member said there are wild expenditures and that everything has gone wild at the Transport Board. Sir, if I was not in this Honourable Chamber I would think the Honourable Member was citing the calypso of the Mighty Sparrow - Capitalism Gone Wild, but I want to assure the Honourable Member that certainly under this Government expenditures have not gone wild at the Transport Board. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, I believe that The Honourable Member for Christ Church South has correctly told the Honourable House that the Transport Board is in fact a social service, it is providing and has been over the years a vital social service and respective Governments have treated the Transport Board not as an entity that ought to make profit but one that is providing a service that cannot simply be derailed. One cannot just wake up one morning and say there is no Transport Board servicing Barbados. What we need to focus on and what this Government has been focusing on since coming to office is to ensure that the Transport Board can operate more efficiently and I believe we owe it to the management and staff of the Transport Board to credit them with the steps that have already been taken to ensure that the Transport Board can operate more efficiently.

Mr. Chairman, the Transport Board over the years - and the Honourable Member talked about runaway expenditure - and I had to pull the annual reports of the Transport Board for 2006/2007, as well as 2005/2006. Sir, if the Honourable Member were to refer to those reports, the Honourable Member would recognise that the Transport Board has always had a problem of diminishing revenues. In 2005, the revenues was over \$29 million but it has always had a challenge of rapidly increasing expenditures, particularly in an environment where, for example... Mr. Chairman, we have had only recently to move very quickly to remove or to ensure that they can function, all of those buses where when you pass by the Weymouth Headquarters you would see those buses just idly lying there, without being engaged in any activity. Sir, I think it is a credit to the management of the Transport Board that much of that fleet of buses are now operational. Therefore, when you are saying that the Transport Board is doing nothing, we have to give credit where credit is due and we have to recognise that coming here and talking about the expenditure of the Transport Board without plotting a path by which we believe that the Board can

function going forward, would not help the Transport Board. Sir, I am not going to into all the figures that we could find in these annual reports to show that under the Barbados Labour Party administration they really presided over a Transport Board that was not innovative. It was not made to be innovative and creative and now that we are trying to do that, I would expect that the other side would come in and offer some meaningful suggestions as to how we could move forward, rather than talking about what you did or did not do. At the end of this debate, the public does not want to hear that. Mr. Chairman, for example, I would not only want to congratulate the Transport Board but also to appeal to more of corporate Barbados to utilise the buses of the Transport Board for advertising. I believe this is something we are beginning to see quite a bit of. When I

look at the financial information of the Transport Board, it looks to me as though this is an area that could become a growing one for revenue. I think the fleet of buses look very attractive when they have the advertisements displayed on them. What it would mean is that the Transport Board would earn more revenue and so I would like to urge corporate Barbados to see the fleet of Transport Board buses as an avenue for advertising. We know that the Transport Board has got to become more efficient and already the management has laid out a number of initiatives that are designed to do that but this has to be something that is incremental. The whole question of ensuring that the deployment of buses are better utilised is also something that has to be incremental, it cannot be done just by waking up and saying that we are going to make sudden and drastic changes in the Transport Board. We recognise that the Transport Board is also an employer of many Barbadians. The Honourable Members mentioned in the vicinity of more than 900 employees. I believe the correct figure is 921 employees the Board currently employs. But we make no secret that the Transport Board is an entity that employs many persons but efficiencies in the Transport Board have to be obtained by means of careful analysis and study. And oftentimes the knee-jerk reactions to public transport services create more harm than good and what it pleases me to say is that the approach we have undertaken is one based on proper research and analysis, both in terms of routes, in term social of the facilities that are used, such as bus terminals, et cetera. We have focused not only on efficiencies of service, we have also focused in terms of the comfort of the public.

Mr. Chairman, we talk about the service in terms of the school children, which is a vital service on its own. Without that the cost to the other departments of Government and in terms of the Treasury would be horrendous and so we need not flog the school bus service, it is playing a vital role in Barbados.

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

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, what we need to do is to focus on those areas in which the Transport Board can become more efficient, while not compromising the level of service that we know ought to be provided to Barbadians. Sir, many Barbadians still use the Transport Board services and we are very focused and certainly we underscore the importance that the service will always be provided to Barbadians and at an efficient standard.

Mr. Chairman, I feel that the Transport Board is aware that there are many routes across Barbados that can be tweaked and can be improved and this is something I believe the Minister has already said. Mr. Chairman, in closing I want to make the point that this debate is not about the historical position of the Transport Board. We have come and found the Transport Board as a social service and we intend that it remains and efficient social service, by means of forging ahead with greater efficiencies in the operations of the Transport Board. That has got to be the way forward, we have to ensure that the revenues are increased and that the rolling stock of the Transport Board is continuously maintained, whether with our partners who are now contracted to do it or by some other means. Sir, it has to be a mix, we have to use and employ new and modern services and modern techniques to achieve this. Sir, this particular Supplementary is not new, Governments before and in the future will provide supplementary funding to the Transport Board because the Transport Board does not charge an economic fare, it charges a highly subsidized fair and it does that because we recognise that we have to provide a service that is social in orientation and not necessary economic in its focus.

Mr. Chairman, I support this Supplementary. I see it as an opportunity to continue to support the Transport Board in the delivery of a vital service and at the same time not diminishing the efforts that we are making to ensure that the Transport Board can become more and more efficient in the provision of this service to Barbadians. Mr. Chairman, I am obliged.

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not getting into the crosstalk in relation to who blames who. I believe that the social service of the Transport Board is paramount in servicing the public of Barbados and so any exercise that helps to enhance the quality service will get my support and, indeed, the support on this side. Sir, I am amazed that Honourable Members on the other side have been making a song and a dance and when I inspect this document, Mr. Chairman, there is only comment about congestion on the roads and all that but absolutely nothing else to do with the Transport Board that is the major form of transportation for the masses of this country. Sir, it speaks about ferries and different things but

nothing to do with the Transport Board that we are hearing so much negativity about from the past but now, all of a sudden, it is a gem.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South in his presentation said quite a bit but before I get to the queries, I would want to make through you, Sir, to the Honourable Minister, I would wish to express congratulations to those members of the Transport Board and, indeed, the Authority that is now making its mark and its input in helping with the improvement of the system in this country overall. (2:09) Sir, if you would allow me, I can name one name, a Mr. Sabir, who I found to be an excellent worker. He gives you a listening ear and wherever possible he assists, and I can speak to the experiences I have had over the past many years in that respect.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to find out which are the new routes beyond the ABC Highway which I have never been able to see on the highway or have never been able to see people waiting to get the bus. I want to know which other new routes have been instituted in order for me to be able to know of these new routes that the Honourable Member speaks of. What plans are they for new buses to help to service the routes because in the past I know there was a plan for a dedicated school bus system and we got all kinds of stories then, as a Government about the problems, about this bus, that the engine did not work, so on and so forth and then when we heard in 2008 of the plans for the free bus for the school children, which is something that I would support, I have found that many buses were cannibalised.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, that brings me to the question of what new buses and how many buses do this Government intends to purchase to help to increase the stock because every day that I go on the roads - I am a frequent traveller, not on the bus but on the roads - there are buses that are being towed and buses that break down. Sir, I would never forget August last year when a caller on the radio call-in programme spoke about a bus going through Hillaby to St. Andrew's Church, that when that bus broke down and the driver came out, he looked into the gutter and saw a stick. He took up the stick, checked the bus and said: "You believe that this bus has ran out of oil" and, Sir, I have a problem with that. What service is being offered to make sure that buses are roadworthy and that they are properly prepared to carry the people, particularly those on the long-haul route.

Mr. Chairman, when you are talking about buses going to St. Andrew, St. Thomas and so on, or you are talking about St. John and other parishes that have hills then there has to be some type of special bus. The short route bus will most likely have to be different because it has not got to bother about the terrain and, therefore, I

would like to know from the Honourable Minister if there is a plan for new buses to upgrade the stock, and when because we need to know that for sure.

Mr. Chairman, I am experiencing again, as a frequent traveller, the emissions that are coming from buses. I am not going to call the number of the bus I saw yesterday evening. I traveled behind it from Jackson all the way up to Welchman Hall and I had to turn up the car window, that I had down, in order to avoid the emissions and having to breathe them in and, of course, you know it is affecting the whole atmosphere. Sir, likewise with the other PSVs as well. I do not know if it is the diesel or engine or what that is causing it but they really do need to have more frequent service in order to minimise the impact that it would have on persons, especially those who have sinus problems and, indeed, asthma for that matter.

Mr. Chairman, I have also recognised that within the last four weeks or so there has been a hot debate about the buses for people who are disabled. Sir, several buses were bought to accommodate that set of individuals because we started as country - I am not saying as a Government - but as a country to recognise that our disabled people are not unable to think, to function for employment, for school and so on in the way that stigma was before and so buses for the disabled, for me, should always be rolling on the road so that students can reach school, so that those who are employed can get to their employment and so on. Sir, I believe that is something that needs to be urgently addressed and I must give credit to the individual, it was a female, I do not know if she is the overall coordinator or which capacity she is in but she came on the radio and try to explain what were the challenges. Sir, a lot of the parents of disabled children could not take their children to school for quite a while as a result of lack of those buses that were out of operation. Sir, I believe it is something we must look at if we are going to be looking after the disabled in the community then we must ensure that the facilities are available for them in every form and fashion because the inclusion is important.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to know about revenues because we have had the escalation in cost for petrol. I know that the Transport Board is now selling gas, and I would wish to know what are the revenues between 2008 and now. Sir, what about the revenue from buses that go to the Port to assist with the transportation of visitors to island, if that is still on. What about revenues for the buses that take people to picnics, bus excursions and so on because we know that has been on the rise for a little while. I believe those are revenue streams that really need to be continued where possible and, of course, bring in some much needed funds for enhancement of the service.

Mr. Chairman, I have a pet peeve and most persons know of it because I, too, am angry about all of the pirates,

who are on the road. I know that because it is such a lucrative area that persons have been known to build houses. I have absolutely no problem with people building houses but not through something that is illegal. I am a stickler for that, I shall continue and when I do not uphold what is correct, Mr. Chairman, then I need to bow out and go home graciously in my little corner.

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Sir, very well and I can make the point then. Where there are so many pirates operating on the route that I would say should start Clifton Hill, come through Proute, onto Bibby's Lane, Lear and Hothersal Turning, that route is not probably facilitated by the Transport Board because you would call Clifton Hill the tail end of the Sugar Hill bus and, therefore, most people suffer to get to and from Bridgetown and wherever they have to go for the linking of buses because the bus system is so inadequate in that area. Sir, therefore, I believe that it is about time that the Transport Board and maybe, through the Authority, put even if it were a ZR or two, or a mini bus or two on that route because we know that if they are pirating the adequate insurance is not there, we cannot guarantee if the person who is driving has a valid drivers licence or if the road tax has been paid for that vehicle. I know it is a service that would drop people to their door but would I want to put my life on the line to get closer to my door by a pirate driver or to wait for a Transport Board or any other that I can be guarantee if I have any injury that I could get some kind of compensation.

Therefore, what happens if the vehicle of the pirate gets involved in an accident, because they will not be included in the insurance policy. Sir, again, I ask, and this has been not only in this administration, but I would say for the last six or so year, been asking for a bus that would service the masses from the Clifton Hill area, through Proutes Village, which is in St. Joseph, I do not ask for myself, onto to Exchange, Bibby's Lane, Lears and Hothersal Turning, for an efficient service that would help them to meet their targets and so on.

His Honour K.St.C. Best: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House or she has not done her research. Sir, there is a service being provided on that route by the Transport Authority. That was part and parcel of the new route of the Transport Authority.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, as I know, I would not want the Honourable Member for St. Michael East to correct me, because I see the pirates every day. If the Honourable Member is so sure that there has been an improvement, it still is not enough because the pirates are doing good trade.

Sir, all I want to say as I close is, we know that not every person can buy a car. We that not every person would be able to get a lift. Therefore, whatever efficiencies there are, whatever reliabilities there are, what kind of quality service there is to be offered to the traveling public of Barbados, I will continue to lend my support to these various ventures. At the end of the day it is about the people of Barbados.

I wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I want to wrap up this debate and first of all thank the Honourable Members who participated and contributed and make note of all the substantive recommendations which were made, even the ones that were not substantive, like the ones make by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, we have made note of them too.

Sir, we will improve the bus service where we can. We shall tweet routes where we can to include the overall service.

Sir, the Honourable Member must be one of the most unlucky Members of Parliament. If a bus breaks down, the Honourable Member is behind it. If the bus is smoking, the Honourable Member is behind it. If a car tyre blows out, the Honourable Member is behind it. It appears as though if it was not for bad luck the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would not have any luck at all. She just encounters these kind of very hazardous situations all the time. The Honourable Member is remarkable.

Sir, the Honourable Member went on to say that the only reference to transport in the Democratic Labour Party Manifesto was about ferries. I want to read the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party and I want the Honourable Members to listen. "Facilitate water transportation linking Bridgetown with Oistin, Holetown and Speightstown." Sir, was the Honourable Member going to do this by bus? I do not understand.

In 2003 the Barbados Labour Party, on Page 43, made it clear that they were going to facilitate water transportation. I do not know who is saying what, or what is so wrong for including that as an idea or improvement. It is not every idea you put into effect. Sir, the point is, we have come to an end of a brief discussion on the question of the Supplementary for the Transport Board. We recognise the magnitude of the intervention by Government by way of support, and we have put on the table too certain recommendations between the Ministry of Transport Board and Works, between the Transport Board and the Transport Authority, by which we expect to see a tremendous

improvement in the overall approach to mass transportation in Barbados. Sir, when the Heads of all of those in Barbados, and indeed outside of Barbados, who have a contribution to make in coming up with a solution that works for us are put together, when all those Heads are put together, I am sure that we will look forward to a resounding success in this regard.

Sir, some Honourable Members have referred to it as a restructuring of the transport system, the transport industry in Barbados. It is clear that there will have to be discussions with private sector partners, as I said before, and public sector partners as we try to reach a new dimension, a new paradigm, in respect to the way we treat transport in this country. Sir, an arrangement which would see us lessen, as I have said before, lessen the dependency of the Transport Board on transfers from Central Government.

We all recognise that it not happen overnight. It will take some time, but I would expect within the realms of the five-year plan which the Transport Authority is charged with producing will find that solution being put forward, ever clearly, and then the action plan to go along with the proposal will be put in place and facilitated by this administration to ensure this better and more efficient service which we all yearn for, and which will serve our public better.

Sir, with those few remarks and again with appreciation for the contributions from all Honourable Members, I beg to move that Head 40 stand part.

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

The Question Head 40 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. R.D. JONES, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. R.D. JONES, the Bill was read a first and second time and agreed.

Adjournment

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, we have come to the end of Government Business for the day and I beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned until March 8, 2011, at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BEST, His Hon. K. St.C. (St. Michael East)
BOYCE, Hon. J. D. E. (Christ Church South)
CLARKE, Mr. G.A. (St. George North)
EASTMOND, Mr. R.C. (St. James North)
FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)
HUTSON, Hon. E. G. (St. James Central)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
LASHLEY, Hon. M. A. (St. Philip North)
LASHLEY, Hon. S. A. (Christ Church West Central)
SINCKLER, Hon. C. P. (St. Michael North West)
STUART, Hon.F.J. (St. Michael South)
TODD, Hon. P.M.T. (City of Bridgetown)

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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. Committee of Supply, Head 40, from Miss C. Y. Forde to the report of the Resolution. The source carries this passage twice in succession: from the call of the Member for St. Thomas, through Miss C. Y. Forde's speech, the point of order by His Honour K. St.C. Best and Hon. J. D. E. Boyce's reply, to the report of the Money Resolution. The second copy, which has one more paragraph in Miss Forde's speech, is printed and the first (about 2,600 words) has been left out. Please confirm.

Q3. Opening. The convening sentence reads 'met at 10.10 a.m. on Tuesday, February , 22, 2010', but the masthead, the Minutes and the Bills place the sitting in 2011. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Committee of Supply, Head 40, His Honour K. St.C. Best. His Honour K. St.C. Best's speech (about 830 words) is typed in the source as 'His Honour K.St.C. Best: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support...' straight after the Chairman's call, so it prints under the Chairman's label. His point of order on Miss C. Y. Forde is typed in the same way. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Committee of Supply, Head 40, Hon. P. M. T. Todd. After 'The Honourable Member has two minutes.' the rest of Hon. P. M. T. Todd's speech (about 330 words) continues under the Chairman's label. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Committee of Supply, Head 40. The amount under the heading is typed '\$49 300 00'; the Minister speaks of \$49.3 million and the Resolution of \$49 400 000 in all. Hon. M. A. Lashley's later speech is labelled 'Hon. S. A. LASHLEY'. Printed as in the source.

Q7. First Reading of Bills. Hon. F. J. Stuart's seconding reads 'BOYCE: I beg to second that.' Printed as in the source.

Q8. Order No. 7, report. The procedural sentence after the Money Resolution reads 'the Bill was read a first and second time and agreed.' Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 22nd February, 2011, with His Honour Michael A. Carrington, Speaker, presiding; prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood and the Minutes of February 15, 2011 were confirmed. The Speaker announced receipt of the Accountant General's accounts and statements for July 2010, and Hon. C. P. Sinckler laid the 2010 Annual Report of the Barbados International Business Promotion Corporation (Invest Barbados). Hon. J. D. E. Boyce moved the first reading of the Immigration (Validation of Functions) Bill, 2011, and Standing Orders were suspended.

Under Order No. 6 Hon. F. J. Stuart moved the second reading of the Immigration (Validation of Functions) Bill, 2011. He explained that under section 28 of the Immigration Act the late Prime Minister had delegated his functions to Senator Husbands, and that the delegation had ended when a new Prime Minister was sworn in on October 23, 2010; the Bill validated acts done by Senator Husbands and Senator Boyce. Mr. G. A. Clarke did not object but said that there had been three or four Ministers of Immigration since 2008, and His Honour K. St.C. Best was cautioned by the Speaker on relevance. Replying, the Minister said there had been only two substantive Ministers and pointed to a coming White Paper. The Bill passed Committee, Mr. J. Paul in the Chair, and was read a third time.

Under Order No. 7 the House went into Committee of Supply on a Resolution for \$49 400 000 under Supplementary Estimates No. 11 2010-2011. Hon. F. J. Stuart moved \$100 000 under Head 15, Cabinet Office, including US\$10 000 for Haiti's cholera epidemic. Miss C. Y. Forde supported it, Hon. R. D. Jones spoke, and Mr. R. C. Eastmond recalled Haiti's history as the first black republic; the Head was agreed.

On Head 40, Ministry of Transport and Works, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce sought \$49.3 million for the Transport Board to meet operating costs for the rest of the year, liquidate its overdraft and pay outstanding debts. Mr. G. A. Clarke raised a point on the quorum and questioned the non-renewal of the General Manager's contract and the growth of the Board's staff from 800 to 900, in repeated exchanges of points of order with the Minister. His Honour K. St.C. Best called for a maintenance programme and a review of the arrangement with UCAL and the unions; Hon. R. D. Jones blamed the previous administration for

taking lucrative routes from the Board. Progress was reported and the Sitting was suspended until 1.30 p.m.

On resumption the Minister replied to points raised, and Mr. G. A. Clarke returned to transport policy and the subsidy for school children. Hon. P. M. T. Todd credited the Government with better bus maintenance and the City Circle Service and proposed tickets on ZR and minibuses routes; Hon. E. G. Hutson said the previous Government had had 14 years to restructure the Board; Hon. M. A. Lashley called for greater efficiency; and Miss C. Y. Forde asked about new routes, new buses, emissions, buses for

disabled persons and fuel revenues, and complained of 'pirates' on the routes, drawing a point of order from His Honour K. St.C. Best.

Hon. J. D. E. Boyce wound up, citing the Barbados Labour Party's 2003 manifesto on water transport and the five-year plan the Transport Authority was to produce. Head 40 was agreed, the Money Resolution was reported and agreed to, and on his motion, seconded by the Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart, the House was adjourned until March 8, 2011 at 10.00 a.m.