
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 01, 9.59 a.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting of this Honourable Chamber commenced yesterday morning, continues.

When the suspension was taken last evening, we were on Order No. 6 and with that we shall continue.

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

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the coming financial year 2011-2012. I would begin by greeting the wonderful people of the City of Bridgetown who have elected your humble servant to represent their interest in these August Chambers. I always reflect on this tremendous responsibility which each and every one of us in this Chamber has in terms of representing the masses of our country. Clearly, not all of the 700 000 citizens of our country can take a place in the Chambers of the Parliament. And so, in our system of Westminster-styled democracy, we must always remember that we represent our dear constituents. I believe it is important that we have a sense of purpose, in terms of what drives us, what motivates us to seek public office in the first instance and what it is that we would wish to leave as a legacy, what we would expect people to say about us in a biography or even, although we do not think about it, at our funeral.

Clearly, politics is a legitimate career path and so we should not be ashamed to say that this is our calling in life by which we support legitimately ourselves our families but clearly we must have a purpose, a goal, in terms of the way in which we wish to take our constituents in the first

instance and the country as a whole. And so I would wish to focus on this, Mr. Speaker, on this occasion. In that it is clear that the Democratic Labour Party as a democratic socialist party seeks to address the needs of the masses of our country to ensure that we have a just and equitable distribution of the resources of our country so that there is a general sense of peace and stability and a common purpose that each and every citizen of our country feel that they have an equal chance to fulfill their optimum levels of personal achievement and therefore resulting in the country as a whole, developing at the most rapid pace possible.

As I reflect too, at the global realities of this new millennium we have in Japan, as we speak, the devastation caused by the recent earthquake, one of the largest recorded in modern history and the resulting Tsunami with thousands who have perished and now we have the threat of nuclear contamination. As I listen to some of the international reports coming out of that situation we learn that there was a tremendous sense of order in the aftermath of this disaster to the extent that, according to independent reports of journalists from abroad who have been deployed to that country, we have limited or almost non-existent looting and no panic and people helping their relatives and their fellow man.

A major car manufacturer has just announced today that they are going to halt production at their factory for three consecutive days so that they can assist in the national effort of rebuilding and reconstruction and recovery and actually going further to deploying millions of dollars towards that effort. And so I am not saying that Japan is the only success model in our world but I am saying that I would wish that we in Barbados as a Parliament should really seek to engender this sense of purpose within our country and this sense of togetherness and pride in being Barbadian.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that I have been given the important responsibility as Minister of State within the Ministry of Housing, Lands, Urban and Rural Development

for both the Urban Development Committee and Rural Development Commission. These Commissions as we know foci on addressing in a very tangible way, the housing needs and other needs of the most vulnerable sectors of our society, the working class, the people who rely on the state for assistance not by way simply of handouts but rather a hand up. I always hear our Prime Minister the Honourable Member for St. Michael South making the point at all levels, be it the political platform, in Parliament or in other public addresses, that we as politicians owe it to our constituents, the masses of our country to look out for the vulnerable groups within our society because the most privileged in our society have the financial means to give themselves and their families the best of education, the best of healthcare, the best of legal representation, the best of infrastructure and other social creature comforts of life. We should not be envious of them but we must look to ensure that the vulnerable groups who do not have these resources are not treated as second class citizens and are not forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I make no apologies for saying that my purpose here is to represent the interests of the masses not at the exclusion of the privileged but as I said, to ensure that there is equal access to national resources and therefore equal opportunity for all. Mr. Speaker, if we look at, for example, the mission statement of the Urban Development Committee which was set up in the mid 90s and it says to contribute to the eradication of poverty in urban areas through the provision of services and programmes aimed at upgrading their physical infrastructure, the motion of entrepreneurship and security of tenure. Their vision is to become the leading social development agency in the public sector by providing comprehensive quality, efficient, effective and professional services to disadvantaged persons, groups and communities throughout urban Barbados.

Sir, you know the urban corridor which is referred to as the greater Bridgetown area, stretches from Enterprise in the south in Christ Church to Holders Hill in the north with the ABC Highway as a boundary. Therefore, it delineates approximately 280 acres of the urban territory in our country. Of course, the Rural Development Commission will deal with the rest of the island. If I may just start with the Urban Development Commission to report that the Urban Development Commission has been working very, very aggressively, focussing for the last two years on house repairs and replacement, the transfer of tenancies, and the construction of roads and foot paths.

Now, the responsibility as I outlined of the Urban Development Commission and indeed the Rural Development Commission is far-reaching and we would not expect that any Government would be able to solve all of the problems within the working class districts overnight but clearly we have a responsibility to deliver in a very

timely manner to alleviate the plight of the vulnerable groups in our society.

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 01

Mr. Speaker, I can state that in the next financial year the Urban Development Commission would wish to focus its capital works programme on the construction and repair of community roads, the subsidisation of the purchase of tenantry lots, house construction, repairs and maintenance, the maintenance of property and the special project, which is called the Pit Eradication Programme as well as a special project on the development of community centres and other community work.

Mr. Speaker, the construction of community roads is an ongoing process. Many of the tenancies throughout our island are inaccessible by road. We will seek to continue to empower Barbadians to own a piece of the rock in the urban tenancies by way of an arrangement in which the Urban Development Commission will pay the difference between the market price of properties in the urban corridor and the \$2.50 per square foot, which the qualified tenants would pay. This programme is ongoing but must be supported with the provision of access roads in terms of tenancies road.

Mr. Speaker, in the densely populated urban areas, including the City of Bridgetown, there is not even enough space to construct a road that can accommodate vehicular traffic so certainly concrete footpaths will be very necessary so that residents in these alleys would be able to access their homes without having to endure the inconvenience of wading through muddy waters, rocks and so on. There are a number of alleys in Bridgetown I can speak of by name, such as Bamboo Alley in Lightfoot Lane and Man's Gap and Brown's Gap, Passage Road, which connects the various avenues in the New Orleans area. There are also alleys in the uptown area in Bayville, the avenues in the Bayland, in Henry's Lane, in Dundlow Lane and other parts of the urban corridor.

Sir, this work will continue. Of course, what we would have to do, as I spoke to the Director of the Urban Development Commission recently, is that before we put in the concrete footpaths in these alleys, we will have to make sure, if we are going to provide water-borne toilet and bath facilities for these persons certainly in Bridgetown, that these persons are hooked up to the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant. What we are seeking to do at the Urban Development Commission is to put in place the necessary hook-ups to the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant within these alleys by way of running the necessary pipes and so on before we actually construct the concrete footpaths because we do not want to waste scarce public resources by putting in a concrete footpath and then having to excavate then to lay the piping to hook up to the

Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant, so we are getting the order correct. Certainly, we are committed to ensuring that the remaining alleys in Bridgetown and other parts of the urban corridor that require footpaths are serviced with these footpaths for the convenience of these residents. Mr. Speaker, as I said, this will continue.

In addition, the transfer of titles in this tenantry programme will continue full steam ahead. Mr. Speaker, we know that there are certain challenges there in terms of ownership issues where you have various interests claiming these plots or parts thereof. There are problems of boundaries where somebody is accusing a neighbour of encroachment in terms of their pailing coming too far over into their property and so on. These issues have to be determined. Certainly, all the necessary support within the Government agencies would be provided to empower these persons to know of their rights.

In fact, I am very happy that just a few days ago the Minister of Housing and Lands, Urban and Rural Development, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, myself, a team from the ministry and the newly elected Honourable Member for St. John were able to go to Bath Tenantry in St. John to inform these residents about their rights and how to fill to the Form 1 Form that then has to be submitted to the Ministry for the Minister to sign that would start the process in terms of those persons accessing their right to own the piece of the rock on which perhaps their forefathers would have occupied at very concessional rates. Many people do not know the procedures and so what we are seeking to do within the Ministry is to go into these communities one by one and inform the residents of their rights. Sir, Bath Tenantry was the start and the residents came out in their numbers. The Minister has promised to go throughout the urban and rural corridors to ensure that these persons in these tenantries are assisted in terms of being able to purchase their lots.

Mr. Speaker, I talked about the Pit Eradication Programme within the Urban Development Commission. This has been moving full steam ahead. In fact, I am happy to report that in the Kings Street area in Bridgetown, in Church Gap in particular, we were able to start the process of hooking up people to the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant. We have the main roads like Kings Street and other areas which are serviced with Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment lines but the ancillary roads connecting these were not.

Mr. Speaker, in areas in Bridgetown, such as in the coastal belt, you find that the water table is very high and so when you seek to sink the traditional suck well, after a few feet you fall upon water and so the suck well is not feasible and septic tanks would have to be an option. Sir, where it is economically feasible and we have main lines of the sewerage system close by, we will be seeking to do the

necessary piping work to hook up these adjoining households to the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant. As part of the Neighbourhood and Upgrading Programme, Mr. Speaker, that you are aware of in the Garden Land area in your constituency, as we seek to provide waterborne toilets and bath facilities for your constituents, we are looking at the feasibility of connecting these people to the neighbouring sewerage treatment lines in Bridgetown.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, along Hunte Street, we have identified a number of households that would be interested in upgrades in terms of indoor plumbing facilities. Again, with the problem of not being able to have suck wells, which of course is not desirable anyhow, we propose to have a multimillion dollar project, which would see these households being hooked up to the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant. Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the emphasis of this Administration is different from that of the Barbados Labour Party. My predecessor and the Barbados Labour Party as a whole focused in terms of the Bridgetown upgrade on the commercial side, Broadwalks and cobblestone paths in Shepherd Street between Norman Centre and Cave Shepherd. Mr. Speaker, these are good but at the same time commensurate with that investment in the commercial side of Bridgetown, you must develop the quality of life of the working class residents of Bridgetown, they are people too. The Barbados Labour Party's track record in that regard is woefully lacking. I remember that my predecessor's almanac, just on the eve of the last election, had a big photograph of Jubilee Gardens which was their pride and joy. Sir, I would rather have photographs of the people in Hunte Street and King Street hooked up to the Bridgetown Sewerage Treatment Plant with modern indoor water-borne toilet and bath facility.

House A87B Sequence 2

Mr. Speaker, this Member of Parliament makes no apology for focusing on this because there is some romantic view of some ill-advised persons I heard saying that we cannot upgrade ghetto areas, that we must keep them simple, as though they are something to be shown off to tourists. Sir, I say my constituents as well as yours and others in working-class districts would wish to improve their standard of living as well. Sir, we can keep the architectural heritage going but it does not mean that we cannot improve the infrastructure in terms of drainage to reduce flooding, improve street-lighting and housing quality, et cetera. This is what we are doing at the Urban Development Commission in terms of making a serious dent in terms of the lack of basic amenities within the urban corridor.

Mr. Speaker, we also note that it was important that we improve the quality of life in terms of the social cohesion in the various communities, that is why the Urban Development Commission has been spending significant

sums in terms of, for example, the Community Centre in Deacons, an old school where work is continuing to rehabilitate that complex, so that we would be able to house the community post, the old St. Leonard School annex, part of what is called the Deacons Development Complex, where classes in arts and crafts, small business and entrepreneurship, sporting facilities, a laundromat, a dormitory, a bakery and exercise gym would all be provided at that site. We have already identified other sites, for example, at Lands End, a pavilion which was damaged by tropical storm Tomas. There is a proposal to rehabilitate that as well as areas such as Bayville and St. Paul's Avenue, which will service St. Michael South, as well as St. Michael South-Central, including other areas which will be identified, to improve the community spirit within the various districts within the urban corridor.

Mr. Speaker, the last administration was able to, should I say, mismanage the loan portfolio at the Urban Development Commission to the extent that the default rate was unacceptably high. This administration is now seeking assiduously to ensure that outstanding monies are paid into the Urban Development Commission. Sir, we realised it is important to empower the vulnerable groups, in terms of emerging entrepreneurs to assist them. I am pleased to hear the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North-West, making the point that this administration will be seeking to negotiate with the Inter-American Development Bank for assistance for the small entrepreneurs. I look forward to some of these funds being channeled to the Urban Development Commission, so that even if we consider small grants to entrepreneurs to assist them, in the same way that we have with the national microenterprise grant, which this administration was able to implement, such that many entrepreneurs, be they persons in craft, textiles, debushing, hairdressing, photography, et cetera, have been able to access these grants to the tune of up to \$3 000. I know that this administration is committed to increasing the funds available in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, I know my time is limited but I know the Urban Development Commission has also been involved in debushing the neighbourhoods to improve the sanitary conditions therein. I would spend a few minutes, as the time slips away, on the Rural Development Commission.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have another seven minutes.

Hon. Patrick M. T. TODD: Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Rural Development Commission is part of my portfolio. The work is very similar to the Urban Development Commission and I would wish at the onset to congratulate the Rural Development Commission for donating \$7 000 to the Barbados Agricultural Society to

ensure that, for example, this year's Agrofest was a tremendous success. Mr. Speaker, we had more than 150 entrepreneurs housed under the tents provided free of cost to clients of the Rural Development Commission in their revolving loan programme. Sir, we were able to tour the exhibition within the heart of the City of Bridgetown and I look forward to seeing this Agrofest growing, even to include Weymouth Pasture, so that Bridgetown can accommodate any expansion of the Agrofest national exhibition and so the Rural Development Commission has been able to accommodate more than 150 entrepreneurs who have benefited from revolving loans. Mr. Speaker, we are making sure that people repay those loans so that more entrepreneurs will be able to access that facility.

Mr. Speaker, the Rural Development Commission has also been working assiduously in terms of house repairs, house construction for vulnerable groups. I should say that both agencies have worked assiduously in terms of their response to tropical storm Tomas, in some instances \$5 million was accessed via the Ministry of Home Affairs and several housing solutions have been provided. As you know, you would have seen in the media where we would have toured many of these houses.

Asides.

Hon. Patrick M. T. TODD: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. George North asked where were these houses but clearly that Honourable Member was not attuned to the media as Ministry of Home Affairs, Minister of Housing and Lands and I toured a number of places, for example, New Orleans, where we saw housing solutions being provided. We went throughout other areas in St. Philip. In fact, we spent almost the whole day, we even ran out of time and did not get to St. Lucy and other areas but several houses have been repaired and further on, if I get time I will be able to give you specifics but I can assure you that we have in fact been providing housing solutions. In fact, for example, thus far up to February 28, 2011 within the rural corridor, the Rural Development Commission has been able to effect house repairs to 19 household and 77 new houses, so that 94 contracts amounting to more than \$6.5 million have been awarded in this response to Tomas.

We have also spent thousands of dollars to accommodate residents in the rural corridor who were completely displaced by Tomas and rather than being exposed to the elements, the Rural Development Commission took the decision to accommodate them at the State's expense. Sir, these persons will be given priority so that they can have their housing solutions provided and returned to some sort of normalcy with regard to their situation.

Mr. Speaker, within the Urban Development Commission several houses have been repaired. There is a committee at which both agencies are represented, which was chaired by the Attorney-General, present were the Minister of Housing and Lands, Urban and Rural Development, the Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development and I. These agencies are reporting monthly and therefore we are ensuring that the response to Tomas is very ordered, so as opposed to what happened under the Barbados Labour Party where storms that had affected our country years ago, when we assumed office those people were still waiting for assistance which was not forthcoming. Therefore, we are looking to make sure that this situation does not obtain with regard to the response to Tomas.

Mr. Speaker, road construction within the rural corridor, the Barbados Labour Party as an election gimmick on the eve of the last General Election engaged in a number of road works, in terms of preparatory work, to give the electorate the impression that they cared. They did not have the funds to finish that work and this administration is working assiduously to ensure that these and other roads in the rural corridor are properly addressed. We are going to do it in a fair way.

10.29 a.m.

Also, we are going to do it in a fair way because what we inherited were situations where these agencies would have done work and then the landlords, in terms of being paid, were left wanting but we believe that if you are going to take up people's land then they must be appropriately compensated, if our country is going to be just and fair.

Mr. Speaker, the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission have had some adjustments to their Boards but they are in place and headed by able Barbadians. Sir, in the case of the Urban Development Commission that is headed an attorney-at-law and in the case of the Rural Development Commission, that is headed by a well-known trade unionist and both the Minister of Housing and myself have met with both boards and they are definitely committed to the task at hand. Sir, as the Minister of Finance mentioned, I have spoken to the Board at Urban Development Commission and let them know in no uncertain terms that we cannot afford to have millions of dollars just being left on bank accounts when they are people in these catchment areas who need the assistance of these agencies like yesterday.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please wind up.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Thank you, Sir. We have given them the necessary support and, of course, according to all

the necessary financial rules we make sure their work is intensified and with the recent restructuring of the Urban Development Commission we expect that we can have at least a 40 per cent increase in terms of their output.

Mr. Speaker, I will just close by saying that the Honourable Member for St. Peter talked about capital works programme but the intensified work of the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission really assist in that regard in terms of providing income opportunities for the small contractors out there, the plumbers, the masons, the carpenters and the electricians, and this administration assures them that we care as we care about the vulnerable groups in our society.

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

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, thank you. Sir, I rise to give my support to this Bill to grant a sum of money out of the Consolidation Fund and to appropriate the same for the service of Barbados for the financial year ending March 31, 2012.

Mr. Speaker, I would want as I commence my presentation on this Bill to take members back to the period of early 2008 when we first took up our role as the Government of Barbados. I think it is relevant because these Estimates 2011/2012 have been prepared against a background of world financial crisis for, I believe, the second or third consecutive year. Sir, one would recall that at the beginning of 2008, we first encountered a situation where world prices of grain and flour were going through the roof and our first response was to subsidise the price of feed and grain in this country to the extent that by the end of the first quarter of 2008, the amounts were something like BDS\$0.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, we also had a situation at that time when the price of oil on the world market was going through the roof. We would recall that at one stage the price of oil reached something like US\$140 per barrel and we deliberated a long time before we sought to address the issue of how we would tackle that particular problem so that the policy of subsidising and shielding the public from those rapidly increasing fuel prices was a policy that we followed for probably the first two quarters of 2008.

Mr. Speaker, by the third quarter of 2008, we had the bursting of the housing bubble and the collapse of major financing companies in the United States of America, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Asides.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Sir, the point is, those were the challenges and the beginning of a financial crisis the

world had never before seen and that, certainly, had never been contemplated within the immediate past.

Mr. Speaker, I choose to start at that point and to remind members of this Honourable House of that situation because, as I listened yesterday to the presentation by the former Prime Minister of this country and the Honourable Member for St. Peter, yesterday's man as he is popularly known in some quarters, I felt there was some sort of disconnect between the reality of our present situation and his presentation. Sir, he emphasized the need for to maintain our present foreign exchange rate parity to the US dollar of two for one. He cautioned about the deficit financing and the view that it is not a sustainable policy and he cautioned about the energy policy of this particular administration. Mr. Speaker, and I listened carefully for the solutions that the Honourable Member for St. Peter was going to put forward, the alternative policy positions that he was prepared to put for and, of course, Honourable Members know that we are still for those alternative policies to be put forward.

Mr. Speaker, the one position that he offered was to go back to subsidising prices and putting subsidies within our energy policy. Sir, a situation that if we had followed would end up with the same result in terms of depleting substantially our foreign exchange reserves and creating the same situation of instability with the parity of the dollar to the US dollar. Sir, we would end up creating that sort of environment within this country, if we follow that particular proposal that the Honourable Member for St. Peter was putting forward yesterday.

Sequence 4

He spoke of the deficit financing and that is not a sustainable position. Mr. Speaker, for almost every year of the 14 years that the Barbados labour Party led this country, we had a situation of deficit financing. I do not understand what is so new about this, or what is the problem the Honourable Member for St. Peter has with the particular programme. Sir, it seems to me that it is good when the Barbados Labour Party is in power to have the deficit financing and when the Barbados Labour Party is out of power there is a big problem with the deficit financing.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that within small economies economic growth is led by the Government. There is no private sector anywhere in the world with any of these small countries that lead the economic growth. The economic growth is led by Government spending, and that is deficit financing. So what is the issue? What is the problem?

Sir, we have to be very conscious of these things. If we look at the American situation, given this particular

world financial crisis, the US is the home of capitalisation, the home of small governments, so to speak, the place where they project that the growth is supposed to be funded by the private sector. This environment of a financial crisis, the United States of America, the ending of the Bush Administration, their reaction was to increase Government spending, to bail out massive major private sector organisations within the States. It was a programme followed again by the Obama Administration to try to address the problem and to try to grow their economy led by massive Government spending. A policy that if I recall correctly, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, in 2008, was putting forward under the expression of a stimulus package. This is what the Honourable Member, Leader of the Opposition at that time, was putting forward. That is the problem.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot see the problem with the deficit financing, and certainly within the context of the Barbados environment, where a lot of the debt is being funded from domestic sources using the funds of the National Insurance, I believe. The foreign debt at this particular point in time, the foreign component is less than 30 per cent or there about. Sir, as I said, this model for Barbados is nothing new. It is a model that has been followed by the previous Government when they were in power.

Mr. Speaker, we, in 2008 and in subsequent Budgets in 2009 and 2010, have put forward programmes that would protect the vulnerable persons within the society, the children, the old people, and the unemployed. We decided that if there were going to be hard times, it had to be borne by all, and if there were going to be good times it had to be borne by all. It was a programme policy position by our late Prime Minister, David Thompson, God rest him in his grave, a man with foresight and experience of dealing with the challenges of the early 1990s, and who was in a position at the beginning of this economic crisis that we face, to use his experience, managed and shepherded this country through that particular period and this particular experience that we are encountering as we go forward.

Sir, I want to commend the Honourable Minister of Finance for continuing to pursue those fundamental policy positions as he tries to address the issues facing our country, 2011-2012 and going forward.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Peter yesterday in his presentation admitted that he has not had to face such a difficult set of circumstances in the 14 years that he was Minister of Finance in the country, and that he would not like to have to address those issues. The Honourable Member, the Minister of Finance, has to address these problems. I believe, and certainly based on

the operating results that are coming out, he is on the right track.

Sir, last year we had a situation of minus 4 per cent in deficit. This year the projected figure is 0.3 per cent in growth. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Peter attempted yesterday to make mock sport of that achievement. Sir, what is in fact the situation and the way that one has to look at it is that we are recovering from a minus 4 per cent positive figure of 0.3 per cent. In other words, during the course of the past year the economy has turned some 4.3 per cent. This is the reality.

Mr. Speaker, the measures that we have put in place as a Government has changed, has brought about the downward spiral of the Barbados economy and put us on a path of growth going forward, such to the extent that the Honourable Minister of Finance is able to project a 2.25 per cent growth going forward into 2011/2012. So we are on the right track.

Sir, I want to encourage the population of Barbados to support the programme of the Democratic Labour Party, the measures that we have put forward in these Budgetary Proposals for 2011/2012. This Government is on the right path for growth.

Of course there are no guarantees. We are again facing a situation where oil prices are increasing rapidly and we are not an island unto ourselves. We are going to have to address that particular issue very shortly if the trends continue.

Sir, the Honourable Minister of Finance certainly in the measures that he introduced in November 2010 indicated that these would be for a short time. A time of approximately eighteen months, all things being equal, because at the end of the day it is an Estimate and none of us can see into the future. We can only take given trends. We can only take and implement measures that we feel will be able to address the short-term issues as they come forward, but fundamentally, none of us can look into the distant future and design measures to address that.

Sequence 5

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak a little bit about the international business sector, where the observation is that the Corporation Tax receipts have fallen significantly over the 2009/2010 period and that is a fact, Nobody is disputing that but, Mr. Speaker, *cu dare*, the profitability of the international financial companies is dictated not by what is happening in the Barbados economy. Those companies are trading outside of Barbados and the profitability of those companies is to a large extent, dependent on what is happening in the economies of the UK, Canada and North America, where most of the

financial activities for companies operating in the international business sector, is undertaken, Mr. Speaker, so if there are challenges in those economies, if those economies are on a downward spiral, obviously, the profitability of companies that operate within our international financial sector will be down and obviously by extension, the Corporation Tax take would be down. Mr. Speaker, this is child display. This is nothing difficult. This is not rocket science. That is the reality. Mr. Speaker, I continue to say when you look at the numbers for 2007 the number of international business entities licenced for 2004 to 2010, in 2007, the total number of those companies was 3 156. Today, at the end of 2010 that number is 3 725 companies, an increase of more than 600 companies or approximately 20 per cent over that period between 2007 and 2008.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that consider the fact that there are now 3 725 international business companies and we are not counting for those companies that are operating under the local Companies Act, licenced by the Central Bank to do international business. Those are excluded from these particular numbers and the practitioners in this Honourable Chamber would know that is an increasing trend within the international business sector to use local companies under the Local Companies Act. The point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that the question is and the question that we have to ask is how many people are being employed in the international business sector between 2007 and 2010. If there is an additional, it stands to reason, Mr. Speaker, that if there have been an additional 600 companies added approximately to the number of listed companies that there must be more persons being employed within the international business company. There must be more and that is a reasonable assumption. Mr. Speaker, given that assumption, then it means that there must be an increase in the personal Income Tax take coming from the sector and, of course, when one thinks in terms of the multiplier effect of the additional contribution to VAT, and so on, then the sector cannot just be judged from the point of the contribution to the Corporation Tax.

I say to this Honourable Chamber that is why in the Ministry of International Business, we have engaged under the EU Programme the consultants and their work should be completed during the course of the next three months or so, in a study to measure the contribution of the international business sector to the overall GDP and if we had that information, Mr. Speaker, today, we would be able to have made the analysis as to what is the situation between 2007 and 2010, in respect to employment within the sector and the other increase in contributions that by extension would have happened within this particular economy.

Mr. Speaker, at the Office of Corporate Affairs, there is a programme, I am told that in the increase band

width, we have a programme funded by the EU Consultancy that will look at the institutional strengthening of the IBU as well as the Corporate Affairs Department. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that as we go forward into 2011/2012, it is important that we continue to provide an enabling environment for the development of our business sector. The department has increased its Internet band width so that on line services are now being provided to practitioners in the international business sector and the service providers, in respect of name searches and name reservations and that will - during the course of this year, hopefully by the summer of this year - be extended towards the introduction of company searches via the Internet and allow practitioners to be informed as to the status of their various applications and so on.

Mr. Speaker, we are working in that regard to try to address some of the challenges that have been put forward by the Barbados business community, particularly those operating in the international business sector going forward.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes in which to conclude.

Hon. E.G. HUTSON: Thank you, Sir, and I will be brief.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to update the Honourable Chamber in respect of the work being done towards improving the economic situation in Barbados, towards addressing the failure of the Barbados Labour Party to make certain structural changes within the different sectors of Barbados in the years when there was very much. But we, Mr. Speaker, will shortly be taking a recommendation to Cabinet in respect to the development of a cruise pier which is expected to cost several millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, and will see certainly a separation between cargo and cruise passengers. I will speak in more detail when I get the opportunity or when we come to report to this Chamber formally on that particular project but just to let the Honourable Chamber know that we are in an advance stage of the planning and we hope that project will certainly get going in terms of physical construction by the summer of this year, all things being well. Mr. Speaker, what is important within that particular event, is the need for us to focus and to increase on the home porting cruise passengers.

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 06, 10.59 a.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Within the context of this programme, expanded home-porting facilities will be there. Home-porting is important, Mr. Speaker, because given the

continued increase in the price of fuel, cruise ships coming this far south to Barbados will be challenged in the future if that policy of prices of oil in excess of \$100 continue, and therefore we need to put strategies in place where we can have those cruise ships starting their cruise from here in Barbados. That is why it is important, Mr. Speaker, that I have stressed on more than one occasion the need for us as a country to look towards the expanding economies of Latin American like Brazil with 6 per cent growth projected. We need to look seriously at developing that particular marketing focus to try to bring cruise travellers...

The South American market is expanding within the cruise and we need to also bring those persons to Barbados. We have the GOL flight and we have LIAT looking to expand its market share so we need to be able to encourage those persons, rather than dealing with the challenges of the US visas and so on, to come to Barbados and stay for three or four days back end or front end of cruises and then do an itinerary from Barbados going north. We need to be able to push that particular agenda going forward. There is no point sitting back and waiting until oil prices dropped again. We have to have an effective strategy going forward at the port.

Mr. Speaker, within the context of the airport, we have embarked on an airport master planning exercise, which will set a framework, given what we are doing at the port, for what we have to do at the airport so that it is a continued linkage between what we are doing in international transport, port and airport, in terms of the development and the planning for the increase number of cruise passengers that we expect to be coming to Barbados over the next five to ten years, this is important.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please wind up.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Speaker, in concluding on this presentation, I just want to reaffirm that this Government is on the right track in respect of the financing of this country and of the Estimates as demonstrated in the comments that I have made during the course of this presentation.

With those words, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, we are here this morning because by law we have to be here. It gives the Government no pleasure in bringing these Estimates when for the very first time in living memory the deficit is about 8 per cent of GDP. Yesterday, the Minister of Finance sought through an economic exercise to use statistics not

only to mislead himself but his Government. Of course, he cannot mislead us at all. The two speakers who spoke this morning were also confused among themselves, confused to the extent that one said that...

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Confuse is a word in the English dictionary that is used for persons who do not know what they are saying and seek to mislead people. One Honourable Member said that there was always a deficit and that developing countries always have a deficit on their current account, that is not totally true. For the first time...

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I do not recall...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, he did not indicate which member, he just said one member. Are you saying that it was you? He said one Honourable Member said. He did not point to any particular member, so I do not know to whom he is referring. I am serious. Is he referring to you? Let me hear the point of order.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. SPEAKER: I made a reference to the deficit financing. I made no reference to a deficit on the current account that the Honourable Member is referring to, so if he is going to quote what I am speaking to, then he needs to be accurate in his presentation.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I hope I get back to my time. Mr. Speaker, I very much admire your sharp wit this morning. Mr. Speaker, the Bible says that the guilty and the wicked fleeth when no man pursueth after them. I did not say a word.

Mr. SPEAKER: If you are quoting the Bible, you should identify where it is coming from.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I do not remember, Mr. Speaker.

We admit, Mr. Speaker, that there would be a deficit from time to time. I believe that the only country that has had a surplus on their current account is Japan. We are saying that for the last three years in succession this Government has run a current account deficit. They have turned a surplus of \$150.7 million in 2007 to a deficit of \$121.6 million in 2008. It rose to \$449.9 million in 2009 and it rose again this year and it continues to rise, yet the Government speaks about growth and they have not

identified in which sector this growth will occur and therefore it leaves one to assume that the Government is on an academic exercise only because by law they have to bring these Estimates here.

Mr. Speaker, when I say that the Minister sought through an economic exercise... For people who do not read these Estimates, it must be stated that the Estimates that are presented to this Chamber point out that the Minister has said to us in clear terms something that is not really here. When we look at page 3 in the Tables of the Estimates, and I want to read it very clearly for the Honourable Members, it shows that the Government has not really read their programme. It says in the third paragraph:

“A Summary of Government Operations and Financing for 2011-2012 is shown at Table 8.”

Mr. Speaker, we will also have to look at Table 8. It continues:

“The overall fiscal deficit on the Accountant General’s basis is projected at...”

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I sat in here yesterday when the Minister of Finance made his presentation and he clearly stated where he expected the growth in the economy to come from. He said that as confidence returns to the international money sector and investments start returning, there will be growth. He also said that once our Government programmes get on stream we can revive that sector and get it going, there will be growth. It is therefore improper for the Honourable Member to try to say to this Chamber that the Minister did not say where the growth is expected to come from.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is always in fairy tales, once upon a time. Very soon he would be talking about Anansi stories, once upon a time something happened and something happened. He said that once upon a time the Minister said that it may happen.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Brother Anansi.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have asked about getting back your time but to my reckoning you have spent half of your time so far responding to comments from other Honourable Members, so do not tell me about time later on.

House A87B Sequence 7

11.09 a.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members are seeking to interrupt my speech. Furthermore, the point I was making is that the overall fiscal deficit on the Accountant-General's basis is projected at \$1 billion or 12 per cent of nominal Gross Domestic Product at market prices, estimated at \$8.554 million. When converted to international financial institutions' basis, the fiscal deficit is projected at \$584.4 million or 6.8 per cent Gross Domestic Product. On the accrual basis, the net operating balance is \$-707.5 million or 8.8 per cent Gross Domestic Product.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister must not get confused with the cash-base system - and this is what he is doing - which is not used in Barbados today and which should only be used for comparative purposes. The Honourable Member is using the accrual basis system and therefore he has to accept that the balance is actually 8.3 per cent Gross Domestic Product. Therefore, one has to ask this Government where would the growth come from? In his own figure he is saying to us that he has a current account deficit of 8.3 per cent Gross Domestic Product, so where would the growth come from? If you look at the Table at Page 8, you would see that Government is raking in a lot of revenue this year and Government continues to fool itself by saying that we on this side had a bigger revenue take than them. Mr. Speaker, it is not true. From the very time in living memory, we have a Government that is raking in more than \$840.5 million in VAT. The total revenue of Government this year is projected to be in the vicinity of \$2522.7 billion. Therefore, Government has out-taxed the country. The people cannot expect anymore, the Government cannot tax the people further, there is no elbow room at this time because Government is raking in every cent from everywhere. Expenditure is growing. Let us look the total expenditure which is \$2.2 billion. The expenditure is \$2.2 billion yet the capital expenditure is down. Your capital expenditure is \$251 million. This is the same level as it was in 2006, so that the Government has taken us back five years to the 2006 figure.

Mr. Speaker, in 2006 the total expenditure was \$2.4 billion and the capital expenditure then was \$368 million, so that we were spending more money in capital expenditure to add progress to this country because we recognized that in order to put forward the country you have to build capacity. This Government has built no capacity in three years. The only capital formation that occurred in this country in the last three years were the houses that were built through the Minister of Housing and Lands, Urban and Rural Development and they are not entirely Government expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, Government is spending this year, \$251 million, which is less than it was three years ago. Sir, Government comes here and brags that it is raking in more money than ever before, Government's total revenue is climbing at an accelerated rate, people are overtaxed with all kind of taxes, the VAT has increased by 33 per cent, it has gone now to 17.5. You are raking in more taxes, people cannot pay nor buy food anymore.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that very often we have to help the poor and that is why we have been asking to have the basket for vatable items more fair for people. We have been asking Government to increase the basket of items. You are also not spending in the economy and so where is construction. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that construction will be at the same level it was this year...

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House and he know he is misleading this Honourable House when he says VAT has been increased by 33 per cent. Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that 2.5 of 15 cannot be 33 per cent.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I assume the Honourable Member was talking.. I did not think the Honourable Member was talking about the fact that the VAT has just been increased, so I left it at that.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, he is an accountant so he can tell the country.. I wanted the Honourable Member to get up and tell the country that his Government has increased the VAT by 17.5 per cent.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Government has increased the VAT by 17.5 per cent, not to. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that 17.5 per cent should be really...

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is an old shopkeeper, he likes to run off figures, so he knows when the scale is not balancing to take something off.

Asides.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House again. Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to round 16.5 to 33. It is easier to round it off to 17 but not to 33. The gap is too wide there, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sure the Honourable Member knows that.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am told that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is a shopkeeper and that he knows how to tip the scale so that it rounds off to 17 per cent. He knows what is happening and that is why the prices at Moon Town is a bit higher.

Mr. Speaker, on a serious note, this Government has very little elbow room because people cannot bear it any more. Mr. Speaker, last night I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church West-Central talking about public debt. Sir, again the Government is confused about this. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West-Central said the public debt has risen to 95 per cent Gross Domestic Product, the Honourable Member for St. James Central said it has risen by 30 per cent Gross Domestic Product but Government must tell us what it is.

Mr. Speaker, if the debt has risen to that figure 30 per cent Gross Domestic Product, then why is the Government borrowing? If you look at Page 8 of the Estimates, Table 8 show where Government is borrowing from. This year Government is proposing to borrow from the Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank...

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House again. The Honourable Member is giving the impression that you should not borrow in a crisis. When I was in here during the glory days of the Barbados Labour Party when they were supposedly in a surplus, yet they borrowed \$200 million for a rainy day.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I have dismissed the notion, when I made the point that the Government is raking in more revenue today than it was two years two years go. Mr. Speaker, the figures are there as crystal clear. Can the Honourable Member for St. Lucy not see that the total revenue this year is... In 2006, it was

\$278.6 billion, that we were raking in less money than you are now, so do not talk about glory days.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House by giving this Honourable House the impression that he knows nothing about the matching principle, when the Honourable Member is well-aware of the matching principle.

11.19 a.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

(ESTIMATES) (Done & G)

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the matching principles. You are raking more revenue now than ever before. Your total expenses are more than before but I am saying to you that it is a mismatch and that Government is spending on the wrong things.

Sir, I am not a tourism guru but it dawned on me recently that the public needs to know this. Mr. Speaker, I do not think that you know this. Sir, the Government is spending over \$100 million and, granted, the tourism sector brings in a lot of revenue but, Sir, do you realise that the Government is paying people to come to Barbados. Sir, every passenger that comes out of Brazil the Government is subsidising and I want to find out if any Barbadian has ever been subsidised to go to New York. Sir, I am saying that Government is paying people, and the Minister of Tourism is here...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please take your seat. Honourable Member, I caution you, when we have a Point of Order please take your seat and let us proceed. Yes, Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member has been in this House since 1994 and the Honourable Member knows that the policy that he speaks of is a policy that he has always supported for the last 14 years in Government.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, when you talk about revenue, I heard the Minister of Tourism, who is my good friend, talking about the arrivals level's record in January but, Sir, what about the receipt. If you pay people to come to Barbados, the people do not have to spend. Sir, if you invite me to your home and pay for me, I do not have spend. Sir, that is the point.

Mr. Speaker, you invite people from Brazil here, you invite people from the American continent, west coast or whatever to come here and they spend very little. They go into the cheapest hotel, spend very little and, therefore, the receipts are done, and that is the problem that is happening in this country. Sir, whereas the Minister should be spending more money in the English markets and the Canadian market where people really spend traditionally but it no sense in Government focusing their efforts totally on markets where people are not spending and, Sir, the Government's policy is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, we have said in 2008 that the Government has to bring a proper capital works programme to add value. I want to tell the Government this. Sir, recently, I had to go to the Port and I marveled at the Port and, Sir, you know why? Sir, in 1958, when Grantley Adams built the Port, our total revenue in those

were less than \$32 million and, Mr. Speaker, you know something, the Port is bringing in revenue after revenue. Sir, when you look at the airport, that was built in the 70s, again, that was capital works programme that added to value for generations to come. Is the Government building for future generations? Is the Government building capacity? Sir, where is the capacity.

Mr. Speaker, we renovated the airport and called it the Grantley Adams International Airport which was Seawell Airport up to then, but I am saying that previous Governments...

Mr. F.J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. As far as I am aware, when the Democratic Labour Party left office in 1976, what is now called the Grantley Adams International Airport was well nigh complete. It was named by the Barbados Labour Party as the Grantley Adams International Airport but from financing we got from Prime Minister Trudeau of Canada that airport was built and it was named by the Barbados Labour Party, so I do not know what the Honourable Minister is talking about.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sure that the Honourable Member is happy for the elucidation.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, I said that we built the airport. I never said that the Barbados Labour Party built it. It was built by a former Government. Sir, that is the point that I want to leave with the Prime Minister that previous Government built for future generation to add capacity so the airport was, indeed, a good venture, as well as Bridgetown Port and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital but what is this Government building for the future? Where is the money being spent because the Minister has not outlined any programme? Sir, the capital works programme of the Barbados Labour Party up to 2008 pointed to a new hospital but the Government is not doing it. The Government is spending their money on tourism, on a number of social programme, which although they are good, will not add capacity and the Minister who represents the City was at pains to say this morning that the Government's focus has shifted from one of property owning in this country to one of encouraging people to rent for life.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for the City what is the point of order.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Sir, at no time during my presentation did I say that this administration is shifting to people perpetually renting. I do not even remember using the word "rent" at all in my speech.

Mr. SPEAKER: I agree with you, so let the record be amended.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member said that the policy has shifted and I agree that the Government seems to be shifting their policy. I am glad to hear the Minister of Housing finally announce that he would now start to accelerate the tenancies' programme. (6:30) Sir, I am happy to say this because from the 1980s, we tried to accelerate a programme of ownership in this country. I am happy that this has happened because this, in itself, will give people the opportunity to get mortgages and help to boost the economy.

Mr. Speaker, if the Government does not transfer titles, people cannot borrow and people will not feel confidence about going to the bank. Sir, that is the difference between side and the other side.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by saying that this Government is not transferring titles. Sir, not only is this Government transferring titles from land belonging to the Government of the day but they have also brought legislation to ensure that people who had land and never had title that they can now get proper titles, so they are doing it two-fold.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five more minutes.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I want to push on. Sir, we need to look at a number of the sectors and I hope that the Government will get into agriculture. I hope that the Government would get into the Head of agriculture and energy because the Government does not understand the policy that was proclaimed by this side in terms of subsidising energy. Sir, it seems to me that the Government believes that when you subsidise diesel and, Sir, when you help the agriculture sector, that is wrong. We had put in place incentives in agriculture not only that would have helped the fishing industry but to help the farmers, the agro businesses, the poultry industry and the pig industry but we had put in place a system to have food security and we have not seen with the naked eye anything that has been done in agriculture over the past three years.

Mr. Speaker, I have made this point two years ago that the Government is giving the same level of subsidy to the Constituency Council that it is giving to agriculture. Sir, it is right here in the Estimates and the Government cannot say otherwise. Sir, I am saying that if you want growth in the economy that you have to split it between agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, the productive sectors and international businesses and that is where the growth will come.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has to refocus its efforts in these Estimates. These Estimates will not bring the growth that the Government has predicted. It will continue to be the same-oh same-oh and people will continue to suffer. Those people who are marginalised will become more marginalised in the coming month and those people who are fat will continue to get fatter because that is the nature of the game. The rich will get richer and the poor will get poorer under these Estimates.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen no change. Sir, the only thing that has changed...

H/A87B/11:29:25

Sequence 9

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, I have seen no change. The only thing that has changed, and I applaud the Prime Minister for this, is that I have not heard present Prime Minister come out in support of Clico. I have not heard him, but all Government Ministers, the whole front bench, were up in this whole stew when it comes to Clico and was a part and parcel of it. Now we have a situation in this country which wants to carry this country to ransom. We have trouble and the Government has to face it. I want the Government to take their hands out of it altogether. The Government has to take its hands out of it and let justice prevail, where necessary. We will not resile from this fact.

Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of work to do in this country. I do not want the Government to feel that we belong to a different country. We want to see this country succeed. The leadership of the Opposition in 2008 called for a stimulus package, at that time, and we would have had production, and we would have had the construction sector. We believe that more money should be put into the construction sector to push Barbados in the future.

Sir, we want to see Queen Elizabeth Hospital improved. We want to see a programme not only to improve roads throughout this country, but I want to see a new road programmes. Nothing new has come out of the Ministry of Transport and Works this year. The only thing new that I see is that the Minister has promised to do the roundabout at Groves, St. George, and it is a wise decision.

Sir, if you want to go towards a single factory in this country, you must improve the roundabout at Groves. You must improve Highway 3, because in my tenure at the Ministry we had agreed to improve Highway 3, stretching from Lears junction to Andrews Factory. You must put in the sidewalks at Market Hill. You must put the sidewalks down to St. Helens. These were done and I hope, and I see

it in these Estimate, that the Minister will ensure that it is done before the end of the financial year.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker is in the Chair.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

J.D. PAUL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to make my contribution in this debate in relation to the Estimates that have been laid by the Minister of Finance in the House of Assembly. I want to begin by saying that I would again express my appreciation to the constituents of St. Michael West Central for giving me the opportunity to represent them in Parliament, an opportunity which I do not take for granted, because I believe that as a Representative you are here to represent what really is in the interest of the people. Sir, not only that, one of the points that needs to be made is that the duty of a Representative is to help to educate and to bring to light facts which the normal observer sitting out there would not be aware of.

Sir, when I sat down and listened to the Honourable Member for St. Peter yesterday, it puzzled me. When I listened to the Honourable Member for St. George North, just now, he said something that was very interesting. He said that he wanted this country to succeed, but when I listen sometimes to the arguments coming from the Opposition it appears to me that they want it to succeed, but under them. In other words, they cannot perceive this country moving forward under any other person.

Sir, one of the points that was made before by the Honourable Member for St. Peter is that Barbadians cannot see into the future. He said so yesterday. Sir, either since January 2008 some blinkers have been put on the eyes of the Barbadian people that they cannot see in the future, or maybe it is within the mind of the Honourable Member for St. Peter that Barbadians cannot see into the future, but I want to say not only the constituents of St. Michael West Central for whom I have principal responsibility, but to the country in general that this Government is very clear of its responsibilities to the people of Barbados, and they are well aware what is required during these most trying times.

Sir, I heard, and I continue to hear, a "Looking Back" episode. One of the things I think we need to recognise is that in order for to move forward, we must be aware of the facts as it pertains today. Based on what happens today, we must then proceed to plan. Sir, what is clear today is this, and it cannot be argued. The world today is in the grips of a recession which it has never seen before. We are seeing behaviours in the world today which were not evident before. Sir, this is a period in which, first of all, the kind of behaviour that we are seeing on the

commodity markets was not there. We are now seeing of oil prices moving to unprecedented levels, which were never seen before.

Sir, even during the last commodities crisis we had, three or four years ago, this was not the experience. Therefore, it is really ungracious for Honourable Members of the Opposition to get up in this House of Assembly and say to Barbadians that the situation is the same and they experienced the same conditions, because the facts do not bear them out. It does not.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Barbadians need to understand that we have an Opposition who is prepared to distort the facts, to convince Barbadians that they are the only ones who can come up with credible solutions to moving this country forward. I am saying that when you look at these proposals, and when you look at the present initiatives which this Government is undertaking, it should be very clear to Barbadians that there are concrete initiatives being put in place to address the current situation that we are undertaking.

Sir, let me say this. We heard that we have new initiatives. Let us speak to agriculture. Let us go there. I want to emphasise this point. Despite the fact that this agricultural sector has been faced under the Democratic Labour Party Government with unprecedented conditions, which were not faced before, we have still been able to see some semblance of growth within the National Agricultural Sector. That is clear.

Sir, I want Barbadians to cast their minds back, just recently, not 14 years ago, but even more recently to the facts that some of the climatic conditions that we experienced in Barbados have not been experienced by the agricultural sector before. We had in some cases unprecedented drought. We had in some cases in terms of the weather unprecedented rainfall at different periods. This happened. Sir, in spite of the challenges, Government was in a position to cope and trying to introduce...

11.39 a.m.

Sequence 10

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 11, 11.39 a.m.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Sir, he asked what we did and what we are proposing. One of the failures, Sir, of the Barbados Labour Party administration is that whenever this country was to go forward they did not look to Barbados to do it, Sir, They looked outside because one of the weaknesses in the policies that they have put forward in the past, is that

they continuously seem to think that the way in which we have to propel Barbados is to look for outside talent and implant inside here.

We need to account for the reason why the kind of progress that we should have made as a nation we did not because one of the things in the 14 years that they had this Government, is that they did not address the whole question of the need for the re balancing of the sectors in this economy. They attempted to develop Barbados, based on one sector, tourism services and even when the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter got up inside here and spoke yesterday, he continued down that road again, services, more services and that is the only sound that he made but what clearly the Democratic Labour Party is trying to do is to drive the productive sectors and there is a new emphasis in this country, Sir, on agriculture and manufacturing and that is clear.

One of the things, Sir, that we are trying to do is in relation to the promotion of the small business sector. More recently, you have seen an initiative where we are trying to coordinate the development of our manufacturing processes and trying to forge linkages between both the agricultural sector and the manufacturing sector. We are seeing that clearly. Sir, for instance, we know even within Fund Access there is a new impetus given to finding ways to further assist small businesses. Sir, when we do that what we do is that we facilitate the initiatives of small entrepreneurs.

Sir, on the question of employment, the Barbados Labour Party in the past has continually ignored the contribution or the potential contributions that small businesses have towards furthering employment in this country. When I say small business, I include the agriculture sector and we need to understand that because one, sometimes we hear people speaking about business in Barbados and small businesses, they forget to add that the persons in a community who might say they are raising ten pigs at a time on a monthly or quarterly basis, are small business persons.

One of the difficulties that I have in this country is that sometimes you have the position being taken by persons, where they tend to basically grade employment and because a person who might have some pigs in a backyard or keep fowls in a backyard, they do not consider them as business persons but they are and what we need to do is to enable those persons to carry their business, Sir, up to a higher level. Sir, we also need to help them to grow their businesses and that is why historically, we have had a problem with a lot of businesses developing in this country and being merely one generational. In other words, it does not get passed one generation because what happens is that we do not get the opportunity or they do not take the opportunity to involve their sons and daughters in the

business because it is not seen as something that you should do and that is the kind of thing that the Barbados Labour Party has been perpetuating in this country.

Sir, when they said that they increased employment in this country, do you know how they did it? They did it by expanding the state sector.

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. The Member who is supposed to be the executive officer in the agriculture sector must understand, and based on his figures that he produced a couple of years ago, the pig industry and the poultry industry had increased by 80 per cent and 60 per cent respectively. So under the Barbados Labour Party you had the poultry industry and the pig industry and not only this, self-employed persons were doing very well in those two sectors. So the Member must recognise that those two sectors in particular were employing hundreds of Barbadians up to 2006/7.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the licks are hot and they are going to get hotter. Come again.

Asides.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Sir, I repeat, the mistake that the Barbados Labour Party has made is that they do not view small farming businesses as businesses which need to be developed in order to afford ordinary people the opportunity to become managers of their own destiny and help to create additional employment. The way in which the Barbados Labour Party has expanded employment is by expanding the state sector that is why, Sir, when we listened to the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter yesterday talking about the fact that we are not bringing forward proposals, Sir, he is not telling Barbadians through that, the kind of hard decisions that need to be made but that he wants us to send home people.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you must refer to him as the Honourable Member.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Sorry, Sir.

The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter did not say - when he spoke about hard decisions - that if we make the hard decisions as the Honourable Member wants us to do, it would mean job-loses in this country. Sir, this Democratic Labour Party Government has given a commitment to the people of Barbados that if it is one thing they would do during this period of economic uncertainty in the world, is that we would try to maintain employment levels in this country.

Asides.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Do not get on as if they do not know, tell them that.

Mr. R.E. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. When the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter spoke about hard decisions, he was emphasising with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, saying that any Minister of Finance, even in good times has to make hard decisions but the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter never hinted, suggested or by innuendo inferred that part of the hard decision-making process meant retrenchment. I just wanted to put it in context and to defend the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is what he said. He said hard decisions have not been made and what I am saying to you and tell them that if hard decisions are to be made, it means that there will be job-loses in this Government sector in this country. Tell them that. So let us understand when we hear the messages coming from the Barbados Labour Party, they are not bringing any solutions to the problems.

Asides.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Of course, I will tell the public that you say they are necessary. Tell them that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to expose the arguments that we have brought forward by the Opposition to Barbadians to let them understand that this Government is taking at this point in time, the measures that would ensure that we do not bring the kinds of hard measures that have been advocated by the Barbados Labour Party, that we would not do things that would undermine the ability of families in this country, Sir, to support each other that is what we need to do. Sir, we talk about the GDP, they have not given us credit as far as things are concerned.

Sir, it is true the GDP in the country declined last year but what has happened now is that we have seen the situation being stabilised as a result, Sir, of the same measures which were introduced by this same Democratic Labour Party administration, even in the face of the fact, Sir, that there are other countries which have not yet stabilised. They are getting up and telling the people in this country that the Democratic Labour Party does not know what it is doing and that is something that we need to look at, Sir.

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 11, 11.49 a.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Mr. J. D PAUL: Sir, one of other things I want to speak to is again in terms of the agricultural sector. Sir, this Government is proposing to ensure that we develop linkages between the other sectors. Sir, I believe that we certainly need to develop those linkages. There is a responsibility on all sectors in this country now to support each other. Sir, because of the current climate that we are in, that becomes even more necessary. We cannot continue to have a system of incentives which does not ensure that one sector being granted an incentive that something does not go inside there that shows that the incentive is also utilised where they can to benefit other sectors at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go quickly to tourism. This Government has been very quick to respond when sectors have been in trouble. Sir, look at the types of assistance that have been given to hoteliers within the tourism sector. It is not like Government has been sitting idly by and when events are happening they do not respond to the situations. Sir, even with respect to the agricultural sector, as I understand it today, they are now paying out claims to those farmers who are eligible for damages that were suffered during Tropical Storm Tomas. Sir, they are not giving us credit for that.

Sir, I am going to go back to the point I was making in terms of linkages. In respect of the question of linkages, I believe that one of the things we need to do in the future is to ensure that when one sector gets a benefit that they should get it in such a way that they ensure development in the other sectors. I believe that it is absurd when individuals in the tourism sector can form useful linkages with those in the agricultural sector but they do not form it.

Sir, we do not want to admit it but the spend per tourist coming here to Barbados is less, let us face it. Sir, because of the depressed economies in the more developed countries, people have less disposable incomes so even if they come to Barbados they would spend less. Sir, what we have to do now is to figure out a way where every dollar they spend earns a greater percentage that goes into our foreign exchange coffers. Sir, I am proposing that if we have a system that is sure and those persons within the tourism sector secure more and more of the inputs into the tourism sector from either our local manufacturers, our local agriculturalists or even our local service sector, that in itself would increase the foreign exchange earning component.

Sir, that is the reason why I believe, even in terms of future concessions to be given to the tourism people to come in here, that we need to ensure that they also understand that in being given that concession, whatever it is, they also have an obligation and a duty to help and assist the other sectors.

Sir, the Barbados Labour Party has promoted this notion that the only suitable form of employment generation is by Government expanding. Sir, I think that the unions have done a service to ordinary Barbadians in that they have helped to improve generally the standard of wages in this country, and that is good. However, Sir, we do have a situation where there is no equity between what I would say public sector wages and private sector wages, so Government employment then becomes very attractive. Sir, what we therefore need to do is to at least try to ensure that, maybe on a longer term view, we achieve some form of equity as it comes to that.

The point I am making is that Barbadians need to understand that we need also to generate more employment within the private sector because we cannot continue with a situation where we overburden our public service to the point where the country and businesses as a whole cannot support it. What we have to do is to help develop businesses.

Sir, I will go back to where I started in terms of how do we take our current small businesses and help them to expand and develop. Sir, when you look at some of the initiatives that the Democratic Labour Party is proposing, they would help precisely in that particular direction. Sir, I think that we need to applaud the efforts of the Minister of Finance in that regard in terms of ensuring that the kinds of incentives that we need are actually there to help to develop those small businesses.

Sir, another thing I want to say to Barbadians is that we have a situation where we seem to want to stir up panic in this country. In other words, the whole thing is that we want to give the impression that if this Democratic Labour Party Administration does not fix something by today, something is going to happen. Sir, it is historical. Governments have always borrowed. Sir, irrespective of what the Barbados Labour Party would tell you, by and large they have borrowed to at least put forward these large capital projects.

Sir, I heard from the other side just now persons saying we did this large capital project, what did you do. Sir, at least the projects that we are going to bring are not ones that would prove to be a burden in this country. Anyone who can get up and say now that the development at Kensington Oval in the way in which it was done, if you look at it in terms of a payback, that it is in anyway a pay back to this country even in the long term, they would really have to look at the maths. We have ended up spending on large projects, which when you look at them in terms of dollars and cents, the only people that seems to benefit are the immediate investors. Sir, this country is now saddled with a bill which this Administration has to look after. Sir, that accounts by and large for the current situation with which we are faced.

Sir, I go to the other point I wish to make in terms of the whole question of food security. Sir, I want to encourage the Minister of Agriculture in terms of pursuing the objectives of food security. Sir, in order for us to understand what food security involves, I think that we also need to understand that the most developed countries have been the greatest practitioners of food security. Sir, we sometimes do not understand how it is that you have a World Trade Organisation agreement but the United States of America, in terms of the negotiations that they were able to negotiate under the World Trade Organisation agreement, can negotiate some of the best subsidies for its farmers and they end up telling you that it is World Trade Organisation compatible.

Sir, what they have been able to do is to use those cocktails of incentives that they provide for the farmers to ensure that they arrive at some form of food security whereby products or staples such as corn, wheat and soya are guaranteed products in the United States of America. Sir, farmers, even if they are losing money, end up making money under the system of subsidies that the United States of America has.

Sir, in the Barbadian context, we need to spend a lot more time on the whole question of food promotion because fundamental in us surviving this current time and also to create a new Barbados, Barbadians need to understand that we need to support our own a little more. We need to recognise that the very foods that we have in this country can be consumed and that they are just as good as those being imported. The problem that we have faced historically in this country is that the producers of local food do not recognise that we also need to make a change in terms of how we process the food. We need to recognise that we cannot take it for granted that consumers will consume an item. We need to take a leaf out of what happens in the more developed countries.

House A87B Sequence 12

11.59 a.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we cannot assume that because something is a primary product, that people feel that sweet potatoes are good, you still have to market that commodity.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five minutes in which to wind up.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, in that regard, I think that one of the things we need to do is to begin having a marketing programme, maybe through Government agencies, that tries to market more of our local foods,

especially to our young people. I have seen situations where in schools when we market our local foods to young people in schools and we give them a taste of that food, those young children develop a taste for that food. Sir, one of the problems is that we have a situation where we do not market our local foods. We need to have a consistent programme that facilitates that.

Sir, I want to say that this is not against World Trade Organisation regulations because in a sense when you look at the More Developed Countries they have systems in place that ensure that their foods are being marketed. Sir, why I am so keen on the question of marketing is that we need to understand that if farmers in this country are going to produce they need to have a market, they cannot tell people to produce and when it comes to the point of sale, those farmers cannot find a sale. Sir, historically that has been the problem. That is something that was never addressed by the Barbados Labour Party administration. Sir, unless you can ensure that farmers have a market for the commodities they have, then they will not produce. Therefore, if we can say to them in the future to produce, that there will be a market, it can happen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to take your memory back to the days when the Barbados Agricultural and Development Marketing Corporation was established. The poultry industry was established, based on initiatives taken by a previous Democratic Labour Party administration and we can take credit for that but we need now to move further, especially at this time where we need to recognise that because of the need for balance growth within the sectors and the need to ensure that we have to maintain food and nutrition security in this country, we have to look at the issue of marketing. We need to recognise that we need to create an awareness of local food products in this country. We also need to excite the taste buds of local consumers so that they would actually consume the food when those foods are being produced.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make that absolutely clear because I believe that when we look at these measures, we can say that the Minister of Finance has done his best in terms of trying to ensure that we provide for the sectors that need to be provided for and to do so in such a way that it does not compromise the standard of living of ordinary Barbadians and those who are least able to defend themselves. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, greetings in the name of the Most High, King of King and Lord of Lords. Also greetings to those listeners on CBC radio who are listening to this broadcast from this Honourable Chamber. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would want to use this occasion in this Honourable Chamber to make a call that these Estimates debates.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me say for the record that when Honourable Members are speaking, the Chair would like to hear that Honourable Member in silence, so that I can hear clearly what is happening. I do not want to have any cross talk of that sort. Please continue, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I was saying, I would like to make a very special plea in this Honourable Chamber that these Estimates of debate in future should be televised on a special channel on CBC television. In fact, I would also make a clear call that when we are having these debates in this Parliament that one of the channels should be allocated for Parliamentary debates. I say that because in my view the level of debate and in relation to the issue coming across to the public from this Honourable Chamber is of a very high standard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my discourse today in this Honourable Chamber is simple, I am speaking under the caption of caring and sharing. Sir, some of the greatest hallmarks of this great political institution called the Democratic Labour Party, is its genuine and humane concerns for those who are socially disadvantaged in our society. This policy by this great party has transcended the barriers of colour, class, creed or race.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South-East please have a seat. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew, please, please, behave yourself. Please continue, Honourable Member for St. Michael South- East.

Sir, my understanding and interpretation of these Estimates are certainly in synchronisation with the parable of the Good Samaritan. I am saying that against a background that if we remember the story of the Good Samaritan, we will remember that Jesus was telling this story to a lawyer. The story was about a man who was beaten and wounded and left to die on the street. The first man who passed by was a priest, who saw this man lying there bleeding but lent that man no assistance. The second person who passed by was a Levite who also did the same thing. The third person who passed by was the Good Samaritan, who not only treated to that man's injuries but also carried him to a hospitable place where he could rest. Sir, I say that as I approach this debate today from the perspective of being part of a Government that seriously cares about the plight and welfare of the most vulnerable in our society, that is the poor, the disabled, the disenfranchised and certainly our single women of large households, as enunciated by our Honourable Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South. Sir, that is what I am talking about, I am talking about

caring and sharing. Sir, these Estimates take us way beyond and out of the realm of just ordinary facts and figures, they bring home the salient and emotional point of caring and sharing, as is shown by the Good Samaritan, in the Book of Luke.

Sir, I also want to congratulate the Minister of Finance for his thorough and incisive presentation of these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, 2011-2012. Sir, we have to understand in the context why and where there Estimates were laid, against this turbulent economic climate that the entire planet is currently facing. When the former Prime Minister, the late David Thompson made a call for all of us to be part of Team Barbados, it was a clear call for all of us to be part of a great joint national effort. It was a call for us as a nation to tackle the global economic situation as one nation and to be part of Team Barbados.

12.09 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

(ESTIMATES) (Done & G)

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: to stave off the global economic shocks brought on by a very volatile external economic climate which obviously has necessitated this Government to extent its safety net. Sir, not only as we say for the poor, et cetera, but also for the middle class. We have to, as enunciated the Minister of Finance, improve our levels of productivity and we have to conserve energy, et cetera. I further understand the Minister of Finance as saying that it is the aim of this Government to continue to reduce the fiscal deficit so that spending power can be released more into the economy. However, with a desire to reduce this deficit, obviously, we would have to implement methods of increasing productivity and reducing wastage.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you know, I am a community practitioner and I will always remain a community practitioner. They might be a day when the University of the West Indies and other such learned institutions across the region would also pay respect and homage to the outstanding community practitioners in this region. Sir, I will speak to that later in my debate because the esteemed lawyers and doctors in this Honourable Chamber are known as legal practitioners and medical practitioners and I also want to be known as a community practitioner and other such persons across Barbados who have really given of their best and toiled for the cause beyond the call of duty to enlighten and enhance the living standards of the poor.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have always believed that the communal and community approach is the best approach of good governance and will also assist Government in further reducing the deficit. Sir, what I am saying is that this whole

situation that we are faced with, brought on by external shock is certainly, one that concern us. I am hearing the Honourable Member for St. Peter saying that the time has come for us to come together as one and that if we had approached them they could have put their input into the debate. Sir, I remember when I was sitting on the other side as an independent Rastafari member that the call was made for this side, in the same side by the former Prime Minister to let us come together because he wanted the best brains and minds to come together as one to deal with the situation and, Sir, it was flatly refused at the time.

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: However you say it, it is true and it is recorded in Hansard too. Sir, therefore, I want to put before this Honourable Chamber a set of communal approaches to the ordinary Barbadian where we together could also assist in this effort.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister (3:58) Association has put forward a wonderful and marvelous idea that I will be developing in St. Michael South East and that whole idea is the whole concept of backyard farming. Sir, backyard farming is nothing new because our parents, years ago, used to grow vegetable, lettuce, tomatoes, whatever and I am saying that (4:27) our initiatives could really develop into a way and that the ordinary consumer would have a savings there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the National Union of Public Workers talked about development of a food bank and this could also be part of an inclusive policy at the community level. Sir, also we could look at the whole fact of a community recycling programme. Sir, the next point that I am going to make is that of a community beautification programme with a view of finding objective programmes and work for boys on the 'block'. Sir, I am saying that when we are facing these kinds of situations and we are looking at overall programmes and planning, those young men on the 'block' could make a substantial contribution. It might not be prudent in some people's minds but I want to put forward to this Honourable Chamber that we embark on a series of crash programmes across this country particularly in community and not only will it enhance the environmental aspects of the communities across Barbados but it would but it would provide some temporary employment for those youngsters on the 'block', and other people that want to get involved.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand the importance of controlling expenditure but I also understand, at the same time, that we, as caring a Government, have a serious responsibility for all of our vulnerable citizens in this country. Sir, I am saying that because I have seen the efforts of the young men on the 'block', particularly during

the passing of Tropical Storm Tomas and I really want, again, to use this Chamber to congratulate them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the most realistic features of any economy is the fact that when there is a downturn in the economy of itself - and I want to drive home this point - there is always the tendency to cut the civil service throughout the world and throughout this region. Sir, this Government has a set of unparallel policy in these Estimates of not cutting the social services. In fact, the safety net has been strengthened considerably by this Government and that is why I began by saying that my discourse here about caring and sharing. The Minister could have said, let us cut welfare, let us cut urban, let us cut rural and let us go into the social services but furthermore from being cut, they have been increased and consolidated, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to also propose that we create in terms of finding employment in a different way that Goal 8 of the Millenium Development Goals talks about partnership for developers. Therefore, I am proposing that we foster greater linkages with the NGO sector and the CBO sector and furthermore the business sector....

Asides.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: You know why, because we could also tackle the unemployment problem with a series of serious intervention and we could even go into the recording industry by establishing recording studios in communities across Barbados. Sir, every young man and every young woman in Barbados believe that he or she is a singer and that they are artists of great proportion or at some point they could be another Ri Ri. Sir, it is notion that is not only pushed forward by me but by some prominent entertainers in Barbados came to me and discussed this. You could talk about the young man in Deacons, I cannot remember his name, but I am more inclined to what is workable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard everybody in here talking about small business development and Government's forward thrust in the small business sector. Sir, this Government has introduced to Barbadians one of the most wonderful pieces of social programme that I have seen, and I want members to check it. Sir, down at the Ministry of Trade, hundreds and hundreds of small people, vendors on the street, vendors in the community, small business people, all of them, go down to the Ministry of Trade, fill out an application form to help finance or recapitalize their businesses. Sir, these people are not only given sometimes a grant, sometimes a loan, but you know what, Sir, a social assessment is carried out in a very serious way and the staff at the Ministry of Trade work

alongside these faces to make sure that business is developed.

H/A87B/12:19:38

Sequence 14

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Mr. H.F. LASHLEY: to work alongside these persons to make sure that business is developed. Sir, I am thinking that probably in next year's Estimates that programme at the Ministry of Trade where hundreds of small black people like myself and small business people will not only be getting an injection of grant funding, but will be also referred to the professional assistance from that Ministry to help them develop their businesses.

Sir, I want to move home a bit. I want to say that we as a Government now have to develop strategically across Barbados, particularly in the housing institutions and the housing areas across Barbados, small business developments. Sir, Deacons has one there which is doing well. There is one in Parkinson Field, in The Pine. Sir, I would like to ask for one to be set up near the National Housing Depot in Wildey, because the more I interact with the younger people in this country, the more I find that they are more business inclined.

Sir, the young people that we have are possibly the most creative, the most energetic, the most independent Bajans that I have met. This was enunciated by the Honourable Minister of Youth and Sports yesterday. I am thinking of that as a serious project, a model intervention in business. Sir, some institutions in this

country like the banks, the commercial banks in this country, give people loans to fail. They grant them and then harass them after. There are no real control over the banking system in this country. Bankers get together to determine and say, this year we have to make a profit and then impose 3 or 4 per cent on their customers. Sir, I am saying from this position, as an Honourable Member of this Chamber, that once we could establish these business centres across Barbados in the communities, in the housing areas, they offer the ordinary persons a chance to develop, not a third sector, fourth sector but a fifth sector, reaching out and helping those small potential business persons in the communities across Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand it is critical at this juncture. The problem we are facing as a nation is not unique to Barbados only. It is also across the entire region. Therefore, as a community practitioner, I want to convene in Barbados, with my other counterparts across the region, and as Government advisor on social policies, we have a regional meeting in this country, a grass-root leader, where

we can come up with comprehensive strategies for the entire region so that we can deal with this surging problem that wants to envelop the Caribbean region like the proverbial Tsunami. Sir, we have to deal with it.

Sir, the Honourable Minister of Tourism is doing a magnificent job in adverse circumstances. What we have to examine also is the fact that this young man has brought a wonderful community-based oriented programme for communities across Barbados. For too long the foreign exchange has been staying on the South Coast and the West Coast, and never getting into the 'Gold Coast' of the communities. All I am saying is, let us invest more in this project, this Community Tourism project that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy also helped to pull and let us replicate it across Barbados. Let us get more 'Oistins Towns' in the communities, more Baxters Roads, bring them into the housing areas. Let us stabilise the housing areas. Let us stabilise them, and we could do this with a lot of social intervention planning.

Sir, why I am very impressed with this Party, is the fact that this Party is a verb. They are doers and not now just talkers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, association, a partnership, is critical for the development of any country. I want to use this occasion in this Honourable Chamber to pay respect and homage to the Maria Holder Foundation. Here is a group of people coming to Barbados, a group of people who fell in love with Barbados and some of them are Barbadians who are now putting back. I also want to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Social Care and Community Development, who has thoroughly pursued this whole programme with the Maria Holder Foundation to have a community centre extension in the good community of St. Michael South East. He did not put it in his constituency. He put it into mine. I am happy about that. Obviously we had a little negotiation. It is a partnership agreement. You know how these things go. It is the truth and I am very much appreciative.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say to the Honourable Minister of Tourism, when they talk about sports, we are on the verge of staging the West Indies Womens Cricket for the tenth year. It is the largest Womens Cricket Tournament in the Caribbean. The Honourable Minister has helped us, and come April 21st, some fifteen teams are coming in from Guyana, Cayman Islands, St. Kitts, even Guadeloupe plays cricket. I did not know that. Also Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent and Dominica are all converging onto Barbados. Over 500 Caribbean people will be coming here to Barbados, into the community of St. Michael South East.

Sir, later on, I want to let the Honourable Member know that Tony Cozier, who I feel should be Knighted by

now, Sir Tony Cozier, and Wes Hall, this is my personal view, should also be Knighted because these are expert Barbadians in their own respective field, respected throughout planet earth. Sir, we will be bringing to Barbados in June, Whitsuntide, thirteen teams from the Caribbean to play what Tony Cozier has called one of the greatest revolutions in cricket. Sir, bring six and come. We have more than six. He has about twenty-two on this side.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member have five minutes more.

Mr. H.F. LASHLEY: Thank you very much Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Sir, we have three sixes here on the Democratic Labour Party team. Come to St. Michael South East on June 11th. Bring six and come.

Sir, you know that I only have five minutes.

Asides.

Mr. H.F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am calling on the Minister of Public Works. On July 27, 2010, I was involved in a very horrendous accident going through the Hanson area. My research has found that eight person have died within that area over the last ten years. I must tell you that area is a virtual death trap. If you are going up there and it is raining and someone loses control of their vehicle and slams into you, God help you, depending on the speed that they are coming at.

Sir, that was one of the most terrible things that I have ever experience. Up to now I still get nightmares and flashbacks.

Asides.

Mr. H.F. LASHLEY: I do not jump up so. I know that is Gline Clarke. Sir, that is a very serious thing.

Sir, I would like to see the extension of that road on both sides, and sidewalks put in.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the residents of Mapp Hill, Haynes Hill, and Rock Close, Wildey have signed two petitions to have natural gas in their area. Sir, I look forward to it very shortly.

I want to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Housing who has started an Infilling Programme in housing areas across Barbados. I really want to congratulate him because this Government is seeking housing solutions, and that acronym, HELP, is not just an acronym or just help, but it is introducing a methodology of

assistance to the numerous applications that they have at the Ministry of Housing.

12.29 p.m.

Sequence 15

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 16, 12.29 a.m.

Mr. H.F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want also in my final two minutes to say that there is a need for a play park in Lower Burnie, which is a developing housing scheme. Sir, I want again to go back to the Honourable Member of Social Care because I know that he is a person who goes along with consummate ease and sometimes you might miss him because of his easiness. He reminds me, in terms of how he moves, of a character that we had years ago in Barbados called, "Easy Boy" but this Easy Boy is no easy boy, this is a hard-working Easy Boy.

The National Assistance Board has a wonderful programme on active aging. There are many developed and developing countries across the globe that are now faced with the global phenomenon of population aging. This Minister has developed a programme for the aged across Barbados, where they could go into the various communities and bring out the shut-ins from their homes and have them involved in active programmes across the community. Sir, as I am about to take my seat, I want to make a clarion call in this Honourable Chamber for such an activity to be brought to the George Dunner Senior Citizens Home. Sir, George Dunner was born in your constituency and he was a magnificent community practitioner. I must tell you that he is greatly missed but the spirit of George Dunner will live and transcend communities across Barbados with that kind of approach.

As I conclude, Sir, I really want to congratulate the Honourable Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance for really bringing these Estimates to this Honourable Chamber, where caring and sharing have been the hallmark of the presentation. Sir, this great party, the Democratic Labour Party of Barbados continues to emphasise, sympathise and work hand-in-hand with the marginalised sectors of Barbados.

With those words, I really want to thank you, Sir.

Asides.

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

SUSPENSION

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House be suspended until 1.45 p.m. this afternoon.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that this Honourable House be now suspended until 1.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Deputy Speaker suspended the House accordingly.

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 16, 12.32 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, we were on Order No. 6 and with that we shall continue.

ORDER NO. 6 (RESUMED)

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank you for the privilege to make my input in this particular exercise. I looked at the front page of my Estimates and I want to refer to the details that are shown there that speak of an Estimated Current Revenue of Barbados of over \$2.522 billion and an Estimated Total Expenditure of over \$3.557 billion.

Sir, I must say that the details that are here almost remind me of the status I am at now that we are in this terrible recession, that a lot of it is foisted upon us because of the Democratic Labour Party's policies and programmes. I am now kind of spending more than I really earn which really should not be because I also had a very good life previously. I have worked for more than 41 years of my life and this is the second time that I have been experiencing what many other thousands of Barbadians are experiencing under the Democratic Labour Party. Indeed, the first time was the period between 1991 and 1994 when as a regular teacher in the classroom my salary was cut like many other civil servants, general workers, nurses, police officers and so on. Sir, the second time is now but even though there is no cut in the salary directly because of legislation which says that there would be no cutting of civil servants' salaries, in essence, we are operating under a wage freeze and our taxes are climbing by the minute.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party in coming to office in 2008 made a proud boast that a Democratic Labour Party Government or Administration will offer to the people of Barbados good governance, accountability, transparency, integrity in the affairs of Government and efficiency in the various ministries. Indeed, they also said that they will follow the Rule of Law and will be responsive to the needs of the voters. Sir, I cannot boast, as will some Honourable Members in those constituencies that are a part of this Government under the DEMS, but I must say and remind Honourable Members here that politics in Barbados as in the rest of the world is about people. I believe that people should come first in every aspect of the political life.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Honourable Minister's presentation and I think he did fairly well the first time in offering the Estimates. Of course, I would have heard him in the Budget as well and under the circumstances I must say that his presentation was fairly tempered. Except for one slip-up, which I will not refer to, he was very tempered, he seems, to me to have spoken from his heart. I believe that is how most of us should be because not to speak with a conscience would not be in keeping with what we have promised the people of Barbados.

However, Sir, all other Honourable Members on that side who have spoken said do not blame the Democratic Labour Party, blame the international arena for the world recession, blame the International Monetary Fund, blame the Barbados Labour Party, blame the civil servants for not carrying out their duties and it went on and on. Sir, I am cognisant of the fact that when the Barbados Labour Party demitted office it left...

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

His Honour K. St.C. BEST: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I sat in these Chambers here yesterday and today and I heard no person refer to the question of blaming the International Monetary Fund or the civil servants for any problems. Honourable Members in this Chamber must be truthful when they make statements of trying to make the civil servants of this country believe that this Government does not care. What I heard from this side is that this Government has a programme in place to make sure that no civil servant is disenfranchised.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the point of order is upheld because I do not recall a statement to that effect either but I am sure it was a slip and the Honourable Member will withdraw the comments and move on.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, from what I deduced from what was being said, I heard that the international arena is responsible for what is happening

here and hence the measures that this Government has taken. I heard that the Barbados Labour Party did all kinds of projects and that is where the money has gone.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, so you are withdrawing the statement then that the Honourable Members on this side blamed the International Monetary Fund and the civil servants?

Miss C. Y. FORDE: I will withdraw it, Mr. Speaker, because I have more to say. I want the Honourable Member for St. Michael East to be just as vigilant in every respect.

Mr. Speaker, when the Barbados Labour Party left office, it left \$2.8 billion in foreign reserves. Mr. Speaker, I want to know what is the status of those reserves today because I want to know what the public of Barbados got for the billions of taxes they have been paying into the public's coffers between 2008 and now. I say, this is my opinion, not anybody else's, that when the Democratic Labour Party came into Government it was very pregnant with ideas and promises but, for me, very little action. I have not opposed the free bus fares because parents would need that assistance but I have opposed a number of the other policies and programmes that are being introduced because I feel that they are a burden on the public's purse and that they have added to the difficulty that we are now experiencing in this particular situation here.

Sir, the pathway to progress that the Democratic Labour Party would have talked about in its Manifesto, for me, three years later has carried us into a cart road to poverty, they are roundabouts. This Government is building roundabouts, roundabouts. It reminds me of a merry-go-round because when you sit in a merry-go-round you go nowhere but round and round and round and where they stop nobody knows. Mr. Speaker, if this Government had invested in the flyovers, that would have eased the tension of the traffic in Barbados and we would not be spending all those millions of dollars now in roundabouts. Sir, you probably pass Jackson because you have some St. Thomas connections, I believe still, and you see the confusion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Most definitely, yes.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: A decent St. Thomas wife.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, that is correct.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: We will continue to be decent.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: I know that if she were living in St. Thomas still I would get her support, not the DEMS, I know that for a fact.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I am not going there because I believe that if we had dealt with the issue of the traffic congestion and built those flyovers, we would not be seeing the mass confusion that is on our highway still in Barbados. There is no answer and it gets worse by the minute. Sir, when you look at Jackson and what we call Warrens bottom with that new eight or ten floor facility that the Government is building at Warrens you can tell the mass confusion that would be on that road as time goes by.

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

His Honour K. St.C. BEST: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. My record and recollection is that no flyovers were planned for the area of Jackson, so to indicate that the roundabout in Jackson is an alternative to the flyovers is misleading this House because no flyovers were planned for Jackson.

House A87B Sequence 17

2.04 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member has abandoned his connection with Jackson, so I do not understand why the Honourable Member is so edgy at this time whenever I speak. Sir, whoever has set the Honourable Member up, please tell him that he is going to be set up in the wrong way today. The Honourable Member needs to leave me alone. Please leave me alone.

Mr. Speaker, One Accord area now has numerous businesses there. There is utter confusion any evening from 3:30 onward and to exit to go towards the Warrens Roundabout. It is endless confusion. The flyovers, as far as I understood, would have eased that congestion because of the traffic that would be flowing on the ground.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that more can be done with Ministry of Transport and Works, especially in relation to link roads. The Honourable Member knows of my feelings about some roads that need to be refurbished, repaired or rebuilt because of the heavy rainfall in the parish of St. Thomas on a daily basis. Therefore, I am not going to refer to Vauxcluse and Canefield but I want to refer to the link road called Jack-in-the-box, which has now become a dump for vehicular traffic and persons driving from all over Barbados, on a bridge is ready to collapse. Sir, that merits urgent attention. Sir, when you leave St. John, certain sections of St. George and want to get to St. James, Jack-in-the-box Gully is the best link road to take you up Ashford Road, down through Stoney Gully, on to Fortress

Hill, on to St. Thomas Parish and on to the highway Church. By traveling this way you would cut down at least 15 to 20 minutes. Mr. Speaker, unless people pay more attention to the link roads that exist throughout Barbados and upgrade those roads, making them more assessable for motorists, it would pose bigger problems.

Mr. Speaker, the Bloomsbury Road is another one and the Honourable Member knows about that, including the Vauxcluse Road. Sir, take note that the tourist attractions, with more than 12 of them in the parish, which have to be traversed by taxis, coaches and people with hired cars, there needs to be a decent network of roads because most of those roads are lonely and if they are not properly prepared, then you can tell what dangers that may exist.

Mr. Speaker, I now wish to make reference to some of the difficulties that have helped to put us into this economic situation that is in existence today. Fuel prices. The Honourable Member spoke this morning about the subvention that was offered to feed manufacturers. Sir, it was approximately \$1.3 million but fuel prices continue to climb on a daily basis. Some days the prices rise by 13 cents on other days it falls by one cent. Sir, for the gas station owners to have to be constantly recalibrating those machines become very expensive to do so. Therefore, I believe there should be another approach.

Mr. Speaker, I accept that what is happening in the rest of the world in the oil producing countries will have an impact but we were having our prices climbing. Domestic gas could not be obtained through SOL for the last three weeks and so many people cannot cook. The Democratic Labour Party is putting Barbadians back to cooking with three rocks on a pot outside. It is wrong. Last week kerosine oil rose by 11 cents so the old man and lady and poor people out there cannot afford to buy kerosine because it has risen by 11 cents more. It really is a terrible situation.

Mr. Speaker, that is not all, once the fuel prices rise, it definitely impacts on manufacturing, fisheries and agriculture and a number of other sectors that heavily rely on fuel to be able to work with the businesses. Sir, further, there was an increase by this Government in 2009, even with funeral directors and so Barbadians have to pay more to bury their dead. Fees have also risen for embalmers, lawyers and educational psychologists. Fees have medical practitioners have also risen, so that when you get sick you have to pay more too. Fees have also risen for contractors. Mr. Speaker, I have a businessman in the constituency who is responsible for manufacturing bricks. He said to me that during the time of the Barbados Labour Party, he could have made \$35 000 per day because of the demand in the environment for construction but that now he does not even collect \$3 500. He has also had to send home five workers

because of the economic situation for which this Government in part is responsible because of the loss of jobs and poor investors' confidence in this country.

Mr. Speaker, fees of the counseling psychologists have also risen. Fees have also risen for the architects, draughtsman, dentists. Sir, you know I always come with my evidence and who were \$750 ended up having to pay more, even double at the end. Mr. Speaker, there are so many other reasons and other difficulties. Sir, every sector of this society is hurting.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, you have to pay more to be born and some of my non-nationals who have immigrant status have to pay \$3 500 at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. One lady who has three children between ages 20, 17 and 11. This lady has never had to pay for any of the other children but had to pay \$ 3 500 to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to have a young baby last year. I did not say Bayview and so my constituents are feeling it.

I spoke about the undertaker and the embalmers, you have to pay more when you fall it, because doctors fees have risen; dental fees have risen. Sir, everything is just going up and it reminds of a particular period of the Democratic Labour Party. You have to pay more for your building cost because 17.5 VAT is having an impact. You have to pay more and we are hearing. We have to pay more when we are hungry because we were promised by the Democratic Labour Party the first order of business of this party when they become the Government is cost of living, cost of living, cost of living and today the 15th day of the month of March, cost of living under the Democratic Labour Party as multiplied 30, instead of 3.

Mr. Speaker, Barbadians are hurting. When people pick up their telephones, because Honourable Members on the other side may not have that direct contact with their constituents but when you come out of church on Sunday mornings and you get a telephone call saying that person has no food in their house, because that person is a nursing student who has not received their allowance for a period of three months, hence they cannot cook.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: The nursing subsidies are not paid to nurses who are in training at the Barbados Community College and the stipend is not being offered to them and therefore one has to jump into the cupboard... I believe Minister of Education and Human Resource Development will help with that if he were approached a Sunday morning, to prepare meal or to offer something to those persons who are less fortunate.

Mr. Speaker, that is not all, there is the issue of high taxes. When the Barbados Labour Party was the Government for 14 years we never raised road taxes, we lowered land tax. This Government has raised the road taxes where people who are driving a 4X4 now has to pay \$900 per year. Property tax have gone up, even a bicycle tax has been introduced. There is a hospital tax also. Sir, I have the evidence of one of my constituents who had an accident and he and his friends went to the Casualty, stayed for three hours, saw no one, got nothing and received a bill from the hospital in October last year. This bill was for \$56. 25. This person is a Barbadian and not a non-national. The man got so vexed he got up and left.

Asides.

2.13 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

(ESTIMATES) (Done & G)

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Sir, the man got so vexed, he got up and left. He said it was madness but he was still billed for medication \$8.21, and for the use of the ambulance, \$187.50. Sir, this is a Barbadian, bred and born in Barbados to whom this Bill has been sent. Mr. Speaker, that is not all, the non-national, who cannot help himself, he pays \$150 for every time he makes a visit. Mr. Speaker, his Bill is now in the hands of a debt collector because he cannot pay the bill. He has children and he has no work because this Government has put him out of work. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what will happen to him but it is unfortunate that is the way we are going in this country but, Sir, I will go on, with the limited time I have.

Mr. Speaker, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is doing the charging and I have no problem if people who have insurance policies are asked to pay for the services because when they go to private institutions and so on that is what is done but persons who have no insurance policies and who are not working, are below the belt when it comes to poverty and to be asked to do it, I think it is unfair and unreasonable.

Mr. Speaker, I visit the hospital sometimes so I have a general, good idea as to what is happening but, Sir, you know what is also taking hold of this country? Sir, we are going back to 1991/1994 again. We heard about the challenges in the Geriatric Hospital. Sir, we have the money and we must spend it. Those senior persons in there, in particular - that is the composition of the geriatric hospitals - are the one who, within recent times, you heard of gastroenteritis. Sir, you heard of nimbles in the hospital and you heard of flu and all kinds of things and, Sir, I am not saying it would not happen but I concerned, as a member of this public because the Circular that was

submitted by the Government on April 7th, 2010 with reference to (2:30) acting appointments and employment of substitutes says that no substitutes should be employed at any level unless specifically approved by the relevant authority.

Mr. Speaker, the staff is limited and, therefore, the individuals in the Geriatric Hospitals are not getting the care that is necessary, after all, the nurses both male and female are human beings too and they work beyond human call to attend to the needs but something must be done to ensure, when persons are on holiday, sick leave, or for whatever reasons are away from work, that our seniors and other persons in the Geriatric Hospitals get the best treatment possible. Sir, so we have to allow those who are substitutes to go, if a janitor is out, there must be a substitute to clean the facility and if a nurse is out, there must be somebody to look after the needs of the patients and if the general worker is out, there must be somebody to clean the environs of those institutions.

Mr. Speaker, that is not all, it brings me to the handling fee. Sir, last year March, when we were doing the Estimates debate, one of our Honourable Members here disputed a Supplementary that came about the Barbados Drug Service. Sir, we criticised and all kinds of things were said about us. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West is the one who raised it and you know we almost left here with all kinds of incidents, accidents and murder, perhaps, if it was not stymied at the point in time over the same issue and now, lo and behold, Sir, we now have...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not know what she is referring to.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: I said murder, perhaps.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just one minute, please. Honourable Member, you did not refer to a specific matter and that is the difficulty that I have but if you are referring to the matter which has been referred to the Committee of Privileges, then you cannot make any reference to it.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, if I have in any way impinged on it, I humbly apologise and ask to withdraw. Sir, I know that we, on this side, were castigated by the other side and it led to all forms of confusion as a result and now, lo and behold, a couple of days ago, there was the information about the handling fee where, if I spend between \$0.01 and \$2, I have to pay an amount of \$5. Sir, is this the way that the Government is going to operate where a number of drugs have been taken off the formulary for persons who are ill? Sir, those with H

Influenza, and, I cannot call the word but I think that Chloramphenicol is off the formulary, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, there are some for the dermatitis of the scalp, some for treatment of alcoholism which we know, Sir, is a problem in this place. There is one call (5:46) Fluoxomestron to do with delayed puberty in males, so even the males are included. There are some with women in menopause who must have the medications, there are some with eye problems and they are all taken off the formulary. Sir, I understand they are more than 100 and when ordinary Barbadians go to the drug stores Barbadians are told that they have to pay up to a certain amount of money, 30 per cent out of their pockets.

Mr. Speaker, it is killing those who are suffering, killing them in the sense that it is a burden for those who are hypertensive, those who are suffering with heart diseases, those who are asthmatic and so on, they need to get the ease, and I do not think that the Democratic Labour Party can give them that ease because of the measures they have put in place.

Mr. Speaker, I have another problem because when I see the pharmacies and how the Government pharmacies operate, for me, the \$8 million that Government will save from the taxpayers paying for the handling fees when then have to go into expansion of the Government's pharmacies, if you are going to get it free there, they are going to have give a 24-hour service in order for the pharmacist to be able to treat to the needs of people and there are a number of other things, so the \$8 million will be dead.

Mr. Speaker, I go on because I know my time is limited. The Ministry with the Welfare Department under the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central. I will speak from my heart because I know of what I speak. Sir, I feel hurt when only yesterday when the Honourable Minister of Finance concluded his speech, I received two texts from persons who have been going, and going to the Welfare Department at Warrens and they are not even getting pampers. Sir, one of them has a common-law husband who died a couple of months ago, and would have been told by an officer that whatever funds the husband was getting because of the tumor from which he suffered that money is now dead with him. There is a six-year-old child and there is a three-year-old child that female has to struggle with and, she too is ill but, Sir, not one cent.

Mr. Speaker, then there is another one with a child who is highly challenged. I would have written to the Honourable Minister and to the Ministry of Welfare asking for assistance. Mr. Speaker, if your child was born with polio and suffers with polio, is in a wheelchair and can hardly move, Sir, you mean that every year you are going to have to renew, wait for three months or four months and no money is coming into the family that can be used to help

feed the same child in the wheelchair. Sir, there is no money coming in to buy baby food or no money coming in to do anything to give them something to eat before they go to school. Yes, they get the free bus fare but many go to school hungry because the parents are now out of employment.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have two minutes in which to conclude.

Mr. Speaker, school meals have now given an instruction, I understand. The Honourable Minister is here and he can correct it. Sir, there will be no more chicken on the menu, only beef and corn beef three times a week. The chicken farmers should say something about this because our children need the protein in their diet if they are to survive.

Mr. Speaker, let me finish off. Sir, you know that I cannot conclude unless I (9:00) touch youth affairs. Sir, I believe that if this Government were to be really interested in fostering a culture of volunteerism that those women and men, those kind-hearted Barbadians who for more than 20 years would have been volunteering their service to this country to assist our youth and others, that they would be able to help.

Sir, I am back on to summer camps again because the \$5.5 million that the Honourable Minister indicated on this Floor that was spent on a 28-day camp last summer where 65 caterers earned \$3.4 million and, Sir, I want to know what benefits did our children get.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: I am interested in who the caterers were now but the point is that I believe that \$5.5 million would have assisted with this whole drug service business where poor people are reeling under the pressure of what they have to pay at the desk when they go to the pharmacy...

H/A87B/2:24

Sequence 19

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Miss C.Y. FORDE: ... with this whole drug service business, where poor people are reeling under the pressure of what they have to pay at the desk when they go to the Pharmacy. The overall can cost close to \$6 million to me. That is my belief. I believe that if we can engage our people more, we would do better.

Mr. Speaker, we heard about the unemployment rate, and I like to bring my facts, again. This is the newspaper of

August 12, 1994, and Ad given by the Democratic Labour Party, "Don't Devalue Barbados". Lots of jobs are being created. The unemployment rate is dropping. Last year for the first quarter it was 27 per cent. It dropped to 22 per cent this year." I can make it a document of the House.

Asides.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Sir, unemployment in this country continues to climb. Do you know what my big beef is? The young men who are now going up to Dodds Prison, the young men who are out there dealing with drugs.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. SPEAKER.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you know you cannot use words like that. What is cock tax? In any case it is improper. Please withdraw it and let us move on.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Sir, I mean child maintenance. That was just a Bajan word, but forgive me.

Sir, men still love to maintain their children.

Hon.F.J. STUART: On a point of order. The Honourable Member might be misleading the House. I think I heard mention being made of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and 'Cock Tax'. What is that?

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just for the record. That comment was with respect to cock tax or whatever tax I was is struck from the record.

Asides.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Those young men who lost their work, those young men who cannot go into construction like the 800 from the Four Seasons, those who have been laid off from manufacturing, and those who get a week on and a week off cannot now maintain their children.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please conclude.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Yes, Sir.

Sir, as I close I want to say that Hurricane Tomas has just gone and I would like the money we voted the \$17 million, along with Catastrophe Fund holding almost \$13 million, I have not had two houses fixed, only one in Clifton Hill. My residents have spent Independence without a housetop, about thirty-one houses. Sir, they spent

Christmas without a housetop, New Years Day without a housetop, Errol Barrow Day without a housetop, and it looks as though Easter and then Kodooment will come, because the Honourable Minister of Housing is quoting in the Press as saying, "We will work with St. Philip first, then Christ Church, and St. Michael after." So we in St. Thomas are not Barbadians. We in St. Thomas do not pay taxes. I am not speaking for St. Lucy. I am not speaking for St. George North. The people of St. Thomas are not getting any benefits and the policies of the Democratic Labour Party have failed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member your time has expired.

Mr. H.F. LASHLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House relative to the statement she made, in relation to the fact that this Minister of Housing said that, we are starting in St. Philip, in relation to the Tomas repairs. I believe that the statement made by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is misleading and is not true. I believe it should be struck from the record.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have no way of having a view on it because while I do not recall the specific comment, it may have been said, and therefore I will accept your statement as a correction, but I cannot ask that it be struck from the record because I do not have the specifics.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member I will prefer if terms like those are not used in this Chamber.

Honourable Member for St. Thomas you have an extra minute. So you can conclude.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Thank you very much. I wanted to close by saying that the policies of the Democratic Labour Party are really not working and Barbadians are suffering. I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give support to these Estimates, the Appropriation Bill, as laid yesterday by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, in his usual great oratory style, obviously having a firm grasp of matters of great national importance when it comes to the economy of Barbados and certainly a clear understanding of what has been happening in the global arena, and its impact upon us in the region and in Barbados in particular.

Sir, coming after the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, who in her usual animated style, would have sought to bring to this Chamber some information that can in some respects be construed as perhaps a little bit inflammatory and a little bit sometimes misleading. We have to realise that the background against which the Honourable Member speaks in a sense we expect those on the other side would oppose whatever this Government is doing just for the sake of opposing rather than bring any serious evidence or providing any viable alternative.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas just spoke and cited individuals who went to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and left with a bill. The policy of this Government is the same of the Government before, and that is that citizens and permanent residence of Barbados are entitled to free health care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. So if someone who she deems to be a citizen of Barbados went there and received a bill, I will be very happy to take copies of the correspondence once they have been produced, as usual, by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West on his computer.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are suggesting some kind fraud and dishonesty. You have to withdraw that comment.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw those comments.

Mr. Speaker, evidence in the past could not have been produced as documents of this House by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West. Sir, I am very happy to take the documents once there are bone fide and investigate, and produce the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and her constituent with any evidence, and if it wrong and apology will be given, but I do not think that you can take a one-off incident and claim it to be the policy or any change in policy when in truth and in fact that is not the case.

Sir, we have to be very careful, Honourable Members of this Honourable Chamber, not to come here and inflame a situation or incite people to behaviour that we do not wish to have, but rather to remain very levelheaded and sober at all times.

Mr. Speaker, we would have listened yesterday for over three hours to the Honourable Member for St. Peter, almost four hours, I believe, who sought to castigate and criticise, however constructively, the proposals as put forward by the Honourable Member of St. Michael North West, in his capacity as Minister of Finance. We listened to him yesterday, and really and truly at the end of his presentation I asked myself what would he have done differently if he were in this position as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West is in.

Sir, a long discourse that really amounted to nothing, clearly had no firm grasp of what is happening in the world today, clearly not understanding the economic challenges of Barbados, clearly not understanding the direction this country is going under this Democratic Labour Party administration, and as usual while after his presentation, nowhere to be found in the precinct of this Parliament, going forward.

Sir, I must say that because it is very important. You have the Honourable Leader of the Opposition who I have noted has spoken in this Chamber on nine occasions between 2007 and now.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: No, 2007, when the Honourable Member for St. John then gave the real Estimates in 2007, not 2008. Since January 2007, the Honourable Member for St. Peter has spoken in this Chamber on only about nine occasions, drawing taxpayers money, and only come into Parliament on Saturday mornings and speak when there is nobody here to dispute what he is saying, but that is the kind of leader that they on the other side opted to displace, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, to put as their leader. So we understand clearly why they cannot agree to anything on that side.

Mr. Speaker, getting back to the issue of the Estimates and the economic situation, we must understand the parameters with which this is done. Barbados is not an island unto itself, and today, March 2011, we are still grappling with many of the challenges that would have erupted in 2008 and 2009, which saw the whole world going through the deepest recession since the 1930s. Often times Honourable Members on the other side like to behave as though all the problems...

2.34 p.m.

Sequence 20

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 21, 2.34 p.m.

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: In 2008/2009, we saw the whole world going through the deepest recession we had since the 1930s. I know often Honourable Members on the other side like to behave as though all the problems in Barbados are of the making of those who exist in Barbados alone. I believe firmly that this Democratic Labour Party administration should be commended for being able to keep the ships steady in the midst of such turbulent global waters. I will show you an example just now, Mr. Speaker.

The USA, for example, one of the world's largest economies in the last 2008/2009 to 2010, has seen the highest level of foreclosures ever in the history of the United States of America. In Barbados you would see the highest level of housing construction ever in the last two or three decades in the midst of that, and you are saying we do not know what we are doing. The USA, has had the highest unemployment levels in the last 50 years and we have not laid off a fellow from the public service in Barbados.

We have also had in the USA, of course, the collapse of financial institutions which then led to a spiraling effect throughout the global arena. Barbados is not immune from these things but through the good regulatory environment banks in Barbados have not closed down. They are still functioning. In the USA, of course, they had to increase their debt cap to, I believe, about more than \$14 trillion. We have kept ours to a certain decent level here. Even the Deposit Insurance Fund for those who follow these things in the international arena in the USA has been broken, netted \$20.7 billion in 2010 and ours is still functioning and still solvent here in this country.

In the United Kingdom, we had the deepest recession ever seen, resident unemployment, deep cuts in social services. We have not cut social services in Barbados. In the United Kingdom, they have increased student fees by 300 per cent. We are still financing educating Barbados kindergarten through to tertiary, giving the University of the West Indies more money than they have ever had, including that to keep the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter in a comfortable ocean view office up there on the hill.

Asides.

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: Yes. We have given the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill and so the campus has money than the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter gave, now holds a chair up there. I am not talking about any rocking chair or any mahogany chair, a seat in the most comfortable office paid for by the taxpayers in this country. We have done that while the U.K. and Ireland increased student fees by 300 per cent.

In Spain, they had a EURO\$15 billion Austerity Programme because of the deep recession in that country. They are now struggling in 2011 to reduce the deficit from 11 per cent to 6 per cent. Here in Barbados it is 6.8 per cent, not the figure that the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter quoted and he is not in his chair here today so he cannot even refuse to challenge me on this point. In Spain they cut public servants salaries by 5 per cent. We granted a 10 per cent increase in salaries to public officers in Barbados, even through the deepest economic challenges we have had. In Spain, unemployment is now in excess of 20 per cent. In Barbados it is about half of that.

In France, they have increased their retirement age, despite all the rioting and looting they had to increase their retirement age to deal with the deep economic recession up there.

Portugal is another country with major economic chaos as well.

Sir, throughout it all, Ireland, Mr. Speaker, that is just to give you a synopsis of what is happening in the global arena. And this little island, 166 square miles in the middle of the Caribbean ocean is not immune from what is happening out there but we have not seen the kind of reaction and the kind of austere measures imposed by this Government, even in the midst of that because we care about the average Barbadian. We have ensured that we kept our hand firmly on the steering wheel and we have steered this ship in safe harbour for the time being and we will continue to do that.

Sir, we talk about Barbados. Barbados is indeed and import dependent economy. We have seen rising food prices around the world some of it had to be imported in this country as well.

In Russia, they decided that they are not exporting wheat, which caused the prices of wheat and the by products of wheat to escalate around the world. Barbados imports them because we do not manufacture any here.

Sir, we have had flooding for example in Punjab in Pakistan, the most fertile area which helped to increase food prices around the world, as well as flooding in Brazil and Australia and the recent phenomenon of earthquakes in Chile and New Zealand. I am sad to say, the one in Japan that occurred the last couple of days. These things, Mr. Speaker, certainly impact upon this small economy of Barbados.

These things did not happen between 1994 and 2007, 14 years of bliss, economic growth around the world and what did the Barbados Labour Party do then? Build monuments for themselves. They did not restructure the economy. They did not guarantee Barbados as though the rough may happen at some point in time. There was always about a party and a fete. It was not about preparing our people. It was not about making a strong society. It was not about building strong and healthy communities. It was about what was in their best interest as individual politicians in the Barbados Labour Party, about building graven images unto themselves. That is what they stood for, for 14 years when the world economy was much better than it has been in the last three years. Therefore, I firmly believe that they ought to tender an apology to this side because we have done really well, when you look at it under the trying economic circumstances.

Now, you also have the growing issue of spiraling oil prices primarily fuel by unrest in the middle east and north Africa. Sir, that is not of Barbados' making but we will feel the price here. What happened under the Barbados Labour Party, I will tell you that under the magic wand of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, whom perhaps we will see sometime in the next month or so in here, was that he subsidised fuel prices so when we came into office in January 2008, it was almost \$80 million in debt on the Barbados National Old Company, a company tinkering on the brink of collapse. It was folly to make Barbadians think you were subsidising fuel prices when in truth and in fact, you were at the end of the day, the taxpayers of Barbados had to pay anyhow.

Asides.

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: Sir, that is false and misleading. Bring drinks somebody will pay so today we are faced with this unrest in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Kuwait, Bahrain and other parts of the Gulf States. Obviously, these will have an impact upon Barbados. These things, Mr. Speaker, must certainly impact upon the state of the economy. I will tell that we have done reasonably well under trying circumstance. Tourism as we mentioned before, has turned around. Numbers are back up to where they were in the pre recession years.

All it took was a strong, firm and decisive leadership by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central to go out there and explore new markets to do with analysis and to listen. Sir, not like the Honourable Member for St. Michael North who had 7½ days as Minister in that Ministry and was a total calamity, as Tom Adams once said, almost a hurricane upon the tourism sector.

What you have had now under this Democratic Labour Party administration is a turnaround in terms of the numbers, who are coming here and from non traditional markets as well.

Asides.

Hon. D.O'N INNISS: Let your pride not stop you, Members on the other side, Mr. Speaker, from congratulating this Democratic Labour Party administration for what we have done around here. The Honourable Members from the other side, including the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and the outgoing Honourable Member for St. George North would give the impression as though this whole economy would collapse and all the social infrastructures will collapse.

Asides.

Hon. D.O'N INNISS: Outgoing. This is your last election.

The Royal Barbados Police Force is still functioning well. Our security is still reasonably good in Barbados. We have done very well in many of these areas.

Mr. Speaker, now I have come to the issues of social services because I know that is an issue that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and those on the other side like to talk about. I think it often, to my mind, differentiates the difference between the Barbados Labour Party as a political organisation and the Democratic Labour Party. This Democratic Labour Party and this Democratic Labour Party Government has always stood fast to ensuring that Barbados has a social services network that is the envy of all around the world. Sir, that is where we put a lot of our emphasis.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. George North get up in here today, Mr. Speaker, and asked where is the progress, what has been happening in this country? They built highways, they built a prison and they expanded the airport and they did all sorts of building, monuments there again to yourself but what about the family situation? What about gender issues? What about the young people and the plight of the youth? What about the softer issues that really and truly sustain a community?

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 21, 2.44 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Without those, what use is the building? We are keeping people away from jail rather than spending between \$300 million and \$600 million building a new prison to incarcerate young people. That was their view on that side, ours is totally different. Our goal is to keep young people away from jail and keep them gainfully employed and engaged in constructive activities.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: That is why, Mr. Speaker, you would have seen that we would have placed a lot of emphasis on summer camps. To the Honourable Members on the other side summer camps are not anything of importance. We have been asking for the longest time what we were going to do with our young boys and girls during the summer period. Mr. Speaker, they are now engaged in constructive activities that lead to wholesome development of the persona. Thanks to this Democratic Labour Party Administration even in the midst of the economic situation, which the Honourable Member for St. Peter continues to give the impression of so doomy and gloomy, we have still been able to do that. We have certainly been able to address youth policies in many respects in this area. We have been able to say to our young people ride the buses free.

Sir, we can be extremely proud of our social services area. Our educational system remains very much intact. I believe that when the Minister of Education and Human Resource Department speaks, he would talk about the three new schools that are currently being built. Even the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is getting a new educational facility in her constituency. We have been able to do this despite having to use taxpayers' money to repair roads that they may have destroyed in the particular area.

Sir, a lot is happening in this society that we can be very proud of. Our housing programme is perhaps one of the most innovative programmes. As I have said before, we have seen major housing developments throughout the island. Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to note that in St. James South we are about to get a major housing development started in terms of the West Terrace Garden expansion. I believe that should start some time by the middle of the year if all goes well along with some other lots in the Wanstead and Oxnards areas that are poised for development and therefore, St. James South is not being left behind.

Sir, beyond that, even in Haynesville, I have 188 families that are no longer paying rent because we took the firm decision that if you lived in a National Housing Corporation unit for 20 or more years and your rent is paid up, you will stop paying rent and take possession of that property. We were able to do that despite all the doom and gloom about the economy of this country because this is a Government that cares about the average men and women in this society. Sir, when you factor in the fact that they are not paying rent with the fact that their children no longer have to pay bus fares to get to school, you will realise how good things are for many families in this society. Sir, we have done very well in many respects.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: I have learnt, Mr. Speaker, to ignore the asides including any call for a polyclinic in St. James. What I would tell the Honourable Member for St. George North is that the Urology Department of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is working very well and we are going to make sure that keeps going.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order, Honourable Member.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. The last visit I made to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Honourable Member was there in that Urology Department and I left him there.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order, please.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The point is that the Honourable Member is misleading the House. The statistics have shown that there is a need for a polyclinic in St. James. The Minister who is the representative of the parish is now saying that the people of St. James would not get one.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please take your seat. Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Thank you very much. I do not pay him much attention in these matters because I am not going to get caught up in his debate about building any facilities in a constituency because I represent the constituency. What I would tell you is that the polyclinic in St. John has started and will be completed under this Democratic Labour Party Administration. Had it been done during the 14 years of plenty under the Barbados Labour Party led by the Honourable Member for St. Peter, we would not be in the kind of situation we are in in dealing with primary health care in this country, the pressure would not be so great in St. George as serviced by the Glebe Polyclinic or in other parts of this island. Sir, I am not going to get caught up by building no monument in a constituency because I represent it. We are serious as a team and the people of St. John and the people of Barbados knows full well that polyclinic is well on its way as needed in this country.

Mr. Speaker, we have done very well in many areas and I would touch just quickly with respect of health care which I think I should speak to in a few areas. The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that you cannot on one hand say that things are tight in the economy... The revenue is not as great as we all would like it to be and we have explained the reasons why. We cannot say, as the Honourable Member for St. Peter would have talked about and the Honourable Member for St. James North who was really in the spirits yesterday, he is the only one who perhaps could converse with the dead, sometimes will get into...

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the excitement and the depth in which he has spoken and the aggressiveness yesterday about the sale...

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member knows that he cannot refer disparagingly to someone. To suggest that the Honourable Member for St. James North spoke in the spirits as if he was conversing with the dead would be akin to my referring to him of trying to raise a zombie of an economy and that this process is in fact embalming a zombie. That is the kind of nonsense we would descend into if the Honourable Member is allowed to make those disparaging remarks about an Honourable Member who is not in his

seat. The Honourable Member knows better. This is the third one. The comment about the Urology Department in the hospital is why people do not respect us in here.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Speaker, the excitement that emanated yesterday from the Members on the other side about how bad the economy is, how people are going to lose their jobs and we cannot finance the deficit, et cetera, makes you really and truly wonder why it is that despite that bad economic situation Barbados has still been able to maintain a health care system that is the envy of the Caribbean and even further afield. Despite all that the Honourable Members have been saying, our health care system today is much better than it was under the Barbados Labour Party with 14 years of plenty.

We have a situation in Barbados today, and it has been for many years now, where chronic non-communicable diseases have been the main challenge we have had in terms of the disease profile in this country. The former Government would have just pumped money behind institutions time and time again without getting any results. We came up as a Government and said no, we have to shift towards a preventative strategy. That is not costing taxpayers a lot of money. We have said that the issue of diet, nutrition, exercise, et cetera need to be addressed. How do we educate Barbadians about healthier lifestyles? It cannot be just about spending money building hospitals and putting equipment there on the tertiary side alone. Yes, some of that has to be addressed but a sustainable health care system can only be well-developed and maintained by a strong preventative strategy. Sir, that is clearly what this Democratic Labour Party Government has embarked on and we have done it well in spite of the economic challenges that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas constantly talk about.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say, in terms of health care generally speaking, some of the things that we continue to do well in this country. I am not going to be caught up in the issues raised by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, I think she understands clearly why she needed to raise those issues. We have shifted more toward community health care. How do we get our nurses and other practitioners out there in the community making timely interventions that ultimately cost taxpayers a lot less money. Sir, if we take, for example, mental health, 16 mental health nursing posts will be created by this Democratic Labour Party Administration so that they could go out in the community and work. At least a third of the residents in the Psychiatric Hospital need not be there but because of the stigma associated with mental health once they are in there people do not want to take them back

home anymore which is part of the challenges we have to deal with in this society.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes in which to conclude.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: In terms of the ambulance service, we acquired two new ambulances last year and I believe there is a rapid response vehicle that would soon be handed over to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as well.

House A87B Sequence 22

2.54 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Hon. D. O. INNISS: You do not hear the constant complains any more about ambulances and shortages of ambulances as you would have had under the Barbados Labour Party because we made a conscious decision to improve things in that department. We have been able to shift some of the outpatient services off the main Queen Elizabeth Hospital and into the building across the road.

Mr. Speaker, between January and August of last year, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would have had 14 097 admissions, with the average length of stay being 6.4 days. The main departments that would have handled these large numbers were medicine, surgery, obstetrics and pediatric. Let me say that 60 per cent of surgeries done in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital during the period would have been for noncommunicable diseases, of which 80 per cent related to diabetic foot care. Mr. Speaker, with these startling statistics we have to do something to help reduce the pressure off our main tertiary institution, which once again goes back to improving things in the primary health care side, the polyclinics, community outreach programmes, engaging other health care individuals in the whole process, so at the end the moneys the Ministry of Finance is able to advance to the health care system in Barbados, we can still keep things afloat and do very well under these circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, we proposed changed to the Drug Service, and I am hearing the constant scare tactics being employed by Honourable Members on the other side, as though Barbadians will no longer get the medication to which they are accustomed. Sir, the illnesses that Barbadians have been dealing with for the last 20 or 30 years will continue to be addressed by the Formulary. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West, who I always say benefits more from Toronto than anything else Barbados, oftentimes gets up and wants to give the impression as though this place would become like Haiti. This is not the case and we will continue to ensure that Barbadians have access to good health care, including good

medicines. We will not be so irresponsible as a country and a Government, as I keep saying, we will not be penny wise and pound foolish. We have a good health care system that works and we will continue to make improvements wherever we can.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I support this Appropriation Bill. The Minister of Finance has made it abundantly clear in terms of our objectives, which include:

(a) to continue to roll out good social programmes that make a meaningful impact upon our society;

(b) help us build good families and strong communities. That is one of the goals as espoused in this Bill.

(c) continue and protect and create jobs wherever possible.

Mr. Speaker, investors' confidence is certainly still there, even though there are many global challenges to economies, Barbados still continues to see investors expressing confidence, by starting new housing project, investing in tourism projects, investing in a multifaceted number of areas, even in the old St. Joseph's property that the Barbados Labour Party closed out of spite, out of political vindictiveness, just like they did with the St. John Polyclinic, has now found someone who is interested in developing that as a health care facility, thanks to a new health and wellness tourism policy of this enlightened Democratic Labour Party administration. We are not in the politics of spite, we recognised that once elections are over we have to take care of all Barbadians, regardless of their political stripes.

Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that we keep discretionary spending in check, and all of us as Ministers have been taxed to look at areas of duplication and wastages in each Ministry and each department. It is not always about borrowing more money, it is also about ensuring that the moneys we get to spend from the taxpayers that we spend it wisely. That is going to help pull this country through these challenging times.

Mr. Speaker, we are predicting a 2.5 per cent growth in the economy this year, which we think in all circumstances is reasonable and fair and we are able to do this, while at the same time giving the necessary resources to the key department in Government that needs to continue to drive and expand the economy of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore give full support to this Appropriations Bill and look forward to a continued debate over the next few days. I am obliged.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Speaker, I too rise in congratulation and support of the very erudite presentation of the Estimates given by the Minister of Finance yesterday. Of course, in stark contrast to that erudite presentation, we had contributions from the other side that were lack lustre, they substance and any serious analysis of the Estimates. They were also laced with a lot of hyperbolic language, language about no food in the house, no medication, people have to go back to cooking on rocks. Sir, in each case cited by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, if we on this side want to cite individual cases of hardship prior to our coming to Government we can cite those cases too. Sir, Barbados has not changed so drastically since 2008 that people had to start cooking on rocks or not getting their medication from the hospital, not having pampers, these individual cases that the Honourable Member is citing, we can cite them just as well but we are more responsible than that.

Mr. Speaker, in the meantime, on the other hand, Barbadians are not listening to them, Barbadians are living very well. As a matter of fact, the last figures coming out of the travel industry state very clearly that Barbadians are travelling at an all-time record, they are going by sea and by air. They are going on vacations. Most of the social events in Barbados are over patronised. Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago Agrofest was oversubscribed. Barbadians are living their regular lives because they are exposed to the offering of CNN, BBC, MSN, Fox News, they know exactly what is happening across the world, they realized that Barbados is not an island unto itself, we are all part of the world's economy and if they are suffering hardship in those countries, then it is obvious that we will be suffering hardship right here in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, what they are saying every Sunday when they go around interrupting people's Sunday siesta by talking all kind of nonsense, is not getting any traction with Barbadians, it is not resonating with Barbadians. Barbadians are in tune with what is happening in the international arena. Sir, all they are saying are falling on death ears and Barbadians simply do not want to hear what they are saying.

Mr. Speaker, on the other hand, Minister of Social Care, is making a substantial contribution to the social reengineering that has occupied the attention of this Government since resuming he reigns of Government in 2008. Mr. Speaker, we see ourselves as one of the ministries that provides social undergirding to the poor, to children, to women, to persons with disabilities and the elderly. I just want to bring to the attention of this Honourable House a few of the policy directions and objectives we have carved out for ourselves as a ministry for implementation.

Mr. Speaker, after I have done this, I will expand on a few objectives, if time permits, to reveal how we as a Ministry are on the production line and are making all contributions to the weaving of this majestic tapestry called the just society, which will continue to provide the protection and cover for each and every citizen. Mr. Speaker, let me first tell you that my ministry has developed a policy that prepares existing welfare recipients for entry or reentry into the workforce through personal development programmes, counseling, skills, training, job placement and access to funding. Sir, we do more than that, we developed and implemented policies, protocols and programmes to facilitate the integration of persons with disabilities back into the community and allow them to feel like the human-being that they are. Our intention is also focused on devising policies and other mechanisms to assist in securing an enabling environment for an ageing population and assist with the alleviation or reduction of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, in the last two years, we have been mandated to broaden our scope by pursuing a bottom-up developmental strategy.

3.03 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

(ESTIMATES) (Done & G)

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Speaker, in the last two years, we have been mandated to broaden our scope by pursuing a bottom-up developmental strategy that allows for participatory governance which is geared towards the development of communities and self-reliance, especially among our citizens and we have answered that call through the establishment of the Constituency Councils.

Mr. Speaker, our Ministry is not undertaking these serious and worthwhile pursuits in a vacuum. We have conducted intense qualitative research to deepen the understanding of the social problems of Barbados and facilitate that formulation of sound evidence-based policy through the Bureau of Social Policy Research and Planning.

Mr. Speaker, the one department that is pivotal to our social assistance programme is the Welfare Department. Sir, so important is this department that the Ministry is embarking on a re-engineering or a retooling of this department. This department is staffed by some of the better qualified social workers in the public service, officers who have the requisite skill sets to address the needs of this vulnerable group that appeal for their assistance but despite this obvious array of talent and training this agency still attracts some of the most bruising

criticism from the public at large, criticism that is sometimes justifiable and sometimes warranted.

Mr. Speaker, from a political and internal top management perspective, we have taken an in-depth and detailed review of the mechanics and operational machinery of that department only to realise that the problem areas do not only lie with the human resource inadequacies, they go beyond that. These inadequacies, Mr. Speaker, are further exacerbated by the lack of modern, 20th Century system that can enhance the identification, stabilisation and eventual empowerment of the Welfare Department's many clients.

Mr. Speaker, these systems when implemented will allow the officers to make a better formatted evidence-based assessments and remove the sometimes personal judgement issues enabling better and more prescriptive solutions to the client's plight. Sir, imagine this. In this 2011 the welfare officers are buried in an ocean of papers, files and sometimes dusty books as they perform their duties and this should not be so in a modern age and, Mr. Speaker, I intend to do something about this situation.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken the bulls by the horns and have undertaken a number of system changes, enhanced service delivery, a paradigm shift, if you will, Mr. Speaker, in our own approach to poverty alleviation along with some of the additional personal benefits that we offer.

Mr. Speaker, we have commenced in the Ministry with the Welfare Department a comprehensive review of the Welfare Department by the completion of the first phase of a study of that department by the Productivity Council to identify the problems in its operations and its processes and to recommend workable solutions and that study will be presented very shortly to the Social Policy Committee of Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, we will undertake also that a comprehensive review of the Welfare-to-Work Programme in its seventh year now, Mr. Speaker, and we have refashioned and renamed that programme the Poverty Reduction Empowerment Programme (PREP), laying the basis for expansion and the implementation of a new programme in the coming year and the assigning of a dedicated officer to deal with that particular programme.

Mr. Speaker, there will be a detailed examination of the eligibility criteria for grants and benefits processed by the various agencies in order to provide more clarity and transparency in the assignment of benefits to clients. Sir, that will be the introduction of a standardised criteria by which all the clients will be assessed. Sir, although the national assistance rates were increased some time in 2008, I think it was, in the 2010 budgetary presentation by the

Honourable Minister of Finance there was an additional increase of \$10 per week granted to children in order to deal with the concerns regarding nutrition. Sir, while I am on that, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Thomas advancing a case for fathers who do not make their contribution for the support of their children. Now, I want to come down on the other side of that argument because I, like most members of Parliament, have to deal with a number of dead-beat fathers in this society who turn their backs on their children and leave the mothers to solely look after those children. Sir, I see them on a weekly basis at my clinics, where these mothers struggle on a daily basis to support these children and a large number of the fathers have abandoned their responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, I want to appeal to you to help me in this regard. Sir, help me to convince these young men that they are fathers and that if they went on a rainy night, or a sunny day and enjoyed the sweets that they should now share in the sweetness of raising their children because I believe they ought to do this. Sir, I am a father of three sons and I take my responsibility very seriously and I believe those fathers should take their responsibilities seriously.

Mr. Speaker, further to that, we have also added an additional \$200 000 in this financial year to the Welfare Department in connection with food vouchers to shore up the many households in Barbados. There will also be further consolidation of the role of the Welfare Department in the Icy Bridge Programme, which I will speak to in a more expansive way a little later on in my presentation, if time permits and also the introduction of the same (8:15) Icy Bridge Programme in association with the OAS Chilean Fuente Bridge Programme with a pilot of 30 households to begin very shortly. Sir, as I have said, I will speak to that in more detail very shortly.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke early of the enhancement of the conditions at the Welfare Department and I also want to say that we are going to add systems audit reviewing computer needs followed the provision of a full compliment of computers to allow each welfare officer to have access to the computers and to enhance their service delivery. Sir, this, of course, will wrench them out of this

antediluvian existence that they now have in the Welfare Department. I will also improve and enhance the communications amongst 80 per cent or so of the welfare officers having access to internet and e-mail. Sir, just imagine that in 2011 that the welfare officers at the Welfare Department do not have access to these programmes.

Mr. Speaker, we will also be increasing over the CARICOM countries and social protection involvement with regional countries and also establishing ties with our friends in the OAS and also in Trinidad.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Welfare Department, they are now 60 years in existence and that is a signal honour to have been in existence for such a long time.

H/A87B/3:14

Sequence 24

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: I want to congratulate the current Chief Welfare Officer and her staff, and, of course, all of the officers that went before them, in assisting in building that department and establishing it, and also helping us as a country and a society to be exactly where we are. Sir, I say to Barbadians, work with us and be patient. I know they are coming from a far way behind but this Government in collaboration with the several officers at the Welfare Department will be working assiduously in making this department better for service delivery.

Sir, the ISEE Bridge Programme that I spoke to earlier, over the years successive Governments have been throwing millions upon millions of dollars at the alleviation of poverty in Barbados and we have had some successes but it is very much alive and threatens not to go away anytime soon. Now it is against this background that we in the Ministry of Social Care had to take fresh guard and to adopt new methodologies to wrestle this multi-headed monster to the ground. It is with this in mind that we have focused our attention on the ISEE Bridge Programme. This programme proposes to be empower members of the poor and vulnerable households in the Barbadian landscape. Members of these households do not have the necessary tools to manage those risks and to overcome their living conditions in poverty. So they simply cannot pull themselves up by their own boot straps.

Some of the problems that we have identified in the Ministry are that integral changes are still required to improve Barbados' poverty profile in spite of the social safety nets provided by the Government over the years. Some of the challenges that we are facing are people living under poverty who are the most vulnerable to change in their environment. They are extremely vulnerable. There is the continued existence of inter generational poverty. Sir, some households simply cannot break free of poverty. They learnt helplessness leads to dependency, which is a characteristic of the poor, and they cannot help themselves and they are always looking to others for existence. That is a reality among people who are destitute or find themselves in a poverty-stricken situation. Some individuals lack the knowledge of how to access social services that are being provided. They simply do not know where to go or to whom to go to.

Sir, agencies are clients driven, that is they have a reactive rather than a proactive approach to the clients' problems. Clients go to agencies rather than seeing the clients in their own particular spaces so that they can identify the problems as they occur. There is also a lack of coordination and a weak monitoring of the evaluation mechanisms, several agencies doing the same thing for the same persons. One client goes to a number of agencies and, of course getting the same responses from those different agencies.

Mr. Speaker, you will ask the question why the ISEE Bridge Programme? Sir, it will be a highly interactive programme which focuses on targeted intervention at the household level addressing the needs of each member of the household and seeking to transform their lives in a very real way. That is the importance about this particular programme.

Now there are four critical areas and thus the acronym ISEE. It is the Identification, Stabalisation, Enablement and Empowerment. (1) It is the identification or the assessment where the poor and vulnerable are identified and their needs assessed. (2) The stalisation is the immediate needs that are addressed. (3) The enablement, the skills to survive are imparted or otherwise teaching them to fish, and (4) the Empowerment where individuals are imbued with the capacity to succeed and excel in the society through formal education and training.

Sir, the Bridge part of the acronym is the gateway to social inclusion and integration of these individuals back into the community, and it is also the conduit for individuals to take up opportunities that are being offered in the wider society and it places the individual concerned within the household at the center of the programme, and it also provides them with the essentials along with the cycle social component to improve their quality and standard of living.

Mr. Speaker, this programme will be a two-year pilot programme commencing from July 2011 and it will culminate in June 2013. Sir, depending on the result of the pilot project, it may be converted into a long-term programme, but we will have this two-year pilot programme in the first place.

Sir, the ISEE Bridge is a household intervention project. It will train family counselors and facilitators. It will also provide intensive cycle social support, and like I said before, we will target 30 households, targeting each constituency in Barbados. Of course, we will be including around 150 persons in that pilot. That is one of the answers that we have come up with, to attack in a very real way the poverty situation in Barbados. We are going to have this pilot for two years, between July 2011 and June 2013.

Sir, I have heard a lot of talk about the Welfare Department, and it has been extended now to the Ministry, not performing that under girding role that is our principal remit. We have distributed between April and September 2010, I do not have the figures up to date, but certainly between April and September 2010, food vouchers were distributed to the value of \$185 000, spectacles, clothing, hearing aids, prostheses, dentures, burials, paying of rents, the payment of rents between August and September is just over one million dollars, electricity payment, \$268 000, payment of water, \$151 000, and we also supplied educational assistance in the sum of \$272 000.

Sir, for that period alone, between April and September, 2010, which is the beginning of the financial year up to September, 2010, we disbursed some \$2.2 million in comparison, of course these are more difficult times so we understand that the numbers would be quite different, but this \$2.2 million between April and September, 2010, the beginning of the financial year in September, compared to the previous financial year of \$2.1 million.

Sir, I expect the numbers would probably be in the vicinity of three million plus dollars for the entire financial year.

Mr. Speaker, the Constituency Councils, that is an ambitious programme action and empowerment as articulated in this Government's Manifesto of 2008. That was underscored, of course, by the Constituency Act of 2009, and the regulations. We also produced an operational manual to guide the individual Councils.

Mr. Speaker, we are moving full steam ahead with this form of Government and there are presently eighteen Councils established. The first six were launched in July 5, 2009, and the second twelve on March 27, 2010. We have now completed the composition of the final twelve Councils and will launch them on the 26th of this month.

I recently met with the eighteen constituted Councils over a three-weekend period to engage them in some productive discussion and dialogue in how we can improve the delivery of their programmes.

3.24 p.m.

Sequence 25

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 26, 3.24 p.m.

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: We agree on the implementation of eight core mandatory functions which

they will pursue, in addition, of course to the projects of their own conceptualisation. I wanted to point them in a particular direction and I thought that I should meet all of that over that three-week period, to mandate exactly what I expect of the Councils by giving them these eight core functions which they will pursue in each of their individual constituencies.

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

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Sir, from all reports I am satisfied that the Councils are well underway to satisfying the needs for which they were constituted. I think that this Government has nothing whatsoever to be ashamed about when it comes to these Constituency Councils.

Asides.

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: The Government can be assured that under my watch, they will deliver on what they are expected to deliver.

Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that this Government has the people of Barbados at heart. We have done a stellar job despite the severe economic conditions that confronted us since 2008 and despite the mouthings of the naysayers on the other sides. Every single agency and department continue to function as they did prior to the recession and in some cases they are performing better. Not a single public servant was sent home, Mr. Speaker. The welfare agencies are still performing, the SSA is still collecting the garbage efficiently, the postal service is still delivering the mail on time, polyclinics are still in business and a new one will soon be built. The University of the West Indies is now accepting more students. Scholarships are still being awarded by the Ministry of Education. Mr. Speaker, Barbados is fully open to business.

Asides.

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: The storeroom is not as laden as it once was but the shelves in the shop are fully stocked and not a single item has passed its sell by date. The shopkeeper, the Government, Mr. Speaker, of this country is minding the shop and minding it well. Now the creation of a society that is just and equitable is our further quest. Even though we are in an economic vice grip Barbadians can be assured that this Government is laying the foundation for a smooth and unencumbered pathway to progress.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Asides.

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

Mr. W.F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, we have come here today well really over the next week to engage in the constitutional requirement of the Estimates of Barbados. Sir, that is essentially again, about the numbers of how we intend to spend the people's money, how we intend to raise the people's money, and how we intend to finance the amount of money that we spend more than we make. Sir, that essentially sums up what the Estimates is about, to get the approval of this Parliament for the spending of the people's money to do the people's business.

I listened very carefully to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. I am sorry he is not in his seat right now but I, in particular, wanted to look at the numbers related to the current account deficit and this is important because, Mr. Speaker, everybody on this side and on that side would have to agree that we have a problem in Barbados in our financing, and the problem as I see it has to do with the current account deficit, and that is the main problem. I am going through some numbers with you to set the environment for my discourse today and I will start at 2003/4.

In 2003/4, the current account deficit was \$219 million. In 2004/5 \$287 million, 2005/6 \$204 million, 2006/7 \$242 million and they are all negative. This is the amount that you spend in excess of what you have taken in on the current account. Now it is clear to me, Mr. Speaker, that the problem started in the 2007/8 time and has continued. Why do I say this? In 2007/8, the deficit went from \$242 million to \$487 million, almost double in a one-year period. Sir, it should have sent warning bells. I take the point that it happened, for a large part not the whole amount, under the Barbados Labour Party and we take the point because that is when the problem started.

But it went on then in 2008/9 rather than coming back to the original more than the million amount, it went higher to \$552 million. In 2009/10, \$894 million, three and a half, almost four times what the deficit normally is. Clearly, when you see a deficit in three years almost troubled, what does that say to you? There is something wrong and there is a mismatch between what you are taking in and what you are spending. Then, one would anticipate that after increasing in 2007/8, increasing again in 2008/9, increasing again in 2009/10, in 2010/11, you would expect that somebody would have taken some measures to curb the spending because we could not do much about the income because the income side was the problem so you had to curb the spending to match the income that you were getting. But no, 2010/11 the deficit went up again to \$1.3 billion, almost six times what it would have been, six, seven years, prior.

We in this country have to be very cognizant of what is happening. Sir, 2011/12 for the first time in almost just under a decade, we are now seeing some control coming back to the deficit. It has come down now and it has shown in the Estimates projected to be approximately \$776 million, still excessively high but it is clear that is where the problem is and that is where we have an issue in this country.

Mr. D.St.C. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member is bringing to the House all deficits but what the Honourable Member did not tell the House is that between the years 1997/8 that there was an actual surplus and they turned a surplus into a deficit.

Mr. W.F. DUGUID: Can I continue?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. Continue please.

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 26, 4.34 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Mr. SPEAKER: Continue, Honourable Member.

Mr. W. F. DUGUID: Clearly, based on the numbers, and they are the facts, there was a problem. Anybody could check them from the Estimates year after year. What we needed to do was to deal with the problem in the early stages not let it galloped away as it has done and that is the problem that we have.

I remember saying on this side, I said it every time I came to this office because it is pertinent, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to face a problem in this country. Why did I say that? I said that, Mr. Speaker, because I travelled to the United States of America during the 2008-2009 period, and I had the opportunity to go into a Winx Dixie Supermarket, which is one of the bigger supermarkets in the Florida area, I would imagine that they are about 30 000 square feet and my family was the only ones in that supermarket. It was not an early morning, it was not a late evening, it was a 2 o'clock visit to the supermarket, so it opened my eyes that we were going to face a problem because at the end of the day, and we heard it all from the Honourable Members who have spoken over there, Barbados is not an island, we depend on other economies but so does the United States of America and so does England. They all depend on each other and intermingle and if there is a problem in one there would be a knock-on to the other.

Mr. Speaker, I knew and I could sense that we were going to face an economic problem but the former Honourable Member for St. John got up in his glory and said what crisis what, we are not facing any crisis, you are

watching too much TV and everybody laughed. Sir, it was a wonderful joke. It was reported in the press and everybody laughed at somebody who was just offering a little bit of advice from this side.

Sir, what is happening now is that everybody that speaks says, oh the crisis, the international crisis, the problems in the world and how the problems in the world are affecting Barbados. Sir, that is what I was saying then but nobody was prepared to listen. Sir, you know that a stitch in time saves nine. We should have done certain things early on in the game and it would have saved a lot of the pain that we are suffering today.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to see how politicians, and I guess to some extent me included, like to play the blame game. These days when there is something negative happening and when the people of Barbados are suffering, you hear oh, it is not me, it was not my fault, it was anybody else's fault, it is the world economy, it is the international situation, the states in the United States of America, the problems in Madison, Wisconsin, the problems in Chicago, Illinois and the problems in Libya, that is where the problems are, do not blame me, it is not my fault but when something positive happened, you hear, well, you know it is me that do that, we brought in that, we implemented that.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you something about the United States of America. An individual state cannot borrow to finance a budget, they have to balance their budgets. This is why they have problems. The United States of America federal economy is the only people who are allowed to borrow to finance a budget and that is why they have that problem.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by equating Barbados with a state. We are like the federal Government not a state.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, correct. Continue Honourable Member.

Mr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, I was referring to what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said in his speech. He is the one that said it. He spoke about the states, I am only repeating what he said. Mr. Speaker, we could call for the record. The Honourable Member made it clear that the problems are happening in Madison, Wisconsin. He said Chicago and Illinois not realising that Chicago is the city of the state of Illinois. He said that and nobody could refute that. I heard it with my own ears and I am sure they heard it too, so I am not going to equate it. You cannot equate them and that is the point. He was trying to equate and show that they have a problem but

they cannot borrow. It is us who borrowed and that is why we have this deficit problem now, and that is the point.

Sir, even although they have had those problems in the United States of America and even although they have problems on the international scene, it is not the international community nor the states, nor the United States of America, nor Libya, nor Egypt nor any of those places that brought to bear an increase in VAT on the people of this country, it is the Democratic Labour Party Administration who did that.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. It is the Barbados Labour Party that brought VAT from 0 to 15 per cent and not the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, in addition to the increase in VAT which I spoke about, it is not the international situations that we are seeing today that increased land tax in this country, it is the Democratic Labour Party Administration that has overseen the increase of land tax for people across Barbados. It is not the international environment that increased the cost of water in Barbados, it is the Democratic Labour Party that came and increased the cost of water for Barbadians by 60 per cent. It is not the international environment that increased the cost of gas in this country, it is the Democratic Labour Party and their programmes and policies that have increased the cost of gas in this country. It is not the international environment that increased the cost of bus fares in this country, it is the Democratic Labour Party and their Administration and their policies that have increased the cost of bus fares in this country. It is not the international environment...

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because when he says it is the Democratic Labour Party that increased all of these things, the public would get the impression that all the increases that happened at the Barbados Water Authority and with gasoline is the Democratic Labour Party. What the Honourable Member should have been saying is that it is the Democratic Labour Party that increased it along with the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue, Honourable Member.

Mr. W. F. DUGUID: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is not the international environment that increased the liquor licences on the poor shopkeepers, it is the Administration of the Democratic Labour Party that did

that. It is not the international environment that increased the road tax of the people of this country, it is the Democratic Labour Party Administration that did that. It is not the international environment that increased professional registration fees for people across this country, it is the Democratic Labour Party Administration that did that. It is not the international environment that increased even bicycle registration in this country, it is the Democratic Labour Party Administration that did that.

Mr. Speaker, not even to be settled with the increases, it is not the international environment that took away your benefits for travel and entertainment, it is the Democratic Labour Party Administration that did that. Sir, what has that done? That has put severe pressure not only on households across this country but it has also put severe pressure on...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please, give him a break and let him continue. Continue, Honourable Member.

Mr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, those multitudes of increases have not only put pressure on the individual households in this country, they also put pressure on businesses in this country, and what does that mean.

House A87B Sequence 27

3.44 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: That meant that people who had small businesses... The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter went through a list of large businesses whose profits have gone down substantially, so we know the pressure was on the large businesses. Mr. Speaker, I am also concerned about the small businesses, about the number of small businesses that are having to close down. You and I know them across the country, we know the number of businesses that have closed. We know of the number of businesses that have reached into all their savings and are now being told that they have to pay rent and cannot pay that rent. They can only do one thing, which is to close doors and send people home.

Mr. Speaker, what have those increased done? Those increases have now caused unemployment in this country to almost double in three years. What does that mean? It means that more than 3 000 people have now gone home. Mr. Speaker, people from the constituencies of almost every Honourable Member would have lost their job because the businesses are under strain and stress. Mr. Speaker, you must understand that there is a knock-all

effect when things happen and when you increased the prices like this, it therefore means that there is going to be a consequence and one of the consequences has been that businesses closed down and people losing their jobs. Mr. Speaker, in my constituency we have only one person who is working out of a household of eight or nine people. Sir, what happens now if that one person falls ill or loses his or her job? This is a serious thing and we come here and make light of what is serious business, the people's business of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak a little bit about the medium-term fiscal policy. Mr. Speaker, I went through that Medium-Term Fiscal Policy very carefully and it is interesting to see that it suggests that in some way the Government of Barbados is going to be able to balance the budget or even achieve a surplus. How could that be? How could they balance a budget? Mr. Speaker, maybe Honourable Member for St. Michael South who knows the history of Barbados well, could get up and tell us when was the Budget last balanced in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, I have been asking but nobody knows. Mr. Speaker, why then do the people who wrote the Medium-Term Fiscal Policy feel that their strategy and programmes could come and do better than all the knowledge that went before us, all the Prime Ministers that went before us, all the Ministers of Finance that went before us. They could not, in all of their years, balance a budget but now in three years we are going to balance the budget.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, let us go to the Medium-Term Fiscal Policy. The Throne Speech given in the Other Place made a comment that the Democratic Labour Party intended to balance the budget with a small fiscal deficit. Sir, we know that is a joke in itself because we cannot the budget and have a small fiscal deficit but even from the time of the Throne Speech, the Democratic Labour Party ...

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, I was in this House when the Other Side said they were going to get unemployment at 5 per cent.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue, Honourable Member.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member would know that we got unemployment down from 24 per cent to 6.7 per cent. Sir, I do not want to talk about unemployment, I want to talk about what the Medium-Term Fiscal Policy was purporting to do. Sir, it is a fallacy, it cannot be that in three years you are going to balance a budget at a time when you are running a current

account deficits in the billions of dollars. Sir, the debt service alone would give you problems in balancing the budget.

Mr. Speaker, this is at a time when we have seen the Government of Barbados introduced measures to raise more than \$200 million in taxes out of the people's pockets.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: What are we doing to fix the problem? We are postponing the problem. Why do I say that, Sir? I say that because all we are doing is borrowing to fix the difference between what we are spending and what we are earning.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. The Honourable Member has just read out deficits and showed where in this year we have reduced the deficit and so the Honourable Member cannot make those statements, then come and say that we not doing anything when the Honourable Member has admitted that we have reduced the deficit.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue, Honourable Member.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying what we have to do is rather than spend, spend, spend, we have to match our spending with our earning and that is the issue that I have shown in my table that we have not been doing.

Mr. Speaker, when you tax the people of Barbados like how you have been doing, you are asking this generation to carry the burden but when you now turn around and borrow, not to cover capital expenditure but to cover current expenditure, we are borrowing \$1 billion essentially to cover current expenditure. That means to pay wages, to pay for goods and services, to pay for the day to day running of Government. Therefore, when you borrow for that, it means now that future generations have to cover the cost of the expense of this generation.

Mr. Speaker, I heard Honourable Member for St. Michael North-West saying it and I agree with him on this point. Generally-speaking, when you borrow, you borrow for capital projects. What does that mean? It means projects where you would see a return on the investment. Mr. Speaker, it is right that we should borrow for that because if you borrow to enhance the airport, if you borrow to enhance the seaport, if you borrow to improve the hospital, those are projects from which future generations will benefit. Therefore, it they are benefitting then there is a

reason because they have to pay what they are benefitting from.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five minutes in which to wind up.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Already? I cannot believe the time has gone so quickly, Mr. Speaker. I have not even get to the CLICO part yet. Mr. Speaker, the policy of that Government has been to put the burden of the people but now that we are borrowing to the extent that we are borrowing, we are not only putting the burden on the people, we are now extending it to future generations, to pay for the bills of this generation. Mr. Speaker, that is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, it is Biblical, Joseph had a vision of seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. He gave counsel to the king that in the seven years of plenty you save and ration how much grain the people will use because you have to save the rest in preparation for that seven years of famine. When the seven years of famine came, because you had the vision to put aside during the time of plenty, then you had something for the people in Egypt to survive on for that seven years of famine.

3.53 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

(ESTIMATES) (Done & G)

Dr. F. DUGID: ...then we had something for the people to survive in Egypt for the seven years of famine and the Barbados Labour Party put aside \$2.7 billion and instead of appropriately managing how you spend the money, we went on a spending spree.

Asides.

Dr. F. DUGID: Sir, they hired as many people as possible, did all sorts of things and had a lot of galas and fetes. Sir, they said that Barbados is a society, that it is not a economy, that you do not have to worry about the money and that the money will come but now the people are suffering the consequence.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot finish without talking about the abomination of the matter as it relates to CLICO when we are seeing people looking for a golden parachute of \$10 million. Mr. Speaker, you know what that reminds me of? (1:03) There was once a man who appeals to the judge for leniency because he was now an orphan and his crime was killing his parents. Sir, how could it be that a man oversees and supervised the downfall of a company, a company that took in millions of dollars of people's life's savings and

now that the company has crumbled, ask for his golden parachute and appeal to a judge for that.

Mr. Speaker, it is an abomination. It is the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard and the people of this country have to make it plain and clear that all those members in the Democratic Labour Party who benefitted from funds from CLICO should understand that the time has come that if you receive the funds and you ride with CLICO then when CLICO falls, you too will fall.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to this debate and to start by congratulating, not the Honourable Member who just sat but the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West for what can only be properly termed an erudite, clear and precise dissertation in respect to the state of affairs of the economy of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member who just sat, of course, in contradistinction spoke to the fortunes of Winn-Dixie and other overseas shopping centre which he attends on a daily basis while neglecting the fortunes or needs of the constituency of Christ Church West much to the increased workload for already full hands of other Members of Parliament of Christ Church and in increasing numbers, Sir...

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I say to this House now, and it has been asked about before that there should be some way of dealing with a matter like this where the Honourable Member sits in Toronto every week while his constituents come to the offices of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central and the Honourable Member who is speaking, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West is such a decent person he still has two families of 15 persons in his constituency house as a result of Tomas. This would not be the first time that an honourable member...

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the point of order, Honourable Member.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Sir, if you would give me a chance.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please state your point of order.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Sir, this would not be the first time that an honourable member of this Chamber has taken leave to go overseas for more than one year and another person sits as Opposition leader.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please take your seat. Please continue Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not going to dwell on the issue because all the references the Honourable Member for Christ Church West makes when he is here are based on his experiences overseas. The references to which I have to respond on a weekly basis are based on our experiences in Barbados and the families who live in Christ Church South, Christ Church East Central, Christ Church West or Christ Church East, they base their requests and their discussions with me and other Honourable Members on this side about experiences in Barbados. Sir, there is no Winn-Dixie in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West in presenting these Estimates made it clear on what basis they stood. Sir, he spoke to stabilisation of the Barbados' economy which is an important step and this is what we have undertaken. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas can grumble as much as she likes because I will get to her and the One Accord Roundabout, which the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is very pleased to welcome.

Mr. Speaker, there is a return to growth and, again, the Honourable Minister of Finance was at pains to point that all indications are that we are sitting on a modest growth of about 2 per cent to 2.5 per cent. Sir, to fix the irritants, those areas of the economy, which continue to hinder the ability of central Government, to have enough discretionary funds on the collection to deal with all the matters that they need to. Sir, we spoke on length about this and we have spoken at length up and down this country about these issues.

Mr. Speaker, we have spoken to the facts that foreign reserves remain at something like 19 weeks to 20 weeks cover of foreign imports. Sir, in spite of all the buffeting of the international realities, we have been able to maintain 19 weeks to 20 weeks of support in our foreign reserves and we have still been able to maintain an effective transport system. Sir, every day I get a report from the Transport Board and it tells me about the fortunes of the Transport Board as they continue to fuel the engines of the economy because, in fact, Sir, transport is at the centre of our ability to keep the economy going, the ability to take our workers to work, our school children to school

and to provide opportunity for recreation for those who have that discretion.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central spoke just a brief while ago to the fortunes of the welfare and the Social Care Department as they continue to provide aid as is necessary in Barbados, not Canada, to those who need assistance and they speak, Sir, not of a diminution of their programme but to an expansion of the kind of cover that we expect to be able to offer Barbadians and, most importantly, to a commitment to training the workers at the Welfare Department and those who offer assistance to our welfare cases in Barbados, a commitment to training them at the highest level.

Mr. Speaker, education. There is no reduction either to the general school system in Barbados, primary or secondary. Sir, as a matter of fact, visit the south eastern of Barbados...

H/A87B/4:04

Sequence 29

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: ...transfers either to the general school system in Barbados, primary or secondary. As a matter of fact visit the Southeastern corner of Barbados and see the new schools being built, the Lodge School and all the other infrastructural improvements taking place even as we debate these Estimates.

The University of the West Indies has, and there is no division on this, both the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West and the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter made the point that there has been no reduction in transfers to the University of the West Indies, the hospital and tourism, but the Minister of Tourism will speak to tourism, when he gets there. Sir, I happen to represent a constituency which is impacted directly by the fortunes of tourism, and I monitor the situation as far as occupancy is concerned almost daily. I am satisfied that there has been a consolidation of our visitor stay in Barbados and we look forward to a continued improvement in the fortunes of the tourism industry. What is wrong with that? Why is it so catastrophic? What makes the Honourable Member for St. Thomas so upset because tourism is beginning to improve again? What upsets her? What upsets the Honourable Members on that side generally is because we have been able to stabilise the situation and try to seek a turnaround tourism.

Sir, we need to continue to craft programmes in this country that are credible and relevant. We need to craft programmes and implement measures that are efficient, equitable and effective. In this regard, as the Minister

responsible for Transport and Works, I am proud to say that we have been able to sit with the Ministry of Finance to work out a programme of funding for the year 2011/2012, which will again allow us to carry out the works programme that are planned for the country of Barbados.

Sir, we spoke to the question of the roundabouts. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas is upset about the construction of roundabouts in Barbados. I am concerned, as Minister, about the cost. I think all of us are concerned about the cost, but in order to build up a safe environment, in order to build an environment, a road network environment that is sustainable, dependable and reliable, we have to rely on the best advice of our technical people and this is the result.

Sir, at Warrens, as the Honourable Member spent some time on Warrens, I believe the people who will be impacted by this activity have been satisfactorily canvassed, and are enough onboard with the methods of construction and the kind of inconvenience that will inevitably come about as we roll out this final solution. The particular area that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas referred to, of course, is probably going to benefit the most from the activities of construction and redevelopment in Warrens. Sir, when we build roads and improve a road network, the obvious benefit is that we open out new panaceas for investment. We open out new areas of land for housing development, for commercial activity. We improve the ease of the movement of traffic between different places in Barbados.

Sir, let us go back to the debate on the ABC Highway, when the debate was first done in the 1970s or 1980s. I had it in my hand a little while ago. I do not recall. The genesis of the argument offered then was that we were opening up a connection between the Airport and the West coast. This is something we have to be continually looking at. The Honourable Members on that side, dwelled on this issue of fly-overs. I say to this Honourable Chamber there is no evidence of a planned, studied and designed fly-over solution for Barbados. It was a dream. It was, in my view, a pipe dream of the Honourable Members on that side, never costed, never designed, and never intended for Barbados. Thank God, because the public has spoken on that matter and have made it very clear. It is not the kind of infrastructural development that they wished for Barbados.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Those Fly-overs were designed when the Democratic Labour Party came into Government in January 2008. If they are not going ahead with them, if they have decided not to go ahead with them so be it, but it is misleading to say that they were not designed. They were designed and they will

be built when we are returned to Government in a few months time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, continue.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is good to have the Honourable Member for St. Andrew back in the House. He has not been here for the entire day. I am sure his colleagues who were pointed out to me know that there were none of the first division Opposition present for most of the afternoon sitting and are grateful to have some offer of leadership from that group of the Opposition.

Sir, the point is, the ABC Highway, and indeed we have essentially completed the question of the widening of the ABC Highway. Obviously, what is being thrown up now is a number of issues which need urgent attention by the Minister and the technical people. The whole question to my mind now is how much of Barbados can actually be dedicated to fast lane, two-lane, or three-lane traffic without interruption by communities? We therefore have got to develop a hybrid. We have to develop in Barbados a hybrid of road traffic management recognising that as a small community, we are a small land mass, twenty-one miles long by fourteen miles wide, and those are at the extent.

We therefore have to be mindful of the fact that our highways, our dual carriage ways, however we prefer to describe them, will impact on existing communities, and where that impact occurs, we need as a responsible Ministry and a technical team to address the interface between vehicular traffic and the human traveling public. Therefore we will have to look at solutions which will allow traffic to pause at a certain time and allow pedestrians to cross, places like the Spring Garden Highway come to mind immediately. Places like Wildey and St. Barnabas, these places, although there is signage already existing which is aimed at indicating to the traffic public that they must slow down, we need to make sure the technical people understand it is fundamentally important that we surrender our wish for vehicles to move at 80 kilometers per hour between spaces, and to recognise that we have to stop, pause, and look again. Therefore, I am sure. They will be guided by that reality. Sir, there is a lot of discussion, always, on our Call-in Programmes in this regard.

Sir, our road programme therefore...

4.14 p.m.

Sequence 30

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 31, 4.14 p.m.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Sir, our road programme therefore has continued to be steady and if there is one area of greater concern than normal would be certainly the increasing need to pay attention to the Scotland District area and the road network. I am convinced that this programme must be put in place on the basis of implementing the many studies which have already taken place, in terms of recognising the priority in the routes that the essential road network and making sure that we can provide from the Ministry of Finance accurate costings and wherever possible, look forward to developing programmes of financing which could see some of these solutions being put in place, not necessarily directly off the budgeting process but in some off budget arrangement.

Sir, Barbadians will have to get accustomed to the fact that the continued increasing cost of road repairs will have to cause Government to start rethinking the entire process of how we fund our road network development system. The same applies to the roundabout solution. The kinds of monies that are being spent now at Coral Ridge and much needed as they are and at Boarded Hall and the plan for Groves and indeed the Turnpike, these are the kinds of solutions which we have to put in place now, so as to alleviate the crowding at Warrens and Gary Sobers and to offer the travelling public an alternative.

Sir, we invited our technical people to look at some of the routing alternatives. Sir, this includes places like St. Davids as a new take off point for another, as it may be described, outer door carriageway if you want, taking us down into some areas of the University or Prior Park or indeed Redman Village which of course is the northern extent, or St. Thomas Parish Church, through the same areas which were referred to by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas when she spoke, of course, not interrupting the scenic beauty of places like Bloomsbury and Jack-in-the-box Gully but enhancing them.

The point is that we need to recognise that network must be provided and, Sir, even as we do that and we complete this Warrens project, we have to look at routing our jewel carriageway into St. Peter, into St. Lucy Parish Church and, indeed, as part of our contemplation for the west coast sewerage project, get to work with the improvement of what I call the crossroads, from Highway 1 into Highway 2A. There are many existing roads. The Honourable Member for St. James North referred to some of these areas. The Sea View, the Gibbs, the Porters and all these roads, which if made more accessible and more safe, would become genuine alternatives as we contemplate what the traffic management solution would be like when we start to build out the west coast sewerage project.

Generally, that is the picture which will inform the work of the Ministry of Transport and Works over the next couple of months as we roll out the provisions of this Estimate. Of course there is always the legal framework which has to be put in place and I am happy again to say to Barbadians that the amendments to the Road Traffic Act which would see us bring under direct control, many areas which have long been left untouched in Barbados' traffic laws, including the consumption of excessive amounts of alcohol and driving. We have taken the draft programme to the Governance Committee and we are intending with some modifications to have this resubmitted for final approval by the Governance Committee within the next couple of months and then for onward movement to Cabinet, after which, Sir, if approved, will come to this Honourable Chamber for final ratification so that is the way that will go.

Sir, Highway Act will have to be looked at and to be modernised to take into account the increased traffic and to improve the supervision of the construction and repair of our highways and street works. This is all tied up to some extent in what we call in the Ministry of Transport and Works a street works Act which will set out the criteria under which, not only utility companies but it is my view that anyone who cuts the road, anyone who has to carry out works on the Highway should in some way be governed by the dictates of this Act, which will set out when and where, what an emergency is and the kind of minimum signage that will be acceptable and we have to dwell on this point for a moment.

Sir, it pains me to see how with very few exceptions, our construction companies including the Ministry of Transport and Works, will do works on our Highway or our road network with minimal or no warning signage whatsoever. It must be partly because as they say, God is a Barbadian that we have been able to survive these interventions. We really need to get more businesslike and we need to set minimum standards, with respect to how we erect signage and warnings for road work interventions in Barbados.

If like the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, we lived in Toronto we will be able to speak to the standards which have to be put in place before you carry out these kinds of works and I see no reason why we cannot transfer a measure of this technology to the way we do things in Barbados and therefore we look forward to its inclusion in the whole consideration of the Highway Act.

Sir, at the Ministry too, there is the question of the mechanical workshop which, I believe, is the Centre really of what happens at the Ministry because unless you can coordinate effectively, the movement of man, machinery and materials when we are carrying projects, well then we are wasting our time. I am convinced that we must bring to

bear the most modern technologies available and we must also make available to the Ministry adequate staff and that is another matter, Sir, which would probably be the subject of another debate, but we need to make available to the Ministry adequate staff to deal with these areas of mechanical management.

Sir, if you look at other construction operations in Barbados the heart of their viability lies in the fact that they can control their equipment that when they need a piece of equipment it is available. The Ministry of Transport and Works is the largest construction company in Barbados by far. It manages more equipment than all the other construction companies probably put together and the need therefore must be even more pressing.

Sir, also in the Legislative pipeline, is the final version of the Building Authority Legislation and I think Barbadians will be happy to know that this Legislation will be ready for a review by the Governance Committee in another two months or so, and that we have more or less worked out the terms and the kinds of arrangements which will best suit the Barbados equivalent of a Building Authority.

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 31, 4.24 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: We can use the Barbados Building Code, which is in the final stages of revision by the National Standards Institute.

Sir, notwithstanding that, the basic rules and the basic regulations of the national Building Code are in place and we want to promote its use even more as we continue to carry out construction in this country, it is important. We must not wait for tragedies to occur to put this kind of legislation in place. We must be mindful of the fact that it is an integral part of our development. I am sure that Barbadian construction persons and practitioners will buy into this large measure.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five minutes in which to wind up.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Yes, Sir. Sir, we believe too that even as Barbadians may want to contemplate the extra cost of the implementation of a Building Code, we have worked out basically three levels of arrangements which I think would be able to soften that impact; one at the social level and government level, the Building Authority will control the maintenance of standards; at what we call the private level, private dwelling houses, we have already had considerable agreement with the General Insurance Association of Barbados that persons who meet the

standards of the Building Code will be able to benefit from significant reductions in premium and of course at the commercial level again the same would apply but at a different standard altogether.

Sir, I believe if we can deal with some of these legislative arrangements, which we have not covered exhaustively but which I felt the nation should be aware of, over the next 12 months we will go a long way in preparing Barbados for the 21st Century and beyond and preparing Barbados for the rollout from this recessionary period which the entire world is feeling.

Sir, then of course there is the question of the Transport Board. Well, I had an opportunity only recently in a recent debate to speak to the question of a reorganisation of the Transport Board. The Honourable Members on the other side made no substantive suggestion bar privatising it but there are many other considerations. If we remember where I started when I spoke about transport being a very serious economic engine which we had to preserve, the provision of school transport, this Government is committed to free school transport in Barbados. We implemented it in the summer of 2008 and it is a benefit of householders. Mr. Speaker, if you want to know how it is a benefit, a family of two children going to school at \$4 a day, that is one bus and most of us take two buses to get to most of our destinations, do the maths, the savings are significant and in these times the savings are critical. Mr. Speaker, we believe that we must continue to support the social programmes of providing for our pensioners, for our police men and women and other members of the social services. These are things which, even as we consider the new purchases of buses and as we consider the urgent development of the Cheapside or the Seaview terminal, an area promised by the Barbados Labour Party since 1996 - we could talk about that at another time - which is now out and being considered by the Tenders Committee which we hope to build for the private sector vehicles to offer an acceptable environment for the travelling public... Sir, depending on the roll out of this programme and a new look at a new mass transport system, we would be able to replicate this at Speightstown and indeed at the River Terminal.

Mr. Speaker, I must mention before I sit that the Transport Authority would play an integral role in making sure that the question of mass transport solutions is effectively put in place in Barbados and therefore we can look forward to an exciting year of work at the Ministry. As a benefit to that work, Barbadians can look forward to an improved access around Barbados and very soon an improved bus mass transport service, that is how I want to put it, buses, private sector, Transport Board buses, private sector vehicles, taxis and all those who are in the multimillion business of transporting Barbadians to all ends of our community.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this debate cognisant now that what is before this very Chamber is in essence a set of figures that is to reflect the programme of the Government of Barbados based on Estimates as to how much would be earned and based on a programme of expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, while that is the immediate issue at hand, I cannot help but start my contribution in this debate without reflecting on a few things that jumped home to me yesterday and today while listening to the speeches thus far. I listened to the Minister of Finance and I could easily have been listening to the Minister of Finance on our side a few years ago. I listened to Members on that side seeking to justify and prescribe blame to the Barbados Labour Party and I listened to Honourable Members on our side seeking to prescribe blame to the Democratic Labour Party. I ask myself, Sir, how many people out there are really interested in who is to blame other than it would become a relevant consideration at the point of an election. I could see that but in terms of their ability to buy food this week, in terms of their ability to pay for the increase gas prices, particularly LPG Sunday night, in terms of their ability to pay their rent or to recognise that they are now paying increase light bills, they are not interested in that debate that is taking place in here, they are interested in what the Government would do in the next year and they are interested in if we are continuing to ask people in this country to make sacrifices what are we making them in aid of, where are you taking me so that I know that even if I am to make a sacrifice in the broader interest of the country, I know my destination point, I know where I am going.

Sir, I fear that as a collective all of us have not met that objective and I fear that in failing to meet that objective at this particular juncture when our room for manoeuvring is so minimal that we do so at our peril but greater so at the peril of the confidence of the population in the class that governs them.

House A87B Sequence 32

4.34 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I say so, cognisant that this is not a zero sum game, there is no clear winner or loser. There is no clear monopoly to information or solutions but what we are asking for is for a country to pull together at its most difficult in post-independence Barbados, whether triggered by international economic

factors or domestic policy considerations by whichever Government, those with surpluses, those with deficits, it matters not. What matters is where we take the country and what we ask of each other in taking the country to that destination.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore hope that in the remaining days ahead of us for the next three days, that we would come into connection with the reality of the expectations of those whom we represent, they are aware of the acute nature of the circumstances. They may not know, for example, that corporation taxes have declined 28.6 per cent. They may not be aware that gross capital formation has declined 40 per cent in the last three years. They may not be aware in peculiar terms that we have continued now to have a fourth straight year of a current account deficit. In other words that we are spending more on a day to day basis than we are earning. They are aware that something is amiss. They know the workers of this country are carrying home less money and are having less money to meet increase cost. They know, if they are small businesses, that they are struggling to keep their heads above water because much of the disposable income that many of our citizens would otherwise have had, in order to get a manicure, a pedicure, go to the hairdresser, in order to be able to buy things that you would normally buy for your children, in order to let them go to the movies with their friends, in order to let them to into Bridgetown and buy things they would otherwise want, from clothes, to hair to whatever. They know they cannot do that with the ease that they did before. They know that they have to start growing vegetables in their backyard because they do not have the option of buying vegetables in the supermarkets at high cost.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Member for St. Michael West-Central should seize on this opportunity because this is the chance when more and more will take responsibility for their own. They know that the larger companies are complaining. Mr. Speaker, we have already heard in this debate the plight of large trading companies in Barbados, from Almond whose performance last year was as dismal as a \$20 million loss, to others who for the most part experienced significant losses as well in the context of this economy. They know these things.

Mr. Speaker, what is our response? When our cars break down, as mine did last night in this yard, I am told because of the security system next door.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Others have done too because the radio waves knock out the computer system. That is not the point. The point is that we go to a mechanic as much as the Minister of Health tried to help me resolve the issue last night, he is not a mechanic, neither am I, so

we went to the mechanic. Equally, if we are feeling poorly, if our stomach is hurting us and the remedies that we have inherited are not longer working, we go to the doctor. If there is a problem in the country in relation to how the society and economy are evolving, households, workers, everyone, they expect that we who occupy the Chambers of the Legislature and Government are equal to the task of fixing it, just as we repose confidence in that mechanic, that doctor or lawyer.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you I believe that if there is one message in this debate that is as clear as punch, it is that there must be a fresh guard, not a fresh guard for the Democratic Labour Party, not a fresh guard for the Barbados Labour Party but a fresh guard for the Government of Barbados and the development policies to which we have been adhering since Independence. Sir, not a fresh guard for the Minister of Finance or the Shadow Minister of Finance but a fresh guard for a country that no longer can rely on significant import duties. They will be declining more and more as we go forward from this year and that is agreed upon because of the international and regional trade agreements to which we have subscribed and will continue to subscribe. Equally, because one of the major instruments of development policy for us to encourage investment, the use of tax incentives, be it hotels, in manufacturing entities from the 1950s, be it to agriculture enterprises, that within the next decade not be an instrument that we can use to encourage people to invest, either locally or from outside.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you - and I do not know whatever way to put it - I almost feel pain that we come back and do the same thing over and over again. We say the same thing over and over again. If it takes 11 years between the choice of site for St. David's Primary School, when I was Minister of Education in 2000 and now for that school to be built, then something is wrong. If it takes in excess of six or seven years for us to deal with the programme for the review of the Statistical Services Department or the Corporate Affairs Project, or the procurement strategy - and I can go through project after projects across both Governments now, if it takes three years under the Barbados Labour Party Government and three years under this Government and they still have not reached the final point of destination. If it takes that time, do you not accept that something is wrong with the system and that we have not just an implementation deficit disorder but that it is now compounded by a structure and a size of Government that can no longer be borne by what we produce in this country.

Mr. Speaker, last year the Government came in this same debate and forecasted that it would own \$2.49 billion. In fact, the Government owned \$2.35 billion, \$145 million less. Mr. Speaker, it is not because of poor forecasting in the Minister of Finance, I believe. It is not because of

wickedness in high places but it is because the underlying structure of our economy needs urgent examination as well as the underlying structure of our society. There are too many people who are full of ideas, who are brimming with energy, but who cannot get into the system. Equally, there is too much defence of the status quo, almost as much if we are embalmers in Government.

Mr. Speaker, I ask ourselves, when will we accept responsibility for ensuring the legacy that we will leave to future generations, in the same way that those who led before us guaranteed us that right of opportunity to be here today and to be benefiting from their investments. Sir, it is a serious issue because there are difficult decisions. Sir, I ask the Government in all sincerity to establish a framework for a national dialogue. Politicians are afraid to be the ones to put out there anything that will lead to the dislocation of any particular group. Mr. Speaker, the bald reality is that if we do not adjust and restructure, we are all going to go down the slippery slope.

4.43 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

(ESTIMATES) (Done & G)

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I do not know when but I know for sure we will go. Sir, I believe that Prime Minister has an unique opportunity, one caste on his shoulders by history but one from which, I believe, that he should have the courage to confront fully. It is not a case of anybody expecting that there is a monopoly of information on any one side or in any one group but what is the reality of our existence in Barbados? Sir, it is cumulative and it is cumulative even from pre-Independence and, as a student of history, he would appreciate this. We have continue to believe, for example, that our pension system can be one that is fully funded by a Government but our pensions are responsible for over \$200 million a year. We have continued to believe that we can provide every form of entitlement without necessarily have the capacity to earn for it.

Mr. Speaker, when you have a national consultation then no single entity can be blamed for putting on the table those matters which must now be the subject of discussion. Sir, I think it is fair to say that given our cultural and historical background that both sides agreed that the one thing Barbados must always have, like access to land, is access to education because it the platform for empowerment of our people. Those who have made it and they children may have a comfortable upbringing but they have no real wealth and therefore, their only ability to remain above the water is for their children to have access to that education because we live in a society that is largely driven by credit. Sir, then there are those who have not

need it ever but who, very often are the victims of social and economic circumstances, combining particularly social circumstances that the Government is not necessarily best structured to deal with, physical abuse, mental abuse, addiction, et cetera, because our social services are still designed to deliver a particular service rather than to move a person from a point of dependency to a point of independence and then to a point of giving back. Sir, these are structural issues.

Mr. Speaker, our expenditure in health care has almost doubled just over the last decade but yet there is no serious discussion of the financing of health care yet every other country in the world is confronted with a dedicated framework for financing health care largely because people have access information through the internet now and other forms like books and people travelling and, therefore, the expectations as to what can be delivered when they are sick are far greater than 20 years ago when people were prepared, sometimes, to accept the will of the doctor, the nurse, the hospital or whatever. Sir, people are not prepared to do that today. Mr. Speaker, the bold reality is that we keep adding, and adding, and adding with rationalising. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the role of the private sector. Sir, the private sector in Barbados has to step up to the plate with a far greater level of aggression. Equally, the Government must ensure that people's access to Government related services be it the private sector or be it the individual is more seamless and quicker than has existed. Sir, these are not easy to achieve and they are not going to be achieved in the lifetime of any one Government but if we do not start now and if we do not determine that the next decade is to reposition this country then we will, like China and India, who dominated the global economy in the 17th Century and the 18th Century only to go into abject decline as the United States of America and Europe rose from the mid 19th Century to the end of the 20th Century, we will recognise that we too can go that route. Sir, simply being the No. 1 developing country in the world according to the UN Human Development Index in the 90s and the early 2000 means nothing. Sir, just as Jamaica learnt that being the No. 1 developing country in 1970 meant nothing. Sir, look at the other issues that we have to contend with.

Mr. Speaker, why do we believe that it is such a bad thing for the workers of this country to own enterprises that have hitherto been owned by the Government but that provide a long-term public service in very often monopolistic conditions. Sir, the airport, the seaport, and the last Honourable Member who spoke, spoke about the Transport Board. Sir, look at the fact.

Mr. Speaker, last year we came for \$59 million for the Transport Board cumulative in what we ordinarily voted and Supplementaries and that does not include the subsidy from welfare which is about another \$14 million and the subsidy from education which is another \$6 million. Can

we afford to be spending \$50 million to \$70 million on a Transport Board every year when the basic services like the police, like the nurses and like the teachers are likely to be undermined because we cannot give them what they really need. If everybody is frightened to say that I propose this and I propose that then, Sir, I do not have a difficulty with putting things on the table because, as I have said, the future will take care of the future but there must be a discussion point and it is not fair to the ordinary citizen out there who looks to us as the mechanic, the doctor or the lawyer, who looks to us as the professional who must know how to get us out of these difficult circumstances. Sir, a constituent told me, "Mistress, I do not have to follow all of that, that is why we put all of you there, that is for all of you to do," and we have a duty, Sir. Mr. Speaker, I have said that I believe that the Prime Minister has the moral fortitude and the courage to start the process. He may not be there at the end...

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: He probably would not be because you are talking about a 10-year transformation. Sir, the Chinese do not think in terms of even decades, they think in terms of centuries and so do the Indian but maybe that is the legacy of being a recent society, a society still trying to find its way. Sir, when I look at these Estimates there are some big ticket items that merit discussions. Sir, some will give us medium term returns and some will give us early returns. Sir, both sides have to be prepared as politicians to put aside some of what I call the patronage aspects because we do not have the room for it now be it Constituency Councils, be it elements of urban, whatever. Sir, what I will say is this that we and the public must know this and I hope in his wrap-up that the Minister of Finance will address it. He hinted it at it yesterday in his first attempt but I think he now has a duty to bring it together. He hinted about the challenges, that we have oil prices on an upward trend again and food prices on an upward trend again.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt in my mind that the immediate consequences of the very tragic and unfortunate tsunami in Japan, in that part of the world will be increased insurance premiums in the short term not to mention the other consequences that would be fueled from rapid capital works in the re-development of the country and then we have the boogie man, CLICO. Sir, ultimately, CLICO will lead to about \$200 million, at least, in additional debt to the Barbados Government and in the context of what we are doing somebody may say that is only 2 per cent or 3 per cent of GDP but that takes away from the developmental activity that is merited and that is necessary to bring about transformation.

Mr. Speaker, our tourism sector is a mature sector and, yes, the numbers this year are higher than the numbers

last year but, truth be told, there are still below the numbers in 2007, coming out of the United Kingdom that is responsible for 40 per cent of our market.

Sir, yes in international business, we are facing difficult challenges from the established developed countries, who will find every mechanism or in the word of members in this House recently, who move the goal on every occasion but truth is that our future development rest upon a recasting of the international business and financial services sector because it has no carrying limits, Mr. Speaker, whereas tourism will and while we have to restructure and renew our tourism product, even when we do that there will be limits.

H/A87B/4:54

Sequence 33

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: While we have to restructure and renew our tourism product, even when we do that there will be limits.

Our manufacturing and our agriculture would be based on specialty areas in which we have a dominant advantage because we will never compete with Australia and Brazil in bulk sugar, but we can compete in specialty sugar, something called Specialty Barbados Sugar, because for four centuries the world has said that it is among the best in the world. We can compete in Barbados rum, and instead of looking at a \$70 million rum industry, we in this House should be planning out expenditure to support a \$500 million rum industry in five years and a billion dollar rum industry in ten years. The emerging economies in which the Minister spoke yesterday that is driving global growth, there are no different from other human beings. Human beings have, what I call, a hierarchy of luxury taste. They start with Brandy and Scotch, then they get tired of that and they come to rum. They have a hierarchy of travel taste. They start with Europe, then they go the Pyramids, then they come to the Caribbean. If you understand human behaviour, then you understand how to position yourself.

Is the power of Government only to be able to tax and spend? No, it is not. We legislate. We facilitate and coordinate. We regulate. We empower. Let us talk about it. What is the most important initiative that this Government could put on the ground this year without casting an additional set onto itself in debt? It is telecommunications reform. You have a generation of Barbadians, perhaps two, because you are really talking about people up to the age of 40, who want strong, quick, fast access to broadband, but cheaper. There are at least five companies that I have come into contact with in the last three months who are into digital marketing, or digital delivery of products, et cetera,

but they are the victims duopoly. Sir, not that it was the intention of the Barbados Labour Party Government, but that is the reality of what transpired. Sir, Digital and Cable and Wireless almost live comfortably lording over the rest of the population. Instead, there has been no investment and no launch of 3G, a4G of Rymax. Our citizens complain because when they go overseas they have that ready access to broadband.

Sir, we speak about free WiFi access up to 256 K in this country, why? In the 1930s people did not know that in the Bay Land a Garfield Sobers would have emerged to become the best cricketer in the world, but he had opportunities, and with opportunities he was able to practice his craft and be noticed and to exploit it.

Sir, if we give that free basic WiFi access, it is the equivalent of free basic education because it opens up the horizons and it brings to the work to our citizens the opportunities of the world. What does it cost the Government of Barbados?

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member you have five more minutes.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir. I did not realise it was going so quickly.

Sir, regulatory reform, bringing the players together, amending the legislation and if necessary this Government in 2008 put on the table a cell phone tax, but a cell phone tax for the purpose of general revenue makes no sense, but if you tell every holder of a cell phone that in exchange for \$2 a month you can get free WiFi wherever you are in Barbados, you cannot even count the decimals that it would cost you per day to work out the \$2 divided by thirty days. All of a sudden it becomes a reality, and I understand that there are elements of the private sector now talking about it.

Sir, but I am saying to you in that context, what is it out of these Estimates that this Government, that this Parliament, wants to achieve with the Barbadian private sector, the Barbadian workers, and indeed, Sir, the entire Barbadian society? What is our goal? Where are we carrying the country? Are we just a holding pattern for the sake of being a holding pattern, because the difficult decisions are too difficult, because the system of Government that we have is too adversarial in nature to accommodate consensus decision making.

Sir, we come out of these Chambers and to a man and woman we virtually agree, to a man and to a woman, but then we come in here it is like the decades of Westminster adversarial tradition has sapped the energy from us, and all of a sudden we become the defenders of history, rather than the promoters of a future.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you I too have to, after twenty years, ask myself many questions, and it has nothing to do with what happened last year. It has to do in reality in where we are, if there were the tensions I felt leading a political Party in this country, there are the tensions I feel today that we have to be able to step outside of the box, and to recognise that we do not have the buffer to deliver as usual in the way it was done before, by doing the same things we have done all along.

Sir, we have spoken in here, and we accept readily on this side too, that this debate is a sterile exercise because it becomes a glorified public meeting for five days, and the public of Barbados thinks we are going mad. In Jamaica ministers come into the realm of the House with their public servants next to them and they through Head by Head and members ask questions.

We have a document in here under the Housing and Neighbourhood Programme and there are no adequate details. Under other aspects as well, the Explanatory Note tells us “foreign assets” under construction. What does an asset under construction means? What kind of asset it is? Is it a chattel asset? Is it a wall? Is it a building? What is it? Yet, we have to vote on this because the exercise has become so sterile that we have lost connection with the people whom we are trying to govern, and while we can entertain that and afford that when things are going well, we cannot when we are on the margins of our existence as a people and as a development model.

Sir, I pray that we will summon the courage to rise above. It does not happen in step because that is a fairy tale, but I believe that the ability for us to fashion a new system of governance - you have a former Prime Minister who has twenty years experience. You have a Prime Minister who is perhaps the most accomplished student of history. I say that without any fear of contradiction, that we have had to hold that post and who appreciates the dynamics of people and history, and large events because in this we have to step back and see the large event and what is happening to us. You have people on both sides now, Members of the Government who have been there sufficiently long to appreciate the true travis of representation, and Members of the Opposition who are sufficiently recent in Government to remember the true travis and the true complexities. Sir, I say to you we stand at a unique opportunity in this country's history, do not let us betray the legacy. Sir, I say, do not let us betray the legacy that has been given to us. Let us start now. It is going to take us about a year to get it right, but if we get it right and 80 per cent of the population says, this is the road, then I am sure that even in the refashioned Barbados we will improve on our governance mechanisms so that this does not become an ad hominen personality, cast the blame exercise that it has become, not in its original format that it has developed into over the years.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

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

SUSPENSION

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 5.30 p.m. this afternoon.

Hon. P.M.T. TODD: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House be now suspended until 5.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

9.59 p.m.

Sequence 35

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 36, 5.29 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, we were on Order No. 6 and to that we shall continue.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this morning, I read an article where the Mothers Union Movement in the Caribbean was concerned about the level of violence in the Caribbean. I thought to myself that in preparing these Estimates or any kind of presentation with respect to these Estimates, that my focus should not be on numbers but in fact on being clear to Members and to the public of Barbados that these numbers mean something and they are our way of demonstrating now we intend to meaningfully impact upon their lives for the next year. Sir, my focus is not on whether or not there has been a 5 per cent growth, my focus, Sir, is not on whether or not there is a deficit or surplus, my focus therefore is on how we intend and in particular, Sir, what these numbers mean, with respect to my Ministry or the two Ministries that report into myself and how they will impact upon ordinary Barbadians over the next year.

Sir, as you very well know, our late Prime Minister was often quoted as saying that Barbados is just not an

economy but it is a society and I stand fast by that comment. Indeed, Sir, it is a signalled area of departure from us and I believe the Opposition Barbados Labour Party and the presentation we heard yesterday afternoon. Sir, we received a discourse of some three hours and nine minutes where the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter moved from Mount Gay in the north to ESA Field in the east but he dwelled only on economic issues, Sir, and did not focus on how its impact upon the ordinary man in the street.

Sir, the fact is that even in societies where there is a significant per capita income, if one does not focus on the necessities, if one does not focus on the ordinary man in the street, if one does not focus on the bread and butter issues, then, Sir, all the wealth that you have disappears because in fact you spend more time trying to protect your wealth than time enjoying your hard-earned earnings.

Sir, if one looks at what has happened in Bermuda, if one looks at what is happening in the British Virgin Islands, two territories close to us that have significant per capita incomes, one can say that they focus for too long on their economic issues and were very well caught like a hair in the headlights when they recognise that they had significant issues, such as gang-related. They had an upsurge in crime and they had an upsurge in drug-related issues. Therefore, it would be unwise of us as a country if we focussed only on the economic issues that impacts Barbados.

Indeed, Sir, yesterday we also heard about the numbers of territories whose economic performances were better than Barbados during the last year. We were told that St. Kitts was better, we were told that St. Lucia was better, we were told that Jamaica was better, we were told that Trinidad was better, indeed that Belize was better but what I have noticed is that in all those territories and all those countries, the level of crime is significantly higher than the level of crime in Barbados. If you want further proof that there are issues impacted upon these countries, in spite of the economic growth - I am saying this against a background that our focus cannot only be upon economic growth.

Just last week or earlier this week, I believe their acting Chief Immigration Officer, was saying that Barbados is going to crack down on the numbers of persons visiting our shores, who were not no longer prepared to abide by the law of Barbados in terms of the length of time that they have been given to stay in this country. Sir, the question is if all there is, is economic growth, if all that the country requires is outstanding economic growth then why are we, Barbados whose economic growth is questionable, still finding lots of persons flocking to our shores to stay both legally and illegally?

The answer simply has to be that there is more to this country than the numbers. There is more to this country, Sir, than whether or not we have achieved a 3 per cent or a 4 per cent growth over the last year.

Sir, our country, as you know, depends on financial services, it depends, Sir, on tourism as its two main earners of foreign exchange. Without a reduced level of crime in this country both these two industries, Sir, can disappear overnight. There is therefore no doubt that we have as a country to ensure that crime is kept under check, we have to ensure that there are certain minimum standards of behaviour that we will accept. I daresay that we have to be bold enough as a Government that if there are issues affecting our society, in terms of standards of behaviour, to say: "Wait a minute, let us look at these issues." I am not exactly proposing, Sir, that the State should regulate all behaviour but I am suggesting that we have to bold enough to establish some minimum standards of behaviour that we are willing to abide by.

Sometime last year, I heard a senior member of the British Government saying that Britain was now relooking at what they, as a country, were doing and that they tried multi culturism. In other words, they had persons from Pakistan from all over Europe, from India and they accepted all of these cultures. He recognised that in fact it was causing them significant challenges and they were now looking once again at identifying what it is like to be British and therefore focussing on what it is like to be British.

In this regard, Sir, maybe it is time for Barbados once again look at what is required to be Bajan. Look once again at what is required for us to have the pride and industry that we were so well known for, the pride and industry that made us the envy of many of our neighbours and, in fact, go back to those basics. Our efforts over the next year, our efforts over the next two years have to be, let us take stock of our country. Let us take stock at more in terms of what we have gone away from and, once again, Sir, move in a direction where pride and industry means more to us than just something that we recite when we say, the national pledge.

Indeed, this afternoon we heard from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and one of her comments that stayed with me was the fact that we have to ask ourselves why is it that it takes us sometimes six years to move from point A to point B, when in fact it is so obvious what we need to accomplish. Those are the kinds of issues that we need to look at as a country and try to resolve them.

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 36, 5.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, as a country, we cannot say that crime is under control in Barbados and ignore what is happening in the rest of the world or what is happening in the rest of the region. If you do a Google search of crime in the Caribbean, you would come up, like I did a couple days ago, with an article that suggests that the level of murders in the United States of America were significantly less than in many parts of the Caribbean. The countries listed as in the Caribbean were Puerto Rico, Panama, Costa Rico and the Dominican Republic, countries, Sir, that you and I would not associate with the Caribbean.

Sir, I make the point that as a country we cannot just look within our shores in terms of our issues and say that we have the issues of crime and gangs under control. We also have to look outside at our neighbours and bring them along with us because when persons are looking at going to the Caribbean, they will not look at us in isolation, and I say that continuously.

Sir, when you look at these Estimates, you would see that there is an amount that we will be paying to IMPACS which, as you know, is the CARICOM Implementary Agency for Crime and Security. Last year, we paid just close to \$1 million to IMPACS and would like to do a similar amount this year. Mr. Speaker, you can say though that we have a deficit situation, let us not contribute \$1 million to IMPACS but the reality is that crime and security in the region is essential and we have to address crime and security in the region and it goes beyond our borders.

Sir, you might very well say why would we want to contribute continuously to the Regional Security System which nowadays it seems as if Barbados has been left the sole responsibility of addressing the financial issues with respect to the Regional Security System. The reality again, Mr. Speaker, is that we cannot ignore the fact that the system is required because crime in the region will impact directly upon our way of life in Barbados.

Another easy one is that you can say why would we continue to contribute so much to LIAT at a time when we have a deficit. The reality is that LIAT is essential for us in terms of regional travel. Without LIAT, there is no alternative now so therefore we do not have any alternative but to continue to contribute to LIAT.

Sir, there are areas in these Estimates where we have made provision for that it would be an easy thing to say let us not do X and let us not do Y. In fact, I go back to the overall issue of numbers. If we really just wanted to have balanced budgets, we can say why give the Transport Board \$50 million, why give the University of the West

Indies \$150 million or why contribute \$145 million to the Ministry of Health. Sir, the reality is that we have a certain standard of living that requires us to subsidise some sectors of our economy and it is either we pay for them or we reduce our standard of living.

Mr. Speaker, we as a Government certainly would not want to take Barbados back to the 50s or to the 40s. We certainly do not intend to do that so therefore we will try within our powers to ensure that we come as close to having a balanced situation as possible while recognising that there would be several occasions, and probably for years to come, when we would have to continue to subsidise certain sectors of our economy because they are in reality social goods.

Mr. Speaker, I go back to the whole issue of transport. From time to time, we discussed whether or not the Transport Board should receive the level of subsidies that it is receiving. Sir, we either have to decide and acknowledge the fact that transportation in Barbados is a necessary social vehicle to move persons from work to home from work to school, et cetera, and that it would be subsidised by the State or we decide that we would privatise it.

Mr. Speaker, there are about three choices; we could either continue having a Government-controlled institution, which is subsidised by Government, we could give it to the private sector, which will almost automatically mean a significant hike in bus fares or we could try to do a bit of a hybrid. However, Sir, we have taken the position that we have a social responsibility so therefore we will subsidise the Transport Board while trying to ensure that it is as efficient as possible.

Sir, as you know, the Attorney-General's Office provides legal services to the Government as a whole in particular via the Solicitor-General's Office. We have indeed set out in these Estimates this year five or six basic objectives that we want to address this year. Indeed, one of these areas is the whole overall modernisation of the justice sector which is receiving significant support from ourselves. We want to continue to provide support for law enforcement aspects for the control of drugs, money-laundering and transnational crime. We want to provide legal and administrative frameworks for the dispense of justice in accordance with the laws of Barbados.

Sir, in terms of our objectives, we have actually formulated our Estimates that would bring our objectives in line for this year. Sir, part of that is the whole issue in terms of the administration of justice and the whole issue in terms of support for law enforcement. Sir, part of that, on the bread and butter side, is the whole issue of police stations. We were not able during the last two years to build an Eric Holder Complex or a Crab Hill Police Station

because our finances did not allowed us to. However, Sir, we did significant maintenance to District "A", District "B" and the Hastings Police Station. Sir, we even did maintenance to the Crab Hill Police Station, believe it or not, because even though the plant is probably two years old, it actually had significant maintenance problems that we had to address. Sir, within our budget we still recognise that we want to ensure that when the police officers and the support staff go to work they have the best possible environment they can go to.

Sir, in that regard, I am pleased to advise you that the police officers at Black Rock should be moving across the street to the new temporary facilities at the end of this month. Again, we looked at the Black Rock Police Station and we looked at what finances we have. Ideally, we wanted to build a new station at Black Rock but we took the decision that we could not allow the officers to continue functioning where they were at Black Rock. We looked at a budget and I dare say that at the end of the month when they move in to their new offices at Black Rock they will be fairly happy with what we are providing them with.

Mr. Speaker, the Project Office looks after the capital and maintenance issues that impact on the offices of the Attorney-General and the Ministry of Home Affairs and I have already agreed with them as it relates to maintenance that they would continue to look at other police stations in Barbados, that they would look at the Magistrates' Courts, the fire stations, the post offices and the Government Industrial School. Sir, this would continue during this financial year.

Mr. Speaker, we will go back to Central Police Station and do a bit more maintenance there. District "B" is in quite bad condition. I went to District "B", I believe, late last month and work at District "B" should start, if it has not already started, and will continue during the next financial year.

House A87B Sequence 37

5.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: We have provided some moneys in the Estimates so that when officers return to District "B" that they would be proud and happy of the work we have done there. Mr. Speaker, I dare say we would wish to build a new station at District "B" and it is our hope that we would be able to do so. Negotiations are in train with respect to new stations at Belleplaine, Cane Garden and Wildey. We are also hoping to build a new station at Worthing.

Mr. Speaker, we recognise there maybe economic challenges but it is there to us that if we do not focus on the officers and persons who dispense justice in this country that it will create significant havoc to us as a country. Sir, that is what I mean about bringing the Estimates homes, so that one can see what the Estimates mean to the ordinary Barbadian, to civil servants or to you or I who sometimes have to find our way into the various halls of justice or into police stations.

Mr. Speaker, speaking from my ministry's perspective, we are timing our programmes to ensure that we bring relief where possible. Sir, there is some new initiative also I dare say but we would not be able to do ideally all that we would like but we still want to ensure a year from now that it is clear to us that the moneys that are being allocated, will be utilized for the betterment of the ministry and the personnel of those ministries.

Mr. Speaker, the whole issue of community policing, this year we want to focus more on community policing. We want to move the police officer for them to appear more like the postmen, so that he is welcomed in the community wherever he goes. We recognize that unless you have that link between the community and police, we will continue to have these issues and questions in terms of the effectiveness of our crime prevention strategy. We are going focus significantly on the issue of community policing this year.

Mr. Speaker, we know there is an issue in terms of manpower in the police force at this point. Tomorrow is will be my pleasure to attend the Passing Out Parade of 35 new police officers, all Barbadians. In fact, we are delighted that these 35 young men and woman have heeded our call for brave men and women to join the police force. We will continue to encourage more Barbadians to join the police force. We will continue to alert them to the wide and varied career paths available within the police force.

Mr. Speaker, 30 minute will not allow me to address all of the issues in depth with respect to my ministry but I could not not speak about the issue of the juvenile system and or at-risk youth. Again, we have recognised that there are issues in terms of our juvenile system. In fact, our juvenile system is archaic, it is disjointed and does not allow the reflexivity necessary for us to address the challenges facing our young men and woman today. We are going to place particular emphasis this year on ensuring that we have meaningful programmes that impact upon our young men and women, our at-risk youths in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I have said this before, we have a situation where often young men and women are sent to the Government Industrial School because there is no alternative. Some time ago - and the Honourable Member for St. George North has spoken about it a few days ago -

there is an organisation which offered to work with Government to build the facility which would be utilised for at-risk youths in this country. I believe what they were asking for is for Government to provide the land and they would provide the funding for building the facility. Mr. Speaker, for some reason the ball was dropped, I think there was a change in the Minister of Housing and Lands. In fact, it moved from a situation where one Minister agreed that they would have allowed the land to be leased at peppercorn rents. There was a change of Minister and the second Minister then thought that the land was too valuable and should be leased at market rates, thus the opportunity to have a facility built at no cost to the Government which would have housed at-risk youths in this country lost. Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that any private sector organization within the sound of my voice who are interested in working with Government to once again provide such a facility, they would step forward because there is no doubt that we need a facility somewhere between the Government Industrial School and the home of these young men and women.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that there are significant issues in terms of why some young men and women leave their homes. This needs to be addressed. Therefore, without burying our heads in the sand, we need urgently to find a solution. The reality also is that as a Government we cannot afford to build the type of institution that ideally I would like to see built at this point in time but therefore it would be required of us that private sector involvement would be an ideal situation.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five minutes in which to wind up.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, there are significant issues in terms of our juvenile and one thing that is also we also require a multisectoral approach to ensure that we address these issues. It cannot just be the Ministry of Home Affairs or the Office of the Attorney-General. It cannot just be the Minister of Youth and Sports, it has to be sectoral, it has to be a common approach and I would suggest that we have to identify an individual whose responsibility it is to drive this policy forward and who could reach across ministries and extract what is required to address these issues of our young people in this country.

Mr. Speaker, let me hasten to add that with respect to the office of the Solicitor-General, there is provision in the Estimates, we are moving to a new facility sometime in either May or June this year. There have been issues in the Office of the Solicitor General for many years. We are moving to address those issues, we are hiring new staff. We hope to have at least seven more attorneys in the Office of the Solicitor General over the over the next few months. We will also have a modern library. We will have internet facility. Mr. Speaker, it is my hope and desire that we

would be able to transform the Office of the Solicitor-General into the best legal chambers in this country. We are moving all of the physical impediments to the production of quality work in those chambers. As the present leader of those chambers, it is my hope that what will emerge will be chambers of which all Barbados would be proud.

Mr. Speaker, there are some issues presently because of their dislocation, we have been aware of these issues for many years. In fact, I go back several years. My friend, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, can tell you that when he was Attorney-General there were issues. I am happy to report that those issues should be a thing of the past within the next few months.

5.59 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

(ESTIMATES) (Done & G)

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Sir, I want to signal my appreciation for the Chief Parliamentary Counsel's office over the last couple of months. Again, we will continue to work with them, as a Government, and they, I am sure will continue to work with us, as a Government. We are ensuring that provisions are made for them so that they can have an up-to-date drafting system which would make their jobs easier.

Over the last year or so, approximately 20 Acts have been brought to Parliament including, as you know, the Transnational Organised Crime Bill, the Medical Professional Bill, which we did a couple of days ago and we had a suite of money-laundering legislation. Sir, there were some 130 statutory instruments which were also published within the last year, such is the productivity that comes from the Chief Parliamentary Counsel's office. Sir, again, ideally they can use a few additional staff members and we would look to see how best that could be accommodated.

Mr. Speaker, in summary, it is my hope, with respect to the Office of Attorney-General, in particular, that over the next year that we will not only see substantial improvements in terms of the physical accommodation but that we will see a situation where, once again, all Barbadians would be proud of the quality of representation that is given to the Government by the officers of the Attorney-General.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

HIS HONOUR K. St.C. BEST: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill which was present to us yesterday. Sir, it is only fitting that in these trying economic times that I should start my speech by giving a small quotation and this is in the form of a question: Let us ask each other what do you contribute rather than what do you do? Sir, in that regard, it makes fundamental sense to ask that question. We understand that not only in Barbados but throughout the world, there is a recession but this Government, despite those financial challenges, is doing its best to ensure that Barbadians receive a better quality life than previously existed.

Mr. Speaker, we are looking at it in the regard of Barbados being a society. Sir, the three basic needs of mankind are food, clothes and shelter and in that regard, Barbados being only 166 square miles, we recognise that you have to balance the whole question of food security versus the provision of shelter in the form of housing. Sir, it is in this regard that all 30 of us in this House of Assembly should look seriously at the way that we can balance this whole question of food security and housing. I believe that this Government is on the right path in respect of looking at the way forward as far as food security is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have to look at new and innovative ways of growing food crops in this country. We have to really look to see, with the scarcity of land, how much can be produced from a small area of land and the only way we do that is to start look at the greenhouse effect, and all the other scientific effects, for the production of food crops in this country and, Sir, that has to be balanced in relation to providing housing. Mr. Speaker, if you provide too much housing and no food, the occupants of those houses will suffer and they will starve so that is why I am saying that we must balance it and balance it equitably in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that it is the desire of every Barbadian to own a piece of the rock and that is why this Government has embarked on this whole question of highrise housing units which means that with a small area of land, you can at least provide housing for a greater amount of persons and, Sir, that is where the balancing act would come about and within this highrise area that we look after what you call the green economy. Sir, even if some of the resident in the area decide to form a little group and decide to get together with a small piece of land and produce their produce to service that small community and, Sir, we would then understand that we are building a society.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we look at that area and tie in d agriculture with what is being done with the BIDC. Sir, the BIDC provides the support for manufacturing and it provides building and so on but it pains me to see the

building allowed to deteriorate to a state of disrepair under the last administration. Sir, you hear day after day in their mouthings that they speak about manufacturing going nowhere. Sir, we know for sure that the BIDC buildings are the places where young entrepreneurs and business persons look for those buildings to carry on their trade. If you travel, Sir, to Newton, you will see those buildings and it extremely difficult in these tough economic times to start to repair those buildings. It means that in order to carry manufacturing forward that this Government would have to search some where to find some sort of money, get a loan or something of that sort to ensure that manufacturing goes forward.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that if some of the money which was borrowed for the rainy day was used in that way that manufacturing would be further than it is today. Sir, I am calling on the personnel from the BIDC to just not sit there but to go into all 30 constituencies and hold town hall meetings to let the people of Barbados to be aware of the products that they produce and what they are all about. Sir, this would sensitise persons as to what is happening at BIDC and if you want to come on board, this is the way you can come on board. Sir, I believe that would increase the whole level of production and productivity in this country, and you might be able to tap talent that was just lying in the district with no guidance.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking the Minister if he could implore on BIDC to move in that regard. We must now at this stage, in this recessionary period look at innovative ways of carrying this country forward and, I believe we should have a look in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, you cannot reduce unemployment unless you look at the labour laws in this country and provide the atmosphere for the benefits of the country. Sir, I am glad to see that shortly the Employment Rights Bill would be before this Chamber. Sir, this is a Bill that has been talked about for many years but I am sure that within this financial year that this Bill will come before this House to be debated. Sir, we also have to look at the Shops Act and the Shop Order Act which gave the proprietors the opportunity to open their businesses longer which mean they would be providing employment and you would then be in a position to use a rotation system where some person would come to work from seven o'clock to a particular time ...

H/A87B/6:09

Sequence 39

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

His Honour K.St.C. Best: would be providing employment, with a position to work a rotation system

from 7 O'clock to a particular time and allowing you to employ more persons. Sir, that would be the area of Apprenticeship Programme, the Skills Training Programme, the Implant Programme, and the Evening Programme.

Sir, the Apprenticeship system has been here for years, but some of the failings in that system have been, sometimes, when young men and women go to the work places they are asked to do the bulk of the work. There is no equality of the work in that system. As soon as that individual for one reason or the other says, "I do not think that what is happening here is equitable", that person is cast out. It means that person with the will, the tenacity and the power to do a good job is cast out on the street. We are taking that person off the street to put into employment, but because of the callous and unfair discriminatory practice of the employer, that person falls back into the cracks. Sir, I am calling on all employers in this country to treat apprentices like permanent employees with equal with equal respect, because sooner or later those young men and women will be the persons who will carry that business further. Sir, I am asking the employers to be reasonable in that regard.

Sir, the Skills Training Programme is an excellent programme. We must ask ourselves the question if the money spent in this regard balances in the whole question of returns? Is it balancing out in the whole question of returns? I am calling on all young men and women who have the opportunity and the privilege to participate in the Skills Training Programme to grab that opportunity with both hands, and to ensure that they become worthwhile citizens of this country.

I believe the Barbados Vocation Training Board should run a Career Showcase in every school and community, to recognise at an early age if a person is academically inclined or if they are skilled, so that you can guide that person in the particular path. I know in that regard we would have a just and equitable society. Sir, we wait until those persons leave school and end up on the 'block', then go to if we can get them off the 'block', when we should be reaching them at a very young age to see how best we can save this little Barbados.

Sir, we have to try new and innovative ways. These new and innovative ways could not have come about at a better time in this recessionary period. It could not have come about at a better time. I believe this is the way forward. I am asking the Minister and all of the Senior Officers directing this programme to take heed of this little advice, because it might go a long way to the development of this country.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the whole issue of Corporate Affairs. Corporate Affairs is trying their best.

Sir, you will realise that there has been an increase in revenue collection. As at February 2011 revenue exceeded the collections for the financial years 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008, which means something good is happening at the Corporate Affairs Department. We must compliment those civil servants who are trying their best to ensure that revenue comes into the country in some form. Sir, despite this, I believe there are some challenges. I am sure that the Minister of International Business and International Transport would do what is necessary in this financial year to make the Corporate Affairs Department one of the best around.

Sir, the whole question of intellectual property and copyright is critical. I believe that Barbadians should be aware and made aware of the value of intellectual property. Sir, you have the copyright, the trade marks and the pattern. I believe that practitioners, if they really care about the development of their country should give of their time and say, let us form a group that will and go into the nook and cranny of this country to tell the average Barbadian the benefits of intellectual property and having their ideas and designs protected. Sir, too often persons develop intellectual property, however some person from outside who think they have all the brains, takes it away, and registers it, leaving the Barbadian person struggling. Sir, I am saying that should not be the case, and I am asking the Minister to allow some forums where the general public could be made aware of the benefits of intellectual property to Barbadians. Sir, it is only in that regard we can really carry this country forward internationally.

Mr. Speaker, we must increase the personnel in that department. Sir, it makes no sense developing all of these various departments, with no consideration for the human factor. It is critical, and it means we must provide a proper place of work for them. Mr. Speaker, they should be happy in their work environment.

Sir, we are challenged with the Qualification Order Act which was passed in this country. That Act is creating havoc within the public sector. I am calling on my Government to seriously look at it. This Act has created a loss of valuable knowledge. Persons who have years of experience, hands-on and on the job training are suddenly deciding that they are going home. So you have a situation where a person has all this knowledge, wants to share this knowledge, but is disenfranchised because he does not hold a degree, based on what the Qualification Order says. I believe an amendment should be made to that Order.

Asides.

9.50 p.m.

Sequence 40

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 41, 6.19 p.m.

His Honour K.St.C. BEST: I believe that amendments should be made to that Act to allow persons with the experience to move up the ladder and share of that knowledge if not what we would have in the public service, Sir, would be persons who have a wealth of knowledge and go and then we have to struggle. Sir, do not let anybody fool you, it is known that this particular order has low morale within the public service because a fellow is saying, listen, he who has the degree let him do the work. He is my supervisor he does not know what to do, I am not doing anything, Sir, which means, Sir, that productivity in the public sector is down and that is a fact of life.

I am asking that at this stage, with a sense of urgency or not what will happen, Sir, is that everyone who has all the experience go home and we will have to start from scratch and one, Sir, would recognise the difficulty and the problem that this country will face where we almost have a brain drain. I believe, Sir, that it is critical at this stage because Barbados is a changing society and it is a changing world to be still operating under laws that are old and antiquated. I believe a committee should be set up to look at those pieces of Legislation to review them so that they fit into the modern world. It is critical.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the figures in here represent that type of approach that is it, Sir. Everybody would say that they want to blame the accountant, Sir, but it is more than figures. Yes, the figures are important but what is critical, Sir, is to ensure that we have a society which benefits from the management of these figures. Sir, this Government came to power talking about accountability and we are accounting. They talk about transparency and we are being transparent and we are doing the people's business even in these rough times.

Sir, one would know full well that all of us whichever day we have our Constituency Councils that persons come because they need a job but it is our duty to counsel those persons in the way forward either by pointing them in the right direction, and say that there is no Government job here. Let us look at this other alternative. Sir, you would do that and then you would hear people saying he is not doing anything for me but at the end of the day when they really sit down and take five or ten minutes, Sir, with quiet reflection then they would recognise that the advice that was given to them yesterday is sound advice. Sir, we have this mentality that we need a Government job.

Very early soon after I won, a young lady who came to my with four O-levels and told me she wanted a job in the School Meals Department. I asked her doing what, Sir,

and she said, a server. I have pointed that young lady away from that and today this young lady has eight O-levels. This is the kind of thing I believe politicians should be doing, guiding young people in the right direction so that we have a just and equitable society.

Sir, before I wrap up, I want to call on the Minister of Transport and Works who is my friend to look seriously at the road network within St. Michael East. The reason I am saying that is that any given day, the amount of traffic that traverse in St. Michael East is horrendous which means that the roads are deteriorating faster and faster. I took his word. He said that in these Estimates, he made the necessary provisions. I hope, Sir, that the residents and the constituents of St. Michael East would see some improvement.

I am so glad, Sir, I have spoken to the Minister of Housing in respect of housing and he has assured me because very soon we have Haggatt Hall, which would provide something. I also want him to look seriously at Clarke's Land pasteur which is the property of the National Housing Corporation. It is a zone one area, Sir, but I would like to see that area transformed into a Friday and Saturday market which gives average Barbadians the opportunity who wants, because it is a farming area, to come there and expose their produce for sale. I think, Sir, that is the way forward. We are looking to building a just and equitable society and to allow people to be entrepreneurs.

I know, Sir, that one of my biggest challenges relates to the whole question of water. This was a problem of zone one and the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central and I share boundaries and we have similar problems. I hope that the Reverse Osmosis Plant will be of some benefit to not only the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central but it would be beneficial to all Barbadians for the simple reasons that this Unit would provide cleaner water for all Barbadians.

Sir, I will conclude by leaving this small quotation:

"It is in everyone's best interest to work towards the development of an equitable and sustainable future."

Sir, when you work equitably it means that we should have an equitable distribution for each and everyone in this country, to provide for a sustainable future. I say that what is contained in these Estimates is a pathway to achieving that goal.

With those few words, I thank you, Sir.

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

Mr. R.St.C. TOPPIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I want to begin by congratulating the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter who gave a very excellent presentation yesterday and who in fact was the one who truly analysed and presented these Estimates and really explained all that they portend or perhaps, more correctly, what they do not portend for Barbados' development over then next year.

Sir, it is extremely disappointing to see that the Government has brought Estimates this year to Parliament that really are devoid of any creativity or any programmes to lift up this country from the financial mess in which is now is, Sir. Even on the admission of one Member from the Other Side, the fact is that the people of Barbados right now are in pain and the pain is real.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please, quiet please.

Mr. R.St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, a large number of Barbadians do not even know where the next meal is coming from. Unemployment is continuing to rise to dangerously high levels again.

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 41, 6.29 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, unemployment is continuing to rise to dangerously high levels again and has in fact joined housing as the two issues that most affect Barbadians at this time. Sir, when it comes to unemployment, the bad situation is made actually worse if you were to actually take into account the large numbers who are in fact unemployed, those who have been reduced from a full week to a one and two-day week but who are still being referred to as employed for statistical purposes. Sir, even those who are fully employed are catching hell and seeing red and struggling to make ends meet. Our people hear every day now some announcement or the other informing of some increase in the price of one thing or the other, either there is an increase in the cost of bottle gas, diesel, gasoline, electricity, water, bread, chicken, pork or something else.

Sir, the shocking reality is that all that this Government is doing in the midst of the cries of Barbadians for assistance to cope with the rising cost of living is to join its voice to all those who are complaining but doing nothing at all to assist people to be able to cope with it. Sir, in many instances, it is the action of the Government itself that is causing the hardship on the people.

Sir, when you look at the increases made to energy prices in April 2008 in this Chamber, that was entirely the Government and that destroyed and decimated individuals,

households and a number of small business people in this country.

Sir, when you look at the fact there was a record amount of taxation extracted from the people of Barbados in 2008, that again was the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, when you look at the recent increases in VAT, that was this Government, the Democratic Labour Party. When you look at the fact that entertainment and travel allowances are now being taxed, that is the action of this Government. Sir, when you look at the fact that from April 1st people now have to pay a dispensing fee at private pharmacies for medication, that is the action of this Government and the list goes on and on.

The Government behaviour has been impacting negatively on the savings and the spending power of Barbadians. Sir, the thing is that no one at all escapes. If you are unemployed, under employed, employed, no matter which class you are in, whether you are in the lower class, the middle class or the upper class, whether you are a small businessman or a big businessman, no one is escaping the proverbial hangman's noose since 2008. Sir, a pay cheque now to a monthly paid manager is just as worthless and useless as a pay cheque or a wage to a weekly paid general worker. All of them now are sucking salt under this Government. They cannot make ends meet. They are crying out for help. The Government's response to their cries for help is to join them in crying out for help but doing nothing meaningful to assist them to cope. Sir, on top of that, where people need help, you have the CLICO issue. People cannot get back their money especially at a time when they need it. All people are getting now in most cases is a letter telling them to hold on, that is all you can get now in response to a request. A lady from my constituency in Eden Lodge wants to get a settlement of the payment of her policy and after all these years, all she got in February this year was a letter telling her that it is likely to be a number of months before the true financial position of the company is known including its ability to pay claims in whole or part. Sir, that is all she has gotten in a letter in February this year after years of trying to get back the few odd cents that she put into CLICO.

Sir, the Minister of Finance wants us in all of this to cool it, he wants restraint, we must be careful not to inflame sentiments. Sir, I got news for him. Sentiments are already inflamed and rightly so. Sir, we know where to point fingers in this issue. This is a finger pointing thing and we know where to point the finger. We know who went public on January 31, 2009 after the issue broke in Trinidad and said fear not everything was well in the Barbadian operation. We know who was intricately and intimately involved in the financing of the Democratic Labour Party's election campaign, we know that too. Sir, we know who used to come in here every Tuesday after the election campaign in 2008 and sit down over there to

oversee his investment. Sir, we know now, we did not know before, who signed as a witness to contracts now involving the payment of bonuses by CLICO and to whom. We did not know them before, all of that was hidden but we know it now. Sir, we know where the fingers have to be pointed now in this debate.

Sir, others may want to back off but I am not going to be accommodating any friend of this Government at a time when people, especially when poor people from my constituency, cannot get their money back from CLICO at this time when they need it more than ever. It is unconscionable to ask me to do that. I am not going to ignore the people's hardship. Things are hard for people and these Estimates do nothing to alleviate the hardship. Nothing is different in these Estimates this year from last year. Sir, it is obvious that there would have to be some adjustments upwards to the figure in these Estimates that would make it even harder for Barbadians. When you look, for example, at the vote for the University of the West Indies, \$77 million allocated this year, \$78 million was allocated last year and they had to come back for \$60 million, so you got to come back again for the \$60 million. The Transport Board is allocated \$10 million, so you know you got to come back. Sir, we may have done some things like that in the past but we were running a 1.5 per cent fiscal deficit, we had elbow room. This Government has no elbow room to be coming back, none. Sir, the truth is these Estimates would have to be adjusted upwards.

Sir, with respect to the Urban Development Commission, I heard the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown speaking in very glowing terms about how much more would be done this year by the Urban Development Commission in the coming financial year. I want to know if the Minister of State or the Minister possessed some mystical powers of God Almighty to get more from less because the Minister did not tell you that for the current or the coming financial year, the money allocated in the Estimates to the Urban Development Commission is \$4.7 million less than what was allocated for the current financial year, so I do not know how the Minister is going to get more done from less.

Sir, we know for sure that precious little has been done by the Urban Development Commission certainly in the constituency of St. Michael North. The Minister spoke in terms of the urban tenancies transfer programme but I want to know when that programme is going to restart because I have attended quite a few meetings with tenants in my constituency and the Urban Development Commission personnel and I was repeatedly promised that the programme would have been effective any time now or shortly as they told me but nothing has happened in my constituency in relation to the transfer of these tenancies lands to the tenants. Sir, I want to know, I am taking the Minister on his word that somehow he is going to do more

this year with less but that he is still going to ensure that some work would be done including the transfer of tenancies to the people of St. Michael North.

House A87B Sequence 42

6.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I want to move on to deal with the issue of tourism. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados have pinned the growth in the economy substantially on the tourism sector. Sir, our concern on this side is that the tourism sector is underperforming. Sir, it would suit some people to look at the figures, especially for January this year when there was a record number of arrivals, and overlook other important issues.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay, Honourable Members.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, if the arrival figures for January do nothing else, they show that international conditions are not now and never were the cause for the significant dip in our tourists arrivals. Sir, in January this year, there were increases out of both the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and there was a decline from Canada. Let me elaborate a bit here. Sir, in the European market, there are serious challenges in relation to the cost of travel, occasioned by the increase of air passenger duty. There was also a recent increase by British Airways of fuel surcharges, which has now made Britons opt to travel to closer destinations, especially in Europe where there are all-inclusive like Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, despite that, we had an increase in visitors out of the United Kingdom, despite those challenges. The United States of America also has serious challenges which we all know about. Despite that, there was an increase this year. On the other hand, the Canadian market is strong and growing. They have a strong currency, vis-a-vis, the United States of America. They have increase airlifts, including subsidised airlifts. Despite all those things the strength of the Canadian economy, February has seen the fourth consecutive month of decline from Canada. Mr. Speaker, there have been increases in two economies that have serious challenges and a decrease from an economy that is strong and growing. Therefore, we know for sure that it is not international conditions that are responsible for the performance.

Mr. Speaker, in any event - because as soon as I got up to speak I was told to bring these figures. They realised

that I spoke of increases. I have not used the word growth, because last year despite a 2.6 per cent increase overall on the previous year, arrivals were still less than for the year 2000. Mr. Speaker, last year we had an increase of 2.6 per cent but it was still less than the figure for the year 2000, so you can talk about increase but do not talk about growth because there was no growth.

Asides.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. When the Honourable Member speaks about the year 2000, the matching year for that would be 2001 and we are not in 2001.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue, Honourable Member.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, there was an increase in United Kingdom visitors this January and February, when compared to last year so the fact is that the United Kingdom market is still performing well below 2005 levels. The Honourable Member can talk about increases but he cannot talk about growth, that is why I use the word increases and not growth.

Mr. Speaker, overall, and this is very important, after the record increase in January, for February we went back to the bad old ways again with the performance in February was below that of 2008. Sir, one swallow does not a whole summer make. Mr. Speaker, the point is that there will always be the appearance of growth when you had a steep slump, but the objective reality is that our performance is inconsistent and it is well below par. When I use par I am not using it in the golfing sense, that would be complimentary. It is below what it should be.

Mr. Speaker, our neighbours in the region continue surging ahead. The latest publication by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation shows that Barbados is now in joint 16th position out of 28 countries reporting to the Caribbean Tourism Organization, which is a slight down by two positions for the last time they published, which was December 2, 2010. The publication from 2010 has been the position one down from where it was in September 2010. Sir, Barbados is continuing to slip, at a time when our neighbours in the region, who are facing the same challenges that we are facing, yet they continue to surge ahead.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you one example, St. Lucia. Mr. Speaker, St. Lucia with a marketing budget lower than ours in 2010, had an increase of 9.9 per cent, while we had 2.6. St. Lucia had 9.9 per cent after a 33 per cent decline in November because of a hurricane. Sir, in one month alone St. Lucia had a 33 per cent decline and still ended up

overall with a 9.9 per cent increase, while we had only a 2.6 per cent increase. They had as well a 30.8 per cent increase out of the United States of America, while we only had a 10.4 per cent increase.

Mr. Speaker, the Government wants to brag about these things. If they want to brag about that, that is their problem but we have slipped, not only in the sense in which I have just outlined, we have also slipped from being in the top 10 destinations of choice to United Kingdom travelers.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Maybe once were, we are not there anymore. Others are still there but Barbados continues to slip. Mr. Speaker, in all this the most shocking reality is that in spite of all this talk about record arrivals in January, yet in that month our reserves fell by more than \$60 million. Therefore, what is the point? What is the big hoo-hah? Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the reason for this performance of the sector, the inconsistent and below par performance has to do with the fact that our tourism has to operate in an environment that is hostile to its development. This hostility manifests itself in a number of ways. First, in the context of the reality that there is a finite amount of money that can be allocated for the marketing of Barbados, this money has to be spent in such a way as to maximise benefits and returns for Barbados. Therefore, the first thing we have to do is decide what markets we are going to target. While venturing into new markets is always something that you have to consider, you first have to ask how much money should you be spending in an entirely new market at a time when you are struggling to reverse your fortunes in your traditional and well-established markets.

6.49 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

(ESTIMATES)

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Sir, in this context, we have to examine not only the decision by the Minister and the BTA to go into the Brazilian market but also the way in which they have gone into the Brazilian market. Sir, firstly, the Minister should have started out with a chartered operation, as opposed to scheduled services, and that would certainly have allowed a more gradual and sustainable development of the market and would certainly, have been less costly.

Mr. Speaker, if you wanted, as the Minister decided to have scheduled services right away then the best approach would have been to be aggressive and target marketing in, and behind, the gateway to generate demand

for Barbados, as a destination, even before the service began so that the service would be a lot more sustainable. Sir, that would have been the approach, build up and generate the demand even before you start the service so the services would more than likely be sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister said he was not going that route instead the Minister and the Barbados Tourism Authority (BTA) opted to go the costly route of subsidising air services by revenue guarantees to airlines. Sir, this approach has really been producing some glaringly, absurd results in places where it is being acted out but especially so in the Brazilian market. Sir, the Minister never gives details of this revenue guaranteed agreement. When I asked for them, he gave me some very short responses and dismisses me, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, based on my information there was an average of 127 Brazilians, who came to Barbados on each of the five Saturdays in January on a 186-seat carrier. Sir, according to the terms of the revenue guarantee agreement given by the Government to this carrier, Gual Airlines, we had to pay Gual Airlines the sum of US\$129 000 for January alone. (2:44)

Mr. Speaker, the situation for February is even worse because in February, whereas in January you had 633 coming in all, in February you had 242 coming.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes more.

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Sir, on an average of 61 per flight. Sir, the question is if 127 persons per flight, which was a fuller flight cost the taxpayers of Barbados US\$129 000 for January when you had a 198-seater aircraft, how much now is it going to cost the Government of Barbados in February when you had 61 passengers per week on a larger aircraft (3:58)

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

Hon. R.D. JONES: (8:00) Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I first want to say how pleased I am to be able to stand here in this Lower House as a result of the blessings of God and, secondly, as a result of the good people of Christ Church East Central, who have given me the opportunity on the second occasion to serve their best interest.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes in life you are disappointed and we were told by our foreparents that you have to roll with the punches but when you are disappointed by some who you believe should know better than the only thing you can do is hang your head in shame.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North should hang his own head in shame because, at the end of the day, for a member who has been in this Honourable House for so long, one would expect better of him and one would hope that he could have provided, as we do on this side, guidance and leadership to the people of Barbados.

H/A87B/7:00

Sequence 44

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Hon. R.D. JONES: ...one would hope that he could have provided, as we do on this side, guidance and leadership to the people of Barbados. The kind of speech which emanated from this Honourable Member should be cast into the dump heap. That is where it should be cast.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that is unparliamentary.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Sir, it has been withdrawn. Sir, it was a speech that was extremely awful. It depressed even the Honourable Members on this side. In fact, one should note that the former Leader of the Opposition left as he started to speak, because the Honourable Member knew what was going to come, but as decent people we remained and we listened. I am not going to spend my time responding to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, neither will I take on the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. They knew already what they did a few months ago with their sharpened cudgels, they knew. Therefore, every Honourable Member on this side has to face them, Do not turn your backs colleagues. Please do not turn your backs. You know what will happen to you.

Sir, I want to salute the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, the Minister of Finance in the Government of Barbados. I did not say Democratic Labour Party Government because there is only one Government of Barbados, elected by the people of Barbados. There are Honourable Members on that side who are looking at what is happening in North Africa and in the Middle East, who believe that the people of Barbados will be galvanised in the same revel of insurrection against an unsavoury Government. That is what they want. They are going around this country, and we all know this, planting seeds of insurrection in the minds of the citizens of Barbados. We are well aware of it.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West brought to this House an Appropriation Bill supported by a document, which we call

the Estimates for 2011-2012. The Honourable Member and the Government have done their best to maintain the services to the people of Barbados. We have not said on this side that it is not difficult, because we will not lie to the people of Barbados. We are still trying to persuade people that is not the case, and that is what we find extremely disheartening.

Sir, we have developed in this country something called 'Opposition Politics'. You can gain the ground that you want to gain by providing solutions, ideas, visions for the guidance of a country, rather than the kind of behaviour manifested by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North. It was one of the most depressing speeches ever delivered in this House by any Member from any side, left or right, extremely depressing, an awful speech, Mr. Speaker. It was an empty speech.

Sir, I am not moved to flogging anyone.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: You need to go before the Lord and bow down because of what you did recently. You need to go before the Lord.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please address the Chair.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: I would carry you outside and put a lash in you.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Sir, no one was speaking to you. You are not recognised at all. No one was speaking to you.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please address the Chair if you want to continue to make your speech. Let us have some order please.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, these Estimates represent the best effort for the people of this country. This is what they represent, but what the Honourable Members on that side tried to do on each and every occasion, which is their right, to somehow suggest that everybody else in this country has no worth or any value. All of a sudden only a few Members, and I am not including all of the Members in this, but the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, and the Honourable Member who only comes in here now and then, believe that they have it all.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: You need to clean the area in Newton that you have full of bush and stop allowing rats to run around the people's places. That is what you need to do.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please desist from shouting across the Floor. Honourable Member, you are on your feet. Please, desist, Honourable Member.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Sir, even with the difficult circumstances as there are - I just want to share just a little bit of the difficult circumstances which still remain. The people of Barbados are sensible. They know that it is difficult and the Government is trying to maintain services right across the length and breadth of this country. Sir, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is not closed. The Polyclinics are not closed. In fact, we have gone to St. John and started work on the St. John Polyclinic after some fourteen years of deliberate and bastardly of the people of St. John. It was about the facility. It is about the health needs of the people of St. John and those who would have accessed that facility for their health situation. That is what was happening.

Mr. Speaker, let me share a little bit of what is happening in the world. Sir, Athen, Greece's budget deficit increased in the first two months of the year as the country struggled to raise revenue. Now we refer to Greece as a first world nation. That is what we do. Sir, Lisbon, Portugal - I am reading this because I was in this country. I have read it.

"Portugal's Government announced more tax hikes and money saving measure to ensure the country meets its deficit reduction targets through 2013, and to ease market jitters over its debt load. Portugal is one of Europe's weakest economies and is under acute market pressure to restore its fiscal health after piling up heavy debts during a decade of feeble growth. Analysts predict that may need a bail out like Greece and Ireland".

Sir, these are just a few examples that I want to share.

Sir, men and women of lesser worth and of lesser value would have thrown their hands up based on the difficulties that we face. We have girded our loins and we have said that we will fight on to ensure that the people of Barbados will not suffer the way the Members of the Opposition want them to suffer, because that is what they truly want, the doom and gloom.

Sir, I leave home sometimes on Sunday evenings. May be there are changing circumstances, but I travel along

Highway 7 going into Warrens and other parts of Barbados and I still see the fast food outlets of Barbados flooded on Sunday evenings. They are not out there just playing in the play parks. There are flooded. That is a message to all of us that persons still enjoy the reasonably good quality of life. That is what is happening. There are persons who are still going to the supermarkets. They are not in long lines at some food store begging. That is not what is happening in this country.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central spoke to the large numbers that came through at Agrofest.

HA87B 7:09

Sequence 45

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 46, 7.09 p.m.

Hon. R.D. JONES: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central spoke to the large numbers that came through at AgroFest. They were not in there begging. They paid their money to go in and they came out through the door with large bags of food grown by citizens of Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Sir, that is what happened therefore I reject out of hand what the Honourable Members on the other side are trying to do, trying to implant into the minds of people that it is a quest for power, it is a greed for power and you believe that you could persuade persons by that greed for power. It is when people reject you, and all of you, including the Honourable Member for St. Andrew and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, will be rejected by the people next time around.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: I remember at another time in here the former Minister of Tourism and the former Honourable Member for St. Michael South when there was a lot of jealousy from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North. He talked about the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. He would take the pain out of tourism so we should not be quarrelling on this side because he attacked his own Members so we should not talk about him. His policy is well known. Anybody that is doing a good job, he cuts down and he undermines. Sir, that is well know and that is the character of the individual we are dealing with.

I want, Mr. Speaker, to touch a bit on education because education and training still hold much for the people of Barbados and the Government of Barbados has not let our education down. It has, in fact, increased the amount of resources available to education in these Estimates. That is what has happened. We have had in the last few years...

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Sir, that is why I like to make this point because there are persons who call their henchman and henchwomen, in relation to matters such as these. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East spoke of the school at Staple Grove, a school we have, when she spoke that school was under consideration for 11 years. That school started construction under the Democratic Labour Party in 2010 and will be ready for occupancy by more than 450 students in September of 2011.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Sir, that is what we are talking about and in difficult circumstances. Sir, 11 years ago the circumstances were not as difficult as now. They had money like slouch funds for the use of all and sundry. That is what happened.

Sir, Harrison College will be ready at the beginning or middle of April.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: It started last year as well. We joined and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas went for the breaking of the ground. I give to Jack his jacket and to Jill her shirt. The Honourable Member went for the breaking of Maria Holder Nursery school at Sharon, a project that was conceptualised but not a lot of work was done on it but pushed through the system because we are promoting, as has started before, nursery education in this country. This school which will end up costing just more than \$2 million for 120 nursery age student and that will also be completed in a matter of two months.

Sir, that is what we are doing in this Government. We are not sat down and wallowed in the difficulties surrounding the world. Sir, you will also find starting this year the roll out of the new School Meals Centre at six roads, which will replace the School Meals Centre which was at Sommervale amalgamated with one at St. Christopher. This School Meals Centre will cater to some 15 000 meals but it is so equipped that in case of a national emergency, it can step up its capacity up to 25 000 meals to support any areas of difficulty.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member spoke just now to the issue of school meals and I do not play around with the food of people and I asked the School Meals Department to send the school menu from September, right down to the end of March, when the students will be going on vacation. I did not have all the time to do the statistics but I see chicken peveau. I do not know if that is made of salt fish, chicken and vegetable stew. I do not know if that is made of beef. The Honourable Member said that the chicken was withdrawn from the menu. Chicken must be beef or turtle. Sir, that is what is on this and what is in our schools and we know.

The Honourable Member gets up and talks about all the vulnerable and the poor and children who do not get food and when you bring nutritious foods to the children of Barbados she would say that there is no chicken. Even if for that argument there was no chicken there is still beef on this. There is still stake fish on this and there is still salted fish, there is nothing wrong with that and there is cou cou in this, cream potato. These are the nutritious meals for the students of Barbados and it is being spread more and more, even to secondary schools where there is a need to be satisfied. There is no pulling back. There is a going forward by the provision of resources to the school meals of Barbados on behalf of the children of Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: We are talking as well, Mr. Speaker, of the Hope Agricultural Training Institute. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter was saying he did not see it in the Budget. Of course it is in the Budget. The project has started, not as fast as we would want. The roads were put in at the Hope. You will also find, that four building will be going up very shortly when the new financial year starts, I believe before the new financial year in the matter of a week or so, but if not it will be going up within the new financial year and one would believe that if everything continues as planned that we will have that Hope Agriculture Training Institute fully established, working cooperatively with the Ministry of Agriculture to bring refreshing new scientific ideas into agriculture within this country. This is what we are talking about and that is what we are doing.

You will find, Mr. Speaker, that they want to make the hue and cry about and that everything is falling down and everything is being mashed up but that is not the evidence that we are seeing. I am extremely thankful as a citizen of Barbados that the Government of Barbados looked at the working people of Barbados who are not at home during the Summer to take care of their children and have allocated \$½ a million for those 10 000 young people of this country. Sir, not only are they exposed to proper

training but you know as well, they can get a wholesome meal. Sir, there have been the constant harping and criticism by the other side on this matter.

We speak of changing the governance model in Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East speaks about changing it, maybe changing it differently but at least she recognises that there is a need for embracing more and more of our citizens in a governance model so that they can hear and understand and partake and participate of whatever is being offered in the governance situation in this country.

ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 46, 7.19 p.m.

Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members on that side are looking at it in one single way, oh somehow, it is going to give the Democratic Labour Party a greater control of the systems of governance and systems of politics in this country. That is why the Honourable Member for St. Andrew no longer goes to St. Andrew. The soup kitchen established in Hillaby no longer operates because the people got tired of that kind of soup bowl representation, that kind of mentality that they want to engender.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: It is corned beef and biscuit now. That needs to stop.

There are certain realities that we have to confront in Barbados. The Honourable Members would want us not to run a fiscal deficit but even they have run a fiscal deficit. No Government likes to run a fiscal deficit, none whatsoever likes to run a fiscal deficit. Sir, you would find that they want us to take \$1.2 billion one time out of that deficit. They are saying to shut down the Transport Board. You got to listen to what they are saying you know. They are saying to shut down the Transport Board, eliminate all of the transfers to agencies which were even developed by the other side, shut them down, send home all the employees of these institutions and put them out on the streets. That is what they are saying by what they are asking. You have to read between the lines. They are clever. They need to have holy water thrown on them.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes in which to wind up.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you, Sir. That is what they need. This kind of argumentation being advanced should demonstrate now an even greater and more mature approach. I am beginning to see it coming from the

Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and that is because like Paul on the road to Damascus there was that emerging transformation trying to distance herself from the obvious decay in the thought processes of some of the Honourable Members on the other side.

Sir, the gap is even wider now than the gap in October in 2010. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is trying to bring a more reasoned approach. Sir, even as she does that, between 1994 and 2008, when there was room to do a lot of the transformation and put Barbados on a sustainable path, it was not done. What was happening was the selling off of the lands of Barbados, which is unsustainable, because we are still only 166 square miles so when you are selling off the land and bringing foreign inflows into Barbados what are you going to harvest eventually, you are going to put them in the sea. Are we going to sell the sea next? Are we going to build an island offshore of Barbados? They were building the foreign exchange on selling land, doing all of that, unsustainable development of Barbados. Sir, the people understood this and that is why the people rejected them all. Sir, I think it is unfortunate that they continue to try to slap the people in their faces in this democracy. The people will deal with people like the Honourable Member for St. Andrew again, that is what is happening.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude because we are going to deal with education more as we go forward as the Heads are called. I want in concluding to use a quote, it is that this international recession... Economies are generally emerging out of the difficulties but we are not going to know really what is going to happen a few months down the road. The massive flooding of Australia, the Tsunami and earthquake in Japan and the fighting in Libya and Bahrain, as mentioned earlier by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East will have an impact on what is happening in the world.

Sir, the quote says that this international economic recession is a testing time for all Barbadians. I also believe that this crisis signals the second phase in our struggle for independence. In that respect, it presents us not with a challenge but with an opportunity. Sir, the Honourable Members on this side and lighthearted Barbadians, men and women of strong consciousness and determination, using the challenges of this period to transform Barbados...

Sir, I continue. In the first place, it forces us to face up to the structural problems in our society that are functioning as constraints on our future economic growth. Sir, I repeat, Barbados is not just an economy. Making adjustments to fiscal and monetary policies without addressing the underlying social fundamentals may help alleviate some of the impact of the external economic crisis we currently face but it will not solve the deep-seated problems that beset us as a society. These are some of the

words of the late leader of the Democratic Labour Party and the late Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados.

I will encourage all Honourable Members to refocus their attention on the delivery of this great country because at the end of the day, there might be Honourable Members on that side who have their boats ready to sail but I am sure that there are no Honourable Members on this side who have boats ready to sail anywhere. We have to live in this society and this economy and we therefore have to work to ensure that it does not fail. We are working to ensure that it does not fail. We are staying focussed and committed. We will continue to bring policies to alleviate the hardships being faced by several Barbadians. We recognise that there are hardships. As Honourable Members, our allowances were cut but none of us quarrel and complain because we made the sacrifice on behalf of this economy and society. We did not groan neither did we moan.

Mr. Speaker, the Appropriation Bill supported by these Estimates thus far has been well-laid and well-presented. We know that the people of Barbados will continue to work with the Democratic Labour Party, the party that cares about the entire country and not about selfish motives, not about stuffing our pockets with the resources of the State but working on behalf of the people so that the State would continue to work on their behalf.

I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 16, 2011.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 16, 2011 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

House A87B Sequence 47

7.30 p.m.

CONTENTS

RESUMPTION

Hon. P.M.T. Todd, 1, 4, 5, 12; Hon. E. G. Hutson, 5, 8, 9; Mr. G. A. Clarke, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15; Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, 9; Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, 10, 11, 12; Mr. F.J. Stuart, 12; Mr. J.D. Paul, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; Mr. R.E. Eastmond, 15; Mr. H.F. Lashley, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

RESUMPTION

ORDER NO. 6 (resumed).....22

Miss C. Y. Forde, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 41, 42; His Honour K. St.C. Best, 22, 23; Mr. F.J. Stuart, 27; Mr. H.F. Lashley, 27; Hon. D. O’N. Inniss, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32; Mr. G. A. Clarke, 31; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 31, 46, 47, 48, 49; Hon. S.D. Blackett, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37; Dr. W. F. Duguid, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41; Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, 38, 39, 40; Dr. F. Dugid, 41; Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45; Mr. G.W. Payne, 43.

RESUMPTION

ORDER NO. 6 (resumed)

Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, 50, 52, 53, 54; His Honour K. St.C. Best, 55, 57; Mr. R. St.C. Toppin, 57, 58, 59, 60; Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, 60.

(ESTIMATES)

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN.....60

Hon. R.D. Jones, 61, 62, 63, 64.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BEST, His Honour K. St.C. (St. Michael East)
BLACKETT, Hon. S.D. (St. Michael Central)
BOYCE, Hon. J. D. E. (Christ Church South)
BRATHWAITE, Hon. A. D. (St. Philip South)
CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
DUGID, Dr. F.
DUGUID, Dr. W. F. (Christ Church West)
EASTMOND, Mr. R.E. (St. James North)
FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)
HUTSON, Hon. E. G. (St. James Central)
INNISS, Hon. D. O’N. (St. James South)
JONES, Hon. R.D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, Hon. D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Mr. H.F. (St. Michael South East)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
PAUL, Mr. J.D. (St. Michael West Central)
PAYNE, Mr. G.W. (St. Andrew)
STUART, Mr. F.J. (St. Michael South)
TODD, Hon. P.M.T. (City of Bridgetown)
TOPPIN, Mr. R. St.C. (St. Michael North)

DISCLAIMER. This transcript was prepared with the assistance of artificial intelligence tools and is provided for reference only. It has not been reviewed, verified or approved by the Hansard Department of the Parliament of Barbados and does not constitute an official parliamentary record. It may contain errors or omissions, including inaccuracies in wording or speaker identification. For authoritative quotations or confirmation of proceedings, consult the official Hansard record when available.

EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

Q2. Opening. The source opens without the convening sentence (Pursuant to the adjournment ... met at ...). The date is taken from the heading of the source.

Q3. Order No. 6, speech of Miss C. Y. Forde, take-slip Sequence 19 (about 2.24 p.m.). Either side of the take-slip the source repeats Miss Forde's words '... with this whole drug service business, where poor people are reeling under the pressure of what they have to pay at the desk when they go to the pharmacy' (about 30 words), each time under a fresh speech label. The overlap is short and both copies are printed. Please confirm.

Q4. Order No. 6, before the suspension at about 5.00 p.m.. After Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley's speech the Chair's call 'The Honourable Member for Christ Church South' carries the label 'Mr. PRESIDENT' in this House sitting. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Take-slip before the 5.30 p.m. resumption. One take-slip reads 'HA 87B 9.59 p.m.', Sequence 35, although it falls between the suspension at about 5.00 p.m. and Sequence 36 at 5.29 p.m. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Reporters' slugs and timings. Reporters' slugs are printed in the text, among them 'ESTIMATES - House A87B, Sequence 01, 9.59 a.m.', '(ESTIMATES) (Done & G)' and a heading '(ESTIMATES)' in Mr. R. St. C. Toppin's speech, and timing marks such as '(9:00)', '(1:03)', '(2:44)', '(3:58)' and '(8:00)' appear inside speeches. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Order No. 6, speech labels. Mr. W. F. Duguid's speech labels vary between 'Mr. W.F. DUGUID', 'Dr. W. F. DUGUID' and 'Dr. F. DUGID'; Mr. J. D. Paul's first label reads 'J.D. PAUL'. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Order No. 6, speech of Mr. G. A. Clarke. Mr. Clarke gives nominal Gross Domestic Product at market prices as 'estimated at \$8.554 million', where billion appears to be meant. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed on Tuesday, 15th March, 2011 at about 10.00 a.m. the Sitting begun the day before, the Speaker presiding, and continued the debate on Order No. 6, the Bill to appropriate money for the service of Barbados for the financial year ending 31st March, 2012, with its Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2011-2012. No papers or other business were taken.

Hon. P. M. T. Todd, the Member for the City of Bridgetown, spoke of the work of the Rural Development Commission in his portfolio and its response to tropical storm Tomas. Hon. E. G. Hutson, the Member for St. James Central, set the Estimates against the world financial crisis since 2008 and described plans for expanded home-porting of cruise ships. Mr. G. A. Clarke, the Member for St. George North, said the deficit was about 8 per cent of GDP for the first time in living memory, put the fiscal deficit at \$1 billion or 12 per cent of GDP on the Accountant-General's basis, and said VAT was raising more than \$840.5 million while capital spending lagged; Mr. Hutson and Hon. J. D. E. Boyce raised points of order.

With the Deputy Speaker in the Chair, Mr. J. D. Paul, the Member for St. Michael West Central, said the Barbados Labour Party had failed small farming businesses and called for better marketing of agriculture, and Mr. H. F. Lashley, the Member for St. Michael South East, asked that Estimates debates be televised on a CBC channel and spoke of 'caring and sharing', likening the Estimates to the parable of the Good Samaritan. The House was suspended at about 12.30 p.m. until 1.45 p.m.

On resumption Miss C. Y. Forde, the Member for St. Thomas, cited Estimated Current Revenue of over \$2.522 billion and Total Expenditure of over \$3.557 billion, criticised welfare delays and drug service charges, and questioned the \$5.5 million spent on a 28-day summer camp where 65 caterers earned \$3.4 million; the Speaker ordered certain of her remarks expunged and she withdrew them. Hon. D. O'N. Inniss defended the summer camps and the Government's record through the recession, and Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley raised a point of order on a disparaging reference. Hon. S. D. Blackett described the bottom-up community development strategy and the welfare department's work. Mr. W. F. Duguid traced the current account deficit from \$219 million in 2003/4 to \$1.3 billion in 2010/11, said \$1 billion was being borrowed for current spending, and condemned a 'golden parachute' of \$10 million in the CLICO matter. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, the Member for Christ Church South, spoke on the road programme and the Scotland District, and Miss Mottley argued that the Estimates reflected the limits of the present economic model and the need for long-term transformation. The House was suspended until 5.30 p.m.

In the evening Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, the Member for St. Philip South, spoke on crime in the region, policing and juvenile justice, and thanked the Chief Parliamentary Counsel's office. His Honour K. St. C. Best supported the Bill. Mr. R. St. C. Toppin said unemployment was rising and criticised the revenue guarantee to Gual Airlines for the Brazilian service, which he said cost US\$129 000 for January alone when an average of 127 passengers came on each flight. Hon. R. D. Jones, the Member for Christ

Church East Central, defended the Estimates as the Government's best effort and spoke of school meals and the Hope Agricultural Training Institute.

On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, seconded by Hon. P. M. T. Todd, the Sitting was suspended until 10.00 a.m. on Wednesday, 16th March, 2011, with the debate on Order No. 6 still in progress.