
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, August 15, 2013

The House of Assembly resumed at 9.30 a.m. on Thursday, August 15, 2013, the Sitting of Wednesday, August 14, 2013 having been suspended.

PRESENT

The full list of Members present is to be inserted from the Votes and Proceedings. Members identified from the record of this Sitting:

His Honour M. A. CARRINGTON (Speaker)
Her Honour Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON (Deputy Speaker)
Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Q.C.
Mr. G. A. CLARKE, J.P.
Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN
Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN (Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development)
Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C. (Leader of the Opposition)
Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P.
Hon. R. D. JONES, J.P. (Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation)
Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK (Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries, Water and Resource Management)
Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C.
Hon. M. A. LASHLEY (Minister of Transport and Works)
Hon. F. J. STUART (Prime Minister, Minister of National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development)
Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE (Minister of Health)
Hon. S. D. BLACKETT (Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development)
Mr. J. D. PAUL (Chairman of Committees)

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE (Minister of Drainage and the Environment)

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE (Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY (Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth)

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS (Minister of Industry, International Business and Commerce and Small Business Development)

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER (Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS

Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC

Dr. M. M. AGARD, J.P.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR

ORDER NO. 3 – FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND BUDGETARY PROPOSALS FOR THE YEAR 2013

Mr. SPEAKER: You are on order number three. And with that, we shall continue. Yes, the Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, good morning to you, sir. I am here today to lead the response for the Barbados Labour Party on this side. And in so doing, Mr. Speaker, I'm reminded of the words of Winston Churchill in the winter of 1940. And he, at the time, Mr. Speaker, was responding to question time. And this is what was stated. On November 5, 1940, the Prime Minister made a statement after question time. He is rather grim. He brings home to the House, as never before, the gravity of our shipping losses and the danger of our position in the Eastern Mediterranean. It has a good effect. By putting the grim side foremost, he impresses us with his ability to face the worst. He rubs the palms of his hands with five fingers extended up and down the front of his coat, searching for the right phrase, indicating cautious selection, conveying almost medicinal poise. If Chamberlain had spoken glum

words such as these, the impression would have been one of despair and lack of confidence. Churchill can say anything and we feel good. Thank God we have a man like that. I have never admired him more.

Mr. Speaker, I say these words because it is my belief that the Minister of Finance has not, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer over there has not inspired confidence at all in this exercise. If the words were spoken by the late excellent - if the words were spoken by our Honourable Owen Arthur, if the words were spoken by somebody else, maybe the Prime Minister, it would have inspired confidence in this nation. Remember my words.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let me deal with it early. I noticed yesterday that it was creeping in. Members were referring to members of the House at present by their names. You are not supposed to do that. So let us start with that today. If you mean the Honourable Member for St. Peter,

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: if the Honourable Member for St. Peter has spoken those words, those words would have given confidence. And I have noticed, Mr. Speaker, that words coming from the front bench especially seem not to be inspiring confidence to this country. I have seen it over and over again that ministers do not understand their role and therefore they get in here and speak, Mr. Speaker, as if they are just an ordinary member. But we have to understand that the words coming from a minister are important, especially the Minister of Finance. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have to be very cautious about the words that are spoken from this Parliament. Because people out there are listening, people out there want to hear what it is that we want to say about this budget. And I have noticed, Mr. Speaker, that a lot has been said in this budget so far, and a lot will be said. But we need to put this budget at this point in time in its right perspective.

Mr. Speaker, if your car broke down, what would you do? If your tooth hurts, where would you go? If you had a leak in your water pipe at home, what would you do? If you had a financial problem, where do you turn to? Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that this government has turned to the right set of professionals and therefore by so doing the wrong set of reasons have been advocated and we now have some wrong results. Mr. Speaker, the government has turned and they have listened to a talk show host at the CBC for advice. They have turned to a number of social scientists at the University of the West Indies, not economists, for advice. They have turned even to the Member for St. Lucy, have heard him pronouncing advice on this budget. But where, Mr. Speaker, where is the Randall McLean of this nation? Where is the Frank Allen? Where, Mr. Speaker, are the Clyde Maskeles of this country? Where are these? Mr. Speaker, I am saying that just as how you will turn to a financial expert for financial

advice, this government has not turned to the right people and have turned to their own selves for advice.

This government, Mr. Speaker, has a major problem. Instead of fixing it, Mr. Speaker, they want to destroy it. You have a problem, confront the problem and fix it. The government, Mr. Speaker, instead of fixing the problem is picking a fight with the students at the University residences. The government is picking a fight with the students at the University residences. Wrong choice. Wrong choice. Nobody in the world, Mr. Speaker, will pick a fight with students. You cannot win. Mr. Speaker, students do not work. Their parents do. This fight is really with parents and guardians because the majority of students at Cave Hill, the majority of students that are studying at the University of the West Indies cannot pay their own way. They have to rely on their parents. They have to rely on their guardians. And therefore this fight is not with the students. They cannot win. This fight is really with the parents. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, we know that parents are already stretched. They are already stretched in this society to make ends meet, and therefore a fight with the parents is unfortunate.

Mr. Speaker, from the body language of the government so far, I can tell that there is a problem. The problem seems to be an inherent problem with this present administration - it continues to fight with the principal and the administrators of the university who are trying to expand the campus. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate because the body language - and that is why I say that this government has not inspired confidence. You cannot fight with the principal. You cannot fight with administrators who are trained to do a good job, who are trained to bring this country and the university into first world status. Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate and we have to resist the language that is coming from the government.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that this is serious business. The economy is serious. The Barbados economy is struggling and there is no world recession. There is no world recession. I took pains, Mr. Speaker, to look today at the reports. The U.S. economy is growing by two to three per cent. The British economy is growing by one per cent. The only economies that are struggling in Europe may be Greece and Spain. All other economies around the world are moving well. Mr. Speaker, I believe that in an attempt to showcase what this budget is all about, the government sets out a programme that is not conducive to success. In fact, I must say that over the past five years or so, this government's measures have all failed. The medium-term strategy has failed. They have failed in terms of producing a set of measures in the 2008 budget that sought to raise over \$108 million - that has failed. They have failed, Mr. Speaker, in 2009 when the set measures in order to raise the economy and curb the cost of living have failed. Mr. Speaker, this government has a very bad record in terms of

the economy. And that is why we are saying the methods over the past five years have not succeeded. And I do not understand why these measures that are inflicted today will succeed.

Before the election of 2013, we were told the economy was stable. How can the economy be stable in January and February of this year? When the government took up and employed more than 3 000 workers, casual workers, all across our various ministries. When the government took money not only to employ people but to do things in order to win the last election - 3 000 workers were employed. I am saying that this was a recipe for disaster and where were they employed? They were not employed in any productive field. They were employed mainly either to clean the roads, to be in drainage, but not in any productive capacity. I am saying that had these workers been put into tourism, had these workers been put into agriculture to boost up production and to help subsidise the agriculture product, that this would have been important.

Mr. Speaker, this deficit of \$400 million is causing problems. The deficit of \$400 million is causing severe problems in the economy. It is unsustainable and therefore the government has defined a method of closing this deficit, and we are saying that they have chosen the wrong approach. We are saying that in the past most governments were able to find ways of balancing the economy on the current account side - that is, you were able to pay your way. This government over the past five years has not been able to pay for the goods and services that we use, either at the hospital, at the various ministries; has not been able to pay their way in terms of wages and salaries, and therefore they have had severe challenges. And that is where the problem lies.

And therefore we see the cuts. We therefore see, Mr. Speaker, that the government is trying today to cut back the \$400 million through cuts at the various ministries, whether it be the QEH, Transport Board, NCC, BAMC - we have seen the cuts. What will these cuts do to the economy? It will make a depressed situation worse. That is what will happen. The cuts, five per cent cuts in goods and services, will cause problems within central government. It will cause a number of persons within the statutory boards either to be laid off or to have severe challenges meeting day-to-day expenses. A cut of \$42 million at the University of the West Indies will also cause severe challenges to the university. Mr. Speaker, all governments over time have borrowed. But why is it that this government cannot borrow at this time? Is it because nobody will lend you? Where is it that you are not borrowing? You mean nobody will lend the government this money? We have had many governments in the past that had to borrow for deficit financing because Barbados over time always had a deficit from time to time, but the deficit was manageable. Today

this deficit is over eight per cent of GDP, which is, to my mind, unsustainable, and therefore the government has to do something about it. But to cut at this point in time will not redound to the benefit of our people.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that a government needs to put a strategy in place. I believe that the government has to rethink this method of cutting expenditure, the government has to relook at the method of what they are doing at the University of the West Indies, and they have to show confidence in what they are doing. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the same results that the government had in the past four years - really increased taxes in this country - will have a similar result as this one, where they are having cuts in the expansion. Mr. Speaker, government must encourage people to produce. I am not sure that this government is encouraging production. I am not sure. And to quote the words of the Member for St. Lucy, because the Member for St. Lucy over the past 15 years has been saying you have to reward production - where is production being rewarded in this exercise? Where is production being rewarded?

I am saying that rather than cut - because one of the very first things that a Minister of Finance will be tempted to do would be to cut - I have said over and over again that there are two manifestos of the political parties that really stand out: the 1986 Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party and the 1951 Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party, where surpluses were supposed to be provided. And in those manifestos, those countries succeeded because the government at the time gave and rewarded production. Today we are not rewarding production and we are rewarding mediocrity. I am saying that we have to look carefully at what we are doing at the University of the West Indies. Government has to show confidence.

Mr. Speaker, government does not produce growth in any country and they need to understand this. The government does not produce growth but the government has to inspire confidence. The government must encourage the private sector to invest. I am saying this climate that we have today does not encourage persons in Barbados and outside of Barbados to invest. And therefore, if government continues to cut, what will they do? We have to have a climate of investor confidence. We have to have the right tax package. The political climate must be right. The economic climate must be right, and the Democratic Labour Party must come out of this mindset that Barbados is only a society and not an economy. We have to come out of this mindset that Barbados is primarily a society. It is a society, but the society must be driven by the economy and vice versa. But at the same time, we have to be able to give the world outside confidence. And a minister saying he does not know where the flight of capital went to earlier does not give confidence. I am saying that this is important - we need that confidence. We need that confidence.

Mr. Speaker, I was in the Ministry of Housing and Lands. And at a time when we were able to give the University of the West Indies land, and we were able at the time to see that the University expand to where it is today - over 30 acres of land - and we were able to do that at a time when we see that the University is celebrating their 50th anniversary, recognise that Barbados can only go further if we put confidence in the University of the West Indies. It is only fair. I am saying the choice today of asking parents to pay for their children is unfortunate. I am saying that the government has a choice. I believe that every graduate - all of them are graduates over there, all ministers are graduates of Cave Hill - why can you not come and say, look, all graduates can have a small tax, a levy, so that every graduate of the University of the West Indies would pay that rather than asking the present students to pay? There are options, Mr. Speaker. There are options which have not been explored in this matter.

I am saying that you have graduates in this House of the University of the West Indies, graduates all across Barbados, graduates in the Caribbean - ask the graduates to pay a small fee rather than asking parents, because as I said before, this is not attacking students because the students will not pay, they cannot pay. Most students are poor. You are asking parents to pay and they cannot pay. I am saying that the government needs to look at this - the government needs to look at where they impose a small tax, a small levy on all past students of the university residences and ask them to help the situation at this time. It is better because the students cannot pay. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that students are generally poor and therefore they cannot pay.

The student loans - I hear about them again, Mr. Speaker - the loans must be accessible. They have too much red tape in them. They must be extended. The interest rates, as I know, are still very high. The rate should be zero. Mr. Speaker, that is the point I want to make: that a minister of the Crown must be very careful of what he says. A minister has to be very careful and he must produce confidence.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that we have other options to pursue which can be pursued with little or no pain. This budget, Mr. Speaker, gives too much pain. It does not give confidence. Mr. Speaker, I am of the view that the government sets out a programme to encourage high net worth individuals to this country. I am not sure if this is a good programme or a bad programme, but it is a programme that will bring in foreign exchange. But then again, Mr. Speaker, we have to be able to show what is happening at the Immigration Department. We have to be able to do more in terms of providing for individuals who come here. And I wonder if the Minister of Tourism knows that on an average month more than 20 to 30 persons are sent back either to London or to Europe because of the

bureaucratic bungling within that department. Something has to happen. And we have to be able to understand that whereas a person may have had a record 20 years ago.

You cannot then send back a man who had a small infraction of law 20 years ago. You have to look at that very carefully. Something has to be wrong. We cannot, at this point in time, if we are serious about tourism, look at the bureaucratic bungling that is taking place within some government departments. And I have said before, all roads lead to the minister, whoever the minister is. So you have to look very carefully at what is happening in your name. So we have, if we want to attract those high-worth individuals, we have to do something about it.

The other question of private sector involvement is important. It was started in this Administration where we were able to give the private sector confidence and bring in their finances. It is important. And it happens in more first-world countries where the private sector is involved in giving growth. But at the same time, the private sector wants to do things in a timely manner. You cannot ask a businessman who has to invest his money that I am going to take 22 days, two, three, four days a week of his investing time. The man wants to do the investment now. Allow him to get on with his investment in a timely manner.

I am saying, I have said before, that there is too much bungling within the Town and Country Department, too much bungling within Customs, too much bungling within the Port Authority. And government at this juncture must take it upon themselves to restructure the economy. You do not want too much government, but you want a government, Mr. Speaker, to exercise authority and at the same time allow the private sector to build the growth. That is where the growth will come. But government - the ministers must not feel that they are everything to everybody.

I heard a minister, the member for St. Lucy, get up here and say he will not do this, he will not approve this, he will not approve that. To me, when I hear these things, it is unfortunate.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Point of order. The honourable member is misleading the House. I never said in here, sir, that I am not approving anything. All I said, sir, is that I am awaiting the file for Barrett to come on my desk so that I can approve it. I never said I am not approving - that I would not be approving anything, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I am saying that this government has a golden opportunity - a golden opportunity to restructure the economy in a modern way. I

am saying that it has missed the opportunity by not looking at what they do. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that by putting cuts upon cuts, I have warned the government about four weeks ago. When I came here, I said at the time that any government that cuts to the disadvantage of individuals and the state apparatus will only fail. It is a temptation to cut. But I believe in the supply side - produce incentives and give the business people and the public that incentive. We want production.

Where is the thinking of the member for St. Lucy today? Ten years ago, he was the one talking about rewarding production. Have you been able to tell your Cabinet this?

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable member, you have four minutes left.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have not been producing in this country methods that will lead to growth. I am saying to you that by cutting the welfare grant, by cutting poverty alleviation, we will not be doing to the benefit of our people. People become poorer and poorer all the time - and who do you affect? The poorest of the poor.

In the USA, we have seen what the president has done. He did not set out to cut the middle class - he cut middle incomes, cut the rich at the top, right at the top, and the economy started to rebound. And he rewarded production. This is where we are today.

Agriculture is at the brink. We need to produce more sugar. We need to produce more cassava. We need to produce more pork. Barbados culturally, Mr. Speaker, loves pork. We all love pork - you and I, Mr. Speaker. And therefore, in Agriculture, I am saying to you that we are not producing enough syrup, we are not producing enough molasses. We need to start producing more foodstuff in this country - chicken and pork. We need to produce more foodstuff. It is only important that we do so.

And therefore, I am saying to the government that those 3 000 workers that were spoken of before the election - send all of them to the Ministry of Agriculture. Send all of them to the Ministry of Tourism and Manufacturing. Let them produce. We are not saying to you to get rid of them, but they are in the wrong place.

If you want tourism to rebound - and tourism is at a stage where we must say to this House - we have seen, Mr. Speaker, and whether the Minister of Tourism - I like the Minister of Tourism - but at the same time, the Minister has to understand that he is meeting other challenges from outside of Barbados. A lot of challenges. There are lots of challenges being faced and we see it daily. St. Lucia,

Antigua, Grenada - all other tourist destinations are fighting for the same tourists.

Who succeeds is important. And therefore I am saying to you that Barbados' tourist product is fast being outdated and you have to show up your tourism product. You have to look for other activities in order to encourage tourism, and therefore I will always support any initiative of government to encourage tourism. But we cannot reward, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time, persons who just go to work and do nothing. There are still too many people within the government service who go to work and do not produce. Why? Have you asked yourself these questions? What is it that ministries are not producing? Why is it that you have a problem where some ministers are succeeding and not others? We have a problem and we have to fix it.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I believe that this mix of measures will not really succeed to the benefit of Barbados. I would ask the government kindly to look at the package for the University because it will not help at this time. It is a backward move as I understand it and it can be avoided - by allowing all graduates of the Cave Hill campus to pay a small fee towards that university over the next two or three years. Mr. Speaker, I will be prepared to sanction a deduction from my salary every month as a graduate to do so, rather than burdening students out there. Mr. Speaker, thank you very much.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable member. Yes, the honourable member for St. John.

Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution in this 2013 budget. Let me continue to thank the good people of St. John for their continued support of the Democratic Labour Party and myself as parliamentary representative. I rise this morning in support of the measures and to add my voice in acknowledgement of the policy prescription that has been rolled out. As I sat here and painfully listened to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, I truly believe that there are also some additional ways that government could reduce expenses by ensuring that funds of the state are not wasted on those who seek to use curve balls and emotion to obtain state power.

This is why I want to intervene in this debate in one of the most emotionally discussed proposals as announced by the Minister of Finance, and that is education, and the funding of university education. This sector is there to me for a few reasons. First, as a teacher for most of my career, and also because I too have been schooled at the university level. I currently have two daughters - not one, two daughters - who attend the University of the West Indies Cave Hill. My two daughters are both undergraduates so that as a family we have a stake in what happens in the university. Fortunately for me, I have regular contact with

life on campus as I come into contact from time to time with students and with staff.

Mr. Speaker, sir, this Democratic Labour Party has had a long association with the education revolution. The party's claim to social engineering and social transformation lies in our intimate relationship with the education sector. We have heard the calls from various interests on what we should be doing as a government and a party. I have read and have heard calls from the private sector, unions, church leaders, radio hosts, newspaper columnists, the Barbados Economic Society, the Association of Accountants, the Hotel Sector, International Business Sector, Barbadians living overseas, and some of the most vociferous ones were and are working at the University of the West Indies.

I want to commend the political machinery of the Barbados Labour Party for springing into action on the weekend before the budget so as to attempt to rattle the Dems and shape the narrative. Of course, Mr. Speaker, their action was then followed during this week by surrogates of the BLP who were deployed in the media through their various columns. What does all of this mean, Mr. Speaker? Once again, we have an opposition coming to the table hoping to stir emotion about a matter as serious as the crossroads that we face in this country right now.

I also read in one of the dailies a former employee of the Barbados Labour Party government who acted as a consultant, speaking the same reckless language as the opposition leader. If I were the Attorney General, I would have asked that the comments be referred to the Director of Public Prosecution for examination.

Mr. Speaker, no organisation or management team likes to initiate measures that may appear to be harmful to staff but ensure the livelihood of the organisation. But this constant pleading with the Barbadian public to reduce themselves to anarchy and protest cannot be in the interest of the national good. I wonder which investor, whether B or D is in office, wants to conduct business or invest when the country is experiencing social unrest. That is why I continue to be baffled by the approach of the opposition to contributing to the upliftment of the quality of life for all in Barbados. You cannot be indifferent when in opposition and after entering government undergo a political surgery so that you change and suddenly become a caring Barbadian. I will leave the machinations of the political machinery to the public for assessment and judgment, as I did in February this year.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados finds itself at a crossroad, where we are asked to put country first. One may even say that it is a grim reminder of the Sandford era, which was initially unkind to Sir Lloyd. But decades later we have heard of the heroic stance taken by our former Prime

Minister, Sir Lloyd, which led to seven years of growth which the Barbados Labour Party inherited and squandered. Ask the Honourable Member for St. Peter about the squandermania. While we on this side can speak about the playing field left by the Democratic Labour Party on which he could bat. We came to office with a lot of off-the-book expenses which gave a very false view of where the Barbados economy was. I distinctly remember one that stands out in my mind which was the close to \$100 million debt incurred by the Barbados National Oil Company and the over \$20 million we had to find to pay for a floating hotel that housed only staff.

I have heard the Barbados Labour Party spokespersons on several occasions attempting to hammer home how they left the Treasury and the reserves, as if when they left Barbados was not in any way indebted or committed to foreign interest. Likewise we have witnessed attempts to mislead Barbados on what is truly at stake today. For the Democratic Labour Party, with which I am proud to be associated, the socio-economic realities are upon our people, not because of our decision as a party, but due to failure of those in the past to think about the future. However, we are committed as a party not to make the error of the Barbados Labour Party by thinking party. It gave them 14 years of prosperity for members and cronies of the BLP who enjoyed the feted life of public office while it scorched the soul of a future Barbados.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we are asked to right the wrongs of the BLP administration that lost its way, failed to restructure the Barbados economy and depended on the construction sector alone as a guise for growth. We don't make any apologies on this side for facing up to the responsibility of having to do what was left undone by the Arthur regime. One such example that I speak about is the University of the West Indies. If my math serves me correct, about one-fifth or 20 per cent of the national budget is spent on education. Of that 20 per cent, the University of the West Indies was taking the lion's share. As I said in my opening statement, I have two daughters who are currently undergraduates and therefore I appreciate what is involved in the equation. But, Mr. Speaker, I must dismantle my emotions about the matter and put before this honourable chamber a case for the Democratic Labour Party and education.

I therefore give my full support to the Minister of Education, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, who I have heard in this chamber misquoted by the opposition on more than one occasion. I have a deep appreciation for the passion - not to mention emotion - that he brings to his work. That is why I felt it important to say a few words on the issue of education this morning.

First, it is important to acknowledge that any cuts to the university I trust will not in any way impact the staff of

the Barbados Labour Party that currently occupy the hallways of the institution. The Democratic Labour Party should first ensure that the many members of the BLP, whose names I will not mention, who spent time or are spending time since 2008 on staff are in no way impacted. I don't think the Minister of Education has asked where the money all of a sudden was found to pay these political rejects. But life must continue for all under the Democratic Labour Party. And that is what separates us from the opposition. Our commitment to Barbados. It is this commitment that is informing the policy agenda of the current budget.

Let me say from the outset, Mr. Speaker, that I would not sit with a government who I believe was taking actions inimical to the well-being of its citizens. What I am aware of is abuse. Let me set out what I believe can legitimately be of concern to the public of Barbados. In Barbados, each student registered with the University of the West Indies attracts a cost which is to be paid by the government of Barbados. This also applies to the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. How possible is it that the government of Barbados can be paying for a student at the Barbados Community College who is also registered at the University of the West Indies? One student, two institutions, two payments - yes, by taxpayers of this country. This is not a case study but a reality and it is these inefficiencies that must be weeded out. This can only be described as a case where you have a sign up saying, Welcome, eat all you can for one price. Barbados has to take the cake in being the only country in the world where students can enjoy that costly undertaking. Obviously cost is not prohibitive to the student as the state pays. There is no real connection as to the true cost by the student. So it is okay to do it and it has to be accepted. But bear in mind that a student who applies to UWI and attends BCC can do so on the merit of his CXC grades and does not have to rely on the BCC grades.

I took the liberty, Mr. Speaker, of logging on to the website of the tourism masters programmes of the UWI Cave Hill and discovered five different tourism master's programmes: tourism and event management, tourism and sports, tourism and hospitality, tourism and marketing, tourism with project management. A call to the university revealed that some of these programmes - which I am sure can be merged - only have two registered students sometimes. But who am I to stand here, Mr. Speaker, and make pronouncements on efficiencies? This is only a suggestion. The simple point I am making is that greater efficiency must be attained within the context of what is affordable. This country cannot deny the importance of education to the national development. But we can't dance around concepts. We must make a concerted effort to examine what constitutes our development agenda.

The bitter unprovoked attacks which I witness every week in the Daily Nation under the guise of academic discourse is really not fair to my party, its leader nor members. But this government is to turn a blind eye to the political poison that is dished out every day at the University of the West Indies by the Barbados Labour Party interests trying to corrupt fertile minds about the actions of this government. I am anticipating, Mr. Speaker, that when the semester opens up, a war of the minds will be waged on the University of the West Indies, propagated by opposition interests who once again will be acting in the interest of the party. And maybe this is why over the years I have witnessed a more polarised Barbadian society as the opposition mission is to matrix this country and issues on every occasion as a B or D matter. I think it is in poor taste and is something we need to resist as a people and a government.

I mention the fact that opposition members have nested their eggs on the hill to demonstrate my point about what makes this party tick and its ability to provide opportunity for all, no matter who you are. So, Mr. Speaker, no one is stopping the hiring of the entire former cabinet of the Barbados Labour Party at the University of the West Indies. Even the Honourable Member for St. Peter had a penthouse office where he was able to breathe in some high altitude air and publicly abuse his current boss on the issue of leadership. Of course that has not been forgotten by me, but another time for that.

Mr. Speaker, as I was making the point on acting in national interest as opposed to narrow partisan gain, I often wondered if the UWI did not jump the gun on pronouncing a graduate in every household without doing the math. I have often heard it and asked, what about ensuring that we deal with the real hard issue of those thousands of graduates every year from five years of secondary schooling, still unable to gain any certification for the world of work? Or what about the thousands who every year are turned away from the BCC because of a lack of space and facilities? And even more critical, the hundreds who are asked to share labs at sixth form schools because of inadequate classroom space. These are not case studies. I tell you, Mr. Speaker, these are systemic issues that plague the Ministry of Education, but yet in the face of all of that, the UWI still signed on for its increase every year.

The time has come for the Minister of Education to relook and examine the hole in education, which is getting bigger and bigger. The hole I speak of, Mr. Speaker, are those who are falling through the cracks because of the desire to see one graduate in every household, as opposed to ensuring literacy in every household. We don't want to admit that our people pass through primary school and yet can't read or write a sentence. We must take stock, Mr. Speaker, as action is required to rescue our human development.

I am predicting the Barbados Labour Party will mount a three-year campaign on the intentions of restoring the status quo in education. And this good issue will campaign on words like betrayed, trust, and it will be coloured. And the columnists and social media will be busy until the dust settles. But I want Barbadians to reflect upon our station as a nation and determine how we can all contribute to the maintenance of our quality of life as a people. We cannot become a nation that gets good at doing things badly.

I firmly believe that the asymmetric relation in funding that currently exists within the Ministry of Education must be examined. There can be no doubt that our future existence as a nation will have a lot to do with how we balance and allocate our scarce resources. I was not part of an elected DLP team where the funds of UWI were used as a tool to effectively keep this government out of office. I know there are still many present who work and lecture there. I have spoken to students who report to me about the poison arrows and anti-government sermons that are preached on the hill under the guise of lectures and tutorials. And I hope it stops.

Mr. Speaker, I sincerely hope that I would see the day, as I said earlier, when the UWI can spell out for Barbadians a way of life and research solutions aimed at upliftment of all Barbadians. Truthfully, I don't believe in the fact that we have reached this juncture as a nation with respect to our educational sector.

The fact that fees are on the table, but I have come face to face with our socioeconomic realities as a small island state, with a fragile open economy dependent on tourism. We exist in some seasons at the mercy of the traveller or suffer as a result of bad travel advisory. I do not believe I would live to see the USSR crumble or a black man walk into the White House. Today, Egypt is under a month-long state of emergency. That too is of concern to me. The point I am making is that change is constant. There is nothing that I can hold on to with certainty, including our fragile existence. Mr. Speaker, we therefore need to design and fashion a long-term perspective on education that reflects the needs and aspirations of Barbadians now and in the future. The success of such an agenda will largely depend on the extent to which society actively engages and makes demands on the skills and knowledge of its citizens. We need an educational architecture for our future that envisions our children and generations to come. We need a clear vision that will keep our sights on what matters most, the development of our people. And so I close, Mr. Speaker, by reiterating that it is time for all of us to take stock, because under the present circumstances, the government must fairly distribute the resources at our disposal. I would wish there was another way, as I too subscribe to the Education Revolution, and have benefited from the efforts of this government. But we

inherited a terrible economic position, understated and off the books expenses. We brought everything to book and discovered the truth. I trust Barbadians will support us in telling them the truth. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and lend support to this budgetary statement 2013. I am obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, the Honourable Member for the City.

Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this debate on the budgetary proposals for 2013. And I do so, of course, having been facilitated by the good people of the city of Bridgetown, to whom I am grateful. This budget was highly anticipated by all Barbadians and the proposals of which will determine the developmental path of this country in a way that no other budget has been called upon to do and that is because of the serious economic situation that confronts us all. As I commence my presentation, I do so ever mindful of renowned economist Professor Compton Bourne's assertion while addressing the conference of the economy hosted by the Economics Department of the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine that CARICOM countries, with the exception of Haiti, Guyana and Suriname, entered into economic recession through the global recession. But by 2011, according to him, most of them had emerged from recession. And also the World Bank's overview of Latin America and the Caribbean economies, which states that overall regional growth rates for 2013 are expected to remain robust, albeit slightly below those of 2012. And I mention these two points, Mr. Speaker, because I am certainly not supportive of any view that Barbados' economic woes are entirely as a result of a continuous world recession and that better cannot be done. That is simply not the way I was brought up.

And I remember last night listening to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and also this morning the last speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John, and I can't help but feeling aware about this thing of constantly apportioning blame, blame, blame, blame, blame, blame, blame, blame. And I say so because the reality is this. Both governments, BLP and DLP, borrowed money. Both governments created some debt. Now, if you felt that the debt was so high when you assumed office, then it was incumbent upon you to do something to run a thing. But the reality is that it escalated. And so I am saying to you that whether or not you like it, history will not absolve the government of the day for accepting responsibilities for the challenges of the day, whether or not those challenges are political, social, economic, or even environmental, and even more importantly, of finding solutions for those very challenges. That is what the people of this country or any country expect of the government of the day.

This budget comes at a period of time in our nation's history where the society that we so cherish and the things which define the socioeconomic standing of modern-day post-independent Barbados are being negatively impacted by its economy, an economy which was described last year by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean as, and I quote, having maintained an extremely sluggish trajectory in 2012 with limited prospects for economic growth, end of quote. The budget is being presented and debated at a time when our economy is characterised by high inflation and unemployment, with increased unemployment being triggered by the contraction of economic activity by a cumulative 5 per cent between 2008 and 2010, characterised by weakening competitiveness, a galloping and unsustainable national debt, and with an increase by more than 20 percentage points of GDP since 2008. The public debt to GDP ratio according to the IMF rose from 56.2 per cent in 2001 to 66.3 per cent in 2007, 91.4 per cent in 2010 and I believe, subject to correction, that I heard the Honourable Minister of Finance stating that it is about 98 per cent for 2013. An economy that is characterised by declining revenues of about \$1.5 million. The continuous failure of its primary economic engines to ignite - there has been little or no combustion. The loss of foreign investor confidence resulting in part from the downgrades given by international rating agencies and the social disintegration in terms of the rising poverty of the very society which the government has been seeking to build during the past six years. Barbados has been in negative growth for the whole of 2013 thus far. The third quarter, as we all know, is usually the worst quarter for Barbados. So it looks as though we will have negative growth for three consecutive quarters, which will surely

mean that Barbados will be back in recession. Culture in whatever language you like, Barbados will be back in recession. The world, unfortunately, is not. And let me add, I'm not saying that we are the only country. There are other countries that have been in and out of recession, including some in the Caribbean. But we seem to be heading in that direction. And I want to say that whether you are B or D, Christian Muslim, or Hindu, black or white, rich, middle class or working class, as long as you are a patriotic Barbadian or a resident of this country, you must be deeply concerned about the present state of our economy. You cannot be feeling good about your country, rich coffee and none wants described as a country that punches above its weight. You cannot be feeling good about your country which the same Economic Commission has projected to register the second lowest growth in the region this year of around 0.7 per cent with Jamaica being the worst at about 0.5 per cent. You cannot be feeling happy about your country's lacklustre economic performance when the World Bank is forecasting economic growth in Latin America for 2013–2014 of between three and 3.5 per cent with countries like Panama, Peru and Chile

expected to grow at between five and 8 per cent. You cannot be feeling good about your country which with its upper middle income status and high human development ranking used to be quoted as a model by the international lending agencies. The Barbados model, as you would recall, sir, was viewed as a template for many small island developing countries which had limited resources but wanted to achieve a relatively high standard of living for its people. And now, everything that we have achieved over the past several years is under severe threat.

One of the points cited by several international experts with regards to Barbados' relative success over the years is the heavy investment placed by successive governments in its human capital, especially in the areas of health and education. Indeed, without an abundance of the natural resources for which several other countries are richly endowed, the presence of a highly educated population and labour force is one of the few areas where Barbados indeed has a competitive advantage. In this vein, and as a proud alumnus of the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, and one who has benefited from government-funded tuition, I am indeed a bit concerned by recent developments. I say concerned because the Government's Human Resource Development Strategy 2011–2016, entitled *Developing National, Institutional and Human Capacity for Sustainable Growth*, lists educational attainment as one of the four components that define that strategy. It also makes reference to the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index, in which higher educational achievement is one of the pillars that continues to give Barbados its high rankings. The Government's Medium-Term Growth and Development Strategy 2013–2020 also lists as goal number three of the broad strategic vision, the enhancing of social and human development. And so it is clear that government acknowledges the fact that human development is germane to the rescuing, rebuilding and restoration of Barbados' economy. So the decision with regard to tuition fees at university is to some extent a baffling one.

And I'll say this, I remember the government made it abundantly clear that it was not going to lay off any workers. And the budget obviously indicated to us that there were measures that they were considering in terms of fewer hours, not filling vacancies in appointed positions, et cetera. I am not satisfied in my mind that government has gone about this whole thing of university education in the same vein, exploring all possibilities before arriving at this. I think perhaps that some attention ought to be given, ought to have been given, to the need for transforming our educational system in my view to make it more relevant to current and projected labour market demands and more consistent with the long-term national development plan for Barbados. I am sure if this is done, then you will see that perhaps we don't have to worry, or we wouldn't have

to worry, about the situation that confronts us at this point in time. I am not satisfied that it was done.

Mr. Speaker, sir, the government has stated that Barbados has made a positive contribution towards the global effort of achieving several of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. And I was indeed very happy to learn that we've actually achieved five of the eight goals - well done to Barbados. However, goal number one, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, continues to have some residual impact on our society. And it's a residual because we do not have extreme poverty and hunger, but there have been increased levels of poverty, especially as articulated by the Honourable Minister of Social Care when he presented the poverty report. And that report suggested that poverty had actually increased to about 20 per cent with another 10 per cent of the population more or less on the borderline. And I believe since the economic decline sustained in this country that those levels are probably much higher at this point in time. And certainly the measures which have been presented to this House will cause further deterioration. I accept the fact that decisions had to be made, tough decisions, and perhaps still have to be made. But whatever is done, we must be mindful of the fact that we have increased poverty in this country. And given the protracted economic season of sluggish to negative growth, we believe that poverty will certainly continue to increase.

We've seen the budget allocated to the Ministry of Social Care, Community Development and Constituency Empowerment, which represents about 1.6 per cent of total government revenue, estimated government revenue decreased by some 6.3 per cent from \$62.9 million to \$58.9 million. At the same time, we have witnessed a 10 per cent increase in the number of applications to the Welfare Department for Monetary Assistance and a 25 per cent increase in food vouchers moving from 5 686 recipients in 2011 to 7 664 in 2012. And so I think all of this, all of these things that I've mentioned in association with the country living assessment project, the results of that - I'm sure that you can clearly see that we have increased poverty within this country.

I want to focus the remainder of my contribution on the historic city of Bridgetown. And I do so not to be parochial in my speech or to appear to be playing to my constituents, but because I sincerely and honestly believe that our capital city is the barometer that ought to be used for measuring the economic and social impact of any budgetary or fiscal policies on the lives of this country's people and its economic institutions. The state of a capital city is usually indicative of the state of a country. And looking around Bridgetown today, this relationship is glaringly apparent. A trip to the harbour industrial estate reminds us of our declining fortunes in international offshore business. The sight of taxi stands being

overwhelmed by park charges is indicative of the continuous decline in tourist arrivals. A visit to the hundreds of micro-enterprises, especially rum shops, bars and restaurants located in places like Baxter's Road, Nelson Street, Tudor Street, will speak to the unavailability of disposable income of our citizens to patronise these establishments in the way that they used to before. A walk through the streets, Swan Street and Broad Street, would reveal the unprecedented sight of business places displaying for rent and for sale signs on the faded walls or behind the dusty glass of unoccupied buildings, with businesses that have been operating for ten years or more closing at an alarming rate.

Bridgetown does not have middle-class communities, Mr. Speaker. However, listening to the voices of the several persons who earn middle-class incomes in the city, one can easily feel the impact that our economic misfortunes are having on that sector of our society. The City of Bridgetown comprises communities with high levels of poverty and consequently a trek through its vibrant but economically deprived avenues and alleys with its highly unemployed and underemployed residents would reveal the gravity and the enormity of the fallout occasioned by the protracted season of sluggish to negative economic growth. The look of hopelessness and despair are etched on the faces of the poor and vulnerable residents of our capital city.

When I look at the city of Bridgetown and its deteriorating socioeconomic condition, as well as the vast potential that it has for economic growth and sustainable development, it makes things become perilously clear to me that the economic recovery of Barbados is inextricably linked to the renaissance of the great city of Bridgetown. The revitalisation of Bridgetown would lead to the economic recovery of Barbados. Our tourism product is obviously falling behind and is in need of innovation. The UNESCO designation of Bridgetown and its Garrison as a World Heritage Site must be maintained and used to the fullest, resulting in heritage tourism becoming a significant component of a new tourism thrust. I am not satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that enough is being done or is being given to this initiative in this budget, and in this regard, I call on the government to act swiftly in doing what is required to create the environment and business landscape that will enable historians, entertainers and entrepreneurs led by the Garrison Committee and the Revitalisation of Bridgetown Initiative to restore and revitalise existing businesses and create new opportunities for maximising the value of our rich cultural and historical heritage. This would create jobs and add valuable foreign exchange earnings to the country.

This UNESCO designation, which took years to realise, started under the Barbados Labour Party, can easily be lost if we fail to live up to the terms and conditions set by UNESCO. A lot of people may not realise that you are

not there forever. New sites are added every year and old ones removed if they do not live up to expectations. I am advised that over half of the buildings within the designated area are owned by government and far too many of these are in serious need of repair or are derelict. And these are unused assets, Mr. Speaker. And I believe that if the government does not have the resources to develop them, then the government should partner with those private sector entities who can - let us move with speed and alacrity to keep Bridgetown and its Garrison on the UNESCO Heritage Map.

The Central Business District of Bridgetown is experiencing significant pressures. Some businesses have been relocated out of the city centre and this is part of the development. And recognising this trend, major projects were started under the Barbados Labour Party administration, some of which I have heard mentioned over the last couple of days. The resuscitation and the continuation of these projects, including the Marina Project, with hotel, restaurant and entertainment centres which was intended to open up Bridgetown, would provide a much needed extra dimension to the economy of Barbados. And I want to say something about this because I heard yesterday of the intended construction of a new cruise terminal. I want to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the marina, in my view, is far more important than the construction of a second cruise terminal, especially if that cruise terminal, as I understand it, is supposed to be like a mini Disney World, if you like, self-contained, where you expect that the tourists will remain in port in order to enjoy and to spend their money. I think that is going to signal the death of commercial Bridgetown. And I know the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is going to agree with me because last night he said that any tourism package we have must be a package for the tourists to see the whole of Barbados. So trying to keep them in port obviously is not the way to go.

Let us get the marina project off the ground. It would create jobs in construction, in retailing and manufacturing and ongoing maintenance. And if there's any doubt at all about the value of this project, we need only look to our neighbour, St. Lucia, who welcomed the Atlantic Race yachters - if you would remember that - after the first few years of the race. You know, they were ending here in Barbados, but we did not have suitable facilities. And this yacht race has been one of the key drivers of the marina development in St. Lucia. And that marina now has a 4.5 acre boat yard, 253 slips, able to accommodate yachts up to 280 feet long, and creates jobs not only for those directly related to the boating industry but the myriad of other support dining, entertainment and shopping facilities that this type of tourism demands. And I believe that we will get greater returns from this type of tourism if we pursue it.

Page 36 of the Barbados Labour Party's manifesto states, and I quote, Young countries such as Barbados will only reach their full potential when they realise the full energies and creative potential of their people. Culture is the platform on which we can unleash this potential. I've also heard the Minister of Culture and the Government talk about the new cultural industries bill. So one can safely say that both sides accept the view that the cultural industry is an important one for the future development of Barbados and creating a new economy for Barbados. And although I've heard some things about this being said by the Honourable Minister, I strongly believe that we need to do a lot more and a lot faster. With the world heritage status that we have, the architectural and cultural heritage, the location of cultural sites within Bridgetown, such as Frank Collymore Hall, a refurbished Empire Theatre, Daphne Joseph Hackett Theatre, Jubilee Gardens, and the nocturnal beauty and aesthetic appeal of Heroes Square, Independence Square, and Chamberlain Bridge areas - I believe that the diffusion of heritage tourism and professional, high-class cultural activities in the city of Bridgetown would bring the city alive in a most dynamic way and will be a shot in the arm of the economy of Barbados.

And let me say a little about the IMPACT Theatre because I remember several months ago that it was reported that government had been presented with at least two proposals, I believe, for the restoration of the IMPACT Theatre that would convert the now derelict space to a thriving entertainment and business centre. And it was reported again that a decision had been made and an agreement signed. I would like to know when we can expect this project to start so that Bridgetown can enjoy the expected economic benefit. If we live in a time and season when government revenues are declining and capital investment flows are not as readily forthcoming. And so it continues to baffle me, Mr. Speaker, why the Inter-American Development Bank sponsored neighbourhood upgrade programme is not being given the light of day. And I was disappointed that I did not hear from the Honourable Minister of Housing, a member of Parliament for the constituency of St. Lucy, who, in my view, has not said anything at all in this regard that I consider to be of any consequence. Talk, talk, talk, but no action. That has been the hallmark of this project, Mr. Speaker. And this is why I want to hear about other projects where government is seeking funding. This is one where funding is available, readily available. And in an economy that could do with the injection of these funds, I find it difficult to see how those funds are, why those funds are not being utilised and not to say six years, the people of Catts Castle in the city of Bridgetown, in Greenfield, in Island View, in St. Thomas and the Garden Land in St. Michael have not really seen the benefit of this.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir, because the Honourable Member knows, Sir, that the work on Garden Land is continuing and that the newspapers even reported finding a tunnel under the project that is going on. So if the Honourable Member is not representing his constituency, I beg of him to stop blaming me for what he doesn't know.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thanks for the elucidation. All right, ma'am. Please continue.

Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact is, the people in Castle in the city of Bridgetown and Greenfield have not been spoken to about this project in the last five or six years. The infrastructural work that was supposed to be done with drainage, lighting, housing, road repairs, that according to the former Member of Parliament for the city of Bridgetown, the government was moving and he chose his words assiduously. I don't know if you have five minutes, but I think that would have been completed before the end of the last term. None of this has happened and I say so without fear of contradiction because the eye does not lie. It is therefore all to see or not to see. Whatever the case, it is for the Honourable Minister of Housing to come and tell the country, at the very least, to explain the lethargy and lack of execution of the taxpayers of Barbados' money in terms of commitment fees. Sorry, the lack of execution of the project. We continue to pay commitment fees and the people of Barbados, the people of Castles and Greenfields and the other communities need to know exactly what is happening.

In that, my speech, Mr. Speaker, by admitting that Barbados is a small country, we know that it produces very little and it does not have a reserve currency which can be used as a means of payment like the United States dollar or the euro and so we depend a lot on foreign exchange earnings. At this time, the main foreign exchange earnings, or tourism and international business, have not been doing well. And despite growth being observed in some of our neighbouring countries, we seem to have lost our competitive advantage in these areas. I am saying that, yes, I support the injection of funds in order to bring tourists back to Barbados, but we must recognise that tourism is too fickle an industry for us to continue to depend so heavily on it and we need to move into different areas and directions and diversification of the economy. And I will argue that we need to go out there and look for businesses that require highly educated people, our labour force, that require good telecommunications, that require stability and so on because we cannot compete on cheap labour. We need to go after the high-end market. We can do it. We need to be proactive and use that which we have as a competitive advantage, which is higher education, good telecommunications, in order to learn and attract the kind of business that we want to attract in this country. And so I

will end by saying that Barbados' development is tied to the development of Bridgetown. I want to say that government needs to look at this question of university education in a more holistic way. Go back to the table, think about it, and come back with something that would perhaps be better for the benefit of the people of this country. Mr. Speaker, thank you. I am obliged.

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

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too rise not only to support this resolution that is before this Honourable House, but also to congratulate the Honourable Minister on his presentation of the financial statement and budgetary proposals on Tuesday. Mr. Speaker, we are on the cusp of celebrating some 47 years of independence. As a nation, a nation, Mr. Speaker, that has blossomed and flourished beyond our wildest dreams and has produced, Mr. Speaker, world-class athletes and spawned international cricketers known not only to the Commonwealth but to the wider world. Our schools and our educational institutions have served as an educational bedrock for some of the leading medical, financial and legal minds. We have had some of the brightest and the best sitting in some of the most influential boardrooms in the international corporate world as captains of industry and captains of commerce. We continue to saturate the international bodies and organisations with our diplomats and our highly trained technicians. We have done well as a nation, Mr. Speaker, up to this point and we have to ensure that this continues.

Now I said all that, Mr. Speaker, to make the point that we have come to a stage in this country's development where we have to stop and take fresh guard - to use the cricketing term. The contents of these set of budgetary proposals presented by the Honourable Minister on Tuesday are exactly that fresh guard, that realignment of finances both on the revenue side and also on the expenditure side, that paradigm shift this country has been crying out for from all quarters to take us into the future with renewed assurance and anticipated bright and welcoming horizons. Now, this path that should have been travelled and pursued by former administrations and former governments in good times, but it is now left to this administration, Mr. Speaker, to navigate these perilous waters in the worst of times.

Now what we have before us, Mr. Speaker, is a budget that is intended to ensure that all those benefits that were enjoyed by our people over the years since independence continue to be enjoyed. And it is no sense, Mr. Speaker, fooling ourselves that all is well in this country and we can continue on our merry way doing business as we have done in the past. Now these are not regular times, Mr. Speaker. Far from it. They are not

regular times. We cannot adopt regular methodologies and concepts. What we have to do is to refashion our national priorities in a way that we in the working class, the middle class, and the high-income categories will all continue to benefit from our slice of the national cake, while at the same time, Mr. Speaker, contributing to the ingredients that produce that same national cake.

Now Mr. Speaker, before I get into the meat of my contribution in this debate I want to address an issue that concerns me and concerns me very deeply. Now I am one of the few members - the Honourable Member for St. George North alluded to it earlier in his contribution, when he said that all of the members on this side of the front bench are graduates of the University of the West Indies. Now I am one of the few members in this August Chamber, Mr. Speaker, that did not benefit from university education, either locally or overseas. On a few occasions, Mr. Speaker, I must confess that I regret that there is a missing accomplishment in my life, my 50-odd years on this planet. But on most occasions, on most occasions, Mr. Speaker, I consider myself as having missed nothing because I never needed or depended on certification to achieve any of my goals in life. Because I was raised by a strong paternal grandmother who instilled in me all of the values. Mr. Speaker, I credit myself with having an abundance of common sense,

an abundance of street smarts, and an abiding faith and love in God Almighty. Now, Mr. Speaker, that grandmother, Louise Josephine Pinder, instilled in me some values that has taken me this far. She died in 1982, leaving me, Mr. Speaker, that legacy that has carried me this far. And I, in return, have instilled those values in my three sons. Now, I have a vested interest in all of this talk about university education and all of that because my three sons are presently attending, well, two of them are attending the University of the West Indies. These one will graduate in October and the other has one more year to go. And my third son now for a form at Harrison College. He too, very shortly, will be entering a tertiary level institution. So I have a vested interest. I have. A vested interest in the finances of the University of the West Indies.

But, Mr. Speaker, what reinforced my belief even more that I missed nothing by not attending the University of the West Indies and certainly was shielded and insulated from the kind of undiluted but dangerous drivel that fell from the mouth of one of its lecturers through a column produced and written by someone who himself does not have any love for this government or for this party. Now this esteemed political scientist found everything wrong, Mr. Speaker, with what this government has done and in the past and certainly will do in the future. From the alleged underfunding of the University of the West Indies, to the marginalization of the Barbados Workers' Union. He even went on, Mr. Speaker, to encourage and cajole our

law-abiding citizens to take to the streets, Mr. Speaker, in their thousands and bring down this lawfully elected government of the people. And he says in three weeks, bring it down and install the government of his preference and of his choice.

Now we truly have a really wonderful and tolerant Prime Minister and we certainly have a tolerant and wonderful government to stomach this overt treasonous and inflammatory statement. And I ask myself sometimes, where is this going to stop? Now, you believe that a statement like that could have been made under a regime of the late Tom Adams, or even under the administration led by the Honourable Member for St. Peter? Never. As a matter of fact, as a matter of fact, a journalist in this country had the audacity to question something that the Honourable Member for St. Peter did, and he was categorized as an illiterate indentured servant. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West questioned something that this Honourable Member for St. Peter in collusion with some other members recently in his general elections, and he under my understanding is he is placed before the law court. But this lecturer, Mr. Speaker, this lecturer could have made such a statement.

Now I have heard criticism of this government in the past, Mr. Speaker, but never have I heard such an unvarnished call by anyone to actually overthrow a government and force it out of office six months after the people of this country decided that this is the government that they wanted. Imagine that. Now, people like this fellow, Mr. Speaker, need to get over the fact that the party of their choice has been rejected by the electorate and he has to wait his turn. He has to wait five years before they can see the light of day if not longer. I say to him, Mr. Speaker, that if greedy would wait, hot will cool.

Now, Mr. Speaker, despite of all that we said to date and all that would be said today by the opposition, this country, Mr. Speaker, and in so many ways continue to enjoy some of the best social services found anywhere in this hemisphere. I just visited a South American country, Mr. Speaker, that will remain nameless for the time being, where we were taken on a tour to showcase and expose some of the country's social care interventions that advantage the poor and also the disadvantaged of that country. Now, we were shown a mini hospital, which is equivalent to what we have here in Barbados as our polyclinics. We were shown education institutions where children could avail themselves of free secondary and primary education, which we have been enjoying since the 60s. A centralised food distribution facility for the poor was also showcased. All of this was done to highlight the achievements of that government in the South American country, how they are wrestling with the abject poverty that continues to strangle that particular society.

Now what was amazing in all of those latter-day achievements were milestones that we had already passed right here in this country years and years ago. Now when I got back to this blessed country of ours, I thank God Almighty for his many and bountiful blessings, Mr. Speaker, for what we enjoy as a country, and particularly a country that despite its vast natural resources could not measure up in terms of our extensive social safety net that we offer here in Barbados.

Now despite the severity of the impact of the worldwide recession, Mr. Speaker, this government never relented when it came to ensuring the survival of our poor and our indigent families. I wanted to strongly make the point, Mr. Speaker, that even in the face of some of the measures contained in this budget, in this year's budgetary proposals, we have maintained what we call the safety net. Now coupled with the direct interventions of the IC Bridge pilot project, which is now in the stabilisation process - I spoke to this at a much earlier debate - we have maintained our relief in kind expenditure throughout the welfare department. Now our IC Bridge project and pilot has seen some 30 households having the stabilisation method applied. Families are clothed, the regular food stuff is applied. School clothes, school-aged children attend school regularly with all of the tools required. Medical attention is provided and we are at the point where we will replace some of the houses that are owned by the occupants with the assistance of the Rural Development Commission with funding from the Poverty Alleviation and Reduction Program. We want to bring them to a really good point of stabilisation before we move to the other interventions.

Now, as Minister, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased with the progress of that pilot and commend all of the facilitators and also my staff in the department for ensuring that our poor families can very soon see light at the end of the tunnel and boldly step out with renewed confidence.

Now, the welfare department, Mr. Speaker, continues despite the criticisms from members of the public to be the leading player in the delivery of relief to our thousands of clients on a daily basis. I am pleased to say that we have now relocated the welfare department in the ICB building on Roebuck Street where they are comfortably housed and that was one of my goals and with the help of the Permanent Secretary and the other administrators within the ministry, we have achieved that goal. One of my concerns really is that we are also housing the St. Philip Satellite Outpost and also the Christ Church offices there at Roebuck Street. We are moving assiduously within the ministry to have the St. Philip building - it is already refurbished, and some wiring has to be done now. And very shortly we have identified the building at Oistins, I am sure, that all members of Christ Church South would be pleased to hear this. We have identified a building in the Grange's complex where we very shortly will be

retrofitting it to accommodate the Christ Church office back in the southern part of the island.

We also identified a building on Country Road where it was once used to house the welfare department. There is considerable refurbishment done at that building - we have about 65 per cent completed and we will be moving in very shortly to complete that building so we can remove the St. Michael office completely out of the ICB building and rehouse it and relocate it at that new building just across from the National Housing Corporation on Country Road.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the comfortable and commodious accommodation of our public servants should be paramount. And I lead by example in my ministry by ensuring that these things happen with our public servants. Now we provide, Mr. Speaker, the relief in kind in 20 categories - 20 categories - to the tune of \$14.8 million in any one financial year, for especially the elderly and the disabled in this country. Now this amount represents, Mr. Speaker, three-quarters of the annual estimates of the welfare department, which is given normally on a yearly basis between \$18 and \$20 million. \$18 million is normally allocated in the estimates and sometimes we have to come back towards the end of the financial year for an additional \$2 million to supplement. I was pleased to hear from the Minister on Tuesday that two of the areas that may be exempted from the request for supplementaries will be the areas to do with the elderly and the children. And that is very close and dear to me because two of the categories of persons whose welfare falls directly under my attention as Minister would be the elderly and the children.

Now that \$14.8 million I spoke of earlier, Mr. Speaker, I spent on a range of items ranging from food to furniture and appliances. In any one financial year, Mr. Speaker, we spend some \$777 000 on food, \$100 000 on spectacles, water rates we pay for our clients \$370 000, electricity \$1.9 million, and NHIC rates - we pay to the NHIC some \$130 000 in rental arrears for our clients and in the private accommodation some \$2.4 million in rental arrears. We pay for our clients. In educational assistance \$483 000 and in the purchase of furniture and appliances \$166 000. So we are holding the hands of our people.

The Honourable Member for the City alluded to it in his speech when he said that there is an increase in the clients presenting for these benefits. And there is a good answer for that because there is no denying that we are in the midst of an economic downturn. We are in the midst of a recession. So therefore, if we are in the middle of the economic downturn, people would be hurting in some ways and the increase of clients to the welfare department and the other social service agencies will be increased. That goes without saying.

Now, the welfare department also continues to distribute monetary grants to a wide range of clients from children, disabled persons, unemployed adults not receiving national insurance, elderly persons who were not in receipt of pensions from any source and special cases of our citizens affected by HIV/AIDS. And especially in the case of those not receiving national insurance contributions - those people who did not pay up their national insurance contributions during their normal working lives - they do not qualify for contributory pension, therefore they fall to the welfare department where a grant is given to them on a monthly basis. Now these monetary grants, Mr. Speaker, range from \$45 a week at the bottom to \$116 a week at the top. And in any one month, between five and six thousand clients receive about \$1.2 million in monetary assistance from this government.

We even go further in those relief in kind and the monetary assistance by providing additional help with payments of even more rent and more utility payments and even the repair of houses and the construction of waterborne facilities through the Poverty Alleviation and Reduction Program found within the Ministry of Social Care. So anytime any person presents and says that they are not receiving any kind of assistance from the Ministry of Social Care, I would have to question the veracity of their statements. So in the face of all of this happening in our economy, Mr. Speaker, our marginalised people can have the hope that the agencies I have the honour to lead stand in readiness to provide that cushion to assist them through these unusually difficult periods.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the constituency councils continue to be a whipping boy for the Barbados Labour Party. From the get-go, they were pursuing these councils with vigour. These councils are stuck across their throats like a billfish bone. As Minister, I am comfortable that the councils are doing what they were designed to do in terms of reaching constituents in their communities and also reigniting community participation, preparation and also the community spirit that was waning. The councils were established to assist the people of Barbados by improving the delivery of social services to them, and they have over the past four years brought considerable relief, Mr. Speaker, and assistance to the citizens of this country.

Now, \$3 million is allocated to the constituency councils. Now, I want to ask the opposition: if \$3 million is too much to spend on the people, and if it is so, then say so. Say that the average person in your individual constituencies should not benefit from \$3 million of the taxpayers' money, because I am contending that the best people to spend taxpayers' money on are taxpayers themselves. That is the point.

I want to commend each and every one of the 420 council members because up to this day - and I want the

public to know this - up to this date, the 15th of this month, the Barbados Labour Party has not seen it fit to join the other 420 Barbadians who are civic-minded enough to have come forward and presented themselves to serve as members on these councils. The Barbados Labour Party consistently refuses to serve on these councils. Refuses.

Now I want to commend each and every one of those council members who go beyond the call of duty to ensure that these councils function in the best possible manner. This programme of local governance - because it is not local government, it is local governance - is as important to the development of this nation, Mr. Speaker, as any other institution established since independence. I say so. And this government believes in that. Yes. As it was with free secondary education, free school meals, and school books. As it was with any other innovation that benefits the citizens of this country and introduced by the Democratic Labour Party administration, this programme is getting its fair share of criticisms. Nothing wrong with that. You can criticise it if you want. But it will continue and further entrench itself in the psyche of Barbadians. I say that.

Now one of the flagship programs of the councils is the David Thompson Constituency Council Tournament. Now I have no apologies to make for staging of this tournament. I can tell you why, Mr. Speaker. Tribute, first of all, is a tribute to our late Prime Minister who believed in the councils and it was his brainchild and we are going to honour that in this government as long as we are the government. Secondly, it acts as a mini-stimulus to the local economy between October and December. It acts as a stimulus. It employs transportation people, caterers, polo shirt suppliers, printers, commentators, suppliers of tents, chairs and tables, equipment rentals, videographers, sales managers, not to mention, Mr. Speaker, the money we pay both in prize money and performance fees to the over 600 players and officials on all 30 teams. Now, if something is wrong with that, let us stay wrong. Let us stay wrong. Over 600 players, as a matter of fact, a thousand people in all between the months of October and December benefit from what is done with this particular tournament. Tomorrow, I'll be launching the third consecutive David Thompson Constituency Council Tournament.

Now, I want to add something further to this though, Mr. Speaker, because yesterday there was some criticism that the councils are paying for people's funerals, sponsoring young calypsonians. And also, I heard it fall from the mouth of the Honourable Member for the City that they were performing welfare functions. Now, the remit of the constituency councils, Mr. Speaker, is that the programme must create public value and must seem to do so when looked at in relation to rebuilding communities, reducing poverty and creating opportunities for advancement of all constituents. But when I hear this kind of talk from some members of the opposition, I want it to

be noted, Mr. Speaker, that some of them are breaking for themselves, you know, because we get requests from some individual members of the Barbados Labour Party, MPs. You better believe it. Some of them break for themselves, and not only that, even members -

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Tell us in what way? Two years ago, I applied to the Ministry. I don't remember. I didn't hear. I mean, confession is good for the soul. But I came here and called your name. I must say - Mr. Speaker, it has not reached St. George.

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order. Please.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: The Honourable Member for St. George North hangs low. He's a problem. I easily solve problems, Mr. Speaker. And not only that -

Mr. SPEAKER: You have five minutes in which to conclude.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Okay. Okay, Mr. Speaker. Not only that, not only the members, the MPs are breaking for themselves, but the rank and file of the Barbados Labour Party - they are coming in droves to sit on the councils and we will readily accept them. We will accept them because they are Barbadians. We will accept them.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development has the distinct honour to preside over a number of departments and agencies that administer to the needs of almost the total demographic of this Barbadian population. We have the Division of Family, the umbrella of all that represents the institution called the family. We have the Community Development Department, we have the Department of Constituency and Parliament which captures every village, every hamlet, every constituency and every community. The Welfare Department and the National Assistance Board administer to the indigent, the elderly and the dispossessed. The Child Care Board covers the children of our nation. The National Disabilities Unit oversees all matters to do with the disabled community amongst us. The Bureau of Gender Affairs deals with matters connected to harmonising both males and females and those in between. The HIV/AIDS Commission presides over matters connected to the welfare of those infected and affected by that disease.

Now all of these agencies, Mr. Speaker, all of them, each and every one of them account for the spending of over \$80 million, which represents a significant portion of what we call the social safety net. Now if we are to ensure that our citizens, Mr. Speaker, have a decent life regardless

of their social status, sacrifices have to be made on all fronts by all of us. We are in this together, from the Prime Minister and every member of this government down to the humblest citizen in Barbados. We are all being called on to contribute to this project we call Barbados. Most of us, Mr. Speaker, most of us have nowhere to go outside of this country. So I'm appealing to every student, whether primary, secondary and especially tertiary, every public servant, every single private sector employee, the church and civil society, black Barbadians and white Barbadians, and every other ethnic grouping to come to the aid of this country. This is our homeland and I implore all of us, like a good patriotic mariner, to come to the bridge and man some piece of navigational equipment and assist this country, Mr. Speaker, to avoid the reefs and shoals and steer the good ship Barbados, Mr. Speaker, safely back to harbour. Barbados is depending on all of us. Mr. Speaker, I support this resolution 100 per cent that is before this House. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

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

Dr. M. M. AGARD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to the financial statement and budgetary proposals for the year 2013-2014, giving thanks to the Almighty who has seen me thus far and deeply appreciative to the people of Christ Church West for their endorsement in me and their confidence that I will always represent their best interests. And this being my first budget, after an election campaign that just a few months ago the Democratic Labour Party assured the electorate that the Barbados economy was stable, I come to this chamber confident that, invigorated by a renewed mandate, the Minister of Finance would have articulated a plan to stimulate the economy, to inspire investor confidence, to create jobs, and bring the relief so desperately needed to the mothers and fathers of Christ Church West and indeed Barbados in general.

But far from receiving words of comfort upon which a family could plan their future, seek job opportunities and position their children for future advanced level education, the Minister of Finance took us down a path of openly acknowledging that there was now no investor confidence in his handling of the economy, that far from growth the economy was contracting, that there was haemorrhaging of foreign exchange and that all in all there was going to be a period of trial for the man and woman on the street.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance introduced his financial statements and budgetary proposals with a passage of scripture taken from Ecclesiastes Chapter 13, which speaks of a time for everything under the sun. But after following his delivery of the budget and coming to terms with the full measures of his proposals, I am minded to recommend to him a scriptural reference which I

believe more aptly sums up his budgetary declarations. Mr. Speaker, that reference is from the Gospel of John, chapter 11, verse 35. And it says simply, Jesus wept. Sir. Because when you strip away all the form and style, all the sanctimoniousness and posturing, when you get beyond the vague comfort of what was not said yet implied in the proposals, Sir, for the working class and the middle class Barbadian, this is a budget to make a man bawl. And when in a few months the reality of this budget begins to cut deeply, like a double-edged sword, Bajans fear that they will wake up to the reality that once again they were tricked by this administration.

You see, I stand here as a reasonable person, representing the views of reasonable people not only in Christ Church West, but also the views of a wide cross-section of Barbadians whom I come in contact with. It is not an easy thing for me to share their anguish over the seeming lack of concern by this administration. Simply put, they have reached a place of lonely despair, where a sense of hopelessness has overwhelmed them. In the words of the majority of them, the government has lost its way and it is doing nothing meaningful to rescue the country other than to make pronouncements of solutions which after six years many are yet to be implemented. And the hurtful thing is that in the beginning they were of the view that it was their duty to give this administration a chance to correct the ills that they had articulated so fluently during their 2008 campaign. After all, it was a new parliamentary group, a new cabinet, and Barbadians rallied around them in the hope that the very issues of cost of living, high water and electricity rates,

affordable housing, transparency in government and accountability to the people that they so viciously criticized in the previous administration would have been placed at the forefront of a new Barbados agenda. And whilst we were burdened with taxes, saddled with increasing cost of energy, increasingly high food prices stripped of most of our benefits and incentives, endured obvious and not so obvious blunders by the administration that led to a loss of revenue of millions of dollars, there was still a willingness to allow them a chance. And this was made even more manifest by their return to power earlier this year. But after nearly six years of giving them a chance, what is increasingly obvious is that Barbadians are now viewing this administration with mounting skepticism and silent contempt.

Today they are reacting with shock and awe at the viciousness of an administration that has heaped upon the back of poor people the measures that we heard espoused this week. And if we had faith as much as a mustard seed that these murderous measures would bring positive change, we would willingly endure them. But sadly, many believe that these measures will not turn this economy around. And like our leader said, it is pain without promise.

Barbadians are disgusted. They are disgusted by an administration's refusal to level with a nation that is mature enough to hear the truth and dutifully make the necessary adjustments to ensure the survival of an economy made increasingly fragile by an inept administration. Disgusted by this administration that refuses to take responsibility for the financial crisis which their avaricious appetite for spending and ineptitude in generating economic output has caused to spiral dangerously out of control. The country now saddled with an administration so limited in vision that taxation has become the preferred source of government revenue with shortfalls being covered by the NIS, a very dangerous situation in these times.

They are disgusted by the constant blame shifting that has long lost its relevance, of damage done by a previous administration, or of an international recession that has ended since 2009. Constantly referring to Greece and its failing economy whilst conveniently ignoring economies that are growing right here in the region - St. Lucia, Brazil, Guyana. They are disgusted by an administration's blind allegiance to a medium-term fiscal strategy that is unrealistic, that has gone badly off track, and has failed every benchmark that would indicate it was a viable framework for national development - that is inconceivable to be reached in 2004, as was previously proclaimed. And they are disgusted by the austerity measures that are levelled against them and their children and their already strained pockets whilst the government continues its fiscal recklessness and wasteful spending on punitive partisan pursuits, concentrating immense wealth in the hands of a few whilst others face a dismal future of unemployment, hardships and despair.

Most people I speak to suggest that the Minister of Finance ought to have been fired for presenting such a dismal track record. He spoke, referring to the June 2013 central bank press release that gives an overview of the Barbadian performance for the first half of the year. He spoke of our economy witnessing a contraction in the main foreign exchange sectors, tourism and international business and financial services. At the same time, private foreign capital inflows being less than a quarter of the figure recorded in the same period last year. As a result, the foreign reserves have fallen. Overall economic growth has contracted, the inflation rate is estimated at 2.7 per cent in June and the rate of unemployment at 11.5 per cent and with the loss of several jobs I am certain that figure is undoubtedly higher.

Mr. Speaker, it goes on to state long stay visitor arrivals have decreased by 7 per cent for the first six months of the year. Earnings have fallen by 3 per cent. Declines in arrivals were recorded from all major markets - the UK, the USA, Canada and the Caribbean. Activity in the construction sector also declined drastically. You know, Mr. Speaker, that just this overview alone sums up the

seriousness that faces us as a people. Every productive sector of the economy is showing stagnation or no growth at all. And as my colleague has asked, has Barbados slipped back into a recession? But what is concerning us is that whilst we are slipping back into a recession, our colleagues, our countries in the region are experiencing growth. Mr. Speaker, if countries that share the same trading partners as Barbados can grow their economies by 3 per cent, why not Barbados? We need a government that is committed to taking responsibility for its fiscal management.

No. But I do not believe that the Minister should have been fired. I do not join with others clamouring for his resignation because I believe that any self-respecting Minister of Finance having such a dismal record, even without prompting, should have tendered his resignation as his first task on Tuesday evening. Instead, he continues on to suffer the people.

How can you, for example, accept that the Minister would stand and recommend in his fiscal adjustment measures that there will be a reduction in transfers and subsidies to the QEH of \$35 million, yet in a footnote add that the reduction were to be made in line with expenditure cuts over 2012 allocations and measures to raise revenue within the respective agency. Mr. Speaker, the CEO of the hospital is on record as stating that the QEH needs \$200 million to function effectively. It received \$120 million - \$90 million last year - and it suffered as a result. This year it is scheduled to receive \$146.7 million. That in itself is grossly inadequate considering that the cost of goods and services to the institution have increased at all levels and rising demand for these services. And on top of that, the minister can now reduce transfers and subsidies by \$35 million.

But what is so ominous about this is the slickness with which he made the declaration that the QEH will receive \$35 million less. Mr. Speaker, if the existing services are already underfunded and QEH is today experiencing problems meeting its daily commitments with critical shortages of basic drugs, essential supplies, lab reagents, standard goods just to name a few - this hospital is not in a position to sustain current services and there is a gaping abyss between demand and supply of resources. The call to cut \$35 million is not just a statement. It is a directive. It is an instruction to an already underfunded entity to exist on less.

So what is the prescription for achieving a \$35 million cut, Mr. Minister? You tell us where to cut. You are the government. And don't just tell us where to cut, but tell us how to cut, and what the intended cuts will do. Are we to cut the accident and emergency department? Are we to cut from A&E the presence of doctors, nurses, aides, beds? Patients seriously ill already spend 36 hours in A&E before

being admitted. Some people would rather go home to suffer than stay there, if they could help it. It is an unfortunate state of affairs. But you tell us, Mr. Minister, where to cut. Should we cut surgical procedures, clinics, cancer drugs, pharmacy, lab tests, neonatal intensive care unit, cardiac unit, the ambulance service, operating theatre - where to cut, Mr. Minister, where to cut?

And this talk about the raising of revenue within the respective agency - are you suggesting that QEH starts charging for all services as a means of raising revenue? For that could be the only logical conclusion, not stated but expected. But if that is what you intended, why not come out and tell the people up front that you expect them to pay for all health care services at QEH? Why not level with the people? We should be able to take an administration at its word. Do you think that because you have not articulated it, that you are not culpable? What exactly are you saying when you instruct the QEH to make up the shortfall by revenue earning measures, Mr. Speaker? Who will suffer most from this move? Those who are already vulnerable, who have lost their jobs, are on three-day week, those who have lost their health benefits as a result of losing those same jobs.

I want to pause here for a moment and share with you the realities of hardships faced by families where earners have lost their jobs and concomitantly their health benefits. They can now be seen flocking to polyclinics all over the island, placing additional stress on these institutions to meet their needs. I challenge the Minister to take a drive any weekday to the Randal Phillips Polyclinic or any other and see the hundreds of people lined up outside from as early as 6 a.m. to get medical care. Even the polyclinics are heavily burdened.

But this is not the only assault on health care when all the measures are assessed collectively. You see that directive that states effective immediately there will be a total freeze on all hiring in the central public services and across all statutory entities, and that the policy above will also extend to the hiring of substitutes, temporary and/or casual workers for replacement for appointed staff proceeding on leave. Mr. Speaker, what is the implication for staffing at QEH when appointed staff go on leave? Staffing is already at a critical level, with shortages of personnel in several departments. Can the QEH absorb any further staff shortages? Does this directive have the implication that these gaps will not be filled when doctors or nurses go on leave? That the acute shortages of nurses that now exist will continue? What will be the impact on an already overworked staff? We need to be careful that we are not compromising an already fragile health care system.

In wrapping up my interest in health care, I must register my disappointment that a promise made by the Prime Minister still has not been addressed. He promised in

April of 2011 that he would return after 18 months to relook the drug policy. It has now been 27 months and not a word of relief. Do not believe that because people are silent that they are not suffering. We need to relook some of the drugs which have been taken off that formulary. One such is the drug Travatan. Sir, the price of Travatan, having been taken off the formulary, went from \$17 to \$48. This is a drug to control glaucoma and should be taken regularly. Non-compliance can lead to blindness, but at that inflated cost, many pensioners are struggling to maintain their compliance. Unless you intervene - and I am not ordering you, I am begging you - unless you intervene, Mr. Prime Minister, the future looks like disability for pensioners on Travatan. Blindness is too great a burden to pay for this oversight. In this regard, we must not be penny-wise, pound-foolish.

You know, Mr. Speaker, basically I have spent my time speaking about health, but there are many areas in this budget that require further discussion and exposure, primarily because there was so much not said but intended. I cannot leave this discussion without registering my deep concern on the wrong turn approach that you have taken regarding education. The requirement that students from 2014 will now pay tuition costs in addition to paying university costs will result in a loss of opportunity for the poorest in the land.

I know that many parents who have a job, like many of those on the other side, and who even have secondary jobs and are relatively secure will make the necessary sacrifice. They will find the money or they will have the means to borrow. Some even had education plans for their children from birth. But this is the situation in families where there is an income, sometimes two. But when we have, we cannot contemplate the dire lack of those who do not have. We do not understand that there are some who cannot pay even their rent today, far less save in a future building plan. Who do not have rich friends or rich contemporaries to stand as guarantors. Some for whom paying \$6 000 might as well be paying \$60 000 or \$6 million because they just do not have the means. You can talk about means testing and provision of loans and bursaries but when the treasury does not have the money, you know that this is no more than an empty promise. It will go the way of the proposed energy grant. Too many bright children of poor parents will have their prospects for an education interrupted.

Do not take the myopic route of cursing those who go to UWI and waste time. That is an unfair and bitter generalisation and it has no place in a mature discussion on the social dislocation that this policy will bring. In our society, Mr. Speaker, there are two mighty levellers. One is education, the other is death. I understand, Mr. Speaker, that our resources are scarce, and that something has to give. That there are competing interests for these limited

resources. But I also believe that our monies should be directed where they can garner the highest return. I believe that educating poor people's children, as we have been doing for the past 50 years, is one of the best investments this country can make. The benefits far outstrip the cost. And we have enjoyed national development, stability, and a very high human development rate as a result of giving all our people a chance to use their potential, not just for themselves, but for the development of Barbadians as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I can speak to this issue at a personal level. I was the beneficiary of free education 25 years ago, and I am a proud alumna of the University of the West Indies. I will never be able to explain to you, Mr. Speaker -

Mr. SPEAKER: Other members, just a minute. The cross talk is getting too unbearable now. Please let's keep it down. Thank you. I remind you, you have five minutes in which to conclude. Thank you.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: I cannot begin to explain at a personal level what free education did for me, the difference that it made in my own life. I, Mr. Speaker, not just took the education for myself - I formed a business and I am committed to employing young people who themselves have been able to raise their standard of living and give their children a future. Mr. Speaker, there can be no cost to measure the benefits of educating people with ability and promise.

I bring to these chambers the hopes and dreams of many struggling parents in Christ Church West, many of whom bear the dream of seeing their children achieve more than they have been able to achieve. And faced with prospects of high unemployment themselves after leaving school and their children, they turn to higher learning as a means of equipping themselves for a better tomorrow. They are the ones asking you, Mr. Speaker, to reconsider this policy for the sake of their children. I maintain that if there is a burden of payment for education to save Barbados, let it come from those who have already benefited, those who have received the free education, who are now in high paying jobs, who are accumulating wealth that they cannot spend. It is their duty, it is our duty to give back. Let us be the ones to give back. We should be prepared to carry that burden of saving Barbados. As the Minister of Finance said, let those of us who received the free education put our masks on first. But please, Mr. Speaker, for the sake of the children in Christ Church West and beyond, do not stifle the dreams of poor Barbadians even before they have started to take root.

If there is one proposal that I wish the Minister to reconsider in his wrap-up speech, it is that proposal to charge students tuition cost. I understand that you need to save \$42 million, but find another way. Find another way.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, for this reason and many others which I have not had an opportunity to articulate, I wish to say that inasmuch as I mean the very best for my country and I desire to see a return to a vibrant economy, I cannot support these proposals. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your time and I hope that the powers that be would give due consideration to my recommendations. I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I call the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the financial statement and budgetary proposals as outlined by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. Mr. Speaker, I also rise in recognition of the fact that I am here as a result of the goodly constituents of St. Michael Central and that I have a special responsibility in terms of trying to ensure that as a government we navigate these dangerous times and ensure that the decisions that we make are not just in the interest of a few, but the decisions are in the interest of all Barbadians.

I also recognise as a nation we developed on certain principles - hard work, thrift - but we also know that when we look at it, there are always forces that seem to want to suggest to Barbadians that things sometimes are not what they seem. I listened very carefully to the Member for St. Michael North East, and it was almost in utter disbelief when I heard the suggestion that the world is not facing a recession, that the world is not experiencing economic difficulties. And not only that, as if in terms of trying to pull the wool over the right-thinking members of our society, it is as if you repeat a lie often enough, you somehow come to believe it.

I understand that in our world today, where we are very infatuated with the whole thing of marketing and trying to help people to do things and behave in a particular way, that sometimes we think that we can get people to believe a lie. But I took the opportunity to go to the Insurance Journal Report, and this is from August 15, 2013. And it says the World Economic Society has indicated that the world economy has weakened slightly this quarter, merely due to declining optimism in Asia and Latin America. But it does say that North America shows some signs of continued recovery. Now, if we doubt the veracity of that statement, it also goes on to say that the survey consulted with more than 1 000 economists in 123 countries and found some decline in both the current global economic situation and the six-month economic outlook. Now how do you compare that to the statement coming from the opposition that says to us that the recovery is on board and that the recession is over?

One of the things that we need to recognise is that if we are to engage in honest debate, we first of all as

politicians and representatives of the people have a commitment to educate our people and to educate them as to the facts. Our country cannot proceed if in the interest of pure political partisanship we confuse the thinking of ordinary Barbadians. Why? Because we use the positions that are given to us not to educate, not to clarify illusions - we do not do it for that; instead we do it to try to gain some advantage. At the end of the day, it is what it is. And I believe that one of the things that we need to recognise as representatives is that we need to

educate Barbadians on the facts, we might draw different conclusions from it. But the point is, sir, try not to mislead Barbadians, sir, as to what really is because, you know, what is clear though in a recession is this, that it means that as the ordinary citizens, sir, have to know, have to know, sir. And not only ordinary citizens, citizens in general have to recommit themselves to their country in terms of doing what it takes in order to lift us out of this recession. That is what it means.

And sir, you know, one of the things that I remember, sir - Eric Williams, when he spoke about West Indian societies, he said, you live in economies where we have champagne tastes and mobby pockets. That is what he said. And, you know, sir, when I look at our economy today, and when I listen to the argument coming from the opposition sometimes, the opposition is promoting the Barbadian, sir, champagne tastes consistently, not recognising that we don't have the champagne economy to do it. I'm going to say that, sir. I want to say I love mobby, sir. I love mobby. It's a very good drink, nutritious drink and a healthy drink. But the point I'm making is this, sir. We have to ask Barbadians at this time to appreciate the realities in which we live.

And not only that, too, sir. We also have to recognise that in order for us to get out of the current economic situation, we have to make certain changes. And in that regard, sir, I am saying that the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, has come to that recognition. And that instead of thinking and instead of saying to Barbadians that we can continue to live in the way in which we lived in the past - in other words, we can continue to commit the mistakes that we made in the past and get a different result - he is saying to them, we need to change. Because let us understand, the world 15 years ago is very much different.

Sir, you know, once when we want to build a school in this country, all we had to do was go up to the UK or the USA and they would ask us how much and they would give us a grant. And the opposition continues to try to put to Barbadians that this world still exists. It does not exist. Sir, we live in a world in which Barbados has graduated to developed country status. And they are saying to us that if you want to do things, you have got now to start to

mobilise on your own. You have got to start to mobilise the resources that you have in order to accomplish the development objectives that you have set yourself. And I am saying that is the context in which we need to speak to Barbadians today.

We cannot, sir, we cannot continue to make Barbadians feel mendicant - mendicant, as the opposition is trying to do. We cannot continue to make Barbadians feel that they are entitled to everything without having to pay a price. That is what we need to do, sir. And that is why this opposition, sir, is so irrelevant at this time for Barbadians. Irrelevant. You know why? Because of the fact, sir, that they have not tried to help Barbadians to embrace the realities of the times in which we live. They have not done that.

And what they have done, sir, they are behaving like vampires. Vampires, sir. And you know what? You know what the unique character trait of a vampire, sir? It is a dead person, dead person, but it seeks to benefit from the energies of living persons, sir. That is what it does. That is what it does. And when you look, sir, at the prescriptions of the opposition, it represents, sir, a dead party of ideas. Dead party, sir.

Let me just say this, sir. Just now we talked about tourism. I'm going to listen, sir, to the Minister of Tourism, and he spoke to the fact that we are trying our best in tourism. You know what? We forget that while all might not be glowing in tourism, we have had some successes. We have had some successes, sir. And I just refer to the recent VHTA Journal that was produced. Sir, in cruise passenger arrivals, sir, from January to July 2013, cruise passenger arrivals were 360 217 compared to the previous year of 329 029. Sir, there was an improvement. Improvement. But they will not mention that.

Yes, but you know what compromises the whole thing? What compromises the whole thing, sir? It is that the opposition fails to mention to Barbadians that this economic recession that has affected and impacted upon countries such as the USA and UK has had an impact on the purchasing power of tourists who come here. So therefore the visitor expenditure that you thought that you would see before is not there. So despite the fact that we are doing well in some areas, sir, it means that we cannot feel it because the persons from the destinations from which we are drawing tourists, in some cases, they are feeling it too, sir. In other words, the recession that the opposition is denying as existing in those countries - those persons from which they are coming are feeling it. They are feeling it.

So let us not try, sir, to make Barbadians feel that the recession of which we speak is illusory. It is real. And I believe, sir, that we can actually enlighten this debate if the

opposition can come to terms with it, and maybe come, sir, with practical suggestions as to how we can move forward - not to make Barbadians feel, sir, that the state is in a position to give what it does not have.

Sir, I also want to say this, sir. And I want to go on to the area of our recovery quickly because I want to use the time productively. But even before I do that, sir, we need to understand that we need to stop misusing ordinary Barbadians, sir. We need, sir, in this whole political debate, to stop thinking that we could throw things to ordinary Barbadians to make them feel, sir, that, you know what, we could fly to the moon. The point is, sir, let us deal with the realities. It is what it is.

And in this whole issue, sir - education. So, you know, I want to say this. I attended a meeting last week at the University of the West Indies. And, sir, let me say what the meeting was first. The Minister was on a panel trying to attain national food and nutrition security. It is a laudable objective and even at this time it is something I want to say that when we look at the financial statement and budgetary proposals of this government, at least there is an initiative to try to deal with it and I want us to embrace it.

But I go back to that particular meeting. The principal for the Cave Hill campus made a presentation there. I listened to it. But you know what I felt about the presentation, sir? It seems to me that somehow, you know what we do unconsciously in our society - we create certain institutions and people who seem to think at times that they have a first claim on any resources of the state. That when people are going through difficulties, that they must not share the difficulties that they go through. It is a kind of elitism that is promoted in this country and a class consciousness that is promoted in this country, that I would hope that we could use this period to get away from. It seems to suggest that there are some people that, despite whatever difficulties that we experience, should have, and others should not have. That whatever dreams that some people want to pursue, they should pursue them, and the others who have dreams - tough luck. That is what it suggests to me.

And not only does it suggest that to me, it also says to me this. I don't want to say this as an institution, but the UWI has to recognise that it has to relocate itself in terms of the development priorities of this country. It says to me, sir, that when you look, sir, at the history of our economic development in the last 20 years, that we have paid very little attention to our productive sectors and the UWI, an institution that should be there helping our productive sectors, sir, helping them to become more efficient in the current global scenario, helping them, sir, to be able to compete on a global stage - that institution, sir, has to take a more forthright role. Not go about investing in real estate and building buildings and not recognise, not recognise, sir,

that the world of university education has changed. It has become more interactive, sir, with the business community.

And not only that, too, sir. You will find even in developed countries what has happened. Those countries that have shown greatest weakness have developed programmes specifically targeted at trying to help those particular sectors - not trying to preach and carry on as if the professors at UWI have all the wisdom in terms of how to take this country forward. Because sometimes they don't. Because, you know, I said something before - I believe this. I believe that we should stop, you see, relying on consultants. Consultants, sir, in this region, they have really fooled people sometimes, because I believe in many cases, sir, we need to call up the consultants and let us get some work done. Because many times all they do is that they come and they write down things that they know already and say here. But one of the things that we need to do, we need to go out there and reach out to our productive sector, sir.

And you know one of the sad things that again when I listen to the debate coming from the opposition, sir, it seems that they do not even recognise, they do not even recognise, sir, the fact that over the 15 years that the previous administration was in power, they followed the prescriptions of the IADB to the letter in terms of trying to undermine the productive sector. As a matter of fact, the plan was to make Barbados completely dependent on services, cut out the productive sectors, and that is the way they went.

Now, I want to say this, sir. You know, to turn around a small vessel, we could turn it around real easy. Easy to turn, sir. Just put your oars on it. It turns around. But, sir, to turn around the QE2 is a different matter. And we know that in order to accomplish the kind of changes that we need to accomplish in this Barbadian economy, it is not going to be as simple as the opposition suggests.

Not only that, sir, I want to talk about change. How do we accomplish change? And very often when we talk about accomplishing change, we point to everybody else except us, you know, sir. We think that change is the responsibility of somebody else. We don't point at ourselves and recognise that the behaviours that we engage in, sir, is what is responsible or what in some way contributes to the situation that we are now experiencing. And I'm saying to the opposition that they are going down the wrong road in terms of trying to help Barbadians to deal with the current situation that this country is facing, sir. A different approach needs to be taken.

Sir, I also want to say this. I want to go to the financial and budgetary proposals of the Minister of Finance. Because, sir, I want to talk about the fact that we see a continued focus, sir, on the sugar industry. And it is

well placed. It is well placed because I know that there are some who will say to Barbadians that you don't need to feed yourself, bring all the food from outside - not recognising, sir, and not telling Barbadians that it is sometimes the food that they bring from outside, the highly processed foods, those are what happen to be contributing to the high incidence of the non-communicable diseases that we experience in this country today.

But you know, sir, you know the thing you notice about it, sir. Those persons who are shouting hard, we shall bring in cheap food, bring it as low as possible - those are the people, sir, who are eating the best, you know, sir. In other words, they will come and they will try to get the fresh foods on somebody else. They are misleading Barbadians a lot, sir. I don't want Barbadians to sit down and watch at what they're speaking - look at what they're doing. Look at what they're doing, because Barbadians are being misled.

Sir, the focus on the sugar industry, the fact that government, sir, is going to seek to do something that should have been done over 10 years ago when we had the resources in order to do it - the investment, sir, in the reengineering of the existing sugar factory. That is something that should have been done 10 to 15 years ago. And what did we have? A previous administration that just sat down on these initiatives - initiatives that were key to the long-term viability of Barbados as a nation - and did nothing. Did absolutely nothing.

You know what I say? Because they were too caught up in following the wrong advice of making Barbados a service economy without recognising - look at all the strong economies around the world. Look at them. That most of these service economies are backed by very strong productive sectors. They didn't learn from that. They didn't learn from that, sir. But this government, sir, has the responsibility now of finding resources in very difficult times to do what was necessary to be done 10 to 15 years ago. But this Minister of Finance is committed, sir, to finding those resources. And again, in these financial and budgetary proposals, sir, he is showing clearly the way forward.

Sir, I also want to say this. We also have the investment, sir, of at least \$2 million in an initiative in order to encourage farmers to engage in crop production. I sometimes, sir - this is important. It is extremely important. Why is it important? It is important, sir, because if we do not find a way to encourage our farmers to produce more food, our nation suffers. Because we recognise that government is not the only place that can employ people. The private sector has to play a role. And you see, I know that the opposition does not see that when a farmer goes and he employs three or four chaps on a weekly basis - they don't see that as employment, but that is employment. And

not only that, sometimes that employment does not even come into our national statistics. It does not even come in. But the fact of the matter is that is employment.

So anywhere in which we can encourage farmers, sir, encourage farmers to produce more, it would automatically generate employment. And you know something, sir? Sir, one of the things that we don't even recognise, you know, I have in St. Michael West Central, sir, a number of shops that actually serve food. And you know, I did a survey once and tried to find out where do these people buy most of their food from? The pork that they have, the chicken that they have, the vegetables that they get. And when you check, sir, those persons are buying those foods or supplies from ordinary people. Again, the opposition will not look at those people as being important. But the fact in the matter is that it is that kind of commerce that we want to create. And that I don't call it an informal economy. It is a formal economy that is not acknowledged that sometimes we don't recognise the amount of money that is being earned by persons who sometimes don't even come to a national production but they are there.

So when those shops in St. Michael West Central buy from the farmers whether or not be chicken, whether or not cucumbers or whatever that these people produce, it is helping, sir. It is helping to give them an income. And you know one of the things that we should stop doing in this country, sir, we should stop. We should stop stratifying jobs and giving it a class because again, as I said, we have built a class system in which some are given the impression that they are at the top notch and the others at the bottom. That is why the attitude of our tourism people, I know people don't like me to say that, the tourism people should not be treated special. I don't feel that they should be treated special anyhow. The point of what I'm saying is this, that we should have a situation where all of our business people in this country be treated equally. We treat it equally and that not one person be given the impression that they will get the total support of the state and why others are left to wonder whether or not they should get it. And that is why the statement by the Minister of Finance I fully embrace and I hope I will be watching to see that it is implemented too.

I will tell you that because he says this for all. When he talks about the fact that secondly, my ministry in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture and the BSJDA, we propose a special programme to incentivise local hotels to use more local produce in their properties. Because you know what's happening? We have people that come in this country that when they build their businesses, they don't see the necessity. How do I look across and help somebody else? The first thing they do is to look outside, and trying to help somebody overseas, how can we build this economy up to where it should be? If the first thing

we're doing is thinking about doing is importing. And you know what's causing the problem in the first place? You know these people, you know, I watch some of these businessmen. They don't earn any foreign exchange. They come with projects, it is not that they earn any foreign exchange. You know what they're doing though? They're using foreign exchange and they expect somebody else, sir, to provide them the foreign exchange when they need it. That is an issue.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have five minutes.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Yes, sir. I thought I had 10, sir. But the point is, sir, the point is, sir, we need to have a change in the attitudes of our business people to recognise that it is not only the responsibility of government to go out there and look for foreign exchange, because these people carry on as if government manufactured the foreign exchange. The foreign exchange, sir, is earned. It's earned by the trading relationships that we have with countries. So if we have businesses that are not prepared to look to see how they can sell their services overseas, how are we going to earn the foreign exchange?

You know historically when you watch, sir, the last administration, you know how the foreign exchange was earned? Grants, borrowings in many cases. Look at it, the borrowings and what else? The most important one that they had was the selling of the silverware. That is how they see. But we cannot go back to those days because a lot of the silverware gone that they had sold already anyhow. Understand really that where we are today is very much different, that the bourgeois of your party is still living in the past. We are here now and we have to deal, sir, with a different reality. We have to deal with a reality that says, sir, that we don't have to look at our productive sectors to see how we could instead breathe life in them to proceed.

And I want to say this too, sir. I heard the Minister of Finance yesterday about the request of the hoteliers to look at the products and look at lowering duties. I want to say this. Sir, if those hoteliers and not only hoteliers but a lot of our retailers in this country were prepared to sit down and work with our productive sectors, sir, to see how they could develop and refine their products, Barbados will be much better off. We would not only save foreign exchange, sir, but we would earn it. And I just refer, sir, look at our dairy farmers. What we have seen, sir, over the last 20 years or so is the fact that our dairy industry, sir, is competing for market space with some imported products. And I want Barbadians to understand that, sir, every product imported that we buy, we are not employing a Barbadian worker, sir. We are employing, sir, a foreign worker. That is who we are employing, not a Barbadian.

So when you hear some of these enterprises that come in here and say how they want to import so much and

they are not doing Barbadians any favours, and that is why this investment that the opposition, the foreign investment that the opposition keeps talking about, we're bringing in, and we should open our hearts and let them do what they want with us. We don't understand that what we are learning to do is to allow them to exploit us. Because what they do is that they do not support the very local businesses that we need in order to ensure that we can continue to provide employment for Barbadians. That is what we do. And I am saying that in as much as we call for a committed effort on the part of Barbadians to find employment opportunities for Barbadians, a lot of those employment opportunities, sir, can be created if our private sector just sat down and recognised that we need to develop greater linkages between the very components of the private sector. That is what we need to do. If they were to stop every time, you know, sir, the thing about a company is about importing. One import is good. No kind of creativity.

And that is why I go back, sir, to the people of UWI because we shall be using those intellectual resources, sir, to help local businesses to refine their products. You know at this age, a lot of the research that we need to do, sir, in terms of helping us to use our breadfruits better, our mangoes, our cassava, a lot of that research we should be putting demands on the academic infrastructure that we have spent and we have invested in. We have invested in, sir, good money too, because, you know, we carry on as if that, you know, we must continue to invest, invest, invest, and don't see some results. We must see some results because our people are depending on those results in order to ensure that Barbados as a nation can continue to be viable.

And we cannot continue to make people feel that they have some special role and some special entitlement. And because you have a particular name or you come from a particular class in this country, okay, that they could do anything and get away with it and nobody says a word to them. And not only that, the blackmailing of politicians is not going to work in this country because that is what they try to do. Blackmail politicians, make them weak and divide politicians and I ask the opposition not to be sucked into it, not to be sucked into it.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I am saying to Barbadians, sir, let us hold fast, sir, with the Democratic Labour Party. Let us recognise, sir, that the decisions that have been taken in this budget, it's not a decision, sir, that was not thought out long and hard, but it was done, sir, in order to ensure that this country continues to be able to hold up its head, not only in the Caribbean but internationally. And I don't want any Barbadian to go to any place in the Caribbean and check and see, sir, we still ranking up top, irrespective of what they say. Because I will tell you, okay, why then do they still clamour to come to Barbados? We have some of the best goods and services in the region without question,

even compared to the much vaunted Trinidad and Tobago. And that is not an idle brag.

Sir, I support these financial statements and budgetary proposals, sir, 2013. And I ask Barbadians do not be distracted by those who would seem to adopt the vampire approach and to cause whatever panic in this nation. We can work ourselves out of it. We have invested heavily in the education of our people. We believe that Barbadians have the ability to move forward. These things are things that we have to do. But at the end of the day, sir, Barbadians as a nation will be much better off. I say thank you very much, sir.

SUSPENSION

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended for one hour only today for lunch, so that we resume sitting, sir, at 1:30 this afternoon.

The question that the House be suspended until 1.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, honourable members. This sitting is resumed. Many suspensions were taken. We are on Order Number three. And with that, we shall - yes, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance in his presentation of the budgetary proposals for this year treated us to his customary discourse whereby on occasions one found it extremely difficult to believe that a person who has prided himself on certain philosophical moorings could be somewhat too fast - in the sense that the man that we saw presenting the estimates as Minister of Finance is not the same personable individual who we know as the Member for St. Michael North West. It would appear as though there are two persons. And at times in the past, the Minister of Finance in making his presentation has found it extremely difficult to convince this House and persons listening to him that the presentation that he made in the House is one with which he is familiar.

And when you go back to the honourable member in the 2010 budgetary proposals, and you take an extract from what he had to say on that occasion, and I quote with respect to cuts in the public service: I find the debate over raising taxes or cutting expenditure devoid of the level of intellectual sincerity expected in public discourse. Those

were his words. And he went on to say that since government is the biggest consumer of goods and services in the economy, with so many businesses relying on government accounts to make a living and keep people employed, any dramatic cut in expenditure will dampen spending in the economy and further deepen the economic decline. But that was not all, Mr. Speaker. He concluded by stating that major cuts in public expenditure is a policy prescription that his government rejects. And as recently as the estimates, he identified job creation as the major aim of government in this financial year.

And listen to him with respect to the draconian cuts. You cannot believe that is the same person who articulated a different position in 2010. And it is fairly obvious even from his own presentation that he himself was reading from a script and he was not aware of the measures that were being imposed - the draconian measures. And in a subtle way, these measures are more draconian than they appear at first sight. And you will recall, following that same manner and in the same style, you will recall the 2010 budgetary proposals again, where in dealing with land taxes he attempted to reduce the land taxes by adjusting the tax bands, and what he ended up doing is by making people who were not paying taxes pay and by making people who were paying taxes pay more. And my understanding is that there are certain things that were reversed.

And Mr. Speaker, what we have now is in these estimates with respect to the same land taxes, you have the Minister of Finance now coming with a municipal solid waste tax, which has also had the result of making people who were not paying taxes pay taxes in a different name. But that is the style of the Minister of Finance. Persons - and I could deal with a case where a person, a young lady, called me over since the presentation of the budgetary proposals. She had just bought a lot under the Tenancy Freehold Purchase, a nice house on the lot. She wasn't paying any land taxes because she was below the band - \$190 000 to \$250 000. And she now has to pay land taxes. And the minister has couched his language by using the municipal solid waste taxes.

Mr. Speaker, the imposition of fees at the university. This is another draconian measure that I don't think that a lot of us realise the seriousness of this particular imposition. And I am of the opinion that persons who are already at the University of the West Indies might very well have a case for bringing an action against government because of the fact that they have been made to believe - if you may use the analogy with respect to the doctrine of estoppel - these students have been told specifically by the agents of government, the headmasters, the Ministry of Education. There are certain documents circulated which indicate very clearly that they would not have to pay fees for three years. They have acted upon it, and take a situation of medical students with no means whatsoever to

actually complete their education. They have acted on it and to their detriment because of the fact that now they have to pay; they are unable to make the payments and obviously there would be a significant loss of earnings if they had to give up the education at the university. And I believe that in these situations, those students have a right to sue the government if the government decides that they must pay and they are not in a position to do so.

And I must say that to those students who are already at the University, I'm telling them: do not pay one red cent, not one red cent. I think that the government obviously should have gone about it a little differently. If they are dealing with an imposition with respect to tuition fees, increasing tuition fees, what should have happened is that it should apply to new students. And I believe that the government should work with the university to find out ways and means in which funds could be raised in order that it would be unnecessary to make this imposition. The universities in the United States, they have a system where past students, parents of students, and companies associated with the university, companies in the particular locality, make substantial donations to the university. I believe that with the cooperation of government in situations where certain tax allowances could even be given to persons who make contributions to the university, that a lot of these expenses could be recovered and it would not be necessary to place the burden on those parents who are already heavily burdened as a result of the present economic situation.

Mr. Speaker, you would recall that if you go back to 2010, this government inflicted severe pain on the middle class. The budgetary proposals of 2010 was a savage assault on the middle class. And one would have thought that in these trying economic times that at least the middle class will be given some ease. But take a scenario - and this is a real life scenario which shows the draconian impact of these measures. Take a gentleman who has been working for \$6 500 a month. He has not had an increase in his salary since 2010. When the Democratic Labour Party introduced these measures, his salary decreased - if you may consider how much he had to pay in taxes - by just over nine per cent. In 2010, he paid from a salary of \$78 000, \$6 500 a month. He had allowances in 2010 of \$20 720, and he paid \$4 144 in taxes. When those allowances were taken away after 2011 - the travel allowance of \$720, the entertainment allowance of \$720, and the other allowances with respect to the co-ops - he all of a sudden moved from \$4 144 to \$11 725, an increase which saw him paying an additional \$7 581 in taxes.

Now that same man has not had a salary increase since 2010. He is still getting \$6 500 and he is lucky because of the fact that he has inherited a house so he is not in the category where he has to pay a big mortgage - and this is a lucky man. But yet, now with the imposition of

these measures, having had a 19 per cent pay cut because of the increases that he had to pay when he lost the allowances, he now is saddled with a fiscal consolidation tax. A fiscal consolidation tax - he has to pay one per cent of the \$6 500, \$78 000 a year. That is \$780. He has an increase in his land taxes because he has to pay now the municipal solid waste tax - \$2 100. And the tuition fees - this is a man that has a son who started the University, the law faculty, last year, and he has a daughter who started two years ago in the medical faculty. The tuition fees with respect to his daughter, when these fees kick in next year - \$16 618. This is a real life scenario. And I sat with that man. I could give the opposition the name of this individual.

This is why I say that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West - I don't think that he has thought out these proposals. Because that same man who had a nine per cent cut in his salary when those allowances were lost way back in 2010 is now being called upon to pay an additional \$28 306 in one year, which represents - having had a nine per cent reduction in his salary - a further 36 per cent reduction in his salary. Mr. Speaker, I think this case is a clear example of the draconian impact of these measures. And I believe that the minister is not too late - in the same way that certain things were changed in the past - I believe that serious thought should be given to reconsidering some of these measures which has continued to, like in the past, direct havoc on the middle class.

Now, just one more thing with respect to the university. I find it somewhat offensive when the Minister, in making a case for the increase in fees, should speak in a very disrespectful way to the management of the university. I view it as disrespect to the principal and the management of the university when he could refer to the Cave Hill campus of the university beginning a major expansion in terms of the numbers of students. I mean, this, in my view, is an affront to the work, the hard work which is being done by the principal of the Cave Hill campus of the university and his management team. The principal of the University of the West Indies is a visionary and he has been able to use his intellect and his vision to speed up the momentum in breaking down the barriers to education which existed for a very, very long time.

And Mr. Speaker, the principal of the university is a man who is driven by his belief that every individual has a talent which should be nurtured and harnessed. He himself came from a rural cricketing village where there were no graduates - in a place, at a time when there were no graduates in any district with a name like Rock Hall. At a time, Mr. Speaker, when there were certain people in this society who thought that a good education was the purview of a few people. And he has been able to use his position, his success and his position at the university, Mr. Speaker, to realise his dream of seeing a university graduate not in

every village, not in every district, but in every household. And I think that we have to be careful that we do not implement policies that would frustrate persons with that vision - a man who I rate as one of the greatest men of my generation in this country, if not the most outstanding man in this country in this generation.

Mr. Speaker, I think that whenever we think about outstanding people, we sometimes tend to look at politicians. The people we look up to sometimes are politicians, because they themselves write the script as to who is to get what and who is to be considered famous. But we have to be very careful because we have to make sure that the strides which we have made after all of these years are not lost because of our ego in ensuring that certain policies damaging to this society are put in place.

But Mr. Speaker, I have a few questions for the Minister of Finance. I was a little surprised that there are certain matters which were not dealt with at all in these budgetary proposals. The CLICO matter - and here again, there are a number of harrowing stories. I had a client coming in from Grenada, sat before me, and actually shed tears in my office. The monies he invested, because he was hoping to send his daughter and his son to medical school - these funds are not available to him. Mr. Speaker, the judicial manager, we understand, has now submitted his final report to the High Court. We are somewhat surprised at the silence of the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister, and the Governor of the Central Bank. You know, they spend more time - the Minister of Finance spends more time speaking of the virtues of constituency councils than matters like these. And these are serious, serious matters.

Mr. Speaker, the judicial manager has made certain recommendations with respect to the establishment of a new company to take care of the regular assets, the regular business of CLICO, and two property trusts to deal with the investments of corporate clients and government. And we have not heard anything from the Minister of Finance with respect to these matters. And it is not that I want to ask these questions for my own sake - these are questions that my clients, these are questions that your friends and my friends who have invested in CLICO, they would like to hear government comment on them, especially seeing that this government, the Minister of Finance, this Prime Minister and the former Prime Minister assured investors and policy holders that their investments were safe.

Mr. Speaker, my questions to the Minister of Finance: I would like to know whether, in his opinion, the CLICO problem will ever be solved.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please withdraw those comments. Have them struck from the record, please.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Are the ESFA holders likely to agree to a solution that ignores payment?

Mr. SPEAKER: Please refrain from making those comments on your feet, please. I mean, I prefer if we didn't hear them at all. But we cannot have them on the record. Please.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I've listened to the members on that side, and I didn't hear anybody interrupt the Minister of Finance. I didn't hear anybody interrupt. But I welcome the interruptions. I have five minutes remaining and we should continue. I welcome the interruptions.

I have a lot of pictures. Are the EFB holders likely to agree to a solution that ignores payment of or compensation for Barbados' \$100 million in accrued interest up to March 31, 2012 on their principal balances? Thirdly, some of the non-real estate assets going into the two property trusts, will be provided by Clico Holdings Barbados Limited, the Barbados parent company. Since the judicial manager has no power over this company, is the CHB Board of Directors functioning so as to facilitate such a request to transfer assets to the trust? The conversion of individual ESPAs with a face value of \$245 million to 10-year annuities has resulted in a present value of \$206 million Barbados or an interest rate of 1.8 per cent per annum. This rate is below the savings rate. Is it fair, Mr. Minister of Finance, to those investors, especially when they have had to forfeit accrued interest of \$58 million Barbados dollars? Will the two property trusts issue common or ordinary shares? And if yes, who will be the owners? Six, what will be the interest rate and repayment period on the two \$460 million bonds? Seven, the Judicial Manager in its interim report on May 27, 2011 stated that on April 12, 2011, the assets on the company's books were valued at \$802 million. These assets were worth \$512 million and \$404.48 million at July 20, 2011 and December 31, 2012 respectively. Don't you agree that the longer this matter remains unresolved, the more likely the value of these assets will continue to deteriorate and add more cost to a solution? Eight, related company balances totalling \$255 million are included in the \$448 million. These are part of the assets to be transferred to the new company and the two property trusts. Are you satisfied that these are free from any encumbrances? Are you or the judicial manager at the stage yet to institute legal action to seek recovery from any company or individuals whose actions may have contributed to the loss to CLICO's policyholders? Do you plan to have a commission of inquiry to probe the reason for the collapse of the CLICO Group? And finally, do you have any doubts about the viability of the property trusts and the governance and management structure of the new company in the event that a sale to an existing insurance company is not possible?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I know that the policyholders, the investors are powerless and these are questions that they have been asking and I believe that it is in their interest that these questions are answered. If we get an answer to half of these questions, at least it will go a long way in consoling

many of the investors who have been hard done by in this whole exercise. And Mr. Speaker, the National Insurance Scheme - we had indicated, or rather in a previous presentation I had indicated, that certain safeguards should be put in place when Government wants to borrow from the fund. Now nothing has been done. The last actuarial report was in 2008. And in that actuarial report there was an indication that Government's access to those investments should be limited to a percentage which amounted to 57 per cent. At this particular point in time, the extent of those investments to Government amounts to 65 per cent. We have not had an actuarial review of the National Insurance Fund since 2008. The one that was due in 2011, we have not seen it - at least I have not seen it on the website. I would like to know from the Minister of Finance whether he has seen the actuarial review for 2011, whether there is an actuarial review, and whether the extent of their loans from the fund is within the stated amounts. We note that the next actuarial review will be due in December next year.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please wait upon that point. Your time is expired.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: With respect. With respect, just touch a little bit on housing, Mr. Speaker. I believe that - just one point on housing. Mr. Pickering's project - we really deserve to know exactly what is the status of that project. And I know that the Minister of Housing has a very difficult job, because he has been dealt a very hard blow by the previous minister. And certainly the status of Coverley and the houses at Lancaster, those are matters which should involve serious public scrutiny. And we would certainly like to hear the minister.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have released the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Thank you, Ms. Deputy Speaker. I join this debate on the financial statements for the year 2013. And I want to start, Madam, by acknowledging, of course, with thanks and appreciation the tremendous honour bestowed on me as Member of Parliament for Christ Church South to represent the people of that constituency and indeed by extension the people of Barbados in this very honourable chamber.

Madam, I also want to start by putting this debate - or drawing this debate back into the context in which it was presented by the Honourable Minister of Finance on Tuesday evening. And I think one of the best ways we can

do this is to actually repeat the resolution which the Honourable Minister laid at that time. And I may not read the entire resolution, Madam, but it starts that the financial statement and budgetary proposals 2013 delivered by the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs is made against the background of a continuation of an unfavourable external economic environment, which is precipitating very severe fiscal and economic challenges for Barbados, that have resulted in little or no improvements being recorded in the economy over the last financial year and into 2013.

And, Madam, I start there because the opposition, through at least two of their spokespersons so far, have sought to indicate to Barbadians that as far as they are concerned, there is no international economic crisis. And this has been the premise on which they have ordered their presentation. So I wonder therefore, Madam, what is it that the Honourable George Osborne, the Chancellor of the United Kingdom, is talking about when he speaks about the challenges that Britain continues to face? And I need to quote, Madam, from Mr. Osborne, who said that the world faced the most dangerous time for the global economy since 2008, adding that markets were waking up to the fact that the global recovery - and I pause to repeat, the global recovery - would be much weaker than expected, because you don't recover from something unless there's something wrong.

So Mr. Osborne is observing that in the United Kingdom there is an economic recovery which has to take place and is anticipating that even as we are seeing signs of some improvement, there is a sluggishness in the reality of its execution. We don't go to Greece or we don't go to Spain. I think that is what the Honourable Minister Michael Northey said. None of us here go to Greece or Spain, but we do go to the United Kingdom. And as a matter of fact, Ms. Deputy Speaker, a large number of our visitors to our important tourism sector come from the United Kingdom. And we, Madam, enjoy a fantastic relationship with the people of the United Kingdom. And this is a historical reality. And indeed, Ms. Deputy Speaker, a large number of Barbadians have made their living in the United Kingdom and form part of that important diaspora on whom we lean for so much support in the developed countries. I speak, of course, not only of the United Kingdom, but I speak too of the United States and Canada - just to name the three of them.

So it is important that I repeat this evening so that Barbadians who are not ignorant of that fact - because, you see, it was all right if the honourable member for St. Michael North was speaking in the dark ages. But in this day of instant communication, there can be no denying the reality of which I speak. That even today, as we observe sporadic recoveries in different countries around the world, the comments from the experts in those countries is: is this a real recovery? Is it going to really mean some effective

turnaround in terms of the performance of these economies? And as we have said so many times, Barbados is a small open island state depending very much on its relationships with the rest of the world.

I trust therefore that with that acknowledgement, the honourable members on that side will begin to appreciate that they are talking to an intelligent clientele. They are talking to Barbadians who are in touch with the world every day. And even as they continue their presentation on Sunday night - as we have been told - they will recognise that it is important to bring the debate back into the reality of the experience here in Barbados.

Ms. Deputy Speaker, I also want to indicate that part of my responsibilities as Member of Parliament for a constituency like mine is the reality that there is a tremendous impact on the community from the performance of our tourism industry. And we speak to these things all the time. My constituency, the constituency I represent, extends in the east from bordering on Silver Sands, right through the centre in Oistins - the very famous town of Oistins - onto the St. Lawrence area and of course the St. Lawrence Gap. And the weakening in the tourism performance in Barbados has affected these communities in no small measure.

So I am happy - I am ecstatic - to hear the Minister of Finance make it clear that one of the hotel properties that we will be tackling to purchase and to bring back into the hotel business of Barbados is the Silver Sands property. I believe there are some 140 rooms or so available on that property. It is a property which I have visited before it was closed as a business and since it has been closed and advertised as an investment opportunity. And I am satisfied from the technical point of view that the Silver Sands property can be brought back into business in fairly short order. And whatever the final asking price is, the Government of Barbados has indicated that they are willing to negotiate with the owners and to make this property available for further development.

I believe the Honourable Member for Christ Church East will join me, Ms. Deputy Speaker, in congratulating the Minister of Finance and the team - the DLP, the Government of Barbados - for this very important intervention. It will bring back to that area job opportunities which have been lost for some three or four years now. And I am acutely aware of many artisans, many young ladies and young men, waiters, waitresses, messengers, drivers, taxi operators who are, like me, waiting with bated breath and waiting anxiously to take advantage of that property. Even as we contemplate the renovation and the return of that property to the pool, the opportunities for small business people to take advantage and to earn money in this context.

I recall, too, in the presentation of the budget on Tuesday, the Honourable Minister of Finance was careful to start his presentation by placing emphasis on the worrying factor of implementation. We are concerned as to the degree and the ability of Barbados as a nation in terms of implementing these important projects. And I know he made that point to emphasise that the cuts and the strategic fiscal measures which have got to be taken over the first 18-month period are extremely dependent on the implementation of our growth programme in order to be effective or indeed to have any real benefit in terms of the Barbadian recovery.

I am satisfied from discussions that I have been having that the business community too in Barbados - the Chamber of Commerce and the Private Sector Association - have indicated that they are satisfied that the level of priority being given by this budget proposal and the commitment being made by the Minister of Finance and the Honourable Prime Minister in ensuring that these growth projects get off the ground is a demonstration of the fact that we as a government recognise where we must place our emphasis. And this is something that we are not going to renounce.

Implementation, Ms. Deputy Speaker, in Barbados has always been an issue. And the Honourable Members on that side are not that far removed from the kind of challenges that they would have gone through as a government in trying to implement projects in Barbados. So to get up and to reel off the statistics in respect of our drawdown, our loans, et cetera, is fine to make a political point. But the point I want to make - and I need the country of Barbados to get a grasp of this - is that within the budget, and I want our country people to read the budget, read it thoroughly, read it verbatim. Do not read the response only of the member for St. Michael North East. Read the budget verbatim and recognise the kind of structures that are going to be put in place so that implementation can be guaranteed. The oversight of the Prime Minister, the oversight of the Minister of Finance and the committee - the investment committee in Barbados - and the constant monitoring and reporting on a three-monthly and monthly basis. All of this, Ms. Deputy Speaker, is to ensure that there is a level of implementation which will augur well for our country going forward.

And I am confident, Madam, I am confident in my view that the people of Barbados will respond and that we will see that investment in Barbados take place which will allow the growth that is so necessary - the job creation that is so vital - to take place alongside the fiscal consolidation and the pain that we may have to inflict for a period of time and for a cause. We have signalled to Barbados that there is a correction that is required in order to bring this country's financial ratios - let me leave it at that without digging too far into matters that I am not necessarily fully conversant

with. But I understand that if you have a situation where your fiscal ratios are out of whack completely and where you will become unattractive to the lending organisations in the world, you have to correct it. And we brought that case to the Barbadian public, and I am satisfied, in spite of the fact that there will be some pain.

And you know the honourable member for St. Michael North East has promised to continue on Sunday night too, because that is the kind of demonstration that they have to make - to try to convince Barbadians that somehow there has been some miraculous overcoming on the part of the Barbados Labour Party, who wasted away all the glory days, who wasted away all the glory days of Barbados' best economic performances and have nothing, Ms. Deputy Speaker, to show this country in terms of restructuring this country's economic environment so that we would not be so dependent on one or two legs in terms of good economic performance. They wasted all.

And the last stroke, of course, was when they did the World Cup. I think that at home alone, some \$160 million went in the ground - in an environment where other countries in the Caribbean were spending \$38 million to build a stadium. Around 16 schools. \$38 million to build a stadium. We spent \$160 million. Yes, St. Lucia is a good example of that. And we did not even have lights. We still had to turn around in 2008-09 and spend upwards of \$10 million to put up lights to make the place useful. Ricky Ponting - or one of the other cricketers who played in that World Cup final - has written volumes about the disgust in terms of the execution of that project. But today we can boast a Caribbean Premier League being played under lights, not only in St. Lucia, Antigua and Trinidad and Tobago, but in Barbados, because of the intervention of the Democratic Labour Party. You talk about proper investment, proper management of our resources. These are the things we heard. I have only touched on \$160 million of it.

We were there. They were there when this squandermania was going on. You all remember when the member for St. Peter got up in here on at least two occasions - for me to hear, and I am here every time the House of Assembly sits - and said that he takes responsibility for all of it. Because he is the fall guy. He goes all over the Caribbean and preaches one gospel. Comes back here to Barbados, as if we do not read the newspapers in Cayman and the Bahamas, and would like to preach another gospel. But let them fight their battles - but do not let them force their battles on the people of Barbados. Not where the Democratic Labour Party is the government of this country.

So the divisions and the quarrels and the lawsuits in the Barbados Labour Party must be dealt with by them. The cleansing that the member for St. Peter keeps asking for

must be dealt with by them. The differences between the member for St. James North and the member for St. Andrew and the member for St. George South must be dealt with by them and their lawyers. And together they can continue the destroy programme for the member for St. Michael North East, because that is their job.

So, Ms. Deputy Speaker, I do not get fazed by the fancy footwork in here. And the truth is, the people of Barbados do not get fazed by it either. They appreciate hard work and they appreciate the hard work and the efforts of the Democratic Labour Party. And we took that programme to them in February and they spoke. But all of a sudden, the Barbados Labour Party is embarking on some kind of evolution and revolution. Well, let them proceed. Led by whoever they may. It is not going to happen that way. There will be dialogue. Madam, nobody on this side has ever contemplated that this kind of exercise could take place in a vacuum or simply in the cabinet room at Bay Street. It does not work like that. There has been dialogue already and there will continue to be dialogue as we seek to realise the objectives of this budget.

We have asked for sacrifices throughout the length and breadth of this Barbadian community. Madam, it is because we have to make that critical fiscal adjustment in time before someone else has to come and make it for us. And that is the point that we have made continually over here. And they cannot change that. So do not let them pretend and fool you, Madam. I know they cannot fool the Barbadian public. They certainly cannot fool me with that pretence. Because they have one ambition - and we saw it demonstrated in February all the time. They want to get their hands on the treasury. That is what they want. The Honourable Minister of Finance has made that point every step, every move.

is to get their hands on the treasury again and to destroy, to continue their job of destroying the finances. We have protected jobs in this country and we intend and all through this budget you can see that emphasis on the question of jobs. And it pains us if there has to be some level of dislocation. But we know and we are confident that if this, once this takes place in an environment of high implementation, then growth will be part of the reality of the experience. And we will return in short order to a country, Madam Deputy Speaker, where once again, once again, we can offer all of the wide choices, the wide and many choices. But we are asking the people to take this journey with us, take this journey with us. As we correct a fiscal imbalance that if not dealt with will wreak havoc on our finances. And it is important, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we understand this reality and it gives no one on this side any pleasure in any of these exercises which may bring pain. But we know that it is about correcting the situation.

We're not going to have to, we can't, we don't have to get up in here and tell lies or, sorry, misrepresent the facts. I mean, I heard it all day. I mean, I heard about the hoisting, the Bay Garden participation in the Tourism Initiative. I know what is happening there. There are some people that are not as organised as others. And you know, when you do business with government, you're not going to be able to carry in an invoice this evening and get your check at a cashier counter. It doesn't work. You have to send an invoice. You have to wait a little bit, you know, you have to wait a little bit. That is how government does business. You're lucky if you get anything paid within 30 days in a government arrangement. And that is the reality. That is how government does its business. And, you know, to come in here and try to misrepresent those facts - the important thing is that we recognise that the Barbados Tourism Association has recognised the important role that places like the Bay Garden, the Oistins Bay Garden play and sought to include them in their promotion. And I applaud them for that. And I'm sure that the people who make their business in the Oistins Bay Garden applaud them for that. Not everybody will be able to take advantage of - not everybody has to take advantage of the programme. But the point is it is there.

And again, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West - I think she is a shadow Minister of Health - she seeks to make high weather of the fact that Travattine eye drops are not on the drug formulary. A little quick check with the people at the drug formulary tells me that is not true. But to say that the Member was telling a lie is not parliamentary, so I am not going to say so. She is obviously mistaken or misled. Travattine eye drops, Madam Deputy Speaker, are available and are part of the drug formulary. So the Member will have to rewrite that part of her script and come back to the House another time and make the appropriate correction.

I have nothing again because, you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, I try to manage the business of the Ministry of Health as quietly as I can. And the reporters at the Nation and the Advocate newspaper will tell you that it is true. They have to sometimes wait a long time before I get into their programme, because their programme is not necessarily about reporting the facts. They want to slant stories in the way that best suits them. So they are likely putting in the sauce. The Honourable Member for St. Peter refers to it as newspaper politics - or what is the thing? Fish and cuckoo politics. That is what he calls it. They have snide remarks, trying to cast some kind of aspersion at somebody's character and draw people into a lot of foolishness. I am not in that foolishness, you know. Who cut car seats or who did this - that is foolishness. I am not in that kind of nonsense, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Let us talk about the fact that we have been able in the Ministry of Health to bring the Queen Elizabeth

Hospital back around to an institution which at least can take care of the public of Barbados. Let us talk about what we inherited. Let us talk about what we inherited in the Ministry. We did not even have electrical power at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We did not have electrical backup power, or we did not have sufficient power, at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We had to fix all that - I think to something like \$20 million. I speak subject to correction in that regard.

Anyway, let me quickly deal with the fact that we brought that on board. We gave them power, we gave them good clean power that they can run their institution. We have now taken the Lions IQRA unit, which was donated many, many years ago, but left to wallow. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was Minister of Health for a little while, too. But she was certainly large and in charge, Madam Deputy Speaker. And they allowed that hospital to go to naught.

Madam, the point is that we have now introduced a level of care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which is on par with what we are accustomed to in Barbados. We lead in the Caribbean and we continue to lead. Our challenge - and I would never be otherwise - is how do we continue to pay for this kind of service? And where do we draw the line between public health care and private health care? What portion of the slack is taken up by public sector care and the private sector care? Where can we work with those who finance health care - the insurance companies, the medical professionals, et cetera - in order to work out a formula in Barbados that will help us to see that private health care coming back into whack, coming back under control, so that the insurance companies who now offer private health insurance can derive some level of viability in the exercise. This is a challenge and this is the kind of dialogue, Madam Deputy Speaker, which will take place in the Ministry of Health over the next coming weeks and months.

It is important that we reach that dialogue so that the people of Barbados, the public of Barbados, understand where that care cost is and how much it is. It is important, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we recognise that even in this changing reality in terms of health care and the demographics of the Barbadian population, we recognise that primary health care is not only the least expensive option open to the Ministry of Health and the Government of Barbados, but it is also, in truth and in fact, the most effective option. Because if we can deal with our issues of ill health at the very early stages of our polyclinic system, well then, Madam Deputy Speaker, we will prevent a lot of situations which mushroom into very serious cases - either cardiovascular, diabetic issues, or any of the other issues which so challenge us.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are a lot of other things which we would have loved to raise this evening in terms of health care, but you have indicated that my time is up and I want to respectfully indicate my support for this resolution once again and indicate the extent to which I am obliged. I thank you.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Madam Deputy Speaker. I want to say how grateful I am for the privilege to convey the concerns of the people of St. Thomas in relation to the draconian measures that would have been outlined in this 2013 budget. Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget is a betrayal of the faith and trust that the people of Barbados have put in the Democratic Labour Party not once but twice. And it is unfortunate that all in the month of December, January and February, the people of Barbados were being told everything is alright. The Barbados Labour Party is trying to cause confusion. They want to get power and all the other negative things that were said today, the people of Barbados have seen that some mistakes have been made. But we here on this side believe in democracy and we will continue to uphold that kind of outlook towards this whole exercise.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this period, ma'am, reminds me of the 1991 to 1994 challenges that developed. It is not a happy moment for me as a single parent at that time when the little salary I was earning as a teacher in the classroom had to help me to raise a child as a single parent. And of course there were many other persons who sought to get help because they too lost their work, as well as many others got the 8 per cent cut. The cost of living was not as severe as now. And this is the worst that I have ever seen in more than three scores of living in this country of ours that our forefathers worked so hard to build with their blood, sweat and tears. And it does not only bother me because I would say that whatever stipend I get from this honourable institution, ma'am, would help to keep me in a certain position, but those thousands of persons across the length of Barbados, including those in St. Thomas who are humble people that are not accustomed, and I will repeat that, not accustomed to relying on any government for any stipend through the welfare department or any other institution, are now suffering in a worse way than I have ever seen before.

This government has successfully developed a mendicant society when in 1994, when the Barbados Labour Party became the government, we saw the community college, the plans were there - Community College, Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the University of the West Indies, and the teachers, Erskine and teachers training college - that those institutions were put in a package where the students would have had to pay.

As a matter of fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, those persons who wanted to pursue teacher training at Erskine could not because Erskine Teachers' Training College was abandoned for a while as well. We saw all kinds of projects that were started and came to a halt. And a Labour Party came in and completed those projects in Lester Vaughn School, the King's Garden development. We put on the back part of the Sherbourne Centre. And there were so many other challenges that we faced in Barbados at that time. And after a Labour Party came and instituted measures that would bring about change, worry about the back side of the Sherbourne Centre being not closed - worry about it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party restored the 8 per cent that was taken from the workers. I am not talking about the hundreds who were sent home. I am not talking about the hope and despair then. The Labour Party came in and said our first order of business - job number one is jobs. And between 1994 and 2008, the Barbados Labour Party developed 30 000 jobs and Barbadians were seeing a measure of prosperity. I cannot say it was the envy of the Caribbean. It was the admiration of the Caribbean where St. Lucians, Trinidadians and others came to Barbados to shop, came to Barbados to recreate, and we all fitted in. The Guyanese came in numbers. I am not going to talk about what the late Honourable Member for St. John did. I am not going to refer to any comments that were made by the Member for St. John now who spoke this morning. I'm going to get into the meat of the matter because I'm a very upset old woman at this stage when I thought that we will be going forward as a country to further empower ordinary black people and the white people among us. We have made some retrograde steps through the management of a government that say we are creating pathways to progress and now we are into highway to poverty in the year 2013, the month of August. I say that is a shame. It is a betrayal of the trust of the people of Barbados.

But that is not all, ma'am, because under the leadership and the astute leadership of the Member for St. Peter, the Honourable Member, we had those cylinders in government, in those sectors - they were firing: manufacturing, agriculture, construction, international business. And then, of course, there were some other social agencies developed to assist with the empowerment of people. The AIDS/HIV Commission, Urban Development Commission, Rural Development Commission, Poverty Alleviation, not to mention Fund Access and a number of other agencies to help with those who are interested in businesses.

But you know what, Madam Deputy Speaker? In 2008, the portfolio of the Minister of Education then was changed because it used to be Education, Youth Affairs and Sport, but it became Education and Human Resource

Development. I believe there was a reason and the Honourable Member for St. John, the late Honourable Member, should have been probably praised for that. And a strategy was brought here to this honourable chamber, ma'am, and we discussed it at length because the human development of our people is paramount since we only have them as a resource. We don't have the bauxite and the coal and so on, the mining that takes place in many of the other countries. We don't have the oil like in Trinidad. But our people, and for many, many decades and generations, Barbadians who have been trained here got the opportunity to travel the length and breadth of the Caribbean and the world and to contribute. And when I hear about the returning nationals, it blesses my heart, because there are the ones who sent back remittances. The Honourable Prime Minister assisted me because he recognises that you treat women well.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that portfolio was associated with nurturing, training, preparing people to be able to function here in Barbados and offer their skills, expertise and everything else that comes with it, as well as the people in the international world. And you know what, ma'am? The 14 years that they on the other side, ma'am, the Honourable Members on the other side say were 14 years of plenty - those 14 years of plenty got wiped out under the Democratic Labour Party. As a government, allowances of persons who are travelling and so on were cut, where there were families with two persons in the household as travelling officers, salaries cut by five, their allowances cut by \$500 each, and that \$1 000 cumulatively is what they were using to pay the remortgage amount on the houses that they had because they wanted to bring in some tenants and so to be able to help to make some income. Pensions - those who were receiving two pensions, one was taken away and left old men and women suffering because they had grown accustomed for more than 10 years, sometimes 15 years, to receiving those two pensions that they could plan to pay for the medication, to pay the handling fee for, to pay for the medication that when they gave them the two and three different sets instead of the one that they had for their diabetes and their different medical conditions, it gave them side effects that confused them. When you are old, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is difficult to make adjustments in the way that young people can. And as a result of the handling fees that were imposed by the Honourable Member for St. James South then, a lot of those old people having lost their pension suffered another blow by this government that says it cares. And to make things even worse, 2.5 per cent VAT - that too on building materials and other services, on utility bills - and so that spiralled during the time of the five to six years of this government were difficult latches on the back of individuals to give them pain, and pain they did get.

But you know, ma'am, as a result of the mismanagement of the affairs of this Democratic Labour

Party, more hardship has developed. So much unnecessary expenditure. We heard, not only from the late Honourable Member for St. John, but others on that side over the five-year period, cost overruns will be a thing of the past. Layoffs will not happen. Listen to the news today, Madam Deputy Speaker. NTWA workers can't get their money this evening and they get paid every two weeks. Some immigration officers - not a cent. And there are other workers in Barbados and these measures have not been put in place yet. How do you pay your mortgage? How do you pay the credit union? How do you feed your children in the summertime when they don't have school meals to eat? How do they survive? Almost every month the prison officers - some of them dropping dead as a result of this government that made promises and have not kept them. But don't forget, ma'am, this government has said in the past administration that a manifesto is not a social contract, so I would expect anything to happen.

But, ma'am, rather than cut in these estimates, ma'am, in this budget, ma'am, the constituency councils that have not yet got off the ground - wastage in millions of dollars, and they will add persons who are a part of the Democratic Labour Party with four-day morning jams last, bands last here and four-day morning bands again this year out of the constituency council. I can speak of that. The people in St. Thomas are not getting any help from the constituency councils. The Honourable Member for St. Michael Central will indicate, ma'am, if he had to be called upon, the numerous letters I write to him asking for assistance for those poor people who are too ashamed to go into somebody's departments, not always because they might be embarrassed by who is there, but because they want to get help but they're not accustomed to being in a men-dominated composition. Largesse for the Democratic Labour Party supporters - that's what the commissions are for. And it is wrong because we were not told that was the concept. And that's the reason why we did not support it, because we could envision it happening.

Summer camps for six consecutive years at approximately \$6 million - that is \$36 million. And every year, Madam Deputy Speaker, none of the persons who are supposed to get these stipends have received anything on time. Last year we heard that there were aliases so they couldn't give out - they couldn't pay the money because you can't pay money to an alias in the newspaper. Again this year they haven't got any money and they were looking for their money to celebrate the stipends that they have worked the summer camps. And I'm not going to raise it in here because I'm not going to drive the fear of the devil in parents' hearts. But I will speak of it in another forum - what is happening at the summer camp in the constituency that I have the distinguished honour to live and represent. It is wrong and it has to stop because for many years the Barbados Labour Party managed summer camps and everything was in order. I must give the

Honourable Member that is the Minister a copy of this book that he can see how well structured the camps were. You did not wait for the councillor to turn up after 10:30 on the morning of opening the camps with not a key, with not a room and nothing organised, and when in wild and my little constituent fell and broke her hand before two o'clock and spent 24 hours at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is wrong.

I'll go on, ma'am. The football tournament - I opposed it before and I will oppose it again because I do not believe that the taxpayers' money, \$300 000 in 2011, \$600 000 in 2012, and I do not know how much this year - that money could have gone towards helping the same students at the University of the West Indies. It could have gone forward to put money back in the hands of those pensioners that was taken away. A lady saw me outside on Tuesday evening at 3 or 5 p.m. and she said to me, ma'am, I come from St. Joseph, beg the Minister of Finance to offer a basket of goods that is zero-rated tax, because I'm a diabetic. She said I work three days a week. I have to spend all I have in the supermarket, ma'am. And I have nothing left back to meet my commitments for the bills and so on and so forth. I had somebody with me, so the person is my witness. I will never stand in this honourable chamber and misguide anybody.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I oppose the football tournament then and I oppose it now. And I oppose it because I felt that the money could have been better spent to benefit those who are suffering, because I do not like to see anybody suffering, whether they be from St. Philip North, St. Michael South, St. James South, St. Michael North East, St. Lucy or whatever, St. Michael North West. I don't like to see people suffer because I'm not used to it, and I think that we have to be a little more compassionate and a bit better, better more organised in what we do so that the people out there do not go to sleep hungry as many do. You go to houses canvassing, Madam Deputy Speaker, there are people who still have the fridge on, but there's little or nothing in the fridge. I saw a lady the other day outside the gate and she said to me - I live in town, was, remember, you know, miss, I had nothing to eat for lunch - and the only \$20 I had in my purse, Madam Deputy Speaker, I put it in her hand, a lady from the city, and I had no reason to doubt that she was hungry. And this is what Barbadians have been driven to by a government that says they care.

I believe that the late leader, the excellent Errol Walton Barrow might be somewhere trying to get back into Barbados from within the ocean to say to the Honourable Members on that side, this is not what I envisioned. When I say free education, in my mandate when I became the Prime Minister, or when I say poor people must not suffer, I am sure that he is saying that. But the Minister of Sports who had not a lot to say and did not even touch the budget

yesterday but talked about what Crop Over dead and so on and so forth. The Minister went to London last year to attend the closing ceremony aspect - the closing ceremony aspect - because we were all in here in this Honourable Chamber when the sports were going on for the Olympics. The Minister went away a few weeks ago to China for a weekend festival. Do you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, how much it costs for - what do you call the seats again? - a first class flight to China. Our Barbadians are suffering and going to sleep hungry and naked and they are turning out suffering and have no money.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Youth Affairs Department was a part of the Ministry of Education, rent free. It only had to pay its utility bills when the month comes. And it is now scrambling with more than a hundred thousand dollars when the months come for rental, and the places up there are empty. Is this a government that says it cares, ma'am? The relocation of the Rural Development Commission from the Omni Centre in St. Peter with less than \$10 000 a month in rental - \$52 000 now - bridged down, a Rural Development Commission in the heart of the urban corridor. Something is wrong with the psyche of the Democratic Labour Party. And the Urban Development Commission is in the same building - more than \$100 000 every month to pay in rental. Must I not get angry and upset to see how money is being squandered? And we heard about squandermania on the Barbados everybody. We had things to show. Yes, we had the prison. We have the coast guard. We have highway to where. We have schools and EduTech.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church, the Honourable Minister of Education, knew the good work EduTech has done and we see it as we move the lens on Barbados. It was visionary, on behalf of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East at the time when she was the Minister of Education. And then we make it even worse, Madam Deputy Speaker, with Alexandra Schools - six hundred thousand dollars. And after the commission, the Alexandra Schools matter was resolved through the Services Commission and Public Administration, whichever institution it was - a waste of money. And that six hundred thousand did not include lunch and all the other incidentals that came with it. I am disappointed.

Roundabouts - this government has carried us round and round about. Redmond's Village has taken a roundabout where Welches is. Around the water, Redmond's Village - a simple quiet community - all kinds of confusion where the road did not seem to even want to get anything but traffic. But that is not even the worst, because that crossover - a Pandora's box for \$2.5 million - all it required was a light to press, as is the case coming up St. Barnabas Hill, where all the motorists know it is there now and they stop when people cross over safely. The same is needed, Madam Deputy Speaker, for Spring

Garden. The same is needed for Hillsborough, because when the highway to here was put in place, those are simple communities that were expanding with these big roads and therefore they have created some challenges with people crossing and accidents and death and all that.

Y'all remember the saying that South will get ruffled because he oversaw the construction of a crossover where you hardly see two people cross it. I have to walk so far - I will never cross on that crossover any night, Madam Deputy Speaker, never. I came for my life.

I thought the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West would have told us something about CLICO, because they have some constituents who are waiting. Some have died because of waiting for CLICO to be resolved. We heard absolutely nothing about CLICO in this budget. We heard absolutely nothing about the barracks building - we heard about it for such a long time, even before the Honourable Member for St. John passed away, God rest his soul. We have heard nothing about our barracks building and the funds that are due. Absolutely nothing.

And then, Madam Deputy Speaker, for four consecutive days, not a drop of water in St. Thomas. And nobody said a word. You know why? We have now been expanding. Lancaster Phase One has about 41 or 42 houses - 45 or 42, how is it? Well, the other one has 45. It is one or the other. I went there two weeks ago. How do you put in so many houses in communities? Thirty-five or 25 are now in Capefield, St. Thomas. Another 35 or so are in the vicinity of the District D police station. How do we keep building houses all the time and the Water and Power Authority does not seem to have a plan for digging or sinking reservoirs or pumping stations to collect more water for the city to facilitate the needs of those new housing developments? Town planning has got to do something about it, because for pipes to be off - not a word in English for anybody to hear - but you are just running from pillar to post to get water. And we have been paying 60 per cent more for water bills every month. It is killing the Barbadian. And we want Barbados to be functioning properly - Castle Grant, the one over in Shop Hill, and of course for the sinking of any new reservoirs.

So many Honourable Members get up and speak about 40 years and nothing to show. And we have our track record. The Honourable Minister of Education must tell us about the 72 gazebos - that is wasted money again, and not two of them being used. The key for the one I am sharing is missing. The door is falling out. Go to some of them - I take pictures when I go. If I go to meetings, I do not deliberately go for it. The guard hut has been an abysmal failure. Thousands of dollars spent, hundreds of thousands, and no use. Seven days - seven days they have four people in Queensbury. Money dead again. Thousands of dollars,

the material. A hundred thousand dollars from in at the post office at Eagle Hall. And then the two hundred thousand dollars in materials again from all stages went missing. Where? From National Housing under the Honourable Member for St. Philip North. A whole container of plywood - gone where? Gone where? No class overran.

Madam Deputy Speaker, ma'am, I would like to know what is the cost of the St. John Polyclinic and when will it finish? We heard nothing. But QEH is going to be cut by a couple million dollars. How is it going to be furnished? How is it going to be staffed? All of that calls for money. The Water Authority is not doing anything but they built a building - and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West apparently had no signature put to the contract or whatever document, negotiation, or agreement there was. But a building is going up - one to the right and one to the left when you go up on St. Barnabas Hill - a new school needs centre to take the place of three others that all of us know. I heard three. Lancaster will remain open; the other - but if it is two, that is just as much, because you are not going to need all the workers in there. If you are going to be cooking the food and storing it and doing storing and so on, they too have got to worry. Those millions, if you look at them collectively - cumulatively - they could have been spent to fill the void of foisting this expenditure on the backs of Barbadians when it comes to the University of the West Indies.

I did not have the privilege to go to the University of the West Indies, but I had the privilege to have a proper primary and secondary education.

and will rub shoulders with any of the Honourable members in here on the outside. And I furthered my studies. So the Honourable Member and the Honourable Minister of Education will speak on my days in education and early distinction during my course of study. But I do not envy anybody for that. What I want though is for my grandchildren too to get the privilege that my sisters and those who were able to go work and study came back and helped to empower the family. And that is what is the Barbadian dream - those who can go to university, we expect them to come back and help to chip in with the house repairs and the maintenance of the children and so on and so forth. So I have a tremendous problem with that.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Central Bank Governor had informed us that everything was on track and now we are in a disaster situation. As a matter of fact, when our funds are drunk downstairs. We are in a really very, very deep hole and Standard and Poor's and the other international reputable institutions spoke to us about the downgrades. And every time we said something about it, we were told this thing is not right and this body is picking on this body. The reality is that it is a disaster in this place.

And this government has betrayed the confidence that the people of Barbados put in it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want as well to speak to the whole issue of a circular that was making the rounds - I believe it was in April 2010 or 2011 - where it spoke to no filling of vacancies when people go on leave. The full reality has now hit home. Where the budget has shown us, the budget details have shown us, there will be a total freeze of all of those positions. And I wonder if the Honourable Minister for Environment did not know that. Because every time you heard of people going on at NCC as general workers, as rangers and as lifeguards, and I have some play parks in St. Thomas - King Garden and on Hill Terrace - that I have to be begging other institutions to cut the grass, to save the residents from rodents and from vandals and all kinds of - I don't care how I write, I am not getting any help. But yet new general workers went on. I remember St. Philip North is also in that story. 250 additional members of staff. I haven't got a house in St. Thomas. Not one in five years. But additional - where the world got mashed up. And I'm going to sue the government of Barbados. I am going to sue the government of Barbados for my money.

The late Honourable Member for St. John - I heard the Honourable Member for St. John now speaking this morning in very strange words that I am not so sure what went on there, but I'm not going to deal with it - who held up a newspaper, as well as the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. MTWA is doing nothing and for nine consecutive months nothing happened with a major artery for tourism being blocked off from West - [Inaudible.] - and Harrison's Cave and so on, but I am not even going to dwell on that anymore except to say I'm going to come to the home ground. I'm going to come to you homegrown, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The freezing of the hiring of staff will heap further hardship on families. The amalgamation of 18 entities or the reorganisation of 18 entities will have serious repercussions, ma'am, for the staff in those institutions. Many of them have had sleepless nights - if they have slept at all - because people who have to work and pay bills and raise families and help out others, they want to know that they are gainfully employed. But many of them haven't slept since Tuesday night.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if they can't buy their food, if they can't feed their children, if they can't pay their bills, if they can't do the numerous things they are accustomed to doing - put petrol in their cars and so on - it will affect them. And I want to know if when persons go on leave, no one will be coming in to fill for them. The Honourable Member, I'm sure in his response, will indicate if when police officers go on holiday, sick leave, maternity leave -

because we have females there - if nobody will fill in for them. I'm asking because that is not clear for me.

I'm a member for St. James South. I want you to know that I am speaking for you too because you do not agree with the policies as articulated in this budget either.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, would you address the Chair, please?

Miss C. Y. FORDE: I beg your pardon, ma'am. Ma'am, I would like just to, through you, just remind the Honourable Member for St. James South that I agreed with him that I will speak on behalf of the folks from Hainesville and the other surrounding communities who are suffering as a result and they have to look for alternative means of survival. I want for him to remember that.

But ma'am, I want to know if the ministers who will act or the senators who will act for ministers when they go on leave will be getting the allowance. And if the Honourable Member or Minister of Tourism acts as Prime Minister, if he will get that acting allowance too, because if the others can't get it, the members there should lead by example and therefore not give. I don't want the members of St. James to answer me. No, I don't want the Minister of Education to answer me because he has been put on the back burner for a while. [Inaudible.] has been put on the back. Same has been put on the back. Wonderful.

Appendix one, ma'am, speaks about the reduction in transfers and subsidies to the Transport Board, NCC, QEH, UWI, ADMC and SSA. Transport Board - function for nearly six years, would not buy a single bus. Minister, they are broken down all over the road. The service to the commuters is the worst. I am not getting the garbage picked up in St. Thomas as it used to. Used to be twice a week. It went to one, or sometimes once every two weeks. I want that to be dealt with.

The consolidation tax, ma'am, especially the \$50 000 to \$75 000 - you're looking at police and teachers and clerical officers - and they're really not coping. Those cuts will push them further down the gutter. The reverse tax credit - that's the one that hits all people the worst. Gas station workers, maids, janitors, general workers. Small businesses are cringing under the pressure.

My housing neighbourhood project under the Honourable Member's leadership - the Honourable Member for St. Philip North - not a fella in Island View. Pit toilets are still there affecting the cave. No waterborne toilets for those folks. All they ask, all they plead, all they write, all they beg - I will beg for them. Madam Deputy Speaker, as long as I am given the breath - no housing upgrades, no funds for acquisitions for their properties, no

income generation projects to give them anywhere - and the former member for the city did not even smile on them to give them a \$10 000 grant that some of them requested and we know that they need it. But this Democratic Labour Party with the nepotism, with the nepotism, the victimisation, and the fatted calf syndrome and the families first - everything has really pushed this government down the road.

I take close on this because I had some Asian sayings, ma'am, that they wanted to touch. This Democratic Labour Party is like the goose that killed the golden egg. That lady golden egg. And they killed it. They killed the goose. Too many broken promises. A one-day with tourism.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South did an excellent presentation from his head on Monday at the University associated with the Provincial Conference for the Anglican Church. And he said he spoke of suffering, the suffering of families. He advised all of us to use the Gospel of Christ to provide hope. There is so much powerlessness, so many people deprived, so much insecurity. And he said there is no shortage of frustration, insecurity, powerlessness in the Caribbean. And I know he meant Barbados too. And he read an excellent poem.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Minister is telling us, if life gives you a lemon, make lemonade. And therefore, you know, the people of Barbados will make lemonade. But they will make lemonade because the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said in history, Ecclesiastes chapter three. And I only caught two verses. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to pluck that which is planted. And the final verse, as I will take my seat and thank you, ma'am, for your kindness. A time to get and a time to lose. A time to keep and a time to cast away. The Democratic Labour Party must be cast away for these draconian measures that have been foisted on the people of Barbados who have done nothing but use the democratic process to vote for a group of individuals who just do not have in their psyche understanding the needs of poor people in a country who need a chance to develop.

Mr. SPEAKER: I thank you kindly, ma'am. Yes, the Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, I rise to give full support to the budgetary measures as enunciated by the honourable member for St. Michael North West on Tuesday evening. And I have listened to all that has been said in here over the last two days. I've certainly followed the debates on any mass media, the social media. And of course, I am very mindful of the concerns of many Barbadians, and of course, the praises have also been singled out.

Mr. Speaker, I've, of course, paid great attention to what the opposition benches have had to say in the last two days, and I must say that I am even more convinced that the people of Barbados made the right choice in the last election by re-electing the Democratic Party to office. The Barbados Labour Party, as led by their current outgoing leader, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, really added no value, spent hours standing up in here, obviously seeking to entertain the public via the television cameras, but delivering very little of substance. One would have thought that after you would have stood up in here and gone elsewhere and said that Barbados is in dire straits, we have to cross roads, the economy is in the dump, et cetera, et cetera, that we would have at least heard some alternatives from the opposition benches. There has not been any one, and Mr. Speaker, this is a very serious point. We on this side don't sit and wait on the Barbados Labour Party to tell us what to do, but I believe that those who elected them in their own constituencies and the public at large certainly ought to have benefited from at least one constructive criticism, one viable alternative from the Barbados Labour Party, and that was not done by any one of them.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas who just spoke spent 37 and a half minutes raking up the dead and talking about all sorts of petty things and have not offered one iota of alternative to what is happening in this country and therefore I say we need to press on. But I understand why the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East came with all the fluff and all the palaver because they are so busy rattling with lawsuits among themselves. Do y'all remember since St. Andrew filed a lawsuit against our members, St. James North - do y'all remember St. George South has now intervened as a youngster and filed an affidavit against it - and they said some of the most nasty and dastardly things about one another. I mean, really and truly, we are serious about governing this country and you do not see that kind of behaviour on this side of the Democratic Leader's party benches.

Mr. Speaker, we have this country for years - we've been told by opposition how bad things are. Let me tell you this, Mr. Speaker. I know you have not been involved in this. The budgetary proposals as delivered on Tuesday evening by our Minister of Finance is a reflection of the widest and deepest level of consultation that has ever taken place in Barbados leading up to a budgetary process. Never before have a Prime Minister or a Minister of Finance consulted so far and wide in this country. And I don't understand why all this thing about the element of surprise. I attended some of the consultations. And even when you listen now to the post-budgetary analysis that have come up, you recognise that the private sector agencies have said that this is the right thing we are doing. The Chamber of Commerce have come out and said it is the right thing. The Barbados International Business Association have come

out and said it is the right thing we have done. And even the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association who seem so difficult to please have finally and perhaps most reluctantly come out and given full support for the budgetary measures before us today.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, I am satisfied that this Democratic Labour Party government, ably led by the Honourable Minister of Finance, is leading this country in the right direction. And these are times when we as politicians have to do away with a little pettiness and triviality and be very mindful of where we wish to take this country. Those who don't have vision and who are not prepared to stand up in here and expose it ought to leave. This government clearly has indicated the direction that we wish to take this country, and it's against the backdrop of the macroeconomic environment that we've been faced with. It's not about making any excuses about a prolonged international recession. It's not about making excuses about foreign reserves. These are realities. They are not excuses.

And I heard one of the members on the other side this morning talk about the EU coming out of a recession and the U.S. out of a recession. When they were going into recession, we were still doing reasonably well in Barbados. You don't need to have a PhD in economics to know about the lifetime in terms of macroeconomic issues. We have not woken up just last weekend and decided this economy turn around. This has been a work in progress. Since 2008, we've been seeking to correct many of the wrongs committed by the former Barbados Labour Party administration. For 14 years they did it. We could not have solved all the problems overnight, but we have gradually sought to rein in this economy and keep this society together. Because we hold steadfast to the view that Barbados is not just an economy, it's also a society. And that has been the guiding principle of this Democratic Labour Party administration.

Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a few minutes speaking to the particular issues in my ministry. But before I get there, let me address this issue of university education and the fees. Because this is now a very emotive issue in this society. I represent the people of St. James South and I want to thank them again for the overwhelming support they gave me last election. And the people of St. James South, like other constituencies, are poor, working class, middle class, upper class, black, white, Indian, Chinese, Muslim, Jews, Christians, whatever. And it is that level of diversity in my constituency from whence I draw my strength. I don't only represent poor people, I represent very rich people as well.

You see, Mr. Speaker, we come in this chamber from time to time - I must say far too often - and go on political platforms and always talk about the masses and the poor people because they're the ones whom we get all

the emotion about. I want to say this. I also represent a large middle class constituency and a sizable upper income constituency as well. I am not going to be party to any policies and programmes that are going to destroy the middle class or to penalise those who have worked hard and earned a decent living in this country. Let me make that abundantly clear.

So, y'all remember the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, who likes to talk about poor people as though he thought them he can't exist and as part of a party that likes to keep people poor all the time gets all excited about these issues. I say that, Mr. Speaker, because this issue about UWI and fees - people behave as though it's just one group affected. This is the entire society. Let me say this. I have heard in respect of the Minister of Finance's comments about the fees to UWI - tuition fees, by the way - that they are draconian, they are brutal, they are hostile. Barrow turned in his grave. Barrow trying to book the next flight back here - all sorts of things we've heard in this country.

Let me make this abundantly clear. Had it not been for Errol Walton Barrow and the Democratic Labour Party leadership in their policies in the early 1960s to ensure that all Barbadians regardless of their calling in life could get access to secondary education and university education, I could not be where I am today. Let me make that clear. I am very grateful for the work of our Democratic Labour Party, that I, the son of a fisherman, was able to go to Barbados Community College and the University of the West Indies from whence I've obtained two degrees - a bachelor's and a master's. I paid for the master's, by the way.

So let me make it clear - that is the position from whence I speak. But it is our Democratic Labour Party and their policies and programmes that also taught us to think for ourselves and to recognise how one must manage this economy and society. Not to continue to embark on programmes that we know are not sustainable. Not to do things for short political gain and destroy this entire society. And that is why I have no difficulty in supporting fully the request that students attending the University of the West Indies pay their tuition fee.

I have two children. The oldest one is now getting ready to go to university next year. I did not plan to pay for it if he's going to a campus, but now I have to adjust. I too have also had a cut in salaries. Let me make this another point, Mr. Speaker, because people behave as though we ministers get a whole washband of money and that our salaries are not affected. That is not true. I lost about \$1 400 per month in income between what I make now and what I made when I joined in 2008. I am not one of those politicians that are going to walk around this country saying ministers' salaries must be given up. I have bills to

pay too. I have to rough it like other people in this society. We all have to go through this together. Whether you are working class, middle class, upper class, this society is calling for all of us to put our hands to the plough and lift this country out of any doldrums we are in.

But Mr. Speaker, I believe that there has been a lot of misinformation out there, some of it deliberate and some not deliberate. I wish to quietly remind Barbadians that the Government of Barbados has taken a decision - a recommendation at this point in time - that students attending the University of the West Indies shall pay their tuition fees. But the state remains responsible for paying the economic costs. You see, part of the problem, Mr. Speaker, in this country is that we talk about free education, free healthcare, free housing, et cetera. There is absolutely nothing free in this country. Somebody has to pay. I went through the Cave Hill campus and spent a couple of years and got my degree. I left and I had no idea what it cost the state to provide me with that degree. There is no one at all that I know who graduated from the University of the West Indies that can tell you what their degree would have cost the state.

Mr. Speaker, the state has recognised - and going back to the 2010 budget where the Minister of Finance then, who is still Minister of Finance, made it clear that we had to do something about the spiralling cost of tertiary education especially at UWI, about the Transport Board and about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital - the records of Parliament are crystal clear on these matters. So this is nothing that has been sprung overnight and there have been consistent and persistent dialogue with the University of the West Indies on these matters, both through the Minister of Education who sets the policy generally speaking and the Minister of Finance who has to manage the budget.

Mr. Speaker, we have stated explicitly that students pay tuition fees. Now nobody expected this, and I want to make this clear, Mr. Speaker, and others listening - not one of us on this side of this Parliament expects that parents come next September will have to write a cheque for six or eight thousand dollars and send their children to university at the Cave Hill campus unless they can afford to do that and have the cash. Nobody expects any student, either currently in the University of the West Indies or those entering next September, to go and drain their bank accounts and pay tuition fees unless they have to. That would be nice and certainly perhaps beneficial.

The point that has consistently been missed since the Minister of Finance addressed this issue is that the state in introducing this measure has at the same time explicitly stated that we will ensure that the Students Revolving Loan Fund is adequately capitalised to ensure that those who need to borrow to pay their tuition fees can get the money. And in terms of the issue of guarantors, et cetera, which we

all get emotional about - it's not easy sometimes for these students. But obviously the state will have to be a kind of blanket guarantor for those students who are entering university and wish to borrow money. So therefore there ought to be absolutely no fear that anyone who wishes to go to university will not get there because they don't have the monies to pay the tuition costs.

Mr. Speaker, we have made that commitment. It has been stated in the budgetary proposals that the state will ensure that the Students Revolving Loan Fund is adequately financed, recapitalised, and structured to ensure that any student entering the University of the West Indies at any one of the campuses can borrow money from that Students Revolving Loan Fund to pay. And we've gone a step further. I stated that in the few cases where one may not qualify to borrow money, the state will pay. So no Barbadian at all can come and say that they are being denied the opportunity to go to the University of the West Indies. That is absolutely not true. Whether you are poor, middle class or upper class, you still hold steadfast to the view that you have a right to achieve your full potential and to get the university degree that you so desire. We have not been so cruel and inhumane.

But of course, political hacks have gone out there giving the impression that we have climbed up the ladder, we've gotten our degrees and now we want to kick the ladder down and stop others from getting. I will leave the Democratic Labour Party today if that was the position. I am not going anywhere. I'm not moving. But we've gone a step further and stated - given the level of creativity which does not come from the Barbados Labour Party side - we have stated that we will work with the other financial institutions in this country to provide appropriate financing for students. And to show the level of ingenuity and the level of creativity that permeates the Democratic Labour Party side, we've also stated a national education savings plan for those who wish to start investing towards their children's education.

Speaker, you know, the truth rarely comes when you look at the figures. Do you know that if you go to Kettering campus and pursue a degree in Humanities, Social Sciences, Science and Technology, and you spend four years to get that degree, your tuition costs for the total four years amount to \$22 500? That is what the state is asking you to pay towards your education - \$22 500 Barbados dollars to get a degree. That is 50 per cent less than the cost of the cheapest motorcar, by the way. Beyond that, let me also say that the state pays the economic costs, which amounts to \$112 500. So as much as the honourable members on the other side and others are complaining, we are simply saying to students, look, this level of us paying for your education at university is not sustainable. You cannot tell me, Mr. Speaker, that we have a problem. Everybody knows that there is a problem. And now that we

have found a solution, we are being criticised for finding a solution, particularly by an opposition bench that has offered no alternatives, who also stated that they wanted to charge school fees.

Today we realise that Barbadians are no longer going to Trinidad, St. Augustine, to do degrees. But the reason they are not going is because the programmes being offered in Trinidad are now offered here. Every campus, all 30 campuses, now wish to offer or are offering the same degrees. And we talk about regional integration. We do not know what is going on around the region. Our students will no longer travel to study elsewhere. It is more expensive to educate medical students - precisely. But let me go on further, Mr. Speaker. I wish to remind people that to get a degree after spending four years at UWI, the student will be required to pay \$22 500 in total. But the state pays \$112 500 in economic costs. So we are still paying almost 80 per cent of the costs of educating our students at

UWI. Now when you realise, Mr. Speaker, that through the Student Revolving Loan, you can obtain that \$22 500 at perhaps 4 per cent interest over a five-year period, the mathematics that I was taught at school will tell me that \$22 500 borrowed at 4 per cent interest over a 60-month period amounts to \$414.37 per month.

Mr. Speaker, let me make this point. We can argue over the percentage - whether four percent, three percent. The honourable member for St. George North got up and sought to correct me, saying it is not four percent. But in typical Barbados Labour Party style, she cannot say what it is or what it should be. My understanding, Mr. Speaker, is that - and I am reminded by a colleague - the honourable member who spoke before is in fact correct. The interest rate is 4 per cent per annum. I believe the honourable member from the other side who spoke on a point of order was speaking of a previous regime when the interest rate was compounded. The interest rate at the Student Revolving Loan Fund now is simple interest at 4 per cent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am very mindful, Mr. Speaker, that that kind of analysis is way above the level of the ordinary citizen, and therefore the honourable member for St. George North should really take some notes. So you borrow \$22 500 Barbados dollars to get a degree, at 4 per cent interest over a 60-month period - that translates to \$414.37 per month. Now let us say that is a worst-case scenario. A best-case scenario: you borrow the same \$22 500 at 4 per cent over a 10-year period, you will pay back \$227.80 per month. So Mr. Speaker, I think we need to take away the emotion from it. We need to ask ourselves, first, can we continue to maintain the level of so-called freeness at university level? We need to ask ourselves if we maintain that, what impact would it have on the rest of our education system and the

rest of our society? And we need to ask ourselves what is the alternative?

And yes, we could have said, as our Minister has proposed, that you charge 2 per cent on everybody to cover university education. And then the same bureaucracy would say we are taxing people too much. And people say, well, why should I pay another 2 per cent of my money towards university education when less than 3 per cent of the population go to university? Again, I understand that concern. Then the other proposal put forward today from the opposition bench is that all graduates of the University of the West Indies should pay something back towards university when they graduate and when they are working. That could be considered too, but the truth of the matter is that it is fraught with confusion and is perceived to be very discriminatory. So therefore let us look at how we do it up front.

So I wish to give the assurance that we as politicians and our supporters need to step back a bit, take away the emotion, take away the DLP-BLP thing, and realise that we are talking here about sustaining a university that the Democratic Labour Party certainly piloted and has supported. The Democratic Labour Party has not moved away from its philosophical moorings or its principles that say we are committed to education. We recognise the invaluable contribution that an educated workforce brings to this economy and society. So let us realise, and Mr. Speaker, I must say to you that I have no cause whatsoever with saying to my children, go to the University of the West Indies, and when you graduate and you start working, pay about three or four hundred dollars a month for five years or whatever towards the education. We will spend eight or nine hundred dollars per month after our first year of graduation. In the first year out of university, you get a job and you pay \$800 a month towards a car alone that will last you for five years. If you do not want to pay three hundred dollars towards an education that will last you a lifetime, something must be fundamentally wrong.

And I urge the honourable member for St. Michael North East to step down off her high horse and stop her naked quest - her parents paid for her - stop her naked quest to get her hands on the reins of power in this country and do what is right. We are seeking to safeguard what we have invested so much in.

And you know, Mr. Speaker - I am reminded I have five minutes. I thought I was not even warming up. Oh, forgive me. But let me at this point say that the opposition benches have said a whole set of things about me in here and outside. All sorts of nasty things have been said about me. But they have never been able to call me a hypocrite. The honourable member for St. Michael North East stood up in here and cast aspersions about student fees - how important people can suffer and people can die and all sorts

of things. The honourable member for St. Michael North West, the Minister of Finance, in talking about the growth strategy, identified the Four Seasons project, the Pierhead project, and another project as projects that we have to get going. Do you know that the honourable member for St. Michael North East is the attorney-at-law for all three projects? Her fees for working with the Four Seasons project and the Paradise Limited project amount to almost a million dollars. And for the other two projects, almost another million dollars. The honourable member for St. Michael North East stands to make about two million dollars in legal fees - all from those same three government projects. That two million dollars could have paid for 175 students to spend three years at Kettering and get a law degree, or for 112 students to get a degree in Social Sciences or Humanities.

So let me make it clear, Mr. Speaker, and I hope Barbadians understand the level of hypocrisy that permeates the opposition benches. I have heard one Mr. George Belgrave say that we are the worst government he has ever seen - all because we do not support maintaining and paying him \$11 000 a month as a consultant on regional affairs, as the previous Prime Minister was paying him. And I mean, Mr. Speaker, so therefore, you know, the beauty about it is that this Democratic Labour Party does not seek to stop anybody from criticising any one of us or any one of our programmes. Democracy has never been as alive and well in this country as it has been under this administration. That is why the press and all of them spend all their time criticising this Democratic Labour Party, but we shall remain focused on rescuing this society and this economy.

We have been dealt a tough hand. We have not thrown our hands in the air and said we cannot find solutions. And when I look at the growth strategies employed, the things that we are going to do internationally, the fact that we have a new Companies Act coming down the line, we have the International Service Providers Regulation in a few weeks, the fact that we are establishing now within my ministry a business facilitation unit to address the myriad of complaints that the private sector and business people place before this government - these are solutions. And I therefore believe that the opposition benches, instead of ranting and raving and seeking to incite unrest in this country, must take a deep breath, sit back, and accept that they do not have the answers.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The honourable member said that the opposition benches are seeking to incite violence. That is not true, and he must withdraw that from the record.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: I withdraw that comment, Mr. Speaker, and simply say that members of the Barbados

Labour Party who may not be in the Parliament are out there seeking to incite unrest in this country.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: That is misleading, Mr. Speaker. No Barbados Labour Party supporter will ever incite violence in this country.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wish to wrap up as you have warned me my time is thin. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that in terms of industry, manufacturing, and commerce, we have all started to find the solutions and implement them. We are not a political party or a government that is going to run and hide from the people in power. And let me say, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I wish to make the point that this debate will not end in this chamber tonight. This will go on through the length and breadth of this country, because what I am seeing from the Barbados Labour Party scares me and it energises me to get out there in this country and ensure that they never come back close to the reins of power in the foreseeable future. We have identified the problems, we have identified the solutions, and we are working with them. You either get on board - for those on the opposition benches - or you can step to one side and watch this country pull itself up. But understand this: we are not going to do like what happened before with the previous administration. We are not going to come and rescue this economy and then give it back to the Barbados Labour Party to wreck it again. So be prepared for a long, long political battle, as we are determined to keep this country and this society on the right path. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the honourable member for St. George South.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this honourable House to make - I do not know -

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute. Let the House settle a little bit, please. Members seem to be very excited. Just a minute, please. Thank you. Please continue, honourable member.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker,

I rise in this honourable house to make my contribution to this budget debate. But I must thank the people of St. George South, who saw it necessary at this juncture in the history of this country to place that burden of leading the people of St. George South. And I take this on and I shoulder the mantle. It is a burden now. And I show them that mantle of leadership of the constituency. And it is a sacred responsibility that I honour. And I feel that weight of responsibility. That is why I call it a burden. Because what I heard this afternoon, Mr. Speaker - let's have some order, please - 36 temporary employees, 36

temporary employees have been sent home from the Barbados Water Authority. And we are in this house, we are in this honourable house. Yes, some of the members on the other side seem surprised, but we are in this honourable house, the Honourable Member for St. James South and the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, making plenty noise about court cases and who is suing who, when we have fundamental issues, when we have fundamental issues to be addressed in this country.

And I said burden because, Mr. Speaker, sir, it is indeed a burden when we, as members of the Barbados Labour Party, now have to take on that mantle - not only of counselling, but we have to find solutions. And I heard the Honourable Member for St. James South talking about we don't have solutions. But as I carry on my presentation this afternoon, I will let you see, Honourable Member for St. James South, that we have solutions. And indeed you have placed tremendous burden on us in this country. When you were heading down a road and several signs were saying, Cliff Ahead, Danger Cliff Ahead, Fiscal Cliff Ahead, and you passed about eight or nine signs and you refused to stop, the end result - you fell off the cliff. And here we are now with that burden, having to rescue the people of this country, and we have done it before and we will do it again. That is why I say burden - take it in the context in which I mean it. Never let it be said that it is a burden, me winning the seat in St. George South, because it was not a burden. It is a burden now. You have placed that burden on us and take it in the context in which it has been said.

Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, I wish to move on. I feel the weight and it is disappointing that we have missed several opportunities within the last two days. And we have placed that disproportionate burden on the public service workers. We have placed that disproportionate burden on homeowners. We have placed that disproportionate burden on university students and not only on university students, but on their parents. And we have placed that burden, that disproportionate burden, on the poor people of this country. And Mr. Speaker, as I focus my speech on these missed opportunities and perhaps the soberness with which I make my presentation, these things will become clear.

And in listening to the Minister of Finance, I was left with a profound lack of clarity on his theory of development and how his interventions will advance the pillars of sustainable development in this country. And I heard the Honourable Member for St. James South - but there is no growth strategy. I heard him talking about growth, but there is no growth strategy. And for instance, if we refer to this document, I will look at the cuts that have been imposed, the expenditure, the cuts in expenditure. QEH, UWI - yes, I understand. QEH, UWI - and when you make these cuts, people, you are tinkering with one of the most vital assets in this country, and that is the human capital, the development of the human capital. So you have

asked these people at the university - poor, some poor, these students, some poor, some rich, whatever - to carry that burden of paying tuition fees. But when you travel the length and breadth, and I got a call Tuesday night when I left this honourable house, this single parent said to me, I cannot afford, as of next year, to send my child to university anymore. That is what she said.

And I also got a call from Jamaica saying to us, had the Democratic Labour Party imposed these measures pre-election, what would have been the result? Well, I cannot answer that. That has gone on. But I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that these are some of the challenges that we are faced with in this country. And I hear people making mock sport - that we need to look at student loans and calculating \$22 500 at four per cent interest. Who in St. George South, from Drexel to Cox Road, to Byde Mill, to Ellerton, who can afford to pay \$400 in a month when you cannot even pay your light bills and your water bills based on these austerity measures imposed by the Democratic Labour Party?

And I will keep referring to the Honourable Member for St. James South because he is the one who got up and talked about a growth strategy. But I don't see any growth strategy and I don't see anything put in place to ease the pain of the people of this country. Taxes have been increased. Taxes have been increased. People now have been asked to shoulder that burden. They have been asked to shoulder that burden of tuition. And for some people it is \$5 000 a year. For some it is more. But what you have done is destroy the Democratic Labour Party's legacy of free education in this country. Of free education in this country. And I said this afternoon, without a shadow of a doubt, we need to ask the Democratic Labour Party to revisit that strategy of imposing tuition fees on the students at the university. You need to revisit, because what you have done is start to focus on losing critical human capital. This is one of the cornerstones of this said country. This is what we sell - our intellectual capital. When people come here, people take pride and say Barbados has a very good education system. Barbados has great people. Barbados has people who can leave these shores and go anywhere in the world and command jobs. That is as a result of our education system and you have destroyed it.

And come into this house - come into this house to make more sport at it, talking about student loans. When it is written in this document that you have asked the students at the university to pay tuition fees. But accept it and let us move on. But don't get up telling us - don't get up in this honourable house, Mr. Speaker, making more sport talking about student loans. How many of us can afford student loans? How many of us cannot afford student loans? But, Mr. Speaker, let me move on because I want to focus this afternoon on the missed opportunities. The missed opportunities, because during economic crisis, you have the

prime opportunity to focus on a number of sectors. You have the prime opportunity to build the profile of a number of sectors. And this budget delivered by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has not done that. When you look at manufacturing, when you look at energy, when you look at agriculture - and I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, and if I have the time, I will touch on agriculture - we have basically missed the opportunities.

But let me get into one of the areas that we have missed, and that is energy. And Mr. Speaker, in this area of energy, there is one thing that I will compliment the Democratic Labour Party for in this document, and that is the whole aspect of the green economy. And we are in synergy - both this side and your side. Mr. Speaker, we are in synergy, both the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party. We are in synergy because what we have done, way back in 2008 coming forward and before, we focused on the green economy. We have placed significant focus on the green economy. And what I will say to you this afternoon, a renewable energy strategy is a good strategy because what we are doing is trying to reduce the carbon dioxide emissions and greening our environment.

But I want to move on, Mr. Speaker, further. And I want to reference this document - Sustainable Energy Framework for Barbados, Final Report, Government of Barbados, Inter-American Development Bank, June 2010. And I want to reference this because, while I appreciate the focus on the green economy and on renewable energy, our renewable energy potential in terms of electricity consumption is 29 per cent. And let me repeat for those who do not know - our renewable energy potential in terms of electricity consumption is 29 per cent. So we therefore have 71 per cent to focus on fossil fuels in terms of our energy. But we are nowhere near that 29 per cent. We are nowhere near that 29 per cent.

And Mr. Speaker, there are several initiatives that I read in this document by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. And Mr. Speaker, I think that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South should sit down and listen and learn something about energy. Mr. Speaker, when you look at what has been laid in this document by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, we have here - it has been estimated that one million square feet of roof space will be able to accommodate a maximum of 10 megawatts of solar photovoltaic installation. This will result in a maximum of 16.4 million kilowatt hours, or terawatt hours, whatever you want to call it, with a value of \$11.4 million. That is the savings. And when you look at it, Mr. Speaker, \$11.4 million as a result of 10 megawatts of photovoltaic energy - it is a dent in the ocean. When our fuel import bill for last year is \$807.8 million, Mr. Speaker, that represents less

than one per cent. So what that is telling you, Mr. Speaker, is that we have to change our strategy. While I would like most companies who can afford to invest in renewable energy to focus on it, we have a lot more to do in terms of dealing with a strategy to address fossil fuels in this country.

But let me go further, Mr. Speaker. I will quote everything that you all produce. We have here, on June the 20th at the Hilton, National Consultation - we have here the Alternative Development Initiatives, a number of green energy initiatives: solar panels in 2014, 4.5 kilowatts, giving savings to Barbados of \$3.4 million. That is in 2014. Then we go further - solar panels, 7.7 megawatts, Vine Farms, 11; biomass, 25, giving savings of \$1.58 million, and it maxes out in 2017 at 145 megawatts. Now the 10 megawatts that we see here in solar panels will be achieved in 2016 - from this document, from this document, will be achieved in 2016. Where in your 19-month growth strategy can the citizens of this country, the people - and I keep referring to my people in St. George South, who cannot afford to invest in solar panels, some of them, \$50 000 to prevent a light bill of \$140 - where can we, in 19 months, benefit in terms of growth in this country? We cannot benefit from renewable energy as a growth strategy.

And I keep saying to you in this honourable house, Mr. Speaker, I agree with the renewable energy strategies of the other side, the members of the Democratic Labour Party. But these initiatives as a growth strategy cannot work for the next 19 months. So we are again telling our people, as you have done previously, prepare documents that will not show any results in terms of real growth and respectability back to this economy. And you ought to be ashamed, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, to produce these documents after being part of this consultation, talking about 19 months of growth using renewable energy, when clearly you know you have not started anything yet. No biomass co-generation, no waste-to-energy, no solar panels initiatives. And this is close to the end of 2013. Now let us get serious and tell the people the truth, the Democratic Labour Party. Let us get serious and let us tell the people the truth.

But we have some more fundamental issues. We have some more fundamental issues because I have not stopped there yet. Mr. Speaker, we have local reserves here. And I keep saying, Mr. Speaker, we have to focus our growth strategy - as a government it must be on fossil fuels while focusing on renewable energy and while exploiting the reserves that we have in the ground. And I will get to that point now because, Mr. Speaker, we have 2.8 million barrels of crude oil in the ground. That is 10 years of reserves when you look at the current rate that we produced last year, because production dropped from 2011 - and sorry, Mr. Speaker, this is the Barbados Economic and Social Report 2012 that was laid in the house. I am quoting

this. You have 10 years of reserves, but yet your production keeps falling and you keep talking about productivity as a government. And we have a high fuel import bill, but yet you have so much reserves in the ground that you can tap into. But you have done nothing but bring all of these taxes to the people of this country and ask the university students to pay tuition fees. When we have what it takes to bring this country out of the mire. When we have what it takes to pull you off that cliff, we have many oil reserves, both oil and natural gas, because the people in St. George South have been crying out for natural gas. Yes, we have many natural

gas reserves, honourable members for St. John. Now, if you won't know, I can teach you. We have many reserves, natural gas and crude oil. And I am saying to you that if we, as a people, focus on our onshore drilling, if we can take our rate up, because we produced 760 barrels of crude oil last year, and the previous year we produced 820 barrels of crude oil, this is lower than your rate which you capped off at a thousand barrels of crude oil per day, which equates to 24 per cent of the fuel oil that we use in this country. Pray tell me, Mr. Speaker, isn't this a gross strategy that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has not tapped into? Renewable energy on its own cannot do it. Renewable energy on its own cannot do it. But, Mr. Speaker, let me go a bit further, because when you produce this oil, when you produce this oil, you are taking this crude oil and you are sending it to Trinidad and you are getting back the equivalent in fuel oil. And then you are selling that fuel oil to Light and Power at world market prices. You are selling that fuel oil to Light and Power at world market prices. There again, Mr. Speaker, there again, Mr. Speaker. We have the potential not only to increase the production, but we also have the potential to lower our costs in the fuel clause adjustment going to the poor, the people of this country. Right now our fuel clause adjustment is about 42 cents per kilowatt hour. I stand to be corrected, Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, yourself. Right? And we, but we have the potential, we have the potential to save about 12 cents per kilowatt hour. This will impact the light bills of the people in this country. People are crying out for light bills, the increase in light bills. This can also impact several other areas, Mr. Speaker. And I am asking the government to review their energy pricing policy so that Light and Power can pass on those savings. If you increase your production, local production to 1 300 barrels per day, we can see savings of 12 cents per kilowatt hour, and that will be passed on to the consumers. 29 per cent of the electricity produced goes to homeowners. 29 per cent of the electricity produced by Light and Power - of the 1.4 billion kilowatt hours, 310 million kilowatt hours going to homeowners. Mr. Speaker, I cry shame that the Democratic Labour Party has missed this opportunity in a growth strategy at a time like now and is asking the civil service and is asking homeowners and they are asking university students and

the poor people of this country to continue paying high light bills.

But worse yet, Mr. Speaker, something major has been missed. I have this Fair Trading Commission document, Renewable Energy Rider. And Mr. Speaker, we can make this a document of the House. This document says that you cannot - you have a maximum of only seven megawatt hours that you can give into the grid. You have a maximum of seven megawatt hours that you can give to the grid.

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

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Thank you. Seven megawatt hours. This Rider - Renewable Energy Rider - was put in place by the Fair Trading Commission. And Mr. Speaker, on the 9th of August, this document - and Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has been talking about 10 megawatt hours in his document. Again, we are misleading the people of this country. We need to stop that. Mr. Speaker, do your research before you come to this Honourable House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I remember you. You have repeated that. You're not allowed to accuse members of misleading the people. Please address that.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Withdraw, Mr. Speaker. So my comment, Mr. Speaker, to the members on the other side - go back and do your homework. As it relates to energy in this country, renewable energy alone cannot be seen as a growth strategy. You need to focus on the fossil fuels. You need to do more onshore drilling. You need to do more offshore drilling because the seismic data shows that we can - yes, offshore. There is onshore and there is offshore. We can do more offshore drilling because the seismic data shows that you have the potential for oil and gas in the offshore sector.

But, Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me after I spend my whole afternoon talking about energy and not focusing on the area to which I've been assigned. And I want to switch gears slightly, Mr. Speaker. I want to move into transport and works. Mr. Speaker, we have some cuts here of \$15 million from the Transport Board. And, Mr. Speaker, in my maiden speech in this Honourable House, when I said to the honourable members - and I was criticised by the honourable member for St. Philip South - when I said we have 294 buses, sometimes we can't get 200 working. And I challenge you this afternoon to go and do your homework because I have done mine, Mr. Speaker. And you have out of 294 buses, you have approximately 210 buses working. But, Mr. Speaker, you have just made \$50 million in cuts from the Transport Board. And I am hoping though, Mr. Speaker, to you that there is no hidden

agenda with respect to bus fares because I would like to know where you are going to get this money from to do repairs and maintenance on these buses. You have not bought any buses since you came into office. You have not bought any buses since you came into office. But yet, we are seeing massive breakdowns. Massive breakdowns. We are seeing high repairs and maintenance costs and, Mr. Speaker, we have seen many supplementaries coming to this House for Transport Board.

Thank you, Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, because you have laid the mandate. You don't want to see any more supplementaries. So I am hoping, I am hoping, Mr. Speaker, that there is no hidden agenda with respect to raising bus fares in this country to impact those people who have to catch the bus. And where else yet, Mr. Speaker? This medium-term growth strategy - we have four drivers of growth. One is increased public and private, foreign and domestic investment. The next one is better business facilitation. And the third one, which I wish to focus on, is increased productivity. So when you're going to send me buses every four hours, every three hours, you are asking me to improve productivity. And those people who are living in Towers, Cots, Roll, Elton, Greens - they cannot get a bus. So you are spending three to four hours on a bus. That is a productivity issue. I am calling on this government, through you, Mr. Speaker, to address the issues at the Transport Board so we can have one of your pillars fulfilled - worker productivity. It is critical that we focus on rural Barbados in terms of an efficient transport system. It is the far-flung area and these people rely on an efficient transport system to get to work. So it is incumbent on you, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, to make sure, number one, there is no hidden agenda with raising bus fares and, number two, that you fix your maintenance challenge at Transport Board. If you need help, we can offer help.

The Honourable Member for St. John said we are not offering any solutions. I have just offered some. I have just offered some. Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, I wish to wrap up. And I said earlier that this government has missed the opportunity to focus on areas to diversify this economy. And it has asked ordinary folks, homeowners, public sector workers, students to bear much of the burden for growth strategies that are ill-thought. But I want to leave you with a quote and I don't want you to take it out of context, Mr. Speaker. Proverbs 14:12 - There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death. You have wrecked this economy and you are on the verge of destroying this society. I'm obliged, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I recognise the member for St. Philip South.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the six years, six or so years that

I've been in this honourable chamber, I have lived in the hope that one day we will put our collective intellects together and come up with policies that are in the best interest of all Barbadians. In fact, I thought we'd turned the corner recently when I remember we had a debate on an amendment to the Defence Act, when the member for the City, I believe, in his presentation recognised the importance of what we were doing and accepted those recommendations. But two weeks later, another member of the opposition criticised every aspect of the same bill. And that's when I realised that no matter what we do, the opposition, championed by the member for St. Michael North East, will oppose everything that this government does.

And indeed, sir, when I did a Google search recently on opposition parties and the role of the opposition, a consistent theme seems to be that oppositions oppose and need not offer any solutions - that their role is to oppose. And this opposition certainly takes their responsibility to oppose very seriously. I'm heartened to note that the member for St. George South believes that he can offer some alternatives, and if he is serious we are quite willing to engage anyone who wants to offer alternatives. But I say to the people of Barbados and I say to my colleagues, do not be surprised by what you are hearing from the other side. Do not be surprised by what you are hearing from their hired guns in the media. Do not be surprised that they have nothing good to say about our policies.

We have sat down, we have done wide and far consultations all across the length and breadth of Barbados before we brought these policies to this honourable chamber. And it is for that very reason that, notwithstanding the doom and gloom that you were hearing from the other side, it is for that very reason that we have not heard the hue and cry that was expected from the general public - because it has been accepted. We've heard from the BHDA, we've heard from the Employers' Confederation, we have heard from the private sector, and a common theme has been that this is a budget for the time, that all we now need to do as a government, as a country, is to ensure that it is implemented.

There are one or two commentators - for example, I saw in the local media a director of a company criticising the budget. But he is the sole director and sole owner of that company and is a well-known supporter of the Barbados Labour Party. So nothing we ever do will he give us any credit for. So when you read in the media certain commentators out and about criticising us, the people of Barbados should look at their history and understand. So when you hear certain commentators speaking about agitation and making sure that in three weeks this government comes to naught, you should understand that some of them still carry consultancies from years past and still owe debts of delivery to members on this side. So

when you hear certain commentators, unless you have the full background, you might be misled - given their stature - into believing the authenticity of their comments, not recognising their particular prejudices.

I heard the member for St. Michael North East in her first sojourn as opposition leader say the answer to our problems is a stimulus package - bring a big stimulus package. Then the second leader said, no, no, no, it is actually a fiscal problem, so you need to address the fiscal issue. Then the current leader - whose aspirations, we found out yesterday, are to manage a band, but I know that the member for St. James Central will ensure that she goes off very soon to manage as many bands as possible - her view is that we have an expenditure problem and we need to address our expenditure. In economic speak, we have been advised that we need to reduce our deficit, we need to have a short reduction in spending. And then we are told that what you need to do is have a smaller deficit - that is the neoclassical approach. I have also heard, sir, that we do not have an expenditure problem, that we have a revenue problem, that if we had more revenue no one would care how much we spend. We have heard all kinds of things.

But what we can all agree on is that we have a financial situation in this country today that needs some urgent remedies, and therefore these proposals we can all accept. Not the root cause, because our division has been about what has caused us to be where we are today. But the opposition from 2008 up until today has accepted that we have some fiscal issues that have to be addressed. The two areas of divide are: how did we get here, and how do we solve the problems? And I say to the people of Barbados, let us deal with the second area of divide, because we at least have come up with some solutions, but we have not heard any solutions from the other side.

And this brings me really, sir, to the real meat of my presentation. Now let me digress for a little while, because I did not want to touch the whole education debate - I find it very sad that it has gone across the media as though it is the government against the University of the West Indies. We have recognised the debt owed to the University of the West Indies. Let us not get confused about it. I saw an extract from one section of the media suggesting that we are denying the debt. We have acknowledged that there is a debt. We regret the extent of the debt, but that is not the beginning and end of the education debate.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is happening more and more. You know the rules, you know the rules of engagement with respect to calling people's names. Let us try and stick to the rules please. Thank you.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: So guided, Mr. Speaker. I find it sad that my good friend and former opening bowler at the University of the West Indies can

recently be in the media raising the whole issue of the debt and creating the impression that there is a divide. I find it very sad that we have taken a policy that says we want students to pay their way, to pay their tuition fees, and it has become a major platform all across Barbados on a very simple matter, sir - a very simple matter.

My mother raised three children - three sons - a single woman, a school meals worker. And let me take the opportunity to recognise that she is 86 years old today, the school meals worker. And you are invited, sir, to the house later. We did not always have adequate food and drink, et cetera. And I remember when I finished O levels, I said to Mum, I am going to go off to work. She said, no, no, no, you go back to school. We will find a way. You go back to school. And in 1985, when I had to make the decision about going to the University of the West Indies, the late Prime Minister said to me: you need to go to the Student Revolving Fund and borrow some money, because if you do not go now you may never make it to law school. I went to law school. I went to the Student Revolving Fund and I borrowed \$25 000 or \$30 000 - I do not remember how much it was. But I borrowed the money. I paid back the money with interest to the government and people of Barbados. \$25 000 in my education, sir - a lifetime of education.

Would you believe, sir - and I think that you know this well - the member for St. James South made the point that the first motor vehicle I bought cost more than what I spent on my education. A depreciating asset. And most of us who have borrowed money for education have spent more money on depreciating assets and on unnecessary assets than we have on our education. So I do not understand why it is such a huge issue all across Barbados - Barbadians paying for education, even at the University of the West Indies. There are many lawyers around Bridgetown who paid for their degrees - University of London, et cetera, the Holborn. Many corporate secretaries did ICSA and paid for them. Most of our accountants, if not all of our accountants, pay for their professional designations. And we are saying that the time has come in this country where we can no longer afford as a country to continue along the lines that we are going with respect to certain sections of education.

And I believe that even the management of the University of the West Indies recognises that government cannot continue paying the full cost of student education, and have looked at various methods that can see alternative funding arrangements so that we can continue our path towards allowing as many Barbadians as possible to have access to tertiary education. And we are committed to that. I represent a rural constituency. I will not be part of any policies that inflict unnecessary pain and suffering on my friends and constituents. And we recognise, and we have said, that it is either we take our policies now - either we

take a little pain now - or we have major surgery down the road. It is like sometimes diabetics have this problem: you speak about taking off a toe, they say no, no, no, you are not taking any part of my body, you cannot take my toe, and then they lose the whole foot, because they did not take the early corrective surgery. And that is what we are saying.

But let me repeat, for the benefit of my constituents in particular: I will not be part of any policies that inflict pain on my constituents unless it is absolutely necessary. Unless it is absolutely necessary. So I do not understand the argument, sir. In simple terms, there is no country in this world that can on a continuous basis provide free education, free health care, subsidised housing, subsidised natural gas, subsidised fuel - a true welfare state, subsidised water - at some point in time reality has to step in. And that time for Barbados is now. In fact, that time for Barbados may have been a couple of years ago. It is unsustainable. And that is what we are saying to the people of Barbados. As we have grown, we are now 280 000 people. When we were 200 000 or 180 000, it may have made sense and we could have sustained it. But we are talking about 280 000 people with depreciating revenue - you still have to pay for all of these things. It is impossible to conceptualise. And I believe if those on the other side are honest, they would accept that as a country we cannot continue and could not continue providing all of these heavily subsidised services.

Even Cuba - even Cuba - has recognised that it has to open its doors to foreign investment, allow its people to start investing and doing capitalist things. They were anti-capitalism for God knows how long, and even Cuba has now said we cannot take the burden anymore. So that is where we are. So let us be honest with our people. We will work with them. We will hold their hands. But the time has come when the state and the people must work closer towards more of an equal partnership so that we continue supporting the more vulnerable in society, the less fortunate, the marginalised. We are committed to them. But we are saying to our people: there are some things that unfortunately we expect you will have to pay more for, because our revenue situation does not allow us to continue carrying these costs. Two hundred million dollars owed to the University of the West Indies - unsustainable, sir. That is a reality.

So it may have been a difficult decision. Yes, it was a difficult decision. We thought long and hard about it. We had a divide on this side - we are a party of free education, how could we do this? But what do you do? Do you do what is politically expedient or do you do what is best for the people of Barbados? I look them in the eyes and say: we want to be able to sustain this way of life, but there is a cost. And one thing history has also taught me - because I love history - is that everything changes. There is no constant. What may have worked in 1930 does not

necessarily work in 1950 or 1960 or 1970. It is for that reason that the member for St. James Central is lining up to lead the Barbados Labour Party - because he recognised that the old policies of the member for St. Michael North East are not what is required to take that party forward. A time of change. And that is all we are seeing - a time of change.

Sir, what we need at this juncture is for our people to recognise that we need all hands on deck in every sense of the word. We need to release a spirit of productivity, a spirit of creativity, a spirit of national pride in industry - so that whether you are a carpenter or a messenger or a driver or a doctor or a lawyer, no matter what role you play in the puzzle, the fact that you do your best and lift this country up. Let me give you some illustrations, sir. In 2005, I believe, in a matter involving St. Louis Castle, the court in this country -

the judgment was delivered a couple of days ago. That's about eight or nine years after. St. Louis Castle has been closed for almost 20 years. In my time, sir, hundreds of Barbadians, and particularly hundreds of people from St. Philip, work at St. Louis Castle. Many families across St. Philip benefited significantly from the working of St. Louis Castle and under small businesses, etc. Assuming that matter is appealed at the speed that things happen in this country, it will probably be another 10 years before St. Louis Castle is brought back into production. I hope I'm wrong, but it is sad.

Now, the truth is, is that can we as a country afford to have a product that out of production for 30 years? No, the answer is obviously no. So there's a role to be played by the courts, by the lawyers, by the owners of the properties to recognize that it's not just a case of a simple case of a court matter, but in fact that you're talking about hundreds of lives that you can touch by moving with expediency to get these things resolved.

You have, for example, a road coming from Rock Hall to St. Martin that for a year you can't get paved. The businesses in St. Martin's complaining, the supermarket complaining, the hardware store complaining. The only body who complaining is Clarence Best because people are still dying and have to go and stuff. Again, sir, the importance, the importance of everybody coming on board, of everybody coming on board and getting things done because there's a knock-on effect in terms of not producing with the kind of alacrity that I'm speaking about, because an important fact is the suffering that will entail or that can possibly entail if that's not done.

The point I'm making, sir, is that unless we all recognize the importance of our roles and play our roles no matter what our policy is, and in particular, sir, our growth policy, because our growth policy, sir, is the most

important part of this budget presentation. Because you know what I said, sir, in terms of revenue, because we need to ensure that we improve our revenue situation. And there lies where I would like to focus for a couple of minutes, sir.

The Barbados Labour Party, sir, as I said before, and as I will say now, the member for St. Michael North East is willing to burn down the country if that's what it takes for her to become Prime Minister of this country. We will sacrifice the whole of Barbados as long as she becomes Prime Minister. So the seed of discord she is willing to sow. So she wants to encourage the labour movement to come up in arms. She understands, she knows very well that in part of our growth strategy that we need to have the Barbados Workers' Union on board with the Barbados Water Authority. It is absolutely essential to have the Barbados Water Authority and the Barbados Workers' Union sit down and let us have our main project done. Let us have the West Coast project done. But it took her and them to sow the seed of discord to ensure that no matter what happens that we cannot get this off the ground.

So we have the same gentleman whose name I'm not allowed to call, the consultant - the former consultant whose name I am not allowed to call - quoted in our local newspaper saying that labour should withdraw from the social partnership, etc., again sowing the seeds of discord, agreed to between them. That's right. Because they understand that we need labour and government. We need us to work together to ensure the execution, the proper execution of our growth strategy.

I say to the labour movement in this country, I say in particular to the Barbados Workers' Union, you are patriots, you are Barbadians, you need to place this country, continue to place this country first. Ignore politics. I say to people consistently, there's a time for politics. But I am a Barbadian first and second and a politician third. And therefore, sir, when I speak, I speak in all genuineness and I take all efforts to ensure that this country comes first in my thinking and in my deliberations. And I'm saying to the trade union movement, ignore the mouthings from the other side. Ignore the seeds of discord that they're trying to sow and continue working with us to ensure that we bring this country along.

I heard also the member for St. Michael North East yesterday, again sowing unnecessary seeds of discord - with the first public officers who going home first, who going home second, first and last out. All kinds of mischief. That's right. All kinds of mischief. Again, I can promise the public service in this country, we are a political party, but we are not vicious like the other side. We don't believe that if your name is Douglas, or Paul Phillips, like they said and did, that you should not eat or drink in this country. We don't believe this. We don't believe this at all.

I'm always being distracted, sir. So I'm only allowed a couple more minutes. So let me just deal quickly with two other issues that impact upon my ministry. Because one of the things that you would hear is that there are issues in the Royal Barbados Police Force and the suggestion that crime is up, etc. You know that I saw, for example, an article recently about transfers in the Royal Barbados Police Force. So policemen have been transferred across this country on a continuous basis. In fact, one of my best friends - and I'll explain - a Police Officer. I remember, sir, that he was working in Central, then he went to Oistins, then he went down to the whole town, then he went back to Oistins. So I have another friend, sir, who went to CID, up to Oistins, down to whole town, etc. These things happen. And in particular, sir, if you have a new manager, you expect that he will want to put his own stamp and make his own changes. Nothing sinister, but they would have you believe that there are sinister things at work.

Again, sir, I can tell you as Minister, I don't behave like that. I can tell you that. And the management and members of the Royal Barbados Police Force would tell you that I don't behave like that. I had a call recently about chaos at the prison, prison officers down and not working, going on strike, etc. When I investigated and called, a very, very simple matter, a very simple matter. Prison officers and the majority of them are hard at work. There's no problem in the prison. But again, they want to sow the seeds of discord in this country.

Things are not perfect, sir. In fact, sir, things have never been perfect in this country, never been perfect in this country. But what I can commit to the people of Barbados, what I can commit in spite of the comments from the other side, is that this government will continue to work with you. This government will continue to take you into our confidence and ensure that any solutions that we come up with are solutions that are homegrown and that place the people of Barbados at the centre and forefront. That's what we're about. I thank you, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: And the member for St. Michael East.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, thank you once again for giving me an opportunity to at least contribute to such a meaningful debate. Now, on Tuesday when we came here, we witnessed in the pre-arrival of the start of this ceremony, we watched glitter, lights, sound. I got the impression that we were coming to celebrate an important annual event. I could not believe that a matter - a travesty of this kind, where a major economic challenge is confronting us - we will be set in such a mood to come and address the issue that impacts directly, more so, on the most vulnerable people in this society.

I am not going to move from that. I am not God. I am not going to address the issues of the affluent in Barbados and everybody. There are people who can take care of themselves and I try to represent the majority, but I also respect that all of us must live in an integrated way in this community called Barbados. I heard people today trying to give legitimacy to their contribution by making reference to their origins. Sometimes when I hear about the origins of these people, I am surprised by the mirroring of the values which I see coming from them. I am surprised by the body language and the attitude towards their own kind, but I suppose because they are not exposed to the village in which they live, and my ears are not present within that in Veron, they can paint a picture of themselves. But that does not necessarily mean that is the picture that the society holds about them.

Because most of these people that are here today trying to identify themselves with the poor - they disconnected as soon as they got access to university education. And that is one of the problems, the philosophical problems that we are faced with. If we were not faced with that today, we would not be having a debate that travels along this kind of logic, this kind of philosophical direction at all. But when people commit themselves to blind loyalty - and party politics has a way - I am not going to be a blind loyalist to any political party in the world. Get vex, get vex. I am not going to be.

There are things that we expect from political parties, and the two major political parties in Barbados are the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party. Both parties earned their legitimacy based on the historic journey that reflected what they believe in and the mechanisms that they put in place to take people from the bottom - and it took most of us and our foreparents on a vertical journey to become somebody when we were perceived as nobody. And I am not going to change from that.

And sir, the reality is that when we start this discussion, the Minister of Finance set the parameters very clearly. He said he was looking at a restructuring and a revitalisation of the structures of government - not the exact words. And I really believe that we are at that. And he also made the point that this is a critical juncture in our history and we have to sit and examine where we are. I have heard discussions in here today and most of us never even mentioned that we are trying to close a \$400 million gap. None of us mentioned that \$400 million gap. None of us mentioned that, according to the Minister, he witnessed a flight of \$300 million at an average of \$25 million a week over a three-month period. Didn't judge words, but you say three months' time, right? And you went on to say that you identified the sources that you believe probably contributed in some way to that flight. So there is a leakage. There is a leakage, of course.

But I am saying that the examples that we are dealing with are not without historic experiences. At critical junctures, when a person speaks about restructuring and revitalising at a critical juncture, you are talking about fundamental changes in the organs of the state - how the organs are structured, fundamental changes in the instruments that give legitimacy to the organs. You are looking at eradicating the overlapping of parastatal agencies, and I got the impression from the paper - extrapolated that from the paper - because you already believe there is wastage, duplication, some major problems in the system. Although for me, when you try to bring two or three into one, it means that somebody from the top must go. So the reality is that if three institutions have three directors, when you put them under one umbrella, you cannot have three directors in charge. So the level of unemployment that will be created at the top - your general managers, somebody - they have to be thinking all the time.

But I am saying to you, even the views that I have heard expressed in here today about names who I am unable to call now - unfortunately I am unable to do so because I really believe the characters of these professional people, outstanding and remarkable Barbadians, ought to be defended. We have had this struggle in the early part of the 20th century as well. And that is why, unfortunately, we have a bust out there in the middle of the stage where we come up - a bust depicting a man called Cornelius Reeves - because that type who is even present inside these chambers, or who might refer to me over and over as a fraud, not within a shot of the ears of the Chair, but I hear it - he represents, he personifies the same type of individual in this House of Assembly who has large sums of money but points out everybody who is working for a million dollars there. Even if the person has a law firm, even if I have about 90 lawyers working in the law firm, points over the other side and says, I have money. Why can I not pay my bills sometimes? Especially since it is the Democratic Labour Party, in 2008. But that kind of stigma must be placed on persons simply because they are not a part of that collective.

And they, by their own admission, indicated to us that they had difficulty in coming to a consensus on whether the imposition of tuition fees ought to be imposed on the students at the university. 80 per cent - 80 out of every 100 students at the university - came from the same class. You understand? 80 per cent of the students would have to go to the Ministry of Education and sit down in front of officers and stand the test of time in a means test. You understand? You shift the autonomy from the University of the West Indies and allow these people who are making the evaluations to determine who will go into the university, who should not go. Well, I am suspicious, because the reality, sir, is if you are already quarrelling about the quota, the numbers of people at the university, it gives the Ministry an excellent opportunity - when

instructed that only a certain number should go into the university - not only in terms of economic costs, not only the tuition fees, but the numbers of persons with access to the university would be reduced as a consequence of the means test.

I know your behaviour. I stand up in the dock already charged. Charged. They never had any explanation. They just had the law. They charged me for all types of things in the Ministry of Education already. I know that you all put a commissioner to question me, sir. I have a basis for being suspicious. A man came to my house, ran me down, called me in the opposition office, questioning me about human trafficking, for bringing Ghanaians and Nigerians to Barbados. And when the plane arrived, the Minister of Tourism was the first man at the airport ready to welcome the people. I do not think he deserves it. But the Minister was the first man there because he wanted to beat his chest - direct flight from Africa, because he had just brought a direct flight from Africa, the first in the history of Barbados. The people ended up incarcerated. And you know what the government told me? If I can take care of them - me and other persons - I can collect them every morning at nine o'clock. I had a meeting in the Ministry with the Minister, but I had to get them back to the place where they had them by six o'clock. I wanted to give them all the names and tell them where some of the people were staying. They then called one morning and said, bring all of them down to the immigration department. They locked the doors of the immigration department, escorted them all through the back door, put them in police vans and carried them and incarcerated them.

So I have to be suspicious when you put a mechanism in place, because you wanted that. And as a result of doing that, you want me to believe that whatever numbers already have access to the University of the West Indies, you are going to be so fair that these people are still going to have that access. So you will end up paying the tuition fee and you will also end up paying the economic fee, and waiting until after the person graduates - and not even a provision - because you do not even know if the person would work for a salary that would allow them to pay back the \$400 a month or not. But this is the issue that David Cameron had, and you saw massive demonstrations.

So we have to have - and you also know how working-class people operate. If a mother who does not work anywhere, or just sells a few area drinks or vendors and brings in an income of \$115, three children with natural ability, certified at the CXC level, qualified to go into university - you can imagine this lady hearing that the family must go through some means test, expose the assets and liabilities. She is not even going to leave home to put in the application. First thing, even if she genuinely would like to pay it back, she cannot pay it back because there is

no guarantee. Your only guarantee is that when the children come out from school, they are going to remain in Barbados. There is a guarantee they are going to get work - unless what is happening over the freezing in the public service, or we have already remitted that problem by then.

So these are issues and genuine concerns. In Trinidad and Tobago, sir, Trinidad and Tobago wanted to impose a fee. You know what happened in Trinidad? Black students declined rapidly. Asian and Caucasian students filled the quarters of the university, all in the washrooms. The government had to reverse the problems in those circumstances. Now, that might be - it is not - now every time somebody deals with these variables, somebody attempts to distort the logic and tries to make people believe it has something to do with racism. It has nothing to do with racism. I am just showing that these are examples and challenges that we have had as a people over the years.

The other point I want to make to you, sir - the healthy debate that occurred in the early 20th century contributed to some of the fundamental changes that allowed us to become parliamentarians and allowed our people to be able to see development in this country. Some of the same people who have heard members taking the opportunity to speak courageously about them in here today - and burdened on something pejorative too. One person was even accused of being treasonous, just like somebody made a statement just so, who would burn down the entire country, and nobody paid any attention to that. These people do not want objection, they do not want their formalities, they are talking now.

The reality is that debate throughout the first half of the century gave rise to the same Democratic Labour Party - a healthy debate coming from Fabian Socialism and Democratic Socialism, to which people like Duncan only can identify, to which everybody can identify. And it formed the bedrock. And this is one of the issues that has to be dealt with here today, because it is what is troubling the debate, it is what has occupied the debate for all three days. University education. University.

Sir, protect me, sir. Sorry. The DLP has a mantra - or rather, at heart - it is not in the dark, it is not on trial. Because the image of the party rests on those philosophical pillars of both Democratic Socialism and Fabian Socialism. Those two pillars, and it has always been perceived since 1961 as a party running on an egalitarian programme addressing imbalances and disadvantages to the very poor in the society and giving people opportunities that had no opportunities before. How many members in the Democratic Labour Party can clearly define the legitimacy of the party, or the being of the party? That inner self that constitutes the DLP. How many of them can explain that today and tell me that when you move away from the most

fundamental plank of the institution - where you sacrifice the major philosophy of the party because you are responding to an economic challenge of \$400 million - the debate will never be the same. You can never make the claim again in the history of this country.

I respect the institutions. All do. I respect the institutions. But you have done an injustice, you have inflicted harm, you have actually committed political suicide. I do not mind the argument about you just went to the electorate and that the electorate endorsed you because you have majority seats. We cannot describe that as being fraudulent in here - all falsification. But we know that if you understood the path, you will know that as a result of a clear philosophical position, the Democratic Labour Party government introduced free universal secondary education in this country. Are you aware? University education came as well. And you will know that the justification and the point that was made by Eric Williams - and supported by Eric Williams - was that it has nothing to do with cost efficiency or how much the service will cost. He said this is an act to redress the inequalities in the system - for people who, for 200 years, were denied education. The documents are there. There is a book written on the foundation, the formation of the University of the West Indies, by Rex Nettleford, and it said it is an act of redressing inequalities in the system - 1960s, not 1800s, 1960, the second half of the 20th century. And that was the basis of holding the university together.

If there is one institution that we should not put an encumbrance in the way of all young people, it is in fact two. For the broader society, the Ministry of Health; and for young people in the society, education.

education. Find an alternative. Find an alternative. It is unfortunate that we are restricted by three days debate. I heard a lot of superficial mundane discussions in here. I cannot believe that the track - there is a threat to the philosophy of a party that they will not be able to make the same argument after these three days about the DLP. And we heard that kind of wishy-washy discussion going on in the House of Assembly. Sir, the debate was strong. Go back and you see Clarence Wickham. Go back and you see the Herald newspaper. Go back and you see O'Neal. Go back and you see the debates by the Pan-Africanist and the Workers' Men Association. You go back and you see the rise of the Trade Union Movement, how it came into being, a Ministry of Health, it is how it came into being. You cannot have a sensible discourse that begins in the middle of the sea. That we have a gap to close the \$400 million and start a discussion there. This was a path, a path. And we have not achieved the destination. We have not achieved the destination. And this simplistic approach - whether the Bolshevik labour party did it right and it did - this debate demands a merit. Something more profound than that. What about the consideration of our education

levy then? Why could we not share the cost of education? You say we impose a stabilisation tax, whatever name you give it, because I got the impression I had two new names in the provision in the document. I have seen a transport levy tax. I have seen taxes before. You could put a tax in place so that even you and I would be able to contribute to the education for future generations. Because you know the people that are going to be deprived with that mechanism in the whole exercise are those people who have the fear of even getting involved in the system.

Education is not all - I know we got tied up in education for the whole day, but I can tell you some more things. And I can come back to something that I said before that I am not satisfied about. And I know that these are concerns because you have a project at Coverley. You sell land or enter into an agreement to allow the land to be held in possession for \$2.50 per square foot for a 99-year lease. Tell us what is the calculated price by the vendors, the contractors, to the new purchasers? Over \$30 per square foot, according to my knowledge. Tell us the project that began in 2008 - 1 000, initially I heard 1 200 units. The last time I heard 1 026 units. I heard that a little over 600 of the units were started. And by observation, I know - I go there to see - a little over 100 units were sold. There are 660-plus units completed. What has happened to the project there? What has happened to the project there? That tube and freeze. There is another freezer. That freezing. Constant tube.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have five minutes in which to conclude.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Okay, sir. Tell us, sir, what is the situation at Valerie? Tell me what is the situation. Valerie was there last night. I went to find out how many residents reside in the houses. And I went. When I left here, I saw six houses with lights. I made the assumption that probably no more than 10 persons now occupy those houses at Valerie. But you know what is important here, sir? That they give these contracts mysteriously to the same contractor over and over again. And then the man who submitted the tender for the contract - and I am going to say it again because I am not convinced that an additional floor can cost \$10 million when the entire building costs \$18 million. So it starts at \$18 million. And then on completion, charged \$28 million. Who is the one who got that? This is a contract which is, I think, for another \$30 million - \$30 million to one company named BJ Investment. But other persons also submitted in advance. You know what this will do? The attorney for the contract was approved. Documentation inside the NHC office. And the Ministry of Finance knows about it. You know, sir, that another company - I think the name is R - who also submitted a tender for the contract, got put on the back burner and a directive was given to give the contract to BJA Investments. And the last time I made these points

here, the people started to frequent the quarters of Parliament - people that do not even look like ministers - up here with documents. And then a minister here found himself up at the same Coverley having discussions with the individual.

Sir, constant. Constant. And they are talking about when you abandon your philosophical guidelines, you know, constant. Go up there opposite St. George Secondary School. Anybody, anybody from anywhere in Barbados, go up under St. George, opposite St. George Secondary School. You are going to see a development, sir, that started in 2008. The plantation owner said not a cent was paid for the land. The houses look as though they are travelling on stilts. Some four-by-four beams about 10 feet high with enough bush at the bottom. And the houses are about eight-by-four square feet - not even equivalent to the size of the washroom inside the Parliament itself. So nobody at all has any interest in the houses. Not one house so far has been made available. Explain to me and tell me what that is. You have reasons to be suspicious. And when you are talking about wastage, you have to make reference to these things, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please wind it up.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, I personally believe that it would be most unfortunate. But I understand the circumstances. And I want to say this. Sir, there is a book called Gulliver's Travels. The quotation is not from Gulliver's Travels. But this is how Jonathan Swift sums up the whole thing. Man is apt to imitate. He is like a sheep. One just has to jump over the head of another and the others will follow. These men without conscience cannot make a decision consciously. They make a decision based on blind loyalty. And this is the nature of Caribbean politics, party politics. Some people know it is wrong, but they are not going to say it is wrong. Some people know that it is better to defer a matter like this and open it to public debate. When Cameron brought the matter to the people of his country, he brought it in advance and allowed for a big national debate on the issue. Mandela did not do the same and he suffered the consequences.

Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the opportunity to give vent to a number of concerns. I have only been able to talk and to enlighten a few people who were not so qualified as fools or sheep, sir. But I am playing on the collective wisdom of reasonable men. And even if there is not a precedent for this, to think - because when you do this, you have done a harm that we would not be able to correct in the near future. It is not a harm to the members of Parliament. Some went to university, some did not go. Some children - some people got money to pay for the children. I heard a man here say, I already got my money to send my child.

Mr. SPEAKER: All right, member, please wind up.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, I believe that you have done more than I ought to request of you. And I really appreciate the flexibility which you have allowed me, sir. Thank you very much.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, blessed. Yes, Honourable Member.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that the sitting be suspended for 15 to 20 minutes until quarter to six this evening.

The question that the House be suspended until 5.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: All honourable members, this sitting is resumed. Remember, when the suspension was taken, we were on Order Number three, and with that we shall continue. Members, I could do with a two-minute break if you are not ready yet.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that the sitting be suspended for five minutes, by leave.

The question that the House be suspended for five minutes was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Members, when the suspension was taken, we are on Order Number three, and with that we shall continue. Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, at the outset, of course, I want to say that it is a privilege to have an occasion to be able to comment once more on the government's budgetary proposals, and I especially, of course, wish to reiterate my thanks to the people of St. Joseph for the confidence that they have not only reposed in me, but that they have seen it fit to repose in the Barbados Labour Party to be their party of choice in these difficult times.

It is amusing, sir, that throughout the presentations that have been given by members on the government benches in addressing this budget, the Democratic Labour Party speakers, to a man, to a man, Mr. Speaker, spoke about transforming the Barbadian economy. And they have claimed that they have embarked on and have been successful in transforming this Barbadian economy while the Barbados Labour Party, when we were in government, they say we failed to do it.

Sir, I think we all understand the meaning of the word transformation, sir. A transformation is a change in form, it is a change in structure, a change in nature, a change in character. And it is generally used, sir, when those changes in character, nature, structure are changes for the better. We on this side remain completely bewildered that any member on the government benches could seriously lay claim to any transformation of the Barbadian economy.

But if we wanted to be purists, we would say, yes, the economy, the Barbadian economy, has been transformed, sir. Our economy has been transformed because we have gone from low unemployment when the Barbados Labour Party was in power to high unemployment. We have gone from low deficits when their party was in power, to high deficits. We've gone, sir, from being a blue chip investment country to being a country now, sir, that has been graded or downgraded to junk bond status. We've gone from a country where people had tremendous confidence in us and in our economy to a country where even the Minister of Finance concedes people have lost confidence in our country. We have gone, sir, from a country that had growth to a country now that demonstrates precipitous and disastrous decline. In short, sir, we have gone from a country of boom to a country of bust.

And the Minister of Finance seeks almost predictably to shelter himself and his government's policies behind the words of Ecclesiastes, sir. And we all heard him, and we were amused at that. There is a time for everything under the sun. We all know it well. To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to kill, and a time to heal; and he seeks almost to clasp his hands and close his eyes and offer a prayer, as if to suggest, sir, to this country, that it is not in his hands, it is in the hands solely of the Almighty.

It is a kind, sir, of economic fatalism that is being espoused by the Minister of Finance, which he hopes would convince all of Barbados that all we have to do, sir, is to wait for this difficult time to pass and all will be well, therefore absolving him and his Cabinet colleagues and his entire party from any need to be proactive and from any need to make any serious efforts at causing this economy to

grow. But I, in fact, sir - you remember that song, Que Sera, Sera, whatever will be - that is the Chris Sinclair manifesto for our people.

Mr. SPEAKER: Stop calling people names, please.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: the Minister of Finance, I apologize. But I believe, Mr. Speaker, that you all remember the Minister of Finance has forgotten another part of the Bible that we saw often, quote, in this chamber. He forgot, sir, the parable of the talents. I believe it is to be found in Matthew 25, and the Prime Minister would well know verses 14 to 30. And that story, Mr. Speaker, is well remembered because a master had given three servants varying amounts of talents. And sir, one servant used his talent and demonstrated good stewardship and was rewarded. Another servant did the same thing, sir. But the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, is like that third servant who buried his and threw himself at the foot of the master and begged for mercy, sir, saying no doubt, but master, there is a time for everything under the heavens.

Mr. Speaker, the sad fact is that this country cannot afford to have an administration that wants to adopt that kind of supine approach to the management of our affairs. The election, sir, was only six months ago, and it is fresh in this country's mind. We, on both sides, were up and down telling the country various things, presenting various packages and pictures. And the Barbados Labour Party, I well recollect, sir, was careful to point out to the government and to this country that there we were in perilous waters and that they would become more perilous. But the government, sir, chose to tell the people of Barbados, ignore the BLP. They're a bunch of doom and gloomers, a bunch of naysayers, sir. Harbingers of doom and gloom. That's what they said, sir. But still this Minister of Finance is able to say that somehow or another for some inexplicable reason things started to plummet after March 31st.

Now, that, Mr. Speaker, is a bewildering concept. Because the reason a government is in power is to govern, not guess. And anytime that a Minister of Finance can say to us that something so inexplicable happened that he has no explanation for it, nobody knows why it happened, it just happened, and he is left picking up the pieces, sir, that is not a Minister of Finance that I would want to commend to run our country's fiscal affairs. Not at all, sir.

But every day for the last three days, sir, they have come to this chamber and they have said, we want you to hold our hands. They have used many different terms, sir. They have said, no need to panic. They've said rally around the flag. One minister said today that every man should get on board the ship of state and man a different piece of equipment and see if you could help the ship to stay afloat. That sounds like a recipe for disaster, but if that's what he

wants to do, that's fine. And that together we should continue on the pathways to progress. But what is alarming, Mr. Speaker, is that there is nary a Barbadian today who is able to identify this progress that the Democratic Labour Party is telling us about.

We have come to the sad conclusion on this side, and I believe that Barbados has come to the same conclusion, sir. That the government is using words, as one Barbadian diplomat used to say, using words as words. They're using words as words. It doesn't matter what they should mean, what they might mean. The government is throwing a set of words together and hoping that they stick and hoping that people believe it. Mere empty words, sir, and more empty words.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition reminded this chamber of a famous - it is famous, I believe - a famous statement made by the Prime Minister when the Prime Minister said last year that he is committed to university education staying free. Now sir, that is a statement made by a Prime Minister. And it is interesting sir, and we're not going to descend into legalese, but there is now a very important case going on in Trinidad where the Trinidadian government has been sued in relation to Clico because of the promises made by a Prime Minister sir. I believe my colleague from St. James Central well knows the case. A Prime Minister made a promise and the government was sued for reneging on that promise because the courts found that the citizenry had a legitimate expectation to the government keeping its commitment. Now, whether anybody will sue the government on this particular issue or not is a different matter. But the fact is, sir, that the Prime Minister said that university education would remain free. Demonstrating, sir, by the support of this administration, of this cabinet, in the current budget, that what he said then was using words as words. Without any serious intention to hold true to that commitment, sir. Reminding us, of course, that this was the administration that said a manifesto was not a social contract. That's what we have to face, sir.

And we have the Minister of Finance who has the same pattern. Has the same pattern, sir. Saying one thing and meaning something else. It is interesting, sir, that in his budgetary presentation he talked frequently about temporary this and temporary VAT, sir. And somebody reminded me that in his 2010 budgetary proposal, when talking about the increase in the VAT, he said that it was going to be a temporary increase, sir. His exact words were, this increase in the VAT is intended as a temporary measure for the next 18 months. Those were his words on November 22nd, 2010, sir. Now, Mr. Speaker, we are a long, long past - we are a long, long past - but the minister said a temporary measure for 18 months. So, Mr. Speaker, we once again have a situation where a senior member of the administration has been using words as words. So why

are we to take anything that this administration tells us seriously, sir? Why are we to take anything that they say seriously, sir?

The Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister said there will be no layoffs. Now, I don't know if they heard the same news that we on this side heard today, but 36 people have been laid off from the Barbados Water Authority. I believe, sir, that if we had to prosecute the Democratic Labour Party on some charge of saying one thing and doing something completely different, sir, they would have been found guilty. So what we are presented with, sir, is a scenario where we clearly cannot take the government's commitment anywhere in this budgetary proposal presented on the 13th of August with anything approaching seriousness, sir.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member - I would remind the member for St. James South - that the Minister of Finance only two days ago said that layoffs would be an absolute last resort. Those were his words. Absolute last resort, sir. So two days later when we have 35 or 36 laid off from the Water Authority, clearly it means that we are at the point where last resort is what is happening.

No sir, what we also have is a Minister of Finance who is prepared to act in such a way that after promising no layoffs, implement a set of fiscal policies that will end up causing Barbadian workers all across the public service and statutory boards to end up getting a three-day week or four-day week, sir. That is in the budget. And in addition to that, the cuts that he proposes for various bodies - and I remind the members of the chamber - the cut to the Transport Board, cut by \$15 million, sir. We have to ask ourselves, what is going to happen with this cut, sir? Is it that we're going to have fewer buses on the routes? Are we going to have fewer routes? Or is the Transport Board going to try to manage this cut by reducing the days that workers will work, sir? Or the QEH? Cut by \$35 million. Is QEH going to do less surgery, fewer surgeries, Mr. Minister of Finance? Is it going to pay fewer bills? Is it going to cause temporary workers not to be kept on? What is going to happen with this cut, sir? And what about the B.A.M.C.? Or the N.C.C., Mr. Speaker?

The point is that in every single one of these statutory boards it is reasonable to assume, sir, that the impact of the cuts will at the earliest point be felt in relation to trying to reduce payroll. Now, Mr. Speaker, what do you have when that happens? I am no economist, but I try to read a few things every now and again, and there is this thing called the Paradox of Thrift, which says that the more you save spending less, the less the economy will produce. And that's what we're at, sir. Because the impact of all of these cuts, sir - the freeze in temporary workers, the fact that some people have already begun to get laid off, the fact

that people are going to be put on short time three days or four days a week - the impact of these cuts, Mr. Speaker, will see a diminution in the spending power of the average Barbadian. It will certainly see a diminution in the spending power of the people who are employed in the public service and who are affected by them.

And when that happens, sir, and we've had this debate before, it will mean fewer people will go into shops and buy corned beef or cheese. It will mean fewer people will buy cucumbers and tomatoes, and that will cause a downward spiral so that our businesses that rely on these individuals to support them - our supermarkets or mini-marts - will end up selling less goods and services, bringing in less profit, and likely having to lay off people. So the downward spiral begins. And what does all that mean, sir? It means that there will be less growth in the economy and of course less revenue to be collected by the Minister of Finance through his taxation. So I ask you, Mr. Speaker, when the government asks us on this side or asks Barbadians within earshot or beyond to come and hold their hand and take this journey with them, is that where it is intended to take us?

That, Mr. Speaker, the only body who needs to go out of St. Lucia does not reside, does not sit on these benches, you know? Does not sit on these benches? Sits on the government benches, not anybody on the opposition benches, sir. So this is what we are being asked to participate in, to come in here and support. No, sir, it tires us to hear the government bellyaching time and time again that the opposition is opposing for opposing sake. They have not heard one suggestion from this side, sir. We went through a whole term between 2008 and 2013 making suggestion after suggestion. Without fail, every single one of them was rejected. So it is somewhat disingenuous, sir, for the government to come in here and shed crocodile tears pretending that they really want to hear a suggestion from the opposition. They do not want to hear anything that we have to say. In fact, sir, we've made recommendations on every significant sector, both in debates and outside of debates, and every single one was rejected. But they want to cry crocodile tears, sir, as if they really want anything we have to say.

Mr. Speaker, but if all of those cuts were not enough, we now, sir, find ourselves in a situation where the government has determined that it will launch another savage attack on the earning power of Barbadians through something called a consolidation tax, sir. A consolidation tax. And we could call it the consolidation attack. Mr. Speaker, I want to take you back to the very first budget speech given in 2008 by the late David Thompson, sir. I don't think anybody remembers anything that the late Prime Minister said in that speech, but his speech is noted for the fact that he in one fell swoop raised \$120 million through a savage increase in licence fees all across the

board, sir, within months of being in government. And if you thought that was bad enough, in the next budget, sir, they took away various benefits and rebates that taxpayers were using as tax initiatives. And then the Minister of Finance in another debate increased the VAT. And in another budget speech, sir, you know what they did - they removed the entertainment and travel allowances. And now this time, sir, we have the consolidation tax. And for good measure, we have a municipal tax. I love the idea, sir. It is a delicious irony because I do not know which part of St. Joseph or St. Andrew would qualify as being called municipal. But this municipal tax is on the unimproved value of land everywhere in Barbados, whether you are in a municipality or not. But we all have to pay, sir.

Every single year without fail, this administration since 2008 has savaged the Barbadian worker by increasing incrementally and in some cases by leaps and bounds the burden of taxation on our people. And what has been the effect of it, sir? What has been the effect of it, sir? The same downward spiral. And you would think that this administration would seek to safeguard the low-income earners, but no, they were not to be spared. The Minister in the document that I have said that the reverse tax credit would be removed, but I believe that a few of his colleagues probably slapped him once or twice around his head and brought him to a measure of Christian understanding, and he voted. So he said, I don't really mean removal. I just mean it will be reduced. But even the low-income earners were not spared, sir.

Now, sir, we've already begun to go down a desperate and dangerous road. But if that was not enough, if that was not enough, they have now decided, sir, to cut UWI's budget and to make students pay their tuition fees. Now sir, I believe - and they can take this as a suggestion and I'm waiting to see what the reaction will be because I believe four other members have suggested it - they should consider getting rid of the wasteful and pointless constituency councils and the six or seven million dollars that they give to the constituency councils every year. They should use that, sir, to put into UWI. These summer camps that are nothing more than an exercise in what the Canadians would call boondoggle, sir - an opportunity for Democratic Labour Party hacks to fatten their pockets through getting contracts for catering, sir - they would cut that budget and divert that money to the university, but oh no, sir.

But you know, I enjoyed the speech given by my friend from St. Michael East, sir.

But I believe, sir, that more than a departure from their philosophical moorings, that there is something more sinister in this, and I hate to say it, but I found it remarkable, sir, that the member for St. John could say with venom and bitterness that the University of West

Indies is populated by BLP political rejects. I am alarmed, sir, that a member for St. John could say that there are people from the BLP who are lecturing, who are giving poisonous lectures.

I asked myself, sir, if there is not some measure of spite against university best in this, I have to wonder. Because for the first time, I mean for the first time, we are hearing talk about BLP political rejects, sir. I am happy, sir, that the BLP political rejects could be considered to be individuals of such academic outstandingness, if there is such a term, of such academic stature, of such academic bent, sir, that the university will consider hiring them. I am proud of that. And if there is nobody on the BLP side who could raise their job at university when their political career is ended, that is their loss, that is their loss, sir. Our people have made their mark in parliament and they've gone on to make it in the higher heights of Cave Hill.

But all that we can see, sir, is the venom coming from the Democratic Labour Party that because perhaps, perhaps, because the University of the West Indies is broad-minded enough to give BLP people an opportunity to educate our young people, that they have determined to do one or two things, sir. Either help to shut it down by cutting the course or by removing those minds from sitting at the feet of the proverbial Gamaliel, sir. We have to wonder.

But I want to remind the members of this chamber that when the University of the West Indies had its genesis, when it was started, sir, it was recognised by our political leaders of the day that there were masses of people who could not have an opportunity for tertiary education. Only the elite were allowed to have tertiary education. So I am a proud product of UWI and I say in here with all humility, sir, that if in the days I went to UWI university education was not free, I would not have had an opportunity, sir, to go to UWI. And I believe, sir, that the same would probably apply to you, Mr. Speaker. That was the genesis of the University, sir. In the days when people across the Caribbean were hamstrung by poverty.

And you know what? Those days are here again. And I'm speechless at the fact that Barbados, when its citizens are at their most powerless in terms of economic matters, that this government would decide that it is going to saddle our Barbadians with the cost of UWI. Sir, I have constituents who I help with university fees, buying books and various things. I know their parents, sir. I know the households that they are from. And to tell those young men and women that they have to go and get a student loan is to tell them, sir, that they have to scale Mount Everest, because their parents are often not working. This is the first opportunity for somebody from that family to lift a whole family out, sir. And instead of empowering the people, the Democratic Labour Party administration is pushing them

further and further away from their dreams, sir. That cannot be right.

And in addition, sir, what the Democratic Labour Party is doing with this measure is increasing the gulf in Barbados between the haves and the have-nots, because through a free university education, the have-nots were allowed and encouraged to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. So we are now returning to the elite days where only those people who have money could send their children to university, sir.

It is remarkable that the Minister of Finance could say with great specificity how much the university students will have to pay. But when it comes to those measures that would palliate the hardship, all of a sudden the speech got wishy-washy, sir. The language, sir - the Ministry will outline adjustments to the Student Involved Loan Scheme to ensure adequate access, and within the coming week they will work - all wishy-washy language, sir. But they are absolutely clear how much money the students will have to pay. But in terms of the olive branch to help them to stay afloat, sir, there is nothing.

Mr. Speaker, this country is going to hell in a handbasket. And the great tragedy, sir, is that the body holding the basket is every single man and woman on the benches of the Democratic Labour Party, sir, and it will haunt them forever. I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, sir, first I want to thank the constituents of St. Philip North for reposing their confidence in me and granting me this opportunity to speak on their behalf, as Member of Parliament for St. Philip North. Mr. Speaker, sir, before I get into the substance of my speech, there are certain matters that I would like to clear that came from the mouths of speakers before me from the other side, particularly the members for St. John South. A member for St. Thomas, the member for St. George South, after confessing that it is a burden to represent the constituents of St. George South, then wholeheartedly agreed with one aspect of our proposal, our budgetary statement, that is the green economy. He got up and wholeheartedly supported it. But we will lift that burden off of you very soon. That is a member for St. George.

So, in relation to St. Thomas, the member alluded to the fact that a number of subsidies - that is the \$10 000 grant under the HNAT programme - her constituents did not benefit from the grant. But I can recall names coming in the cabinet and most of those names were from St. Thomas. Really? For St. Thomas, for subsidies, that is the \$10 000 grant. And my information is that the 450

outstanding subsidies are allocated and accounted for in relation to this programme. And again, the member alluded to the fact that her constituents did not benefit from any measure from the Ministry of Housing and Lands. I recall as Minister of Housing that we acquired land of 40 acres for the benefit of your constituents. I just want to put that to you - you cannot get up and mislead this House, because your constituents stand to benefit from the policies of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance for his presentation. It clearly sets out a strategy, a vision and a path for the growth of this economy. And I believe after choosing, Mr. Speaker, that Labour Party supporters were angry and upset because, of course, they expected that the Minister of Finance was coming here with a budget to reign terror on the poor people of this country. They were expecting removal of social welfare programmes. And these social welfare programmes impact only on the poor in this society. The same poor people dress up in red t-shirts - they pay some to put on t-shirts, to run up and down, to say things like red, we voting red. And they were walking about saying that a vote will increase. That is what their supporters were saying, and without any sort of compassion for poor people.

I cannot believe a party, an opposition party, so thirsty - thirsty, thirsty for power - turns so eager for power after six months that the people of this country elected the Democratic Labour Party. And I must say that the will of the people shall prevail. After six months, the Movement for Social Justice in Central want to be a government. I know that. Mr. Speaker, we cannot go back to the Barbados Labour Party. How can the people of Barbados go back to the Barbados Labour Party? A party that is disunited and divided - divided and shattered. And that is evident and manifested, Mr. Speaker, in a noted High Court case, 0642 of 2013, in the matter of Edmund Hinkson versus George Pinn. That is the stark reality, Mr. Speaker. How can we, the people of Barbados, go back to a party that is so disunited and divided, and all sorts of claims - even five days after election, to name an opposition leader - terror and destruction, calling all people all sorts of names. Mr. Speaker, pat your hand, your lashes.

So, Mr. Speaker, then how can we, the people of Barbados, place their confidence in a shattered, disunited and divided party? But I know that we will hear the real replay of the opposition from the members of St. George's Central. The real replay. So, Mr. Speaker, the confidence remains in the Democratic Labour Party. And I want to speak because every single programme, welfare programme, that this government brought in the last five years - once it is directed towards the poor, vulnerable and underprivileged, it is criticised up and down by the Barbados Labour Party.

The last member that spoke criticised the constituency councils. But here we have an opportunity and a mechanism to give - to use the words of the member for St. Michael East, who is a self-confessed supporter of the Democratic Labour Party - to use the words of him, this is an opportunity to allow community practitioners, ordinary people, in relation to the distribution of the resources of the state. But the member for St. Joseph could get up and criticise such a great and revolutionary mechanism. But we know why, we know why, we know why. Again, it touches and concerns the poor. It is the greatest piece of political snobbery. I will submit, Mr. Speaker, that the criticism - in fact, I always say over there that we can point out some of the leading examples and that they represent the locus classicus in political snobbery in this country. But he has the crown.

And I am saying, what is wrong with a lady from Bayfield or St. Martin's in St. Philip, the Queen's Mercies, going to a constituency council and needing assistance - if they need back-to-school monies or whatever to assist them, to ensure that they have food or they have some supplies or whatever to assist them in their daily lives? What is wrong with that? What is wrong? What is wrong with the councils assisting somebody who is unemployed or assisting the home - if one person in a house is employed - in assisting them in paying their utility bills or paying whatever bills they want paid? What is wrong with that? What is wrong with the constituency councils? And they do it daily. They do it every weekend. Giving the opportunity to small businesses and farmers in the constituency to flourish, or giving the opportunity to them to expose and showcase their goods and services. What is wrong with that? And in a time where there is an economic recession, here is an avenue, an example, to give those small people, these small businesses, the opportunity to ply their trade, to put some money in their pocket, to develop their businesses. Nothing is wrong with that. I know in my constituency that some opposition supporters support the constituency councils. I know that for a fact. And I know that they have asked and requested to assist with the constituency councils.

So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to put that aside because it is an important component, an important tool, particularly in this crisis. Again, Mr. Speaker, I listened to the opposition reply. And it not only mentioned that there is a so-called implementation deficit on this side, that we have not implemented any programmes - that, according to the academic, we should pull up our stumps and call the game over. But Mr. Speaker, I can say to this Parliament that this government, under the leadership of the member for St. Michael South and the Minister of Finance, has achieved in the midst of this crisis. We were able to keep our internationally reserves in a relatively strong position. We have stabilised the economy. We have maintained employment in the civil service. And we have maintained

the access to social services and the quality of our social services. They have not diminished. They have not diminished.

But Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that we should be daunted by any thought of non-performance. I know for a fact, and Barbadians know for a fact, and they voted - they voted for us on our performance. And there is documentary proof, Mr. Speaker. There is documented proof of our performance. So let me speak of the implementation deficit. This document, this document again defeats the argument. And during the last five years, the member for St. George South, when he goes into his constituency, he could recognise the performance of the Democratic Labour Party. And he could attest to the fact that the Democratic Labour Party - and when you were campaigning with the former member for St. George South, he would have made statements that St. George South was treated like an outside child by his own party. As mentioned by the Minister of Tourism, all the ministries during the past five years - the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Transport and Works, Ministry of International Business, Sports and Culture, Agriculture, Environment, Housing and Lands - performed and implemented projects. Implemented projects, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, we can say for a fact that there was a vast improvement in the educational plant from 2008 to 2013. Yes. The Minister of Education led the ministry in relation to projects. I implemented numerous projects in the Ministry of Education. As I said before, a number of projects were implemented by the various ministries. Mr. Speaker, I must say that the Minister put the case for the government. And I will say that when the opposition put their case against us, we have no case to answer. And we said from the outset, Mr. Speaker, ably put by the Minister of Finance, that it is the government's duty to rein in the fiscal imbalances. He said that to protect the vulnerable in this crisis, to maintain employment in the civil service, and he said it is a government's duty to systematically adjust the tax structure so that it will not impact on one group or one class in society. That is the position that he was batting from. And this is what we have achieved and done successfully in one of the most brutal recessions ever.

Mr. Speaker, Barbadians on the ground and Barbadians up there have accepted that 35 of our major trading partners - Canada, United States and Britain - have been impacted tremendously by this recession. And we have seen the impact of this recession resulting in massive layoffs, removal of social welfare programmes, high rates of unemployment, and numerous foreclosures on properties in these countries. You have seen that. So, Mr. Speaker, we have done well in this recession.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance brought policies and he not only brought policies but he explained

to the House that he is accompanying these measures with a growth strategy. That is the point. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance clearly pronounced - and as agreed by the Barbados Labour Party - that the stimulus programme of \$125 million in relation to the Ministry of Transport and Works in terms of roads and bridges will start by November and that 500 jobs will be created. Mr. Speaker, not only will it create jobs, but it will give the opportunities for these companies to subcontract some of the work to small contractors. The spin-off of that - small truckers, small businesses - will benefit from this programme. And in our discussions with these companies, we have said and we have clearly pointed out to them that there must be an inclusion of small businesses and small contractors in this programme, in this project.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is our commitment to small contractors. Our commitment was manifested even during the 2008–2013 period when we came to Parliament and voted \$40 million to the NEITI for the employment of small contractors in the housing projects. And it was then, in Lancaster One, Lancaster Two, and those are the areas. Mr. Speaker, we not only decided on this PPP package, but of course there is a \$35 million road package that has found the support of the Ministry of Finance. Again, which will employ more road workers and impact on the various constituencies - St. Lucy, St. Joseph - all 30 constituencies will be impacted upon when we launch these two massive road projects.

And Mr. Speaker, I could announce to this House that the contract for the reconstruction of the Jos River Bridge has been awarded in the amount of \$2 million. But I must say that project is in the making and will be launched within another two weeks or so. The member for St. Joseph - I remember during the last five years he begged and pleaded for the reconstruction of the Josie River Bridge, and it is now a reality. It has been awarded. And the work will be done. The contract has been awarded. That is all I have to say to you.

Mr. Speaker, we will also be looking at other critical bridges in the Scotland district area, particularly Traill Path, St. Savory's, Thompson and St. Simon's Bridge. We will continue. In fact, all members of parliament will benefit from these programmes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say something about the Transport Board. The member for St. George's alluded to the fact that there is a problem with transport buses - he said that. I do not know where he goes; I do not know if he is living in Barbados. There is a problem with the availability of buses. The member for Christ Church South, who led this ministry before me, can attest to the fact that in the period 2003 to 2007, the bus availability - the transport board counted for the daily fleet - was about 150 or thereabout. When the Minister came in, many ministers

came in through a maintenance programme. The bus availability rose to 212 buses - 212 buses - without going and buying any new buses, without spending money. That is good government.

So, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the Transport Board, we, of course, know that there are challenges, and we are looking at various options. Firstly, we are looking at creating more revenue-gaining measures with the Transport Board. Secondly, we have to work hand in hand with the Transport Authority. And of course, we have to keep our maintenance costs down. And of course, the fleet of the Transport Board is really ageing. And at some time during the course of this year, we will have to replace some buses, be it by way of direct purchase or by way of leases or lease arrangement.

Speaker, we have sat down and we have had many discussions with the management of the Transport Board and we have agreed to the total remarketing of the Transport Board. As I said, we have to look at revenue gaining measures, savings and efficiencies within the Transport Board. And we have to create some more profitable routes. And that is the mandate. That is the mandate of the Transport Board. And that is what we are setting out to do. The management have agreed. The marketing department have met and agreed. And this notion of increased bus fares again - air right flag, air right flag. We have made no pronouncement on the increase in bus fares again. It is bare party propaganda. Again, I want to say to the people of Barbados that we as a government have made no pronouncement on the increase in bus fares. And that is what the Labour Party wants us to do. That is what they want us to do. And that is something that this government - it is misleading the House by indicating that is what the Labour Party wants them to do in relation to the increase in bus fares. It is not the Barbados Labour Party that has laid a budget for \$15 million to be reduced from the Transport Board. And the accompanying note says it will either be achieved by expenditure cuts or by measures to raise revenues within the respective agency, but more importantly, that a portion of it is to be raised between now and - to be cut between now and the next six months, eight months, sorry, at the end of March. That is not our words, this is what is in the budget.

And no point of order from the honourable Member for St. George South. Said that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the point of order? What is the point of order, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: The honourable Member for St. Philip South is saying - no, sorry - is saying that I said that we intend to raise bus fares, that they intend to raise bus fares. And I said in this House that I hope that the strategy of reducing the transfers and subsidies by \$50

million - there is no hidden agenda by the Democratic Labour Party to raise bus fares. And I want him to speak exactly what I said. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please continue.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. George South said that it is the intention of this government to raise bus fares. So, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say to the public that this government is not going to raise bus fares. That is what the members opposite want this government to do. He wanted to put burden - to place burden on the backs of poor people.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Point of order, Mr. Speaker. This honourable member - the honourable Member for St. Philip North - is misleading the House. I never said I wanted the government to increase bus fares.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ruled on that one already. There is no new point of order.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: All right, may I please continue? That is when, Mr. Speaker - that is when, Mr. Speaker, there is a sudden rush. A sudden rush.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please wind up. Your time has expired. Please wind up.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: There is a sudden rush to the call for the Minister of Labour to come back to St. George. So, Mr. Speaker, sir, we have said that the Earthworks strategy is critical to this economy. And it comes at a time where we are asking the private sector and all Barbadians to put their hands on deck. To join with us on this journey. To join with us, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we restructure and we develop this Barbadian economy. And to fall within the vision clearly set out by the Minister of Finance on Tuesday. The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, agreed with the short-term growth strategy as outlined by the Minister of Finance. Most of the policies and programmes and most of the projects will be implemented, Mr. Speaker, by the end of this year and some before the end of this year. And that is where, Mr. Speaker, we will move forward, sir, to place this economy on a recovery path.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, again, I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance for his sterling contribution, again for his full and frank disclosure of the state of this economy. Again, Mr. Speaker, we have to reiterate to the people of Barbados that this is an 18-month programme. It is not a permanent programme or a programme for an indefinite period of time. And we must state that to the public. Because we do not want messages to go out there to the electorate and to Barbadians that this government is

seeking to mislead them. And that is what the opposition is doing. That is what the opposition is doing.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, again, I want to thank the people of St. Philip North and again the people of Barbados have placed their confidence in us. And I am sure for the years to come that this economy will recover and that we will return to power. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I thank the honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes it is hard to speak after what is clearly the worst speech ever made in this chamber. But sir, on Tuesday, the Minister of Finance made a three-hour presentation in which he started by referring to the book of Ecclesiastes chapter three. To everything there is a season. If I may adapt it just a little bit, by keeping the same sort of theme, I would add, sir, a time for denial and a time for confession. Sir, because while a little from his presentation will resonate in a positive way with anyone, this budget really has been sheer torture.

The first thing that stands out is the Minister's admission, finally, that the macroeconomic programme of this government has been off track, has gone off track - a programme that he himself formulated and administered for the last three years approximately. He has gone off track and needs now to be brought back online. They say, Mr. Speaker, that confession is good for the soul and the Minister has finally confessed. He didn't confess during the elections. But he has finally confessed.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, at times his presentation really bordered on a pathetic plea for help. Sir, again for the first time, actually a pain to appeal for everyone to come forward and assist him in a collective effort, and assist the government in a collective effort to bring Barbados out of the mess that they have immersed it in, sir. He even went as far as to have the audacity to appeal expressly to Bees to join with Bees as a part of this collective effort, sir.

Sir, but we on this side, on many occasions previously, had offered to help work with this government only to be snubbed on every single occasion. As recently as March this year, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, in one of his - I am tempted to say one of his hate speeches in here, Mr. Speaker - not only rejected the help that we made offer of, sir, but he insultingly said that if you wish to make any suggestions to him, you would have to submit them in writing for his consideration. So I said it would be a strange Bee, totally devoid of any self-respect or self-esteem, who would agree to come forward now and work with this government at this time, sir.

So I said to the Minister of Finance, sir, no dice. Every Minister of Finance is hereby admitting that he seems to be incapable of doing this job, sir - then he needs to step aside and let someone who can do it, sir, do it. So what has unfolded in this country over the last few years, culminating in the Minister of Finance's budget proposals on Tuesday, has been the fruits of his labour. And he can take full credit for it, sir.

Sir, the only difference between Monday and Tuesday after the budget is that after Tuesday, everybody knows, sir, they are worse off than they were before Tuesday. So that takes some doing, because it was hard to imagine that the poor people of Barbados could ever become any poorer or any worse off. But they will, after this budget, become poorer. And a lot of people, sir, who at present cannot be classified as being in the category of poor, are going to find more and more that they are going to find themselves placed in that category.

So people who are not categorised as poor are going to have the struggle of their lives to either go to university or to be able to send their children to university. People in this country, sir, are going to have the struggle of their lives to be able to pay and cope with the murderous taxes just imposed in this budget. People are going to have to struggle now to be able to cope and pay, sir, the excessive increase in land taxes that will come about as a result of this budget. So a little mathematical computation today told me that people who own a piece of land now paying currently, say, about \$1 200 in taxes - land taxes a year - next year, on top of that, are going to have to find between \$2 000 and \$3 000 in addition, sir, to pay to this government, sir, as a result of this budgetary measure. Some people, sir, are going to find that hard as they try to cope. They are going to find themselves slipping more and more into the categories and categorisations of poor in this country.

So last year - and this is not my data, this is contained in the Economic and Social Report of 2012, sir - it is reported that there was a near 20 per cent increase in food vouchers dispersed by the welfare department to poor people in this country when compared to 2010 and 2011. Meaning that 20 per cent more people last year had to suffer the indignity of going cap in hand to the welfare department asking for money to buy food. That is what happened, sir.

I had the misfortune, sir, last year on Passage Road, near the junction with White Park Road, of seeing a man with bags in his hand walking, and every five feet or so he stopped and put the bags down, sir, and then stooped down to the ground, sir, and bent down and picked up something, and put it in his mouth - every five feet or so - eating in this country, sir, eating off a sidewalk and over a gutter. I saw that, sir, with my own two eyes last year. So I do not have

to rely on any report from the Economic and Social Report of Barbados. I saw it, sir, with my own two eyes. That, sir, is the position to which Barbados has sunk under this government - that people now walk these streets, sir, and have to bend and pick up things off the sidewalk to put in their mouths to eat.

Sir, and to impact further, sir, on the poor people of this country, the Minister of Finance, who has presided over this state of affairs, has now cut the reverse tax credit paid to these people, sir, by 50 per cent. Therefore, sir, putting more pressure on them, sir, to be able to cope. And nothing, sir, is being done to control the cost of living in this country. Sir, everything now costs you more. It does not cost you less. It costs you more, sir - not less, as we have been promised, sir.

Sir, unemployment in this country is extraordinarily high. It is not 12 per cent as is being reported, sir. Any politician worth his salt will tell you that the refrain from everybody, sir, has been for the last few years: a job, a job, a job. Hardly anybody, sir, in this country has a job, and those who do, a lot of them, sir, find themselves now underemployed, working sometimes two and three days a week, sir - underemployed, sir. And the unemployed in this country have been put out to pasture, sir, by this government.

And the only consolation - and I am now being of course very sarcastic - the only consolation is that very shortly, because of the proposals in this budget, they are going to be joined by a large number of government employees who will be joining them on the breadline. That will be their only consolation. Because these huge cuts in transfers to state boards will cause a number of things, but most assuredly they are going to cause a number of people to be sent home. And for them and their families, sir, they are going to be left stranded by a government that just said - just said during the election campaign and subsequently - that they were not going to be sending home anybody. The Minister of Finance was leading the charge in that, sir. Nobody was going to be sent home.

The Minister of Finance has to be now regarded, sir, as the political Delilah of the century. Has to be the political Delilah of the century, sir.

Sir, in this budget, sir, there is nothing to assist the unemployed. Nothing to assist the unemployed. And in fact, sir, there are measures, sir, that will expressly increase the rate of unemployment in this country. Certain high levels of unemployment in this country will continue to be the order of the day unless and until, by some miracle, investor confidence in this country is restored. Right now, there is almost no investor confidence in this country - neither, sir, by locals or by non-nationals. And for there to be job creation, there has to be investment. And there is no

growth under investment because there is no investor confidence in the government of this country, sir.

And the main problem in all this is the Minister of Finance, because he has this fear of having a push and pull, sir, on almost every economic issue facing this country. So our investors are jittery about investing in Barbados, sir, under the stewardship of this Minister of Finance.

Sir, I was just abroad, sir, and it is amazing the perception that people abroad have of what is happening in Barbados. Most of it true, but I found myself in a position where, being the patriotic person that I am, I had to argue vigorously against some of the points that these people were making. I mounted a defence for a performance in Barbados that I knew was not entirely accurate on my part, but did it only because I was patriotic.

The Minister of Finance said he received a call recently from somebody which he interpreted as a compliment - the person seemed to be saying that they wanted to move from what was in documentary and written form to action. The Minister of Finance interpreted that as a compliment, sir. But be that as it may, I too received a call, sir, from a local businessman a little while ago, who told me - and he is sympathetic to the government, I must tell you - who told me that it is not that he does not have money, it is not that his colleague businessmen do not have money, but they are not investing any money under the stewardship of this Minister of Finance.

They say, sir, that his projections seldom match what actually happens. They say, sir, his promises and assurances are worth absolutely nothing, sir, and that is clear, sir, for everyone to see. How often has the Minister of Finance been accurate when he has made any projection about the rate of economic growth in this country? How clear has the Minister of Finance ever been in any pronouncement he made in relation to an investment project in this country?

And I am going to give you a couple of examples. Sir, on April 12, 2011, in a ministerial statement made in this chamber by the Minister of Finance, the Minister said that the government was pleased to announce that a Memorandum of Understanding had been signed by BTII with SMI Infrastructure Solutions Inc. for the construction of a super yacht marina consisting of approximately 80 berths. The Minister made this statement on April 12, 2011. He said the total cost was estimated at \$101 million. He said it would bring great economic benefits, especially the creation of hundreds of jobs. But most importantly, he said, construction was expected to begin in about nine months.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member. Just a minute, just a minute please. I was just playing over in my mind the

statement you made with respect to the Minister of Finance. You said that his morning words and his evening words don't tally back. That is a Barbadian colloquialism which basically means that you are saying he is telling lies. I am not going to allow it. So I want you to withdraw the statement and have it struck from the record.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: I was saying what a businessman said to me, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not care who said it to you, sir. That would not turn it up for me. I cannot allow you to say that a businessman said to you that the Minister of Finance is a liar. I cannot allow that. It is a Barbadian colloquialism and that is my understanding of it. So we need to withdraw the comments and have them struck from the record.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: I withdraw the comments, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Fine. Please continue.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: But sir, the Minister of Finance came for this chamber on April 12, 2011 and said a super yacht marina was going to commence construction sir in nine months time. January 2012 sir. January 2012 has come and gone. January 2013 has come and gone sir. I know the Minister comes in this budget and says that the same marina project he was referring to is now going to begin in the first quarter of 2014, sir, some 24 months after the initial projected start-up date of that project, sir. Sir, how, what confidence can you have in anything that he says? So we have heard, sir, his wishy-washy pronouncements in relation to the Four Seasons project. Sir, and in fact sir, his whole involvement and conduct in relation to that project sir, leaves a lot to be desired. No sir, he has made at least eight, I stopped counting at eight sir. At least eight assurances he is given as to when that project was going to restart. No sir, and I have to speak strongly on this because the Minister of Finance himself has said on more than one occasion that this is the project by which Barbados will be judged. And that overseas investors are carefully watching this project. And if this project gets going, it will lead to a flood of investment coming to this country. And therefore the government had to make sure that they got it right in relation to this project. Those were the words of this Minister of Finance, sir.

Yet, sir, every time he speaks on the project, sir, he gives a new start-up date. Sir, I'm going to refer specifically, sir, to the comments he made in here, sir, in a debate in March-April of 2011. It was during the course of a debate on a resolution about this chamber asking the Chamber to support government guaranteeing a loan, sir, for some 120 million Barbados dollars. And on that occasion, sir, to get the department to agree to go along with that, sir, which we still did not on this side. We did not go along with it. But he then said, sir, that on this side

agreed to that. The project was going to restart in six months time, sir, before October 2011. So that has come and gone two years, sir, and it still not restarted, sir.

Sir, but more importantly, in relation to that project, sir, the minister is not telling this country what has happened to that 120 million dollars that was called under the guarantee, guaranteed, approved of by this chamber. What has happened is that the government was being asked to agree to, decided to agree to a guarantee of a loan payable by the private sector to the private sector. The private sector entity that was supposed to pay the loan did not pay. The government has had to pay. In fact, the Central Bank printed money and paid the loan. And the Minister of Finance, when he raised this matter here in March, said he could not say anything about it because negotiations were at a delicate stage. The member for St. James Central subsequently raised the issue here, and he said that he was not going to answer the member for St. James Central because he had already responded to me, which he had not. And sir, we are now at a state where Barbadians are out by \$120 million. And the Minister of Finance has not said a word to the country about it. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if I had not discovered it, discovered it sir, and raised it in here in March, to this day, not the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Tourism, no one would have said a word. So this was a thunder that happened almost in the dead of night, and no one saw it fit and the Minister of Finance to this day does not see it fit to say a word sir about that matter sir.

Sir but further, the same Minister of Finance has been of the view that our national insurance funds should be put into the Four Seasons project. In fact he also had a view which he expressed that two other national insurance departments in the region were also going to be putting their national insurance funds in the project. But of course the prime ministers of those two countries, sir, came out and said that was not true. Sir, but he has felt from the beginning that national insurance funds should be invested in it. No, sir. When it was announced by me that even the investment committee of the national insurance scheme was not in support of investing funds in the project. And in me at that point it was said that the investment committee had decided expressly not to put funds in the project. The Minister of Finance on a point of order got up and said that was not true, that the investment committee had never so decided. Although I have sir, a copy of the portion of the minutes of the investment committee which expressly said that the investment committee has decided against putting any national insurance funds into the Four Seasons project. So about that, sir, is the nature of the man, sir. And remember, he said that Barbados is being judged by this project. He said that Barbados, sir, is being judged by this project, sir. So how, sir, can anybody have any confidence in anything that the Minister of Finance says?

Sir, the policy in relation to Amwaj is one of total absurdity and a fiasco. Because Amwaj started to go under some 18 months or so ago. Now, sir, Amwaj is a private sector venture. But it had 600 jobs at stake. It is the largest single owner of rooms in Barbados. It has a brand. It has a niche. It has some management issues which the government may not have wanted to touch because of certain relationships between the management and perhaps the government. But that's another issue, sir. But the government decided when Amwaj was going under that they were not going to get involved in the project. They were not going to work with the private sector entity owning the project. Although 600 jobs were at stake and a large number of rooms, largest number of rooms, sir, he said it wasn't getting involved then. But somehow, sir, miraculously, now some 18 months later, some 600 jobs lost later, some 750 rooms later lost, the government has now decided it is going to go out and borrow funds, borrow money, to buy the same hotel from the same private sector owner that it said it was not going to work with before. It is now going to buy that, sir, buy it from them to fix it up, refurbish it, and I say we want to hear not only the purchase cost because it is going to be astronomical to re-equip it, sir, and refurbish it. Because every single thing there has been sold. Every single item has been sold. So it's not just buying a structure and fixing it up, but you have to furnish it entirely, and that is millions more. So why don't I say here what

the total cost of that is going to be? But having decided they were not going to work with a private sector entity before, they are now going to borrow money 18 months later, 600 jobs later, to buy the same business sir from the same private sector entity sir, and then to do what sir, to try and sell it, to try to find a buyer some 600 jobs later, sir. So how can anybody take the Minister of Finance seriously or have any confidence in anything that he says? Sir, this is a man who is clearly out of his depth.

Certainly could go on and on, sir, about his inconsistency, sir, like his statement in relation to the service out of Brazil. When the service out of Brazil was struggling as it continues to struggle. The Minister of Finance made a bold announcement that the service was so successful that a second plane had to be added to service the route. Even, sir, the Minister of Tourism would not have said that. It is because it is further from the truth. No second service has been added, no second service has been added to this day. But the Minister of Finance believes that you can just say enough to get to the next point.

Sir, but most significantly, sir. And so this really is icing on the cake. This Minister of Finance has presided over, sir, not one, but two major downgrades of this economy, sir, to junk status, junk sir, not just downgrades because there were downgrades before, but to junk. Sir, sir, the point is here that people, sir, especially prospective

investors, do not and cannot have any confidence in a Minister of Finance, sir, who is so wishy-washy on all the issues, sir, on which he seeks to make comments, sir. And the time, sir, the time has to be very, very near at hand, sir, if not long past, when a motion of no confidence has to be brought against this Minister of Finance, has to be, sir, there is no other place on Earth where a Minister of Finance could have been such a disaster and a calamity. And the Prime Minister, sir, would have done nothing at all about it. Nothing at all. The only person who can take action against a minister, any minister, is the Prime Minister. And if the Prime Minister has decided that he is not going to take any action against a minister who has been such a disaster, then I am saying now, sir, that the time has to be very near, if not long past, when a motion of no confidence has to be brought, sir, against this Minister of Finance.

Sir, so too, sir, the Minister of Tourism's handling sir of the tourism sector. No sir, Barbados is still as I speak to you at the bottom of the stack of all the countries sir reporting to the Caribbean Tourism Organization. And Barbados has now held this bottom position sir for the last several publications of data by the Caribbean Tourism Organization sir. And in the first of all that sir, what do we hear the Minister of Finance in the budget. And this sir is the same point I was making earlier sir about his wishy-washy way of doing business. This is what now sir is being said by the Minister of Finance about an allocation to Barbados Tourism Authority for the purposes of marketing and promotion. He says that an allocation is being made to the BTA of funds. Listen, sir, of funds that are still to be secured. Sourced from where, sir? From a proposed, not an actual, but a proposed, not yet finalised, a proposed loan that still has to be negotiated. Negotiated means it hasn't yet been settled. Sir, with the IDB and when, sir, later this year. So these are funds allocated to the BTA, sir, that are still to be sourced from a proposed loan that still has to be negotiated with the IDB later this year. Not funds here and now, sir. But still to be negotiated, sir. And to be spent on what, sir? Not on a programme that has yet been formulated or unveiled, but on a programme that is to be unveiled by the BTA, sir, whenever, whenever, sir. So you understand, sir, why our tourism will always be at the bottom, sir, under this administration.

Let me just grab one other point, sir, about the Minister of Finance who likes to slip in these little comments all the time. And I must say, sir, that the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Tourism really can keep you very, very busy because they make statements at the time when they make them, you're not in a position always to be able to disprove them. And by the time you see you're going to do research and disprove them, they're onto another point. I'm going to disprove as well, sir. Sir, but let me just clarify one thing. The Minister of Finance slipped in this comment yesterday about tourism declining

in 2008 and that it had been already showing signs of deteriorating even before the government changed. Nothing on Earth could be further from what was the actual truth. And I must say that nothing could be further. I said the data is there. 2007 was a bumper year for tourism in Barbados. And in fact, it was a record year. And further, Mr. Speaker, let me say this - a government has responsibility for its policies up to March 31st of every year. Although we lost government in January of 2008, our policies still ran until the 31st of March. And for the month of January 2008, February 2008, and March 2008, all three of those months showed an increase in Barbados' tourism performance. All three. And then from April 1st, from the time the Democratic Labour Party took control. From then, sir, from the month of April, everything started to slide in that ministry. Every single thing. And you can go and check all the publications of the BTA, all the Caribbean Tourism Organization. From the time their policy kicked in, tourism kicked out. And that's a fact, Mr. Speaker.

And we should not be in the state that we are in relation to tourism, sir, at the bottom. Because this government, sir, has had assets to work with in tourism that no other government administration ever had. Never, sir, they have had tools to work with that we never had to work with. This government has had two, not one sir, but two T20 World Cup tournaments, the most popular form of the game, and could do nothing with it, sir. Could do nothing to maximise returns. This government has had, has had sir, Rihanna. In fact, Rihanna was out there on her own, big enough, Barbados and tourism was doing better than when this government decided that they were going to bring Rihanna in and some tourism initiative that they have never said what it is. And for instance, sir, they brought Rihanna on board, sir, with their initiative, directing her what to do, and figures went down. So this government has had reject the most popular regional air carrier, sir, for a very, very long time. Well, reject was playing, sir. The minister would tell you.

Sir, but what I say is this, sir. The walls, sir, are closing in sir on the people of this country. And only God knows what the pressure that they are enduring and the additional pressure put on them in this budget, sir, will force them to do. Sir, thank you very much. There could be some very serious consequences, sir. I hope there will not be. I believe, sir, it is incumbent on the government to get us out of this very deep hole that the Minister of Finance spoke of, sir. I will not support any budget, sir, that is really a noose, a tightening of a noose around the necks of people, sir, who are already suffocating, sir. And I will not, sir, stand in support of this budget.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the honourable member for Christ Church East.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to make my contribution to this debate. I've sat here over the last couple of days. And I've heard much has been said on matters related to the budget proposals presented by the Honourable Minister of Finance. I want to place on record my support of these measures. And I also want to place on record that Barbadians have always demonstrated a kind of resilience that has seen us through many challenges over time. The Honourable Minister could not have had a very easy task in putting this budget together. And certainly those of us on this side saw a process executed with great care, great consideration for the people of this country, and an undying commitment to ensure that the level of sensitivity required would be applied to this process.

I've heard on the other side that there are those who say that yet there is a global crisis. Others said, no, there's not a global crisis. Others say, well, yeah, there is a global crisis, but only Greece and Spain that have been affected and continue to be affected. One of the beautiful things about the Barbadian experience is that Barbadians of all walks of life have reached a stage in their existence and their journey where they're able to find information and to draw from different sources of information to help them to deal with the terrain of these times. We watched it on televisions, we hear it on different commentaries, we've read it from different publications. And all of us, Mr. Speaker, are aware that this country is going through a very difficult time economically, and that the time cannot be characterised as exclusive to Barbados, but that the world over continues to struggle through these very difficult economic times. And I don't believe that we have to prove that. I believe the evidence is there.

The impact of this economic crisis has been devastating on developed countries like the United States of America, Great Britain, Canada was touched at one point in time by it, and the world over. Developing states like Barbados, small island developing states whose economies are driven by world conditions for the most part, also have experienced these difficult times. So why should we have to try to prove to Barbadians that what is happening to us is not the doing of this government, but it is the experience of this government to take this country through these difficult times.

What is also unique about these times, Mr. Speaker, sir, is that the onset of this economic crisis came on the heels of great economic successes in this country. What is also the case is that this economic crisis - the forerunner of this economic crisis - was a period of the greatest amount of wastage in this country. And no one wants to seem to take account of that. And I will recall, and I will restate, that the last Prime Minister under the Barbados Labour Party had said to this country - and if he said one right thing, it was that - that they needed to build a resource and

reserves for a rainy day, so that when the rains came and they started to fall, before 2008, so that when the rains came, that Barbados would have a cushion that would help see it through these difficult times. Well, we know the story on that.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the wastage included \$1 million at East Street House that is yet to be found. We know that the wastage included the St. Leonard's School. We know that the misspend also included the prison. We know that a lot of the debt that this government is now trying to ensure that it pays was debt accumulated by the Barbados Labour Party government, and at a time when they had money. They had great wealth. The country was earning. The economy was booming. The former Prime Minister, Honourable Member for St. Peter, said that he was batting like Sobers and that the wicket was playing well. And then at the end of the day, it was like that moment, Mr. Speaker, when Sobers made a duck, because the Honourable Member for St. Peter left office and left this country's economy in a state only to be revealed after it passed out. Not passed on, but passed out.

So, Mr. Speaker, you sit here and you listen to members of the other side wanting to project everything that's wrong with the Barbadian economy on the current Minister of Finance. None of us are perfect, and from time to time all of us do things differently. But if there's one thing that I would stand here and say tonight without fear of contradiction, it is that this Minister of Finance has handled this country's economy in the best possible way under the worst possible conditions. And that is the case. That is the case, Mr. Speaker. That is what happened. And that is why all of us on this side will continue to support this government and the Minister of Finance, because we know that he has taken an economy in the most difficult circumstances and collectively we are working to make it better.

So the period of intense economic struggle is an experience both at the national level for us, the regional level, and the global economies. The debate is occurring at a time when the resilience of our people is placed at a very, very high test. Our nationalism is being tested, Mr. Speaker. Our self-identity is being tested, Mr. Speaker. And we are not going to give up. We're not going to throw our hands up. We're not going to pretend dead because we have a country in whose people we believe and we will continue to believe in the people of this great country.

Our progress has been questioned. Mr. Speaker, where were we when we took over this government? Isn't the Queen Elizabeth Hospital still delivering free health services to all? Yes. At a better quality than would have been the case at the time when we took over this government. I well recall every single day on the calling programmes, when the Labour Party was in office,

Barbadians called in day and night, afraid to access the QEH because of the dire conditions existing there. I speak today proudly of the improvements at the QEH because I was able to go there and be serviced and thank God today I'm here standing. My mom is there tonight not doing well, but I pray that God will see her through. But the point is that under the worst conditions economically, this government has been able to turn around a hospital and to expand hospital services and to expand health care services and about to open the David Thompson Polyclinic in St. John. A polyclinic that sat there for 14 years, untouched, overrun by bush. And this government came into office and now that institution will be reopened, will be opened very shortly.

Mr. Speaker, sir, are not our schools fully functional? Yes, they are. You would recall before this government took over that almost at the beginning of every school year, there would be problems with the reopening of schools across this country. They forget that. They forget that all across Barbados, primary schools and secondary schools would be behind because they couldn't get them repaired. They couldn't get the repairs finished and children would have to wait sometimes two weeks before they go back to school. And under difficult economic circumstances, tell me when last you have heard any school in this country opening beyond the time it was supposed to be open. That's how you measure the success of a government.

Mr. Speaker, they quarrel about buses. There was a previous minister on the other side who went down to Colombia or somewhere down there with a scope around his neck to buy buses. Yes. And they are quarrelling about buses. The fact of the matter is that since we took over the government, the availability of buses has improved. And they did not have to spend the capital on new buses. The same is true with the Sanitation Service Authority that you hear so many complaints about. We were able - we are fixing our fleet. We've just bought some new equipment, but for the most part we've taken equipment that was there on the block to be shuttled out so that somebody could go and buy new trucks, and made sure that was taken care of. But the transportation system in Barbados is still going very strong under difficult circumstances.

After all, Mr. Speaker, you have to give Jack his jacket. You have to really admit that under perilous economic times with shrinking revenues, bleeding foreign exchange, low earnings, under difficult circumstances, this government has been able to keep the essential services of this country going and going strong.

I heard my friend from St. George South talk about energy and applaud the government for its attempts to put on board a green economy programme. And yes, we have. There was a lot of talk about it before. There were a lot of

things talked about, but this government has been able to launch, in conjunction with the UN, with UNDP, and with other organisations, a viable green economy programme that has taken off. That's what we've done. And in terms of energy, yes, I agree with the member that renewable energy is the new emerging sector in this country, and it's going to work not only in terms of helping Barbados to become energy efficient, but it also is going to help Barbados to reduce its burden on the importation of fossil fuels. And I said to the member after his speech that what we are attempting to do is to really create a society where we are able to produce energy, thus reducing the electricity bill. But more than that, we are going to make a serious attack on that fuel import bill, which is now over \$800 million a year. That is our commitment, and that is what we are doing during difficult times.

So yes, we have fossil fuel reserves around the island that we can pick at, but we cannot pursue a full-fledged fossil fuel programme while at the same time trying to achieve a green economy and trying to build out our renewable energy programme. Now, there's a division of energy that deals strictly with energy issues, but the Ministry of the Environment has one of the most formidable renewable energy programmes within the government. When this programme is fully built out, it will see over a billion dollars in investment in renewable energy. And what we're doing - we are taking waste, waste that a small island developing state cannot continue to landfill because we don't have the space. And after Greenland, we certainly ain't planning to spend no more money down there. And that is a hundred million dollars paid to date, not a single piece of garbage. And we've scrapped that - that is finished. And the other irony of it is that the Greenland landfill is placed in the middle of the National Park. The member for St. Andrew, who you don't really quote very often because he says very little, made a strenuous argument that the pursuit of the Greenland option was environmental madness. And he was right.

This government came into office, reviewed all the papers, looked at the project, and discovered that while they were telling Barbadians that they had only spent about \$40 million, it was actually \$100 million already spent. But worse than that, there was a proposal on the table to spend another \$142 million before a single piece of garbage could go to Greenland. Can you imagine what would happen, Mr. Speaker, sir, if we had that money to work with today? Could you imagine what would happen if still within the treasury of the Government of Barbados we could still have that reserve to spend today? It would have been a great thing for this country. But no, they spent it. They spent it.

But the energy programme that this government is pursuing is not a make-believe programme. I heard the member for St. George South saying that it's going to take 19 months before these things are built out. So let me tell

you something. Within the next three weeks, the Sanitation Service Authority will have consummated the contract for the new administration building at Vaucluse. The Leachate Treatment Plant, which is another \$127 million programme - that contract will be signed and that plant will be started within the next month to six weeks. These are already done. And perhaps the most exciting is the waste-to-energy plant, which we are now confident that within the next two months that particular contract will be worked out and that will be in place.

The amount of energy - and then of course there are other aspects. There's the green energy programme where we're actually going to be covering all the decommissioned landfills, extracting all the landfill gas from these systems, setting up our wind farm up there, and setting up our solar panel farm. We are converting that site to a highly industrial site that is driving part of our capacity for renewable energy.

Mr. Speaker, when I hear the Minister of Finance get up and take the time to walk this country through what this country has been doing, what this government has been doing, then to hear people get up and talk about implementation deficit - there is a reason why there are some government projects that have not gotten off the ground. I will say that. Implementation has to be a relationship between the government, the projects, and the civil servants. They don't just happen so. And I will say this - thank God for the civil servants who are working on behalf of Barbados. But there are some who are working on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party, and that is one of the problems where there are some deficits in implementation. But let me go on.

The Minister of Finance talked about renewable energy, what the government is doing in that regard, and how it's going to transform how we do business in Barbados. The Minister of Finance talked about adjustments, and I will say this to this House - all of us sat down and worked through these adjustment ideas. And we had long conversations, we had passionate conversations about them, and we put our positions out there. Government cannot continue as it is. And therefore, any effort to right-size government to ensure that you get the highest levels of efficiency is important in how we do our business. And this government - I had the BLP -

The BLP people boast about how many - that in 18, that in 14 years they created 35 000 jobs. We know. We know you did. I'm now trying to blame us for creating 3 000 jobs last year before the election. That's what. That's what they said. They're blaming us for that. Yo, hush. You had your say. This is my say. As a matter of fact, the member for St. George North said something in this House today that I thought was remarkable. And I'm happy that it is recorded because he said that the words spoken by

ministers should be taken seriously. And I hope that the next time you get up in here, the Honourable Member, and call white Barbadian males white boys, and say that you want us to adopt a Robert Mugabe style of government, that you take it seriously too.

Because you see, what is happening - and he knows really well what those words are, and he hasn't been arrested yet for that. So I hope and pray that you take heed to your own words, Mr. Member for St. George North. Because it is not only us that must take our words seriously. It is the members of the Barbados Labour Party. And you said it well today that you want us to take our words seriously. But they created these jobs. That's fine. We're not going to quarrel with anybody about jobs, but they want to beat up on us because we hired some people in the programme to assist with the drainage challenges in Barbados. The same Honourable Member for St. George North complimented me as Minister. He didn't do it in here, he did it out there - coming out of the bathroom. I was going in and he had back the door, and I wanted to get in the bathroom. Of course I did. And he said to me, listen, congratulations. You're doing a very good job because we're not having the kind of challenges that we had.

Do you know, Mr. Speaker, sir? Do you know that the Barbados Labour Party - when those people were hired - sent around camera people taking pictures of these people, right before the election? They did that. They did that. Harassed the young people out there. And I will say this: we have to take decisions. Decisions will be taken. We will ensure that the decisions are sensitive to the needs of ordinary citizens. But I will not apologise to anybody for having had the opportunity to help young people - 68 of whom were on the welfare roll - who for the first time in their lives started earning a salary. One person fell out of the programme for the last three years and that young lady passed away. And these were persons, Mr. Speaker, who were dependent upon the Government to give them a welfare grant that amounted to about \$90 or \$96. And they went from depending upon that welfare the Government was putting out - a non-productive pay - to coming out and working. And people argue, they ain't gonna work, they ain't gonna work. And I've watched it myself.

I pray to God, and Mr. Minister of Finance, I pray that the measures we are putting in place work and work so swiftly that not one of them will be left behind. That's my desire - to see that happen. We have to put the measures in place. We're going to put the measures in place. But at the end of the day, I intend to work harder than I've been before. These ministers are committed. Our colleagues are committed. We are hoping - and we have confidence - that the measures will work and that they will work to an extent where all of the young people that they are washing their mouths over will be provided for.

These people here - you see, it's bad when you have a short memory. It was the philosophy of Tom Adams that Barbadians have short memories. But Barbadians don't really have short memories, you know. That's why we are still the Government. If they had short memories, they would have put y'all back in. But they didn't put y'all back in. And it ain't gonna happen soon either. I'll tell you that. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph will become the leader of the opposition before that ever happens. And he has a little time to wait.

Listen, these folks are getting around here and trying to make this Government look like a villain because we have tried to help people. And now we're having to take measures to ensure that the economy keeps going. It is about the salvation of the economy because the society depends upon the economy to keep its wheels rolling. But I recall in the last general elections, the Barbados Labour Party's leader -

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

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: - they walked around this country, boasting about how many people they were going to lay off. From the NCF, 300; from education, 1 000; from healthcare, 2 000 people they intended to - this was part of the 15-point plan to restore, to rebuild and to rescue Barbados. BWA, the airport, the Transport Board - 1 000; CBC, NCC - 1 000; NSC - 1 800; the Sanitation Service Authority - 1 100. That is why I am glad you are here. Please address the Chair. I make good use of your limited time. Yes, Honourable Chair. I am glad the members said that because they were in such heat to take over the Government that they were sending home more people than were employed. They were in heat - yes, political estrus they were in, trying to get people to go home. So I don't mind all this talk.

We work from a programme. We work from a plan. We have a vision for this country and our vision takes us beyond 2020. And we are going to ensure that all of the adjustments and the changes that need to be made - to make the Government system more efficient, to make sure that we get greater productivity - we are going to put those measures in place. But we will not be run out of office by the Barbados Labour Party. We're not going to listen to them because they don't believe we belong here. They believe that Parliament is reserved for the Montleys and those people. But I want to make it clear that the people sent us here and they sent us here for a purpose.

So we understand what needs to be done. And we are going to work together with the system, with our leader, to make sure that we get the right things done. I haven't touched on education because the Minister of Education is to speak. But just let me say this here: searching and

seeking and gaining an education is about self-development and it's about building oneself. And no one is better to earn that but those who get it. And I will say this - we will never abandon our philosophy. We will never abandon our purpose. The opposition doesn't have a philosophy. That's their problem. But we will keep going forward. And the final thing I'll say: a house divided against itself cannot stand. And I don't know if they think Barbadians are prepared to put their future in the hands of a divided house. Let them go to court and deal with their issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well. Just a minute, please.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: To give notice of a resolution to approve the borrowing of up to \$500 million in the currency of the United States of America on the international capital market by the issue of securities through Deutsche Bank Securities Inc. as lead manager and underwriter with CIBC World Markets Corporation acting as co-manager; B. the establishment of a sinking fund for the redemption of each issue of securities made under the said Act and for the monies necessary to maintain and service that fund; C. the repurchasing of a maximum of \$250 million in the currency of the United States of America of the Government's outstanding international bond issues maturing in 2021 and 2022 respectively, in a tender offer liability management exercise through Deutsche Bank Securities Incorporated acting as lead manager and CIBC World Markets Corporation acting as co-manager; and to facilitate the provision of budgetary support to finance fiscal operations, build foreign reserves and improve and extend the Government's external debt maturity profile.

I also, Mr. Speaker, give notice of a resolution to grant the sum of \$3 741 500 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 2013-2014, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates Number One 2013-2014 which form the schedule to this resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: To give notice of the first reading of the Culture Industries Development Bill 2013.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the first reading of the Culture Industries Development Bill 2013.

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

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move the suspension of the sitting for dinner until a quarter to nine tonight.

The question that the House be suspended until 8.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Members, the sitting is resumed. Members, when the suspension was called, we were on Order No. three, and with that we shall continue. Yes, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this resolution before this Honourable House which ostensibly deals with the proposals as outlined by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West and the current Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs. I have listened quite carefully to the pronouncements of the members on the other side, particularly the conversation which was held where the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, I believe, last evening, and I recognise that the art of persuasion was cleverly deployed, punctuated as it was with certain hyperbolic language in order to convince the people of Barbados that what the Honourable Member was saying was correct, had the right tone, the right pitch, et cetera. But it fell short of even persuading her own members that she had substance, that she had genuine commitment to dealing with the challenges which confront the people of Barbados.

That was unlike the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, who came strong and stout to lay before the people of Barbados a package, a set of programmes which should lead us out of these difficulties over the next 19 months. One has to recognise, Mr. Speaker, and I have said it before, it is really never a magic wand that one can wave to get so many of the difficulties which not only Barbados but so many other countries in the world are confronted with - to just get them gone, get them to disappear. If it were possible, that magic wand would have been waved a long time ago, over decades, over the time of man's existence in the world. It does not happen. It is going to take hard work, the commitment of all citizens of this country, to put their backs to the proverbial plough, to work even harder, to be more conscientious, to be more focused, to be more deliberate, to stop allowing partisan behaviour to separate the citizens of Barbados, to stop allowing partisan behaviour to allow them to do things which they know are not right.

We have been confronted with certain behaviours over the last five and a half years which have really tarnished the efficacy of our bureaucracy in some ways and which have in fact caused persons, I would hope, to lose their own dignity. There is no government that likes to visit its people at a time of acute challenges with these proposals - with taxes, with impositions, with changing circumstances, et cetera. No government likes to do this, but it takes a strong people to act in unusual circumstances to try to do that which they consider to be right. And at the same time, open themselves to the ideas of others, open themselves to solutions. And that comes from a strong recognition that you simply cannot stand alone. You have to stand with others to ensure that those things which must be done are in fact done.

One of the more controversial aspects of the proposals is that of asking the students of the University of the West Indies to make a small contribution to their education. As Minister of Education, I have been seeing for some while that we have to look carefully at how tertiary education is funded in Barbados, how the entire education project is funded in Barbados. And that is why, Mr. Speaker, I believe way back in 2011, I set up what was called a tertiary level education committee under the leadership of Professor Hilary Beckles, Principal and Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West Indies, to look at the reform - a framework for the reform of tertiary education in Barbados. And I do not believe this document was ever laid in this House. And since, Mr. Speaker, I am going to be quoting a few things from it, I would want to make it a document of the House.

I would wish to note at the outset that the Barbados Labour Party, on page 55 of its manifesto of the last election, stoutly declared that they support the programme for tertiary education as outlined in the report of the Beckles Commission on Higher Education 2012. That is the document which I have in my possession. Now, I am not going to have a lot of time to go through some of the recommendations. What I will quickly go to is a part on page 148, which stated that given the tremendous benefits - and I believe we are all agreed that this country has benefited tremendously from education across all of its sectors, nursery right through to tertiary - tertiary has had a profound impact on helping to build out the economy and society. But we also recognise that without strong foundational elements of education, that cannot continue to happen. So he is saying, given the tremendous benefits of tertiary education to the growth and development of the private sector in Barbados, a system of cost sharing could be considered for implementation. This model of financing could reflect various allocations: major state participation in tertiary education of about 80-85 per cent, contribution by the private sector of around 10 per cent, and a 5 per cent contribution by the consumer.

What our proposal has done is essentially - because you cannot, without taxing specifically the private sector, determine the quantum that the private sector would put into the funding of tertiary education, particularly at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, or the University of the West Indies system, because we pay across the University of the West Indies system - that essentially lumped the 10 and five together to make 15, and came up with a formula of almost an 80-84/16 split in that formula. So to some extent we were taking that recommendation as a process coming out of the recognition, especially in these most difficult times, that you still have to hold some for the future. You still had to hold some for future generations. And therefore you were saying to students - and I called in some of the leadership of the Guild of Undergraduates of the University of the West Indies some weeks ago and held a conversation with them. I would not say to you that they were pleased, and what I would say to you is that in their own minds they had an expectation that the formula being used up to that point in time was proven unsustainable. And in fact, they put forward some ideas that would have helped this process.

Even the Barbados Labour Party recognised that a sustainable delivery of tertiary education - even though there was a bit of a simplistic view that only related to the University of the West Indies - and I remember the former Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, speaking to the notion of reducing, and it was captured in their manifesto, is that in the interim, same page 55, as a temporary measure, reduce the employer-employee contribution rate of national insurance and convert the equivalent to a higher education levy to fund UWI. Now that proposal, a part of that is also contained in the recommendations of the Beckles Commission - not tinkering with the national insurance fund, the employee-employer contribution. But it says a percentage of the government's training fund already in existence should be amended to allow for the establishment of a training and education fund. So even among the leaders of tertiary education in Barbados there is a recognition that to be sustainable, there had to be some changes in the process of funding tertiary education.

I know we argue, we debate - I am tired of it, you know, the way we fight across the aisle. Barbados is now demanding a higher level, a higher commitment, a higher focus than what we currently do in this combative way in our democracy. It is not taking us anywhere. I do not think on this side or that side that anybody wants to dismantle education, particularly tertiary education in Barbados. This is a search for a formula, for a process, to maintain some level of sustainability. And I want to quote - I hope that when the Honourable Prime Minister speaks he will further give strength to what I am saying.

In a publication, Mr. Speaker - I can feel it is 50 years and we celebrate that. We celebrate the 50 years of the University of the West Indies' commitment to the people of this region, to the people of Barbados, for its work. But we go back to 1968, February the 6th - the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, in addressing a graduation, spoke. And when I came across it, I smiled. And he was saying then: university costs are rising steadily. I am quoting, Mr. Speaker. More money has to be found for maintaining existing services and for financing properly planned expansion. Listen to this, because I am going to share some statistics with the House and outside as well, because we cannot be making sport at this time. It now requires nearly \$3 500 a year to keep a student at Mona. \$3 500. \$3 300 at St. Augustine - that is in Trinidad. And over \$2 500 at this campus, meaning Cave Hill. Even with generous assistance from overseas for capital construction, as you see going on all around campus, and for scholarship and research fellowships, the territories must still provide several million dollars each year for the current operations of the university. Way back in 1968, the Right Excellent, as he later became known, Errol Walton Barrow spotted it right there and then, because university education is costly.

And I just want to share with the House some of that cost. It is a project coming from great minds of the region to unite and to create the capacity for a region that was essentially a plantation - a massive plantation - across the Caribbean space. In the University of Cave Hill, if you are doing humanities and education, it costs \$33 750 per year to educate one Barbadian student. We go into artificial situations of talking about economic cost and tuition fee. That was a formula arrived at and agreed to by the governments of the region. But it is one fee. You talk about an 80/20 split - it is still \$33 750. In the case of Barbados, because Barbados took a decision that they will fund the tuition component way back when - whatever that fee was at the time - but in this instance of the \$33 750, the so-called economic cost would be \$28 125 and the tuition fee was \$5 625. And that is reflected throughout the Faculty of Science and Technology, previously called Pure and Applied Science, and the Social Sciences faculty.

But then that changed as well as you move into law - economic costs of \$44 040 and the tuition equivalent of \$8 808, giving you a total per year of \$52 848. And then, the so-called profession of all professions - medicine. There existed previously a Faculty of Medicine or Division of Medicine at Cave Hill working at the higher levels. But in 2008, the process started previously, and along with the University, we took a decision to have a fully fledged medical faculty at Cave Hill, to be set up as a strictly commercial enterprise. Previously, Barbadian students were going to St. Augustine and Mona. Even now, those two countries are cheaper cost centres for medicine. But we made this commitment to the University of the West Indies, demonstrating the need as espoused by Professor Henry

Fraser, who was leading the faculty at the time, Professor Beckles, et cetera. And in that commercial enterprise, we made a commitment that Barbados would fund 25 of those students locally, maintaining five in Trinidad and five at Mona. So therefore, in any given year, 35 students - previously it used to be 15 and 10 in Trinidad and Jamaica, I do not remember exactly how the split was.

But the preclinical phase per year is \$65 000. There is no tuition fee allocated in those first three years. In the clinical phase, the economic cost is \$83 090 and a tuition fee of \$16 618. The combined total of \$99 708 - and the medicine programme is five years. And therefore, for one student, it is \$394 416. That is what it is. Based on the formula as put out by the Minister of Finance, the humanities and education for three years of full-time study - or for three years of study full-time or part-time, because you know how part-time is worked out - it is \$101 250 per student. Education and Humanities, Social Sciences, Science and Technology: \$101 250. Law: \$158 544. In the LLB phase there is also the LEC phase that the government also pays for, and I do not know that cost, so I did not factor it into these figures. Those two programmes are quite costly. In fact, it is my belief, based on calculations, that over the period since 2008, we would have been paying nearly \$20 million to \$22 million for the MBBS at Cave Hill in that short period of time. Again, commitment to our young people, commitment to the human resource development capacity of our country.

And I further want to share, because sometimes we get lost as we try to score points. I am not interested in scoring points. I am interested in protecting and trying to make sustainable an important segment of our country's development, and trying to say to young people: look, the time has come where there must be a little contribution on your part. Sixteen thousand - just around \$16 000 - for the first three programmes I have mentioned: humanities and education, science and technology, and social sciences. And we have gone further than that. And it is not a shut project. I want to make it clear - this is not a closed project. It is an evolving project. It is not closed. But we are trying to find a mechanism to hold something for the future, because we are not going to shut down as a country. Kick 'em Jenny - God continue to protect our lives - is not going to erupt and wipe us off the map. So there are going to be children. The Honourable Member for St. Peter has a lovely young lady at Queen's College. At Queen's College. Oh Lord. So I understand we are holding the future in our hands in the most difficult time. So that is why we came up with this formula. That is why we said we were going to do something.

We said to students: look, we know that there are still vulnerabilities in this country. And we have always taken an egalitarian view. We treat everybody as the same. We do not divide, we do not cut, we do not

compartmentalise. We treat everybody as the same. Over the three-year period of you paying \$5 625 in the humanities, science, technology, and social sciences, you do not have any worry at all. The Student Revolving Loan Fund, which has a history of providing loans for Barbadian students studying overseas.

We came into this house, I believe in 1999, and changed the process, even distance education. Because of the changing mode of delivery, online and flexible learning, you too can benefit from a loan to help if you want to study externally. We said we will also open that as it is open now. It is open now to students from KFL who come and get loans because we know they have other costs beyond the cost of tuition, etc. And they get some more loans. And we give them the same terms. We've changed the terms a few years ago to 4 per cent simple interest on your existing, on the loan. It used to be a compounded process that I call usury, and that too was changed. I was saying to them, you can come. No one will be turned away. Three years, the year moratorium, and we might build in other capacities in there looking at other systems. That's what we will do. Because we don't want to create a burden and we'll work out a process through which they can repay. And in fact, we know that there's some who will not get a guarantee because people are no longer guaranteeing funds. The government of Barbados relying on the goodwill, the capacity and the decency of our young people will stand as a universal guarantee for every single student at KFLR, the University system, UWI system, who come to the student revolving loan fund. So we're not sending you begging or scrambling about Barbados. We are not sending you scrambling about Barbados. That's what we will not be doing to the young people of Barbados.

But there's a reality that this country has to face. Every day cost this country has to face every day. Course goes. Every day. I want to share with this House because you get the impression listening to some commentators that somehow you were not giving the University any money at all. I'm going to share some statistics. You know, the economists like statistics. I don't like them too much, but I'm going to show some statistics. In the 10-year period from ending July 2003 to 2004, July 31st, that's the end of the financial year of the university to July 31st, 2012-2013, the government and people of Barbados would have paid, and we actually paid, to the University of the West Indies, \$1 145 551 - one billion, 145 million, 550 - \$551 056.73 in the 10-year period. It would have been more. And let me explain that to you. In the period ending July 31st, and I left out the 2007-2008 cycle because that cut across the periods of the Barbados Labour Party and the Democrats coming into office and we continue to pay. We would have paid the University of the West Indies, in these most difficult times, \$606 million - \$214 261.36. Inclusive of that was our contribution to the construction of a library and celebration of 50 years of \$19 500 000.

Now that would not have been all. It is known that the government and people of Barbados is indebted to the University of the West Indies. And we're trying to work through that. I'll explain that a little further. We should have contributed roughly \$810 million. Therefore, there is a deficit of roughly - and you work these figures out between yourselves and the system, the University Bursar - of about \$182 million. They reach a point in time and I'd be honest to confess, because just like the member for St. Michael North East, I represent the state, the people of Barbados, on the councils and the organs of the University of the West Indies. That's what I do. So I am protecting the interests of the people of Barbados as well as working with the university, my tertiary alma mater.

So what did we do? We said we have to find the resources. The Ministry of Finance under the leadership of the Honourable Minister said, look, this is proving difficult because our revenues in our country are not coming the way we want to pay them and we wouldn't have had to pay them if they were there. So you go for a loan, things agree, the Senator General signed off, a little hiccup came - you can't have two bonds in the US system at one and the same time. These are the facts. These are the facts you can quarrel about, but this is a demonstration of commitment at the most difficult of

times, to the young people of Barbados. \$810 million should have been the figure between August 8th and July 31st, right down, not including the 2013–2014 period, up to July 31st, 2013. The figures are clear. That's what it is and what it has been.

But let us look at the movement and I don't want to get into this argument. Some arguments don't make sense. In our reality, the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill has expanded phenomenally. And there is a reason why. I don't think there are mad people up there. There's a whole university-wide strategic plan that I came in for. And then there's a new one now, which moved the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill from 4 363 students - and that's the total student population - up to the end of 2012–2013, to 8 776. Therefore, in a 10-year period, responding to the demands of the strategic plan, a 100 per cent increase in the student population. And I'm not quarrelling about that. I want if there was a 100 per cent because I, as Minister of Education, I'm quite conscious that still, just slightly between 38 and 40 per cent of our students in Barbados have access or have gone through a tertiary level programme. It is lower in Jamaica, much lower - it's about 15 per cent. It's lower in Trinidad - it's about 20 per cent. The only two countries in the Caribbean with these kinds of figures will be Bahamas and Barbados. So I don't want to thwart that project. But we're searching.

I will deal with these matters over the next few weeks because there are things to be told. There are things

to be told because people get the impression that somehow the Democratic Labour Party wants to shut down tertiary education. I have been very disappointed with some of the utterances. But I could understand, because when you are managing a project, you want that project to flow easily. You are feeling the pressures of external creditors. We all understand that. Take it from the macro to the micro, so we all understand. It is to find the right formula to make this work.

I want to share with the House as well. Because you all remember the member for St. Michael North West made a point - yes, he did not get it exactly right. Let's be frank. He quoted \$606 million, which was the commitment made in the five years, and then compared it to the entire system that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East spoke about. I'm not going to do that. I'm going to just look at what has been happening at other tertiary level institutions. At the Barbados Community College, in the 10-year period, total financial commitment of the state: \$217 850 835. That's what we did. That is at BCC proper. At the Hospitality Institute, which is part of BCC: \$53 806 660. Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, 2003 to 2013: \$124 000 000. Erdiston Teachers' College: \$34 500 000. The open and flexible learning centre, part of the system to reach persons in a non-contact environment: \$5 625 896. A grand sum for that 10-year period of \$435 698 259. Bear in mind the commitment in the same 10-year period to the University of the West Indies of \$1 145 551 000 and change. It means, Mr. Speaker, that the capacity of the other tertiary level institutions - possibly outside of Erdiston, where there are some challenges now because of infrastructure problems - that UWI did like this, the others stayed constant, and the figures are all there. We have to build out the entire tertiary sector. We have to build out the entire tertiary sector of Barbados. Also for its capacity to earn foreign exchange. The medical faculty at Cave Hill is getting more Trinidadians than Trinidadians staying at home now, because it's something that we offer - peace and tranquillity, they can still move about. So we are trying to build up all of that capacity.

At the same time, we are trying to build the capacity started by the previous government of nursery education. And we are trying to build up capacity at that lower level. But that too is a little more expensive than our primary. You have to build that up. The Member for St. Thomas constantly speaks of building guard huts, but they are not guards. I want a guard at every school because the environment is changing. I want a guard, I want a clerical officer or therapist at every primary and nursery school in Barbados. We don't have it. You know why? The resources are just not there. And they were not there as well under the Barbados Labour Party. We need more money. Education needs more money. I've always needed more money. But leaders of education have tried to be efficient. Tried to make ends meet in the circumstances. So don't let us go

and tear off and see you do this damage to the Right Excellent [Inaudible.] legacy. No one knows what the future holds. We change according to the dynamics of the time we are in, to make the best use of our resources and our circumstances. So don't let us fight and quarrel about this.

If we are committed to the people of Barbados, then we share the ideas, we invite the people themselves. If you don't like the 16 000 over the three-year period of full-time students, or maybe whatever it is for law or whatever it will be for the MBBS, the medical programme, then let us have a discussion. We looked at the 2–3 per cent levy as well. It was not the same as outlined in the manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party. I remember asking the question as Minister of Education - an application of a 2 per cent to establish an education and training levy fund placed on all workers of Barbados, because all workers should make a contribution to the development of the education and training in their country. What would that give us? I asked that question. So we were searching for a way of making this project for our people more sustainable. This is not a retreat. This cannot be a surrender because we all are here. We might not have been formally trained in history, or some of you, but you are still historians from your normal daily participation in the lives of people. So let us eliminate the fight and the bother and find the correct manner in order to fund education in Barbados.

There's the Australian model, there's the New Zealand model, there's noise in Jamaica - noise in Jamaica one time, I made a little noise on behalf of Jamaican students as a Barbadian. And I am sorry that I did that then because nowadays I lean my head a little. I lean my head a little. The GATE programme in Trinidad and Tobago, which funds the tuition component of the fees across tertiary level institutions including UWI in the Caribbean region. There is massive debate going on in Trinidad today. Massive debate about how to continue to fund the project through the GATE programme. I have all the documents here. Through the GATE initiative, previous to this, Barbados was possibly one of the only countries doing the entire thing on behalf of our students. Then the Trinidadians went in a process called dollar for dollar. Then they went, I believe, under the PNM and continue now through the UNC and the COP government of Trinidad and Tobago. But there's a cost. There's been expansion. We want to expand the university even more.

We must congratulate the open campus of the University of the West Indies for its accreditation status. We have to congratulate the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill for its accreditation status. So we are moving ahead, but the resources are needed across the entire system. I'm appealing - I am honestly appealing - that in this country, let us stop this futile fight and let us journey on behalf of the people. Let us journey on behalf of the

young people. The country at this time is not generating the full amount of resources to handle this massive complex that we have built in Barbados in health, education, the social safety net, maintenance of roads. It is not generating that and it has not been generating that for a long time. Mr. Speaker, I will speak more to this in other places with the young people right across the system. But for now, we have to work with what we have. You have to cut the cloth to suit your size. Thank you. I support this resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, sir, I recall that on the night that I was returned to this chamber, I had the opportunity to do a very brief interview and in thanking those constituents of mine who had reposed their confidence in me - and I take this opportunity to refresh that sincere sense of gratitude - I had indicated then, sir, as I feel today, that one of the problems which I felt had manifested themselves during the course of the last general election was that Barbados, sir, had been afflicted by inappropriate policy decisions.

I did not know then, Mr. Speaker, that in such a short period of time we would have come to this juncture where we would have to revisit the ideal of making sure that appropriate policy interventions are made and in a timely manner to counteract some of the crises that we would otherwise be afflicted with. And Mr. Speaker, one of those inappropriate policy responses was the fact that we, for too long, filled and bungled rather than seriously dealing with the issue of an expanding fiscal deficit.

Now the Honourable Prime Minister, sir, if not many more on the front bench, would recall that it was approximately around 1849 that the English novelist Charles Dickens would have written his work *David Copperfield*. And that work, Mr. Speaker, was a work which gave to the world an immortal prescription for sound financial husbandry. And he said, if I recall correctly, Mr. Speaker, sir, that if your annual earnings, annual income is 20 pounds and your annual expenditure is £19.06, then the result is happiness. And if your annual income is £20, but your annual expenditure is £19.06, the result is misery. And that simple quotation, sir, captures the tragedy that can befall individuals, that can befall corporate entities, and that in fact, in this case, sir, has befallen the state of Barbados if one subscribes to the kind of reckless, profligate, extravagant, callous financial expenditure as was admitted to on the fifth day of November in 2012, at a Democratic Labor Party meeting at Foundation School, when Mr. Speaker, this country heard a confession statement to the effect that what could only have been millions of dollars was being borrowed on a monthly basis to pay temporary workers.

Mr. Speaker, sir, that statement - that confession statement - also gives us an insight into the level of absurdity, because I cannot say, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister has a difficulty with the truth, but I can say that his statements are absurd. And there is a level of absurdity, Mr. Speaker, sir, in a Minister of Finance who comes to this chamber two days ago and asks us to accept that all was well going down a path in 2012 and in 2013 up to April. Then all of a sudden after the 31st of March and April dawned, then things went all right.

Now, Mr. Speaker, sir, even as we were being asked to believe the April story, the Minister of Finance was laying a document which is the Growth and Development Strategy of the Government of Barbados. And it is, Mr. Speaker, sir, at page 42 of that document, that the Minister - the absurdity of the Minister's statements - manifest themselves. The document laid by the Minister contradicts all that the Minister asked us to accept.

In 2012, Mr. Speaker, in fact the document indicates clearly that - and I should say it is a document prepared by the Economic Affairs Division of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, it is one that the Minister must be intimately familiar with, not only because it was prepared by his ministry, but he very generously and graciously wrote a foreword to the document. I would presume that he read the contents of it - and the document, sir, at page 42 indicates that the economy he managed from 2010 was a smaller economy than it was in 2009. And that in 2011 and in 2012, Mr. Speaker, sir, the economy continued to demonstrate that trend. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, the document indicates to us clearly that in 2009 and 2010, the economy of Barbados that the Minister tells us was on a smooth track was smaller than it was in 2008, but worse yet, by the time it had gotten to 2012, the economy was smaller than it was in 2006.

Now if a Minister of Finance has on his desk the statistics, publishes, Mr. Speaker, a Growth and Development Strategy that is supposed to guide us through these difficult times and then comes to the chamber and asks us to accept the incredible - you begin to understand what we all know and agree is the crisis of confidence in this country.

But I go further, Mr. Speaker, because the disappointment is also to be manifested at page 35 of the same document when the Minister, or the ministry, indicates that in March 2008, two months after the Democratic Labour Party assumed the reins of government in Barbados, sir - two months - the stock of central government debt in this country was \$4.7 billion, or 56 per cent of the gross domestic product. Mr. Speaker, four years later, in March of 2012, that stock of government debt had gone to \$9 billion or a whopping 103 per cent of GDP.

Now, that is four years of Democratic Labour Party management, but more importantly, Mr. Speaker, intimately involved in the leadership of the economy at the time was the same Minister of Finance who asked us to accept that his policy prescriptions were on the right track - echoing the words of his co-architect, the Governor of the Central Bank, who tells us that all was stable. And the reality is, Mr. Speaker, sir, that the deficit was in fact widening at a galloping pace and Barbados, sir, was being carried towards the precipice of a fiscal cliff. And when the Minister of Finance began his submissions on that tone of asking us to accept the unbelievable - that all was well until April of this year - Mr. Speaker, I was aghast, because it tells me that even as we are here asking ourselves, the members of the government asking the opposition to hold hands with them or walk with them through these difficult times, the Minister of Finance has still not matured to the point of stopping playing games on this serious issue.

Now, Mr. Speaker, sir, that is the first inappropriate policy response. There is another one and that occupied the attention of the Honourable Member who just spoke - that knee-jerk reaction, sir, towards economic expenditure cuts in the vital tertiary education sector as opposed to a more development-oriented path.

No, Mr. Speaker, and I confess, when I was a boy at school, I was taught that the definition of ruthlessness - in the political sense - is that it is the use or misuse of power without social conscience and compassion. There is, Mr. Speaker, sir, a literary view that lowliness is young ambition's ladder, whereto the climber upward turns his face. And when he doth attain the utmost round, he turns his back unto the ladder and scorns the base degrees by which he did ascend. That is from Caesar.

And, Mr. Speaker, sir, we witnessed on Tuesday night a young man who claimed the ladder of free tertiary education in this country. And having attained the utmost rung, turned his back and kicked it down on young people in Barbados with the same ambition and aspiration that the Minister had when he was 20 years younger than he is today. And what is worse, Mr. Speaker, sir, he did it with a level of callousness without regard to a range of alternatives that might have been manifested or ought to have been available.

Now, Mr. Speaker, sir, we have heard in this chamber - and I want to echo the sentiment of the Leader of the Opposition in this regard - the tertiary education sector must be treated as the sacred cow. It is, Mr. Speaker, sir, intimately critical, inextricably linked to the development of Barbados' social capital. It is, Mr. Speaker, sir, indispensable for us to be continually developing our human resource product because we have no minerals, we have no raw materials. In fact, Mr. Speaker, sir, without the University of the West Indies, all the gains that Barbadians

have come to enjoy and to believe in today will be non-existent. It should be the last bastion. It is almost unthinkable that the first assault - the first cut - the Leader of the Opposition talked about a cutlery, but I think she meant a butcher knife - that the first chop with the knife would be at that vital institution.

Now, the Barbados Labour Party made its position very clear, and this is part of the maturity that is necessary in this debate. Because when we went into the last election, sir, we said candidly and forthrightly to the people of Barbados that there were critical financial issues that had to be confronted by this country. And the Democratic Labour Party pooh-poohed all of it. They spoke out of four corners of one mouth - one for privatisation, one against, one for keeping people on and hearing on the other end, nobody will be sent home.

In the middle of it all, Mr. Speaker, sir, we were saying to this country that there was a train trundling down the track at an almost unstoppable and uncontrollable speed. And we said, Mr. Speaker, with specific reference to higher education, that what we wanted to do was to take cognizance of the fact that national insurance surpluses have been rapidly accumulating in Barbados, and that you could reduce the NIS contributions by a percentage which all of us are committed to. And that, Mr. Speaker, sir, out of that, you build a higher education levy. But that cuts in the University of the West Indies expenditure were inappropriate and inopportune at this time, Mr. Speaker, and that the idea of a burden of debt on already heavily indebted families in Barbados - adding to a middle class of Barbados the burden of debt of now having to look to finance their children's education - was almost unthinkable, because you had waited to a point where the average income of the average family in Barbados had been so ravaged that there were no reserves, there were fumes in people's pockets, their businesses were closing down, 16 000 - that was the statistic that was revealed in the election - were already on the breadline. And that, Mr. Speaker, sir, you cannot now come and tell the young people of the country: blessed are the youth for they shall inherit the national debt. That was the position we took.

And Mr. Speaker, sir, we today - I want to be very clear about my position on this. We live in a time, Mr. Speaker, of rising unemployment and declining revenue. And above and beyond all the emotion, I want this chamber to understand that intricately linked to the University of the West Indies is Barbados' capacity to maintain its competitive edge, and that the same document published by the Government of Barbados - to which I earlier referred - tells us, Mr. Speaker, that we are already losing that competitive edge. And the critical statistic is seen in the fact that we have only one trading partner with whom we had and continue to have, fortunately, a competitive advantage.

And there are some who advise the Minister who hate to hear the word services. But I want them to understand that as much as we would like to have a wonderful mix - and that the idea of having a thriving agricultural base and a thriving manufacturing base is something that we can aspire towards - right now we have got to grasp realistically the fruit that is available. And, Mr. Speaker, sir, the goods and services that we sell to the Eastern Caribbean, because that is the only place we have a competitive advantage - when I was part of the cabinet in 2007, we had a trade relationship with them where 53 or 54 per cent of all that we sold went to the Eastern Caribbean. Today, Mr. Speaker, according to the government's own statistics, it is down at 45 per cent. There has been a sharp decline in Barbados' competitive advantage.

And where, Mr. Speaker, sir, does the new emerging competitor come from? The new emerging competitor, Mr. Speaker, is coming from the Eastern Caribbean and the wider Caribbean where previously we were dominant. Barbados today has the unenviable position - in 2012, Mr. Speaker, there were two economies, Barbados and St. Vincent, whose export of services were in steep decline. One was St. Vincent, the other was Barbados. But Trinidad and Tobago, sir, theirs had grown by one percent. St. Lucia's exports to the region, sir, have grown by 2 per cent. Dominican Republic, Mr. Speaker, sir, 3 per cent. Dominica, 3.5 per cent. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, sir, that the country is facing a weakening base of its exports and part of that which has held us, taken us to where we are - I am not here to be romantic about it - is the fact that we have a services economy, and that the services of this country largely are fuelled by the work and the benefits and fruits of the University of the West Indies.

And, Mr. Speaker, sir, that study that I just referred to is a Commonwealth Secretariat study. I am prepared to share it with all the Honourable Members, Mr. Speaker. But I speak to the Prime Minister on this because he is in perhaps a very unique position - I do not think there has ever been a Prime Minister before who has enjoyed the position that this one does. And I do not think, sir, that he fully grasped it. I do not waste my time because the Minister of Finance is now a proven failure. So I speak to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister needs to understand that the era of special entitlements - that even the former Prime Minister who sits now on my left was able to enjoy, the era of special entitlements that all of his predecessors were able to enjoy - has come to an end. That, Mr. Speaker, sir, in the agricultural sector that we like to talk so much about, we were able to build an agricultural sector such as it was, but we did so, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of an entitlement to preferential market

access, guaranteed market, sir, irrespective of the competitiveness or the price of our product. That came to an end. In manufacturing, sir, we were able to build out what manufacturing that we did have, but it rested on the false basis of export subsidies that we could use, taking money and transferring it directly to industry in order to stimulate exports. That must come to an end. In the international business and financial sector, sir, that we rest so precariously on today, we built out what capacity we had on a unique tax benefit arrangement with Canada. Mr. Speaker, sir, that has come to an end. And on top of that, we are now told that the fiscal incentives that allowed us to have societies with restricted liabilities, sir, that all must be terminated by the first day of January 2015. What then, Mr. Speaker, could be the consequence? The only logical consequence that awaits us within a year or so is even more pressure on the revenues, even more pressure, Mr. Speaker, sir, on growth and competitiveness.

And unless Barbados gets extremely serious - unless Barbados gets extremely serious about the difficulty of this time and comes to terms with the fact that government cannot expect to talk about growth in this economy if it is assessed by the World Economic Forum as being 88 out of 100 and some countries, that Barbados, Mr. Speaker, sir, cannot expect to be serious about something like business facilitation when the Minister of Finance comes here with a budget that pledges that he is going to give the international business companies multi-year licences, when he came here two years ago with a budget that in his words, he was bringing a laser-like focus to the international business sector, and that part of the laser-like focus was that international business companies were going to get multi-year licences. The implementation deficit is crippling the country. And I say to the Prime Minister that none but he, sir, none but he is going to be in a position to rescue this country and put it on a sustainable path of development.

But, Mr. Speaker, but, Mr. Speaker, there are conditionalities as well, because as far as I am concerned, the issue, Mr. Speaker, sir, of the removal of impediments to training and to doing business in Barbados is but one part of it. We have been asked, sir, to buy into the view that this country can treat to its students at university. And I want to say while I am on my feet that I respect the contribution made by the member for Christ Church East Central, the Minister of Education, because he attempted to clarify a number of things. But Mr. Speaker, sir, where I have the difficulty is when the minister stands here and says that they are going to give a blanket guarantee that a student who says that I do not have the money, or a parent who says I do not have the money for my child, we then get a guarantee from government.

Well, Mr. Speaker, sir, that sounds good. First of all, the Minister of Education is not in a position to stand here and give us that assurance and have it come with the force

of law, because he does not have the rate or the provisional collection of taxes behind him. That is the Minister of Finance, not the Minister of Education. So he cannot stand here and make law just by words falling from his lips. But more importantly, sir, what does it mean in substance? Because the critical issue is this: that there will still, even if government gives a guarantee to every student who comes and says I need to get a little money, you still have the contingent liability. You are still carrying the contingent liability. Your exposure level is still the same. So what are you really achieving?

And I think, Mr. Speaker, sir, that if there is one thing that this government would do well to hear the opposition on and at least give it the benefit of a rethink - even if you do not feel anything about the overwhelming voice of the public on this matter - rethink, Mr. Speaker, sir, the imposition that you are asking the country to take. Mr. Speaker, sir, I am not taking any comfort in any suggestion about a return to the bad old days of means testing. I am not come to this Parliament to be part of any fraternity for pain and deprivation or pain and degradation on the poor. This is a small society. We know it to be a small society where everybody knows everybody else. I already like to know the business. And I am not going to be part, sir, of an agreement which says that my constituents from poor pockets of the constituency have to go and sit down in front of a civil servant, Mr. Speaker, sir, and explain what they have got, or why they ain't got it, or what to do to earn a living, or who to do it with, and people peeping into their financial rectums. I am not in that, Mr. Speaker.

And I say to you, Mr. Speaker, sir, that a serious government would also understand that there is a cost - there is an administrative cost - to this issue of conducting means testing. Once you implement a means test, Mr. Speaker, sir, the government faces a challenge that it must detect fraud, potential fraud; it must prevent and police potential fraud; and the whole process of administering this means test becomes a burden on the state in and of itself. In some parts of the world, it has been proven to be even more expensive than to have the universal access that you say they want. Think it through.

I also say, Mr. Speaker, sir, that it is a disincentive, potentially, to productivity. And in closing, Mr. Speaker, I say this: if you are going to means test and you are going to use ranges and bands of income, then understand that if I fall below a certain band, there is a disincentive for me to do the things that should push me toward upward mobility in society - and upward mobility for poor people is what I came here to be part of. Mr. Speaker, sir, if it is job skill development, I should earn more money. If, Mr. Speaker, sir, it is higher productivity, that is usually indexed to higher pay. But all of those things will become potentially seen as being a punishment, because I might lose the

benefit if I am financially pushed into a bracket that forces me now to pay for my children at university.

So instead of doing that - and we all know that sociologically the statistics are that the poor part of the population have more children - you say, no, I am not going to put myself in a position to get the upward mobility that I should be seeking. Instead, I will avoid the upward mobility, avoid the higher productivity for the country, avoid the job skill development, because I want to get the little benefit at university. It is, in my view, Mr. Speaker, sir, a foolishness.

And I want to say in closing, Mr. Speaker, that part of the problem we are facing is that the confidence that the government wants to see come will never come, largely because you cannot ask a country to repose confidence in a system in which a Minister of Finance promises \$600 million in stimulus, and then his core architect in the same governmental policy says no, it is a \$400 million cut - and that \$1 billion divide between two people who are supposed to be speaking with one voice on one governmental policy. And if you want to have a \$1 billion divide in one political party before the country, Mr. Speaker, sir, in three months, then what you are really asking the country to do as a whole is to stand with all and say that is a bunch of madness. I would prefer not to invest a cent in that until the country speaks or has an opportunity to speak and return a sane, sensible and ready Barbados Labour Party to office again. I am obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Sorry, St. Philip West. Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to participate in this budget debate that I consider to be of critical importance and of great significance to Barbados' capacity to maintain and to develop a viable economy.

During the lead-up to the election, Mr. Speaker, a lot of time was spent by myself up and down this country, trying to explain similarities in regards to our present economic circumstances and those of the United States and Europe. Some similarities in regards to the economic policies that were being advanced as corrective measures by the Republican Party - those, to name a few, being downsizing government, reduction in entitlements, also measures of tax revision downward across the board, as in a supply-side form of economics. And then on the Democratic side, that being, sir, maintaining entitlements until there is growth. Also a strategy, sir, of government spending to protect the vulnerable and create jobs and stabilise the economy. And also access to the richer persons in society to pay a little bit more in taxes.

After that exercise, Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to review the literature in regards to the debt crisis in Africa in the 70s. I then analysed the debt crisis also in Latin America between 1980 and 1990, that crippled about 19 territories, countries there. I then went and analysed, sir, the Asian crisis from 1997 that started in Thailand. I then went, sir, and came back home to our present crisis in regards to the United States and Europe.

Now, why would I do that, sir? It's because I wanted to understand, from all of those crises, what were the precipitating factors that were different from the factors that precipitated Barbados' critical situation - whether they were different or whether they were similar.

Mr. Speaker, this is what I found out. This is how they emerged. Imprudent fiscal policy, excessive government spending on consumption, borrowing to support that consumption domestically and also externally. Inappropriate tax policy - at times where you should be raising taxes but cutting taxes to stimulate across the board. And excessive spending, sir, on inefficient and ineffective, uncompetitive government institutions as a major factor in every single one of them.

What were the results, sir? In all of the African countries, in Latin America also, Mr. Speaker, in Europe and in Asia, the results were these: a high debt-to-GDP ratio as a result, a high current account deficit as a result, and a high vulnerability to external shocks. And when those external shocks occurred in every single one when analysed - as did occur with respect to this crisis that we now face - you ended up, sir, with either spiralling costs for money, loans. You ended up, sir, with decreased export capacity and spiralling costs for commodities, and you ended up, sir, with decreased foreign exchange capacity. That is for all of them and so on.

Now, in all of them, Mr. Speaker, the borrowing countries that are in the international markets experience significant cost increases with regards to interest rate enhancements. Nothing unusual that happened to Barbados. I think our interest rate payments in regards to our current account would have increased significantly over the last three years as a result of elements of the crisis. But what was important is that the same creditor countries, Mr. Speaker, charge higher rates because there is greater risk as you are perceived. Mr. Speaker, as a result of that, you actually spiral then into a more difficult current account position - that happened in every single one of the areas during crises that I've analysed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, wherever they had to go to the IMF, every single one of those in those crisis periods - this is what the IMF did. Sit under the context of the so-called mantra of the Washington Consensus, truly a neoliberal approach of market economics. Sir, budget cuts - cut

budgets so as to reduce your current account; raise taxes so as to help control your current account; privatise, Mr. Speaker - that is, inefficient government institutions, downsize them, privatise them if necessary, so as to restrict government expenditure. In addition to that, sir, financially liberalise - take off all controls off of movement of foreign exchange in and out of the countries. And obviously, Mr. Speaker, trade liberalisation. But that doesn't matter to Barbados because we have been trade liberalised for a while on the current account in this country.

I said all that, sir, because involved at the back end is debt restructuring - either domestically driven or externally driven - and that being either a proactive approach of refinance, debt reduction, debt forgiveness, write-off, et cetera. The best example of that would have been the use of the Brady Bonds in Latin America. But in all of those places, the decision has always been to protect the banking system and to help them maintain their interest payments and profits.

Why did I go down that road, Mr. Speaker? It is this: whenever those measures were introduced, Mr. Speaker, this is what you had. You had a decrease in disposable income in the countries. A decrease in revenues to business. A decrease in revenue to government. And in many cases a decrease in economic growth across the board. And an increased risk, Mr. Speaker, in regards to worsening the same current account that you are trying to resolve. Now, significant social fallout - because now you have budget cuts, so you have to cut areas of health care, education, pensions, et cetera. And in addition, Mr. Speaker, that is buttressed by significant political blowback at times. All of that comes about, sir, because of issues of uncertainty and confidence.

So the message, therefore, from that journey that I want Barbadians to understand is this. One, austerity on its own is not a strategy. It is not a strategy. It has never been shown to work in any country that I've looked at, because of what I just described as the results. So the budgetary measures brought by the Minister of Finance, recognising that, deciding to couple the austerity measure - understanding that that measure can cause undermining of the growth because it reduces income across the board - you bring a growth strategy along with that. In fact, that is the new measure of the IMF now. It is called Growth in Austerity.

Mr. Speaker, going along with that, there is a third component in every single one of the countries that I've looked at. What is that third component, Mr. Speaker? That third component is structural adjustment - reorganise the structure of the government towards competitiveness and efficiency. That is component number three within the budgetary proposals and the framework for that, Mr. Speaker.

Now, that is set, Mr. Speaker, within this context. And the context is this: that the strategy therefore brought is consistent with the strategy that has been used consistently across the board in every single debt and current account crisis in all of the debt crises that I would have described earlier. No difference, sir. But I say this further - our strategy, sir, is also consistent with the lessons learnt from those periods and crises. As I said earlier, that austerity alone cannot solve a debt crisis. But there are three other more critical factors. One, a country's debt burden cannot be lifted in a contracted economy - cannot. In addition, sir, a country with no growth cannot shed debt. In addition, sir, a country that is growing can pay its debts and decrease its current account deficits. It can manage interest payments. So therefore, Mr. Speaker, our strategy is consistent with established policy.

And the policy that underpins the strategy that I would have spoken to are these. It is guided, sir, by a budget where the policy framework is to lift economic growth but not public debt. Also, Mr. Speaker, to lower public debt but not create economic contraction. Now, why that becomes important, Mr. Speaker, is because when you analyse Barbados's present circumstances - as the Minister of Finance outlined - he outlined the present current account difficulties. He outlined the issue of foreign exchange balances, and he also outlined, Mr. Speaker, in addition to those two elements, some questions in regards to confidence. What I am saying therefore for Barbados is that the strategies that have been articulated here are the strategies that have been consistently applied across every single debt and current account crisis the world has seen.

I heard the member who just spoke before me speak to implementation. That is a fact. That implementation becomes critical because the growth strategy is underpinned essentially by trust for foreign direct investment. Because if you have a scenario where you have declining reserves, the rate of trust in the declining reserves - and understanding that only a portion of the foreign direct investment leaks back out via implementation - then when you drive your projects via foreign direct investment, and the many of those projects that would have been described by many other persons before me, you would be building up your stock of reserves at the same time. So I concur that we will have to do better in regards to implementation. It is my responsibility as the Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure to do so. And all I can say to Barbadians and to all of those hard-working public officers is that the time has come for urgent action - not for me, but for Barbados and your children and grandchildren. And it is now critical that when we go back into the normal day-to-day activity of governance, that we all put our backs to the plough and get the implementation element resolved.

And as I said, that is not for me or for any member on this side. Because the growth strategy is one of the three

distinct strategies in dealing with and correcting your current account and debt problem. But I also will go a little bit further, Mr. Speaker. Let us analyse the current account a little bit more profoundly. Because you can take the current account, sir, and break it into Part A and Part B. Part A and Part B, sir. I will start with B. B is your debt service. The normal convention, Mr. Speaker, is just to use interest charges or your interest costs, because the classical arrangement under the new accounting system is to put your amortisation as a part of your capital asset base. But, Mr. Speaker, the other part - Part A - is your goods and services, your wages, and your transfers and subsidies. So those four elements - I split them like that because, as I said earlier, if you don't have economic growth sufficiently enough to cover your interest payments, then you can't get out of your current account and debt problem, and you will undermine growth forever.

So I commend the Minister of Finance for the growth strategy, because it is the growth strategy and the structural adjustment that are the key components for further advancement. And I say this, Mr. Speaker. The risk for us - the risk for us as a government - I have to analyse both sides. The risk is, and it is something that we would have agonised on, and I've heard the Minister of Education agonising, and others agonising - that is, as you execute your budget cuts, you have to be careful that those cuts and other tax measures do not go to undermining the same growth that you are trying to get from implementation projects. That is the major risk that we have here tonight and the country faces. I am not going to use big fancy talk. I call it as it is. And that risk is something that can only be managed together, sir, by a tripartite arrangement working in concert - the private sector understanding the responsibility in regards to working with government on PPPs, as well as domestic investment. And also, Mr. Speaker, the regulatory framework in the country understanding the urgency in regards to implementing the growth strategy.

And I am confident, sir, that our public officers come next week will hear the cry. And I am confident, sir, that when we go back into normal governance patterns, that we will all endeavour to do better on all of the areas that I would have just described.

You know, Mr. Speaker, Barbadians always say Barbadians have short memories. But I have confidence in the educational ability and capacity of Barbadians. And I believe very strongly, sir, that once they understand tonight that the strategies that we have brought are not inconsistent with what is normally done worldwide - and are strategies therefore set under the policy framework that I would have just described - that they will work with us to turn our current account and deficit problem around. It is not going to turn around, sir, without all of us putting our hands to the plough to get it done.

And as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say to the Minister of Finance that part of the problem that crippled Latin American countries and even many countries in Europe now that are facing anaemic growth is that, even though you had implementation of structural adjustment, Mr. Speaker, and budget cuts, they ended up with higher debts - every single one of them. And in Latin America, one of the things we have to be careful of here is that we must now make sure that any incidence of such goes towards two things: debt [Inaudible.]

The gold strategy itself and ensuring that we are not borrowing to pay debts, because that's exactly what happened in Latin America - getting hold and the interest rates continue to spiral up and spiral up - having to do what we have to do now in regards to the \$500 million, the reserves. I understand the reason for it. I think Barbados will understand the reasons for it. But that must be set, sir, within the strategic framework that I would have just explained.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the areas I want to speak to very quickly. What is important now is for me to speak for a few minutes on my responsibility, sir, in regards to the sugar industry in this country.

Sir, I have gone back and looked at the first Lomé agreement in 1970, sir. And I have also looked, sir, at Lomé 1, Lomé 2, 3, 4. And in every single one of them, Mr. Speaker, even though they had preferential access in regards to our domestic sugar and quotas systems - by the time we got into the quota agreement, Mr. Speaker, the writing was on the wall in regards to that type of international trade policy. It was on the wall. So by the time the EPA came, and they are based on reciprocity, sir, and liberalisation of trade, by the time that happened, the sugar industry in Barbados, in its old form, dependent upon that type of international marketing strategy, was uncompetitive. And as a result of that uncompetitiveness of the industry, you ended up with a threat to food security, because when more lands go out of sugar production, more lands come out of food production in the crop rotation.

So my job and the job of this administration isn't to cast blame, but to recognise the integral link between that industry and the sustainability of the rum industry in Barbados. The rum industry built under threat in regards to geographical indicators - so it's called Barbados rum, Barbados rum - because we import the majority of molasses to support it. And two, that if we had gone the other route in regards to just linking this sugar cane production to electricity, we could have missed the opportunity of supporting the rum industry from domestic molasses production and allowing it to brand and go up the value-added production stream. That's the decision we decided to take, sir. But we accepted the thesis previously of the electricity component.

So every single study that I have looked at - the last one I saw was one IDB, and I looked at all the land and mill studies, I looked at PricewaterhouseCoopers studies, all of them done by the EU - and in every single one of them, sir, they said: go up the value stream, go up the value-added chain in regards to transforming the sugar industry from just producing a sweetener to producing multiple products, if we are to keep the 2 500 people who are directly employed and the other 12 000 that are linked by forward and backward linkages in work.

Now, the plan, sir, is for a foot in that regard. The plan is to produce high-grade - some call it A-strike and B-strike - molasses. We will produce electricity for the grid and power 55 000 or 60 000 homes. We will also be producing, sir, ethanol, automotive ethanol, by dehydrating your standard alcohol - it's just a matter of making it anhydrous. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we are going to be producing specialty sugars and we will stop the importation of \$22 million in brown sugar from Guatemala and wherever else it comes from. Those are going to be produced here, and all their little packets and sachets and all that come from Taiwan and Timbuktu and so on - they are going to get stopped too. And they are going to be produced here in Barbados. Those are value-added. I am totally ashamed when I go to a hotel and pick up a little packet that has come from Taiwan or China - green packet and yellow packet and all sorts of foolishness.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, is that these are things we have to do. And when I hear people out there being critical and not understanding that, and they say, well, are you sure you could get the yields up? Are you sure you can get enough lands back into production? Mr. Speaker, if we do it - what is the alternative? What is the alternative, Mr. Speaker?

So therefore, the plan is - and I have discussed this with the Independent Sugar Growers already - that we will double the amount of money that they get on an annual basis for sugar support. The financing for that is in place. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance would have spoken to the fact that the long-term financing in regards to the new factory and the co-generation facility is also in place. My job, as mandated by the Cabinet, is to carry that to conclusion, and I am telling Barbadians and those persons who would want to think that we should take other routes - I have a mandate from the Cabinet that I am following. And by September, probably latest December, we think we should have full financial closure. That means front-end engineering studies are being done right now, and Williams Industries has now been brought on to deal with certain domestic specifications. That will happen very, very shortly.

But you know, I heard the member who spoke before me continue to speak about implementation deficit - but

you all never produced, never built everything you all said you were going to build. And I can go budget to budget and read Manifesto to Manifesto. But I can say this, and I think the Minister of Finance would have said it before: I have confidence, sir, that the major projects that we are counting on in terms of the growth strategy will come on stream, sir, within a matter of a few months. And I heard the Minister responsible for the environment speak to projects that I can confirm, as the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Committee, will come on stream. But I don't mind the talk, because it is not about talking - it is that we have got to get it done in the interest of our children and grandchildren, Mr. Speaker.

You see, when I do water augmentation, I can take the member and tell them to go up by St. Andrew and see the drills set up there to dig for the water. Go down, see it. Go down in the port and see that it is almost finished.

So, Mr. Speaker, let me conclude, sir, by revisiting a premise, and I want to leave this, sir, with the people of Barbados. Our strategy is consistent with strategies that have been used in every single debt and current account crisis that I have seen, sir. And I have read Africa in the 70s and 80s, Latin America in the 80s, and not the 2001 where Argentina is still struggling to come out. And I have also read, sir, Asia that started in 1997, and I have also read everyone in terms of the European Union and United States. The strategy that we are applying is a three-pronged strategy: control your spending, manage your taxation, get growth going, and at the same time restructure the economy in regards to inefficiencies and so on. So I support that position by simply saying it is the right one, because austerity alone is not a strategy. Austerity alone, when applied, Mr. Speaker, without growth, creates greater problems in regards to the current account of a country.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you very much, and I want to give my full support in regards to these budgetary measures.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir. When historians come to judge the events of the last few days, I believe that they will come to the conclusion that has brought us to the end of an era. The first phase in the independent development of Barbados society can be characterised as an era of civilised and successful development. We managed to do a lot with a little. We managed, Mr. Speaker, to rest our development on sustained investment in the development of our social capital. That period of successful and civilised development was characterised by adherence to certain fundamental precepts and principles, fiscal prudence, Mr. Speaker. Innovative attempts to transform this economy and do it in a way that succeeded in having our country

even before the 50th anniversary of our independence, succeeding in becoming the world's smallest developed society, not on the strength of performance and GDP. But, Mr. Speaker, sir, on the quality of life that we have afforded to our people.

But central to that, sir, has been a commitment to build development on the strengths and the calibre of the social capital. And the people who have written about it, Bruce and others, the Barbados model - not on minerals, but on the strength and the calibre of the social capital. And we have met, Mr. Speaker, at this critical time, to determine whether a country so transformed and developed will hold to that course. Or now, Mr. Speaker, will we take the lurch into catastrophe. And Mr. Speaker, the history of the world, the history of society is replete with species that have failed. We also know societies and economies that have failed - failed in the sense of having to endure long periods of sustained decay from which it is almost impossible to replicate themselves. And Barbados faces the spectre of becoming a failed society, unless at this critical juncture we agree to the right mix of policies and manage the trade-offs between those policies in a manner that gives us a chance to avoid catastrophe.

And, sir, you know, I wish that I did not have to speak in these terms, but the realities are stark. We are speaking in terms of an economy that now is smaller than it was seven years ago. A country that is saving less, investing less. A country, sir, where no productive sector has been growing. We know it is like an airplane where no engine is firing. And thirdly, this country now faces the challenge of taming two demons. One is that after many years of fiscal prudence, Barbados now has an unsustainable fiscal situation that must be dealt with. And at the same time, Mr. Speaker, Barbados now faces an economic situation that, unless it is addressed by proactive measures, and unless those measures are made to harmonise with the initiative to deal with the fiscal problem, we can go the way of societies like Japan and other societies that have had a prolonged period of decay.

Mr. Speaker, I am coming to the end of the debate on the Estimates. And I wish to crystallise the issue because I believe that we must leave this Parliament with the issue crystallised. This debate is taking place at a time when our economy is once again in recession. A recession has a meaning - two quarters of decline. And the Minister of Finance has confirmed that the economy is in recession. Government has chosen to introduce a fiscal consolidation programme of over \$400 million that will compress demand. With nothing more, and if nothing more is done, the fiscal consolidation programme of itself will plunge an economy that is already in recession into further recession.

Now this is the important point, sir. Such further recession will come not like 1991, because you had a

recession then. But it will come after there has been five years of virtual stagnation, five years when, as I said, the economy has gotten smaller and smaller. Enterprises are virtually bankrupt. We are saving less, we are investing less. So that if you know, Mr. Speaker, you have a recession, you compress demand by \$400 million after five years of stagnation, there is the real reality and the prospect that the economy could buckle - and it has happened elsewhere. So I commend the government for understanding that therefore there has to be an element by which we seek to solve our fiscal problems not by fiscal maneuverings but by having growth.

But there must not just be growth, Mr. Speaker. The growth must be at a pace and on a scale and of a nature that would neutralise and more than compensate for the recessionary tendencies that are not just implied but are embedded in a \$400 million contraction programme. And the issue therefore is that this House must leave here satisfying itself that it can answer to the people of Barbados: has what been presented to this House as a strategy for growth? And this is the simple issue. Has what been presented to this House as a strategy for growth? Is it something that gives us the comfort that it is credible enough to offset not just five years of stagnation, contemporary recession, but the further recession that will be caused if you now implement a \$400 million contraction package at this time? That is the issue around which everything is crystallised.

I said I am not going to get too deeply into the blame game and the issues of who brought us to this and who brought us to that. But we are here now, and it must be dealt with. And in every respect, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, sir, the question is: is the strategy for growth credible, realisable, and can it get the job done? So I would just wish to say that if there was something that we should take from this - however, I am not going to go deeply into the fiscal issue - it is sad that Barbados now has to contend with a problem that is entirely within a government that exercises control of in its sole discretion.

In the management of an economy, GDP is not under the government's control. It could be influenced by what the private sector does. Inflation is not always under the government's control. Even sometimes the generation of employment is not under the government's control. But what is under our control and our control as a sovereign state is our fiscal affairs. And I really feel, sir, that it is very unfortunate that we now have that one of the demons with which we have to grapple is the extent of a fiscal problem, because fiscal problems are not caused by international recession. They are caused in large measure by deliberate decisions by government.

I want to say, sir, as part of my contribution to this debate, that this Parliament sets limits on the extent to

which government can abuse its powers of borrowing from the central bank by putting a limit on the overdraft. We set limits on how much government can borrow from under any respective loan instrument. I think that the time has come then to avoid the error and the mess that we are in - knowing that there has to be what I call a constitutional amendment for good housekeeping - and that we have to write into our constitution that no government should be allowed to bring estimates to this House except in circumstances of emergency that does not put government in a position where it has to meet its current expenses from its revenues. I feel, sir, that is necessary at this time because we must avoid this situation where we do not have to face a problem to correct now. Where for five years, Mr. Speaker - and the government has to hear this - for five years, there are those of us who have been pleading with the government: you cannot run a country with a current account deficit of \$500 million a year unless at some time you are going to put that government, the country, in a catastrophic position.

Now, Mr. Speaker, sir, in my short contribution to this debate, I want to talk about growth. I do not believe, frankly, that the government growth strategy - and I commend the government for recognising that it has to do with growth - but I do not believe that the government growth strategy is of a nature that will counteract a recessionary tendency of \$450 million in tax increases coming five years after stagnation. I do not feel so. Many of these measures that the government is talking about, Mr. Speaker - and I take two. The Pier Head Marina: the money that is being sought to be raised is to do the studies. Where are you in the project cycle? You are not ready to implement the project. So do not put it as part of the growth strategy. The Cruise Pier, Mr. Speaker, sir, is at the conceptual level. Incantations cannot create what reality denies. And rather than, sir, how often have you heard this government say the economy is going to be kick-started next quarter by Merits, Fall Bay, Merits, Paradise, Beachlands? Pronouncement, sir, will not get the job done.

I am sorry, I want to suggest to the government - suggest to the country - that rather than these announcements like a new hospital here and there, that there are certain fundamental things that need to be done to put us on a growth path that will give us the comfort and the assurance that things will happen in this country to counteract any recessionary tendencies that ensue from having to undertake fiscal consolidation.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, Barbados has reached the stage where we have to do whatever it takes to allow the tourism industry to lead. There is a book, so called, *The Strategy of Economic Development* by Albert Hirschman - the most fabulous text in economics you can find. I urge all members of the House and all young members, Mr. Speaker, to read page 62, when he speaks of the need for

unbalanced growth, that the leading sector must be allowed to lead. There was a time, Mr. Speaker, in Barbados when the sugar industry was the leading sector. And in 1971, the Sugar Industry Act introduced legislation that enabled the government to take all of the excess profits out of the sugar industry that occurred from time to time, and to allow the government to legislate wages in the sugar industry whether it was producing or not. And by 1971 and 1980, an industry that was the leading sector had to be put on life support. It did not happen by chance. Barbados can only come out of this if a sector leads us out.

And in addition, Mr. Speaker, generating 15 per cent of our activity, the tourism industry generates at least 44 per cent of the rest of the activity in the rest of the economy indirectly. Many of the policies that the government has pursued have hurt the leading sector. This industry - tourism - water and electricity are the two input costs that they cannot pass on. Those have been increased 1.65 per cent, the next 60 per cent straight to the bottom line. And then you increase excise on things you think are luxuries but they are inputs for tourism. And then you increase the value-added tax. And then you increase, Mr. Speaker, property taxes. And what is happening now is a replay of the 1971 scenario,

where the policies that are introduced by the government takes a leading sector and stop it from being able to lead. Whatever is necessary to allow tourism to pull us out has to be done. And so we come to this house, and the government pledges to spend \$500 million on the sugar industry on the factory, the 18 000 ton industry generating \$20 million a year. How much? \$30 million for tourism. Whatever, Mr. Speaker, whatever has to be done Barbados will not come out of this unless a leading sector is allowed to lead.

Secondly, if you are going to have growth, then you do not have fiscal space. And I am accepting there is no fiscal space. Then two things must happen. You must have enablers that allow you, enablers, to allow you to be able to create the conditions for economic growth without having to expend a lot of money. And the question is, sir, is there any such enabler that is available to us that we are not using? The answer is yes. There is a thing called the World Bank ease of doing business conditions. That indicates, Mr. Speaker, and Barbados has been shown for the first time since 2007 that we are 88th in the world in relation to the ease of doing business. At a time when if we could just change the nature how business is done, change the conditions for costs, rates of returns, the two leading sectors tourism and international business can flow. No sir, we are 88th. St. Lucia is number 58th. St. Vincent and the Grenadines and others are higher than us.

Why can't we just say the country with the best conditions for doing business in the world is not a powerful

economy, it is a small economy called Singapore. And Singapore is doing well, Mr. Speaker, because it has the best conditions for doing business in the world. Mr. Speaker, can we not therefore agree that when we do not have fiscal space, do what we said in the manifesto. Let us determine that in short order, all of the things that are stopping us from having capital here and growth here, we will change that. And agree that Barbados must ensure that we become the best place in the Caribbean for doing business. And agree that we ensure, Mr. Speaker, we become in the top 10 in the world.

In our manifesto we did not only talk about the education head. I said that if we had become the government, there would have to be a unit of business facilitation in the Prime Minister's office. And that ministries will be told right now, Barbados is 150th in the world in registering a company. Why should that be? And that ministries should have to be told these are your benchmarks. And we are going to the top. And our growth must come from creating a new climate. And then month by month you give a report. And we have to change this rapidly now. Now, the effort to put it in the Ministry of International Business is a mistake. Why? Because business facilitation cannot only be about facilitating international business. But 76 per cent of the private sector economy is domestic.

Mr. Speaker, the other matter, Mr. Speaker, is this. In today's world, the biggest driver of economic growth, even in Sub-Saharan Africa, is information and communication technology applications. That is true. And we have had what purports to be a growth strategy presented by a minister in the 21st century in conditions where across the rest of the world e-commerce and the applications of information and communication technology is driving growth and not a word on how we can carry Barbados to a higher platform of growth by just advancing our approach in respect to the application of information and communication technology. Mr. Speaker, sir, read the budget. Read the budget - not a mention to it.

Sir, the other way in which we have to create a condition for growth is to recognise that growth comes only from two sources: the expansion of existing enterprises and the creation of new ones. Those are the two only sources of growth. And those things can only happen if people can make a return, can recover their capital, and make a return on the investment. Now, the government is being put to the necessity of having to intervene in what should be the private economy precisely because the conditions do not right now exist for rates of returns to be realised to facilitate the expansion of existing enterprises and the creation of new ones.

And if you are going to have a strategy for growth realistic to our times, let us go through it. I said it in the

case of tourism. No tourism enterprise can - and that is why they are failing. If you pursue certain macroeconomic policies that stab rates of returns in their heart, and let us as a national project understand that there is no growth in Barbados, there is no capital inflows, because when people do the numbers, they cannot see the prospects of getting the rates of returns. And wherever there are policies that stand in the way of these things, let us agree that we have to deal with them and remove them.

The other matter, sir, is that you have to fend off threats. We have, if you are going to create an environment for growth, to fend off the threats. Now, I do not believe that the government did a good job in fending off the OECD threat. We did not. I know what it was to be a Prime Minister of this country and to be faced with a threat from the OECD. I stopped everything that it was doing. I said we are going to fight you to the death till this is resolved. Now, Mr. Speaker, sir, even as they speak to you, there are threats relating to our international business sector, relating to the application of the US and Canadian tax treaties that are still causing business to leave this country. Somebody has to take charge.

I gave a lecture to the Young Economist Association in 2009, and I pointed out that there were four trains virtually colliding at one and the same time. I want to address that Barbados faces - that we have to deal with now - is that most of the incentives that have been used by Barbados to develop our exports have been determined to be incompatible with Article 27 of the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Duties. Now sir, I would like the members of the House - not just the media - but there is a working paper done by the World Bank, implications of WTO disciplines for special economic zones in developing countries. And perhaps you will understand how significant our problem is if I hold up our situation relative to the rest of the world.

There are some countries that have one export incentive that is incompatible with Article 27(4) of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs. One. This large number is Barbados. And this list - let me read them for you, sir. If you give an export subsidy, a reduction in profits based only upon export performance that is judged under international law to be a prohibitive subsidy, and you have to remove it, and if you do not remove it, countries that feel themselves to be victims of your subsidy can apply a remedy equivalent to their loss. It is not a matter to be trifled with. And we have been given to 2015, Mr. Speaker, to deal with it. And that is happening.

And let me tell you what is at stake. The fiscal incentive programme, the export allowances, the research and development allowance, our international business incentives, our society with restricted liability incentives, our export discount facility, our export credit insurance

scheme, our export finance guarantee scheme, our export grant and incentive scheme. That is a large, large chunk of the economy producing goods that is under threat. We have a short time to fix it. I mentioned it in my lecture, Mr. Speaker, in 2009. I beg, do something about it because the waiver runs out in 2015. And Mr. Speaker, sir, the other countries have one only to deal with. That is our list. That is a large part of the core of the rest of the economy that exists. Help to create the conditions for growth in this country - whenever there is a threat, fend it off. No, we got a waiver before and the waiver expires in 2015. So I keep checking the WTO website. I keep checking it and checking it. And you cannot get any more waivers on this matter, sir.

Now, Mr. Speaker, sir. I believe that in addition to policy, in addition to programme, we are at a stage where Barbados's circumstances are so serious that you have to take charge now. Now the issue now is economic leadership. I do not envy the Minister of Finance because I was the Minister of Finance too. But I know that the power that is exercised by the Minister of Finance is not to have to negotiate difficult things that have to be done. We must have the authority that where there is something of fundamental importance to the country that has to be done, that authority has to be exercised. And it is not by chance, Mr. Speaker, that our history as a result, that authority has been exercised by the leader of the country - if only because there are times when you cannot just negotiate it. You just cannot negotiate it. And in my cabinet, Mr. Speaker, sir, I remember when I introduced the value-added tax, I told them it has to be introduced, it will be introduced, and I will tell the country I will introduce it and review it in nine months' time.

Now sir, this is not a time where the Minister of Finance may want to do something and cannot do it because he has to negotiate. This Minister of Finance has hurt his authority by going in public and saying things - he said things on privatisation that he believed in it and he said it to the Chamber of Commerce but then could not negotiate it with his cabinet. This is true. The way in which these measures were introduced to this House, Mr. Speaker, suggests that there might have been things that he wants to do but cannot do because he does not have the authority.

And I also want to say, sir, that he is also doing things that undermine his authority. When you go and say in March that you are going to have a \$600 million stimulus, and then by August you come with a package of \$400 million of contraption, the credibility of the Minister of Finance is in consequence reduced. Somebody knows, Mr. Speaker, sir - this is the time to take charge. And it is not only the time to take charge, sir, but to explain to the country many of the very difficult things that require a

programme of sheer sacrifice on behalf of the people of this country to take us through these difficult times.

And I say, sir, sacrifice. In these measures, Mr. Speaker, every Barbadian of every class is being asked to make a sacrifice. A maid, a single mother maid, finds that this budget will affect her by asking her to give up half of the reverse tax credit by which she lived. And if that single parent maid has a bright son that could become a professional, this budget is telling that person that not only will you lose the reverse tax credit, but the ability for your children to be enjoying that Barbadian dream may be snatched away from you.

Mr. Speaker, there has to be leadership because every other sector of this Barbadian society has been asked to make a sacrifice. But the only sacrifice that has not been asked, Mr. Speaker, is the Democratic Labour Party saying to itself, let us agree that we set the tone by stopping asking the people of this country to pay for our partisan political programme. Because the only thing that is not to be cut are the things that the Democratic Labour Party feels is of political consequence to it. And I believe that this programme will be easier to sell. The monies may not be large, but it is the message of shared sacrifice that is missing now. When everybody including the maid has to shoulder the burden, but the only thing that is satisfactory is the political programme of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. SPEAKER: All right, ma'am, you have five minutes in which to come.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: There is also something that needs to be changed. Barbados, you must stop following an ideology expressed by leadership. Now you're building a society, but we can pay too much attention to building an economy. No matter what they said, that is what was understood. We were accused in the Barbados Labour Party of spending too much time building an economy. But I want to say this, Mr. Speaker, this Barbados Labour Party will this year celebrate 75 years of its existence. And I will take pride. Grandy Adams, sir, not only was the father of a modern democracy, but the modern economy that we know started with the development board that Grandy Adams brought that led to tourism and manufacturing. And his son, sir, can rightly be regarded as the father of the modern offshore sector. And I worked with Bernadine Johnson, sir, who, believe me, was one of the finest economic technicians as a minister you could have. And in my time I sought to perpetuate the Barbados Labour Party's tradition that economic management matters.

Mr. Speaker, I was there and I saw one of the finest leaders in the world, who I revere, Michael Manley, set the most wonderful social goals for our society, but those goals could not be achieved because he could not and did not pay

attention to the deficit and the management of the Jamaican economy. And setting lofty social goals without having the wherewithal to deliver on them is the process by which the developing world and many parts of the world are strewn with the wreckage of failure. And the time has come - it really must come - that the very artificial distinctions that the Barbadian society has had and been asked to set between building a society and building an economy must never again issue from the lips of anybody in this country.

And that, Mr. Speaker, it has to be understood that the purpose of leadership must be to articulate the position and to tell the Barbadian people that you cannot have a strong society without having a sound economy. And whether this government wants to accept it or not, there are a lot of people in Barbados who believe that building a society is all that you need - and so constituency councils and free bus fares and some notion that if you just get these things right, that is what this society will be about.

Mr. Speaker, sir, the country will always need some policies. It will always need some programmes. It also needs strong strategies. But this country, Mr. Speaker, sir, will always need sound and strong economic leadership. And it can justifiably be argued, Mr. Speaker, that unless there is evidence of that strong leadership now - to take charge and to exercise the authority without which we will not have the growth strategy neutralising the consolidation strategy - Barbados will fail.

And I leave the House here with this point, sir. I did Latin at school and I did Tacitus Agricola - the invasion of Britain by the Romans. And there is that famous, famous quotation from Tacitus with which I leave my classical friend: that when they had created a wasteland, they called it civilisation. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Rt. Hon. Prime Minister.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to make my intervention to end the debate on the financial statement and budgetary proposals for fiscal 2013–2014. And I should like to begin by congratulating the Honourable Minister of Finance, the Member for St. Michael North West, for the suite of proposals which he has presented to this House, for the courage that undergirds that suite of proposals, for the processes of consultation upon which he embarked in pursuit of these proposals, and for the elegant presentation made of those proposals to the people of Barbados.

I think that the country has got a clear message from that presentation, and of course the presentation was exemplarily reinforced by the contributions made by Honourable Members on this side of the House. Some outstanding contributions were made during this debate by Honourable Members on this side of the House. We had a

few thoughtful presentations coming from the other side as well. But I think that I owe it to members of this side of the House to congratulate them on the very excellent presentations and recommendations they have made and the excellent defence of the government's programme in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened to budget debates in Barbados from 1962. We were made to listen to the first budget debate of Errol Barrow in 1962 as part of a general knowledge assignment at the Boys' Foundation School. And I have listened to all since then. And there has never been a budget debate in Barbados in which the opposition parties stood up and said, we agree with the government, congratulations, let the budget pass. Opposition parties - and I sat in opposition myself - opposition parties will of necessity and as a right criticise government's policies in any financial statement and budget proposals. And this year has been no exception.

But in fact, the last five budgets have been no exception. In fact, in the year 2008, when we delivered our first budget to this House as a government - a budget which was preceded by estimates of revenue and expenditure which we had inherited from the previous administration for all practical purposes - even those estimates that we inherited were criticised in this House in March 2008. And of course, even though the estimates were substantially an inheritance of ours from the previous administration, because we came in January, basically assumed government in February, and the estimates were supposed to be laid in March - even those estimates were criticised, although we had inherited them. So we knew what we were in for from the time we came to office. And every budget, every set of estimates, have met with the unsparing criticism of the Barbados Labour Party. The estimates were always wrong, the priorities were always wrong, and when budgets have been introduced - whether by the late Honourable Member for St. John or by the now Minister of Finance, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West - the refrain has been the same: wrong policies, wrong priorities, the country is in a crisis.

I listened with interest to the speech of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter just now. And the only thing missing from his previous five speeches is that he did not say that the country was at the edge of a precipice. But in all the previous debates, that is what he said. The country only went to the edge of a precipice once the people of Barbados voted against the Barbados Labour Party and he was not presiding over the destiny of the people of this country. So I am not surprised at anything I have heard in this debate. I am not even surprised by the empty harangue and the hollow bombast of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. We have grown accustomed to that as well. But that is not going to change because that Honourable Member is possessed of the belief

that you can jet-ski your way into people's affections and you can jet-ski your way into the Prime Minister's office in Bay Street. I wish the Honourable Member luck with all of that.

Now, I want to say something -

about this debate. We came to this debate on the clear understanding, Mr. Speaker. That if a building is structurally unsound, there is no safe room in that building. And similarly, if an economy is allowed to become structurally unsound, there is no sector of the economy that will not be affected by that unsoundness. And therefore the policies which we brought to the country in this budget were designed to ensure that an unsoundness in our economic structure that could have untoward consequences for every sector of this society, our households and our businesses, could be fended off.

Now, when one talks about the economy of Barbados, one is talking about the economy in the year 2013 that is really not fundamentally different from the economy of 1962 when the first budget was introduced. Let me tell you why I say that, Mr. Speaker. I'm quoting from the speeches by Errol Barrow. There's an abridged reproduction of that first budget delivered on June 26, 1962. And in 1962, in that first budget, the then Minister of Finance said as follows. I'm just reading this one paragraph.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this island of Barbados is to a large degree dependent on external trade, on the amount of money which tourists are able to spend in the island, and on the remittances which we obtain from relatives, friends and well-wishers abroad. This is not a manufacturing economy wherein the people consume the product of industry, and wherein we get a turnaround of the money in the country entirely independent of external trade.

Those words were spoken in 1961, in the first financial statement. Of course, since then we've added International Business and Financial Services. The same Minister of Finance in 1965, I believe, three years after making those statements, brought an International Business Bill to this chamber and laid the foundation for the development of our international business sector. Of course, at the time of laying that foundation, the world was a completely different place, and not until the second half of the 1970s did the idea of pushing international business and financial services really take off.

It will be noted that the then Minister of Finance did not mention sugar because he had seen, as far back as then, where sugar was going to end up. And of course the right honourable member for St. Peter in his speech just now mentioned sugar and the rather minor role it is now playing in the economy. So we haven't changed fundamentally.

The structure of the Barbadian economy has not changed fundamentally over the last 51 years. We depend on external trade, whether we depend on tourists, now it is international business and financial services, and of course we depend too on foreign capital inflows.

When we came to office in the year 2008, the world had plunged into a recession, a recession from which - I don't mind what I've heard coming from the other side of the House in this debate. I listen to the BBC every single night and every single morning. And what I hear from the BBC and what I read in the Economist magazine and the other things that I follow don't tell me that the world is no longer in any recession. In fact, the chief economist at the International Monetary Fund, Olivia Blanchard, has made it very clear that this is really a 10-year haul that we're talking about. So we're only part of the way on the way out of this crisis.

So we inherited - we walked right into this global economic downturn where, as a result of the fact that our economy is structured around external trade, we had to deal over time with a fall-off in external demand for particularly the services, but to a lesser extent the goods which we produce for export. There were dramatic events in the United States of America, dramatic events in the United Kingdom. Canada was the only shining light at that time. The buzzwords that came out of the United States of America during that period were the words "stimulus package" - that was supposed to be the panacea for all of the ills at that time confronting the Barbadian economy. And we heard them here in Barbados from the honourable member for St. Michael North East and we heard them from the right honourable member for St. Peter. What the country needs is a stimulus package, we were told.

The right honourable member for St. Peter, not too far away from the spiritual home of the Barbados Labour Party, not too far away from the territorial court, at a public meeting, exhorting the government to spend foreign exchange - that's what we left it there for. The country needs a stimulus package. We were not being told that stimulus packages were not working anywhere else. But the government did not take that advice and up until very recently, the honourable member for St. Michael North East has been advising the government: oh, you have all this foreign exchange, you only need 12 weeks of import cover, you can spend some of the remainder and stimulate some local demand. Up to recently we were being told that. We did not take that advice and on any objective evaluation of the stance we have taken, we were right.

In fact, when we got the alert from the Central Bank officials that things had changed after the month of April, members of the cabinet will bear witness. I asked the question: if we had taken the advice that we were being given all along, would we have been in this situation now?

And unhesitatingly the answer was given - we would have been in an eminently worse situation; perhaps we would have been wiped out by now. So I do not apologise for ignoring what was reckless advice and making sure that we kept Barbados on an even keel.

There were some unique features about the global economic downturn with which we were dealing. There was a downturn between 1974 and 1975 that lasted for about a year to 16 or 18 months. There was one between 1981 and 1982 that lasted for a year or 18 months as well. There was one in the early 90s, another year and a half to two years; there was 2001, 2002, year and a half to two years. This downturn is now going into its seventh year, and nobody is able to say with any certainty when it is going to come to an end.

So I hear all this talk about when the history of this period is written - when the history of this period is written, there will only have been one government of Barbados in the post-independence period that had to deal with an over five-year economic downturn. And we are going to be judged on how we managed it, and on our capacity to get the people out of it, to get the economy back on serious track.

So we did not accept the recommendations of the Barbados Labour Party. We ran a larger than usually desirable fiscal deficit. There's nothing unusual about that either. In 2001, when 9/11 happened, the then Minister of Finance, the right honourable member for St. Peter, introduced what he called counter-cyclical policies, running a larger than usual fiscal deficit, creating some fiscal expansion so that economic activity would not abate and that there would be no serious loss of jobs and that kind of thing. We did no differently in the present context. We did it for a longer time because we were dealing with a longer crisis. And as long as the foreign reserves we were earning were paying for the imports we were consuming, the advice available to us was that even though we had to try and control the fiscal deficit, we were not in any serious peril.

We've been accused of going to the people of Barbados and saying that all was well. That is not true. I was speaking at constituency conferences of the Democratic Labour Party from 2009. I believe my predecessor, the late right honourable member for St. John, spoke at about two or three of them, four at most, before he fell ill. I spoke at all the others and at every single constituency conference that I addressed, I made clear that we were in the more serious downturn the world had seen in nearly a hundred years, that we had to be very careful. At Harrison College School Hall, I began to tell people that we have to distinguish between wants and needs and we have to be prudent because we were going through a very difficult period and nobody could say with any certainty

how long it would last or what would be its ultimate depth. I said so and that was the position I took consistently.

It was the position that members of this government took consistently in all of our public pronouncements. Nobody said that we were living in any Panglossian world, that all was well, all was sweetness and light, because there's no household in Barbados that doesn't have either a friend or a relative living in either the United States of America, United Kingdom, or Canada. So people don't have to depend on us for information. They can get it from sources independent of us. And it would have been - to use the words of the honourable member for St. James - it would have been absurd for us to walk around the place saying that all was well when the evidence available to households and to business was telling them something else.

But we embarked on a policy position, the object of which was to keep some spending in the economy, and we could only do that by keeping people employed, and that is what we did for practically the full duration of this crisis. And the policy was that we were going to keep people employed in the public service. We made attempts to protect jobs in the private sector as well by extending the hand of fellowship and cooperation to the private sector, making certain national insurance concessions and that kind of thing. And also we extended the payment period for persons who carelessly lost their jobs from 26 weeks to 40 weeks, until actuarial advice suggested to us that we could not carry it beyond 40 weeks.

So this idea that the DLP deceived the people, that we were telling the people one thing before the election and now we are coming to say something else, cannot stand the test of public scrutiny. It certainly cannot stand up to the truth of the situation because the facts say otherwise. Our challenges, our most serious challenges, took shape on the advice we got just after April 2013. And that is the point at which we were told - and since the advice made sense, we took the advice - we were told that we had to take stock and to take corrective action so that we did not allow the national economy to be structurally undermined, therefore exposing households and businesses to unnecessary risks.

Our problems have been the deficit - the fiscal deficit - debt, and of course we've had to pay careful attention, we have been paying careful attention, to the foreign reserves. The resolution before the House in its third recital says, and whereas the government proposes to institute measures and policies to protect the foreign reserves, to reduce the fiscal deficit, and to promote sustained economic growth while maintaining the social fabric. That's the focus of the government. We are aware that if you have a deficit, there's a limited number of ways in which you can deal with a deficit in the short term. You either have to get your revenues up or you have to cut your

expenditure. But in the more medium term, you need to get the economy on a growth path. Growth is the ultimate solution to problems of debt and deficit. The measures brought to this House by the honourable Minister of Finance are designed to deal with all of these issues. There is no magic to any of this.

I listened to the right honourable member for St. Peter. And one would have got the impression that between 1994 and January 2008, there were no problems in Barbados. I know differently. And Barbadians know differently. Hindsight uses 20/20 vision and I'm very happy that from where he now sits he can look back and he can give the kind of advice which his experience puts him in a position to give. I saw that happen before, between 1976 and 1986. I used to come here and listen to Errol Barrow giving the Government of the Day advice because he had been at it for 15 years before that. There's nothing new about this. But he never gave the impression that he presided over a perfect world and that the world to which he was then giving the advice had all of a sudden become the most imperfect world ever.

So we've been trying to deal with our debt problems, our deficit problems, and our foreign reserves issues. That is what this budget is about. We did not take the advice we were being given about fiscal expansion with any stimulus package or anything like that when we were being advised by the government.

No, Mr. Speaker, some years ago I had a brief attachment at the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of the West Indies. I was there working along with the late Dr. Patrick Emmanuel, and on one occasion he and I had a discussion on a paper which he shared with me and which I still have. And that paper had to do with structural adjustment policy, IMF policies to correct balance of payments challenges. That paper - the IMF policies and the balance of payments in Barbados - was written by an economist by the name of Owen Arthur. I pulled out this article because of the advice we were being given from 2008 until now.

If you will permit me, Mr. Speaker, to just draw the House's attention and the country's attention to a part of this paper published by the Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, Cave Hill - IMF policies and the balance of payments in Barbados, by Owen Arthur, Research Fellow. It's dealing with the challenges that Barbados faced in 1981 when the IMF had to be called in by the then administration. After the general election of 1981, I heard the honourable member for St. Michael North East yesterday saying that Tom Adams came to the country before the election and said this. I went to political meetings all across Barbados through the 1981 campaign.

I was in this House when the mini-budget was brought. I was in the public gallery of this House when the mini-budget was brought after the 1981 general election, when the then opposition, Democratic Labour Party, condemned the then government of Tom Adams for lying to the country during the election campaign, saying that all was well, and then coming immediately after and bringing a mini-budget, which mini-budget was designed to ensure that IMF preconditions or conditionalities were satisfied. So I don't know where the Honourable Member got that from. But at page 26 of this paper, this economist Owen Arthur said the following: He said the economic preconditions of Barbados' approach to the International Monetary Fund were established in 1981. The economy recorded negative growth of 2.6 per cent, largely as a result of a steep fall-off in real activity in its main export sectors. The current account deficit increased fivefold between 1980 and 1982. And in the face of these circumstances, the government embarked on an expansionary fiscal programme to counter the real income effects of a fall in international demand. Those were the conditions that existed in 1981.

What was the conclusion of this economist Owen Arthur in this paper? I read from page 35. It says, since 1973, successful macroeconomic management in Barbados has been based on the premise that fiscal expansion cannot compensate for the recessionary tendencies of a fall in international demand in small open economies. They may lead to a spurt in the level of employment, but it soon becomes clear that such a position cannot be indefinitely sustained because the fiscal expansion fuels the demand for imports, weakens the country's external position, and reduces its capacity to maintain a stable growth rate over the medium term. That's the same advice that the Governor of the Central Bank was giving us, giving the government. That's the same advice we were getting in the Ministry of Finance and in the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

But that advice was wrong. We were being told - not by Owen Arthur, but by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. Not by Owen Arthur, but by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter - that we should embark on this expansionary programme, spend the foreign reserves; that's why we left them there.

Mr. Speaker, one thing that I hope I can do, and I hope I can do it in the not too distant future, is to effect a meeting between Owen Arthur and the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. I want these two people to meet, and I want to see them looking into each other's face. I will effect the introduction. But I ignored the advice and here we are tonight.

Now, coming out of this budget debate and coming out of the measures which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has introduced, the government has

determined that one of the ways to deal with some of the challenges we are facing is to ask students at the university to make a small contribution to their education.

Now, I sat here in amused silence in this debate to hear Errol Barrow being praised to the highest heaven. This is the same Barbados Labour Party that tried to lock him up. The Duffus Commission was intended to destroy Errol Barrow forever. He was a criminal, according to them, and those younger members of the Barbados Labour Party - the ones who read - should get the debate in this House in which, if I get the Ministerial statement that Tom Adams made in this House when he was announcing that he was going to set up a Commission of Inquiry into the doings of the Democratic Labour Party and particularly Errol Barrow after the 1976 election. I hear attempts to beatify Errol Barrow all of a sudden when the Barbados Labour Party did everything in its power to destroy him.

Now, the Honourable Minister of Education, Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, has spoken admirably and very lucidly on this issue of university education and the measure which the government has

introduced designed to ask students to contribute their tuition fees as part of the effort of controlling government costs. And he read from this document the 50th anniversary document of the university. He didn't read all of the most important parts, but I want them to go into this house's records. So I crave your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, to read just three, four paragraphs between pages 52 and 53 of this document. Okay, fill at 50. 1963-2013: Path to Prosperity, Selected Documents, UWA and Barbados, and so on. This is Errol Barrow speaking on February 6, 1968, 45 years ago. Addressing a University of the West Indies graduation at Cave Hill, on the sixth day of February 1968. I hear people over there speaking with authority about Barrow. I never, I didn't know Barrow, but he called him Uncle Errol. He was never my Uncle Errol. I knew him sitting in meetings, General Council meetings, executive meetings, and in meetings of the Academy of Politics of the DLP, from 1970 until he died. I never could call him Uncle Errol, so I don't - I never had that privilege. I dealt with him on matters of policy and matters related to the future of Barbados. I was in the General Council when the issue of free textbooks for school children was discussed. I know about those things, but I hear people speaking with all this authority about our Barrow. So let's hear what he said.

The impression has been given that the facility of free tertiary education is a facility intended for all time, and that this government has now, according to the Member for St. Michael East, betrayed Barrow. And we should be ashamed that one of the pillars of our philosophy has now collapsed. And we will not be able to walk the streets of

Barbados anymore. We've now lost our capacity or our right to say anything about education in Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East is a very good friend of mine. We have been friends for many, many years. And we've had many, many long conversations early in the morning - four o'clock, five o'clock - discussing matters of state in the days of his enlightenment. In the days of his enlightenment.

At page 52, here is what it said. University costs are rising steadily. This is 1968, 45 years ago. University costs are rising steadily. More money has to be found for maintaining existing services and for financing properly planned expansion. It now requires nearly \$3 500 a year to keep a student at Mona, nearly \$3 300 to keep a student at St. Augustine, and over \$2 500 to keep a student at this campus. Even with generous assistance from overseas for capital construction and for scholarships and research fellowships, the territories must still provide several million dollars each year for the current operations of the University. The larger territories, apart from their mandatory payments to the Central University, maintain hundreds of students from public funds in furtherance of their policies for the spread of higher education. This investment on their part cannot be curtailed until there is evidence that it is no longer necessary. Meanwhile, the university itself has to teach more students, do more research, provide even more special services to governments. All of this activity will necessarily be reflected in higher costs, though equally in speedier development. The calculated sacrifice of present comforts to future benefits can only be justified if the fullest use is made of available resources. When, therefore, we speak of bringing the university to the people, we should not only mean that more and more people should directly as students enjoy its facilities. We should also intend that the citizens of the region should be encouraged to regard the university as their most important asset. We cannot rightly urge them to sacrifice for it merely by pointing with pride to its facilities, or to its achievements, or even to its international standing. They must feel for the University the same concern which the fortunes of sugar, tourism, industrial development and national security engender. They must be helped to know as a subtle conviction that the efficient growth of this university is almost their only path to prosperity.

And here is a very important paragraph, and this is the final one. The university, for its part, must eschew conspicuous consumption. It is the People's University. In this most exacting role, it must lead the territories in the difficult art of making one dollar do the work of two. Governments have to run the first gauntlet of parliamentary approval for public expenditure, and they sometimes have to impose taxation which is never acceptable. If the university raises its level of expenditure to a height not easily justifiable by the benefits conferred on the taxpayer

as citizen, the government will not have a pleasant time with their fellow citizens when they ask for increased provision. The greater awareness there is of the university's moderation the more generous will be the region's response. Dr. Samuel Johnson once said of Scotsmen that they sustain their culture on a little oatmeal. I should not live to prescribe this somewhat unpalatable diet for our university, but I think we can still sustain our culture by the prudent use of a slender purse.

When I heard what the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central said here tonight in this debate, when I heard the information he shared with the country on the whole issue of expenditure of the university, it is as though Mr. Barrow was some kind of prophet. And he did not give the impression in anything he said here that this thing could last forever. He said the investment cannot be curtailed until there is evidence that it is no longer necessary. Now, who decides whether it is necessary or not? The government has to decide that. And the Government of Barbados is not deciding that contribution to the university is no longer necessary. What we are saying is that the costs have become so prohibitive and that the contribution to the university is so disproportionate when contrasted with the contribution to other tertiary institutions that some balance has to be restored - and that balance is best restored by the government continuing to carry the bulk of the burden, but asking students in controlled circumstances to carry a little of that burden.

Look, I received all of my education, Mr. Speaker, at the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, apart from when I went to Hewitt in law school. I did a BA degree at the University at the taxpayers' expense. I did a Bachelor of Laws degree at the University again at the taxpayers' expense. When I wanted to go off to Hewitt in law school I didn't have a cent. The Student Revolving Loan Fund was saying that law was not a priority. So rather than waste the two years knocking around, I decided to do a Master of Laws degree again at the taxpayers' expense. When I was finished that Master of Laws degree, the priorities at the Student Revolving Loan Fund had changed and I believe I borrowed about \$40 000 or \$45 000. I went off to Trinidad to do the bar. I came back, went to Royal Bank, owning my very first car at age 33, and borrowed another \$35 000 to get a car, and of course to set up a law office. Before I had one client, that is the debt with which I started my professional career. I gave myself seven years to build a legal reputation. I knew you couldn't build a reputation as a professional overnight, so I gave myself seven years. I told myself, I don't have to have any extra money to do anything. I just want to be able to pay my rent, pay my secretary, run my car, and do my work. That is how I did it.

No, I am not saying that everybody is going to be in a position to do it that way. What I am saying though is this: since the taxpayers of Barbados were so good to me, I

cannot expect them to make the same sacrifices for my daughter. So I pay for her now. And that is what I think is expected of persons who benefit from the benefaction of the taxpayers of Barbados through the University of the West Indies. I can feel that spirit empowers you, but they don't empower you for your own pleasure and enjoyment. They empower you to put you in a position where you can be of help to others in their situation. And that is what is expected.

Now there are parents who cannot manage that situation and the government has taken the position that the Student Revolving Loan Fund will be made available - or the processes of the Student Revolving Loan Fund will be made available - to persons in those difficult circumstances. Now let me say something very briefly, because I know the night is far spent, about the Student Revolving Loan Fund. This Student Revolving Loan Fund, Mr. Speaker, was passed by the Democratic Labour Party in this Parliament in 1976. It was introduced because the Democratic Labour Party in government under Errol Barrow's leadership, with Sir Frederick Smith - Mr. Sleepy Smith at the time - as Minister of Education. But Erskine Sandiford, as he then was, had been - there had been a reshuffle about a year and a half before that. The DLP passed the Student Revolving Loan Fund Act because the party contemplated that people will want to get loans to finance their own education. That is what the Student Revolving Loan Fund is there for. It was passed in 1976 in this House. It did not get to the Senate because Parliament was dissolved before the Senate could sit. And as soon as the Barbados Labour Party came to office in 1976, the first bill they brought here - because they said there was no difference across the aisle on the question - was the Student Revolving Loan Fund Bill, which was passed by the consent of the whole House, because it had been debated before Parliament was dissolved, and then it went up to the Upper House and was passed.

Why do you pass a Student Revolving Loan Fund Act if students are not supposed to borrow money to make use of it? It is a Democratic Labour Party project and therefore we say we are going to make it more flexible, and this Minister of Education has come to this House in the last Parliament and raised the loan figures from about \$50 000 to over \$100 000 to take account of rising costs, so that students who want to make use of the Student Revolving Loan Fund can get access to those funds. And that is what it is about. A government that never contemplated people paying for education passed the Student Revolving Loan Fund - to do what? Do you go to a Student Revolving Loan Fund to borrow money to buy a car or to build houses? You go to finance your education. And it is from that fund that I borrowed to finance my studies in Trinidad. And I would not be surprised, Mr. Speaker - I know that your Honour's circumstances were far more propitious than mine, and your Honour may not have had to borrow - but I

would not be surprised if your Honour didn't have to use the same route. And I heard the learned Attorney General making the same point today. That is what it is about.

The Democratic Labour Party is not abandoning its commitment to tertiary education. The bulk of the costs of university education is still being met by the Government of Barbados, even after this measure becomes effective. And we are putting mechanisms in place to ensure that every deserving citizen of Barbados - every citizen, every student desirous of getting a university education - can still get it. The means testing mechanism - all of a sudden means testing is now a phrase of derision. It applies in every other situation in the social safety net system, you know. But all of a sudden now, because people want to score cheap political points, means testing is now something to be ashamed of. When you go to a bank to get a mortgage, that is means testing. Banks don't close their eyes and ask you no questions about yourself and take out the money and give you. Your means are tested. It happens wherever you go. You have your own money in the credit union and when you go there, unless you satisfy certain means tests, you cannot get the loan you want. Simple as that. So I don't know where all this talk about means testing being something degrading comes from. When I went to Royal Bank of Canada to get a mortgage, I was means tested. They asked me more questions than I could even answer. That is what it is about.

So let us get some sanity back into this debate. I certainly would not preside over a government that was going to turn its back on the poor people of Barbados. And I do not subscribe to the view propounded here tonight by the Honourable Members - about lowliness being an ambitious ladder and people kicking down the ladder. No ladder is being kicked down. All that is happening is we are facing reality - a reality that was articulated in 1968, 45 years ago, and a reality that has now come to full maturity.

So, Mr. Speaker, I got to this much more quickly than I wanted to because I had to take cognizance of the time of the night. I really had quite a few other things to say, but I know that there is other business we have to do before this debate comes to an end. I really don't want to go on any longer. But I had to get to this issue.

I hear talk about the reverse tax credit. Not a lot of attention has been paid to that. The old focus has been on the university education. But the reverse tax credit has a history too. And that history has to do with the fact that when the VAT was introduced in 1996, it was introduced as a revenue-neutral tax. We were told that it was abolishing about 11 taxes and that we were replacing 11 taxes with one tax of value-added tax. I sat in the House. I was Deputy Opposition Leader sitting down exactly where the Honourable Member for St. John is now sitting. I am the person who spoke for the Democratic Labour Party

when the Value-Added Tax was introduced, because my then leader - the late Honourable Member for St. John - was out of the country. I am the person who spoke in this House for the opposition when the Value-Added Tax was introduced. It was supposed to be a revenue-neutral tax. But the Honourable Member for St. Lucy constantly said to the government of the day, this tax is not going to be revenue neutral. It is going to yield millions of dollars more than you are saying. And he was laughed out of court.

When the figures came in, the tax yielded upwards of \$200 million more than contemplated by the government at the time. And the government took the position that since it had wrecked more taxes than it could have contemplated, that it was going to do a little give back to people from whom these taxes would have been collected. And that is how reverse tax credit was introduced. It had nothing to do with looking out for any poor or anything like that. That was not how the debate was framed. It had to do with the fact that the value-added tax raked in a lot more money, millions more, than it was intended to rake in and, struck at the level of its conscience, the government decided, let's give back a little something to the people. We took more from them than we intended. And over time, the reverse tax credit was built on. We built on it, too. My predecessor in office, the late member for St. John, when he was Minister of Finance, increased the reverse tax credit in his budget, 2008 I think it was, or 2009, we used it. But it had nothing to do with any concern about poverty and it could not have had anything to do with any concern about poverty because the right Honourable member for St. Peter only discovered policy, a very big part in poverty, in 1996, the month of November in the St. Michael North East by-election by his own confession. He said that he did not know that there were so many poor people in Barbados until he fought that by-election. So it could not have been about any poverty. It was about giving back to people some of what you're taking from them and what you say you didn't intend to take.

And all of a sudden, we hear in all of this talk, we hear all this talk, these bleeding hearts around everybody, everybody carrying on about these things. No, no. Mr. Speaker. I think the government has done the best that it could do in the present circumstances. I have never heard applause break out in Barbados or in this House when any tax was introduced or anything of the kind, that kind of thing. Some policies will require a little more explanation than others. And I agree with the Minister of Education. We have a lot more talking to do on this, because people have to hear the facts. But in the context of the overall package brought to this House by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, I think the government has done the best it can do in all the circumstances. I think our programme for growth has great potential. I, as Prime Minister, I heard the talk, I heard the advice from the Honourable Member for St. Peter. I take the advice. The

advice is already contained in the budget though, that I am going to make sure month by month that these projects are pursued and that they are brought to successful conclusion. That is already set in the budget. So that is the position of the government.

And let me end where I started. A building that is structurally unsound contains no safe rooms. And an economy that is structurally unsound is a threat to all sectors of the society. And these measures are designed to ensure that the economy of Barbados remains sound and that the people of Barbados can enjoy a quality of life or continue to enjoy a quality of life that is consistent not only with their traditions, but consistent with their expectations. Yes, we've had some challenges with our growth, but I said in this House in the estimates that a recent report had indicated that it would take the British economy another four or five years to get back to where it was, I believe, in 2007. There's nothing new about any of these things. The world is going through its worst crisis in about 100 years. And Barbados, we love Barbados. We wish it well. We are committed to it. But let us not lose sight of the fact that Barbados is still a small, fragile country in the Eastern Caribbean, and that for all of our history, what has happened in the United States of America, what has happened in the United Kingdom, and what has happened in Canada has always impacted on what happens here in Barbados. But we continue to do our best to keep our eyes on the ball and to make sure that we continue to raise this country's gaze to horizons hitherto unimagined. Mr. Speaker, this resolution has my full support and I'm obliged to you.

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

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oh, I didn't hold up my hand. I had my head down.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Ms. Deputy Speaker. I want to begin my very brief intervention in wrapping up this debate by expressing my appreciation to all members who have contributed from both sides of the House, from the opposition benches, and of course, for the very erudite, weighty and insightful contributions from the government side of the House, particularly - I think, but I don't want to single out people - but I think the presentation that we last heard from the Prime Minister, Honourable Prime Minister, puts into context many things in relation to this budget that we presented and of course the resolution that of course initiates this particular discourse.

I think two speeches in particular, Mr. Speaker, if I may say so, caught my attention in particular because in many ways they were quite similar to some extent, not entirely, but I think they reflect exactly what we were

attempting to do and are attempting to do in relation to the Barbados economy, which we all accept has had a fairly rough time in this very deep global business downturn. Really, it's a business downturn. People say recession and economic downturn, those are terms you can use, but it's a downturn in the business cycle, which even though at the macro level we've been having reports of growth in different parts

of the world, even in the United States, the underbelly of the growth, the real basis of the growth has not been as robust as in previous recoveries, and therefore businesses are still uncertain, certain investors are still uncertain and we've had to contend with that. It's had a particularly devastating impact on our economy. The two speeches I refer to, of course, is two delivered this evening, one by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West and the other by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. I think really the Member for St. James Central would do well to pick up a little thing from both of those, but we will see in time. But the context of both speeches was that, or the common denominator, is that you had to look to re-engineer growth in your economy. If you're going to do stabilisation or consolidation fiscally, you had to look towards growth. I think the Honourable Member for St. Philip West made one stage further to speak about structural reform of the economy, which I thought was a little disappointing in the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. Peter because he didn't touch it. And there seems to be some particular - I wouldn't say opposition, but he seems to be oblivious to the fact that this economy is really in need of deep structural changes. He didn't attempt it when he was Minister of Finance. He went the easy road. Of course, times were good and the country's economy was booming and people were investing, and tourists were travelling and everybody was having a good time. So the casino economy that we constructed globally and which Barbados, of course, helped roll the dice and participated in, everybody was having a good time. But we know that the underpinnings of this economy were structurally unsound, were not attempted to be changed fundamentally, and therefore we, when faced with difficult circumstances, particularly a downturn in the demand for our goods and services internationally, would obviously have had a struggle. And we've had a pretty good struggle in the last couple of years.

Indeed, I listened to the Member for St. Peter very clearly when he spoke, and he often tries to bring over this degree of intellectual seriousness that I perhaps - we can accept, believe we can accept - in the context in which it is given. But it always makes this point when he speaks every year about an enterprise culture and building enterprise and we need to build enterprises and all of these nice things. The truth is the model of economic development that the Honourable Member embraced so generously and clearly made such passionate love to in the time when he was

Minister of Finance didn't stress any enterprise culture and building enterprises. It was really ostensibly about pushing the services model for the economy. That's right. That's a warning. And he was warned repeatedly about it, and that at some point in time, unless that services model was underpinned by an appropriate expansion in industrial capacity in the economy, whether it is in the higher value-added end of agriculture, in manufacturing, niche manufacturing, in other areas of fundamental importance where industrial culture can be built and sustained, that we would run into a problem. The Honourable Member who was bathing in the fun of an expanding global economy ignored that particular aspect of economic planning and development. And the result is what we have. We built a services economy based on tourism and international business and financial services predominantly linked to a global economy, and when that became imperiled and declined, the result is what we have now.

So, I mean, you know, these fancy speeches that we hear from time to time, if we have enough time, we could expose them. My job tonight is not to expose too much of that because frankly it runs around quite naked on its own and anybody with a modicum of intelligence is able to see through a lot of it. What I do find quite amazing, Mr. Speaker, sir, and I want to address this issue in particular, one or two. And the other one is this whole issue about what we are doing. The speech of the Honourable Member for St. Peter, which was in such direct contrast to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North. In fact, it was a total jettisoning of that approach, what we call the retail politics approach. The Honourable Member actually supported the budgetary presentation without saying so. He said we needed to go for growth. In doing so, we needed to focus on our two key sectors, tourism and international business. He said we needed to focus on business facilitation. He said we needed to get projects going, capital works projects, investment projects and so forth and so on. And that government needed to take the lead in that respect. All of what he said is what we enunciated on Tuesday. So he basically - I know it with much interest - that in the speech which the Honourable Member gave, he did not mention a word about education, at least not in the kind of naked politicking that other members of the Opposition did. He was very careful not to do that because he knows he is on record as saying and suggesting very clearly that the time had come for a new financing model for university education that would include payment of fees by students. Of course he said it. All of that talk about registered savings plans for university education backed by appropriate tax allowances or tax credits - you don't save to pay for something if you don't intend to make people pay for it - so I clearly understand the logic. I understand the logic of what the Honourable Member was saying. But because I want to get that very early before I forget about it, I know why he didn't say anything about education in here.

But, Mr. Speaker, sir, some of the political hypocrisy - not in here, but otherwise - that you hear about this part of this issue of education, I think, needs to be exposed. Because the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, a good friend of mine as well, I speak to him often and I've known him for many years, and therefore I respect his views. But when he comes here and cries crocodile tears, I often wonder if people who run for political parties read the documents that are produced in their names. I'm going to get to that. The Minister of Education spoke about the - they call it the Beckles Commission, but it is really the framework for reform of tertiary education in Barbados, looking for financing for tertiary education. And I want to read at page 34, Mr. Speaker, sir, where it spoke about a shared costing model 2012 to 2020. And it spoke about the conception and implementation. And I quote it, Mr. Speaker, sir.

"Of a tertiary education funding model in which the government paid 100 per cent of the economic cost for students took place within a discernible national, economic and social circumstances. Primary in this matrix was a consideration of extreme wealth, mild distribution, endemic mass poverty, residual constitutional institutional racism, economic and social injustice, and inadequate cultural confidence. The funding model established was intended to launch an educational revolution for democracy, which was designed to produce a broad-based middle class, popular professionalism in human resource, and to uproot deep historic material poverty among the majority labouring class. The state considered the launch of a public education revolution as the key variable in building the just society. The results of this policy have been spectacular. Barbados as a society has been significantly transformed and the strategy largely vindicated."

Now here's the key point. The policy imperatives were set out some 50 years ago and have remained in place to this day. The question being asked today seeks to answer in respect of the continued relevance of the vision and policy. It is now properly recognised that while the tertiary funding model remains relevant, it is necessary to make adjustments in order to reflect the benefits of past decades. The point which the Prime Minister was making, that parents who particularly benefited should be able to, in turn, support the system continuing. It goes on to say: "This report therefore suggests the need to make adjustments without in any way subverting the general integrity of the model. These adjustments are intended to strengthen rather than weaken the model and are intended to consolidate the ongoing democratisation of access to education in the country. Given the tremendous benefits of tertiary education to the growth and development of the public and private sectors in Barbados, a system of cost sharing could be considered for implementation. The model of finance and education could therefore be adjusted to

reflect the following allocations: 85 per cent contribution by the government, inclusive of higher education levy.”

Now, understand it. 85 per cent contribution by the government, backed by an education levy; 10 per cent contribution by the private sector; and 5 per cent contribution by the consumer or the student. That is the Professor Sir Hilary Beckles Commission, chaired and shepherded through the system by Professor Beckles and his team. 85 per cent from the government, but backed by a levy. Now, a levy is a tax. We haven’t imposed an educational levy on anybody. 10 per cent for the private sector - I don’t know which private sector it is that they’re going to get that from - but 10 per cent from the private sector, and 5 per cent contribution by the consumer or the student.

Now here’s the point that I want to make about the political hypocrisy. In this document called *A Vision for a Better Tomorrow*, the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party, with a beautifully airbrushed photo of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter - yes, the hair, the hair looked really, really nice, and all the baby powder and Ponds cold cream on his face - Mr. Speaker, sir, do you know that at page 40 - let me get to the education thing here - listen to this. That’s why I say the Honourable Member for St. Michael East - I am not going to speak about the Honourable Member for St. James Central. He was very abusive of me, tried to say all kinds of things about me, that I am a catastrophic failure and all of that. No, no, no, no, no. The Honourable Member for St. James Central is my friend. So I am not going to trouble him. He is saying - imagine an Honourable Member who, when he was Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance, an order was given - foreign affairs - an order was given specifically by the substantive minister that he was not to touch a file. Up to now you cannot find his signature on any file. And he’s talking about implementation deficit. But if I had to ask Mr. [Inaudible.] about implementation deficit, I wonder what he would say. He is here trying to abuse me - his long-time frame about implementation deficit.

But the Member for St. Michael East is the one that had me most bothered. Because once again, he ripped out the 1976 Black Power speech by Don Blackman, of which there were three copies. Don kept one; he gave one to Randolph [Inaudible.] and the other one to Prescott. My friend has put down his - but sorry, Mr. Speaker, sir - the Honourable Member for St. Michael East still walks around with it in his bus jacket and every time he comes to this Parliament he pulls it out with the appropriate crocodile tears about how putting Black people back through means testing - he was Minister of Social Care responsible for the Welfare Department. But the Welfare Department is the atypical place of means testing. When you go there, they test you to see if you’re entitled. And he was the minister. And all this thing about raping Black

people and taking down Barrow’s legacy. And in the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto, which he clearly did not see before and has not read since, it says - we will support, at page 55, the Programme for Tertiary Education as outlined in the report of the Beckles Commission on Higher Education.

What does the Beckles Commission report say? Read it again. Read it. That you should have an 85 per cent contribution by the government backed by a tax called an education levy. That you should have a 10 per cent contribution by the private sector. And that students should pay 5 per cent of the cost. So the Barbados Labour Party, if anything, if you want to be generous to them, contributed to this policy. I will call the policy I announced on Tuesday the Barbados Labour Party’s policy. Oh, yes. Let them defend that. So who is the hypocrite now? Just like when you speak about - [Inaudible.] - you see, because their own record and their own words shall hang them.

Mr. Speaker, sir, just like - yes, but you see, when you have a three-headed monster and you don’t know who is talking at the time, I lament because they have come here clearly to try to prosecute my credibility. Yes, they did. Yes, it’s clear. I don’t know who wrote that. I already know who wrote it because I could look at the policies in there and I know who wrote them. The same body that said in 2002 that the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter had overtaxed Barbados. That when he came and found Barbados in 1994, the tax take was 20 cents of every dollar - 20 per cent of every dollar - and that by 2002, it was 40 cents. Yes. I know who wrote that. I know who wrote that. They had nothing to do with it. I know who wrote it.

You see, but I asked the Minister of Tourism why does he sit down sometimes and allow the Member for St. Michael North - who spent any of the debate here other than to rush here at the last minute to give a speech to try to abuse me - I don’t allow the Member for St. Michael North to confuse me because I have picked up in the short time that I have been around here that the Honourable Member has this kind of disdainfulness in his belly, this bitterness that I can’t understand because it is not normal. It is not normal. So I try my best to ignore him most of the time. Member for St.

Michael South Central tells me to ignore him because if he has to get up each time and correct him, he will be on his feet constantly. So sometimes you just have to let it pass. So I don’t really take on the Honourable Member, you know, because he, the Honourable Member, Mr. Speaker, sir, was fired or resigned from a cabinet. And up to this day, after promising people he would tell all, he has not said to this day why he was removed from the cabinet or resigned. You don’t remember saying that, St. Michael North? And he’s coming here to prosecute my credibility. An honourable man, Mr. Speaker, sir, who has

been on pre-retirement leave for almost 22 years. Hasn't had a good thought in 22 years. Hasn't put his mind to constructive work. No, but he said a lot of things. And he then said, as he has said here all of the time, that Barbados is at the bottom. Barbados is at the bottom of the Caribbean tourism figures. He tries to make up this thing. He said it again tonight. Barbados at the bottom. Anytime you are trying to prove up or trying to say or claim that somebody is a liar, as he clearly was trying to say about me, you have to have the credibility yourself - you have to come to equity with clean hands. So I went on the CTO website because he said go to the CTO website and check. What are you waiting to check, Mr. Speaker? He said you want me to check the figures for 2013. It says here - I am going to give the countries that are around us, these are the ones we compare to. Angola had 34 stopover arrivals up to August 2013. Aruba 33 849. Antigua and Barbuda, January to June, 129 000. Bahamas 581 528. Barbados 265 000 - \$293 000. Belize \$166 304. Bermuda \$74 000. British Virgin Islands \$153 000. Cayman Islands \$192 000. Let's get down to Dominica \$20 000. Grenada \$22 000. Martinique \$238 000. Montserrat 2 227. The great St. Lucia - with all due respect to the Honourable Member for St. John - St. Lucia that has beaten us up and down the field, the new model that Barbados must follow: 165 814 tourists. Say that again. Repeat that figure. And Barbados is at the bottom. We are at the bottom, the Honourable Member says. So he's trying to prosecute me as telling lies and having no credibility. And he comes to this House and gives misleading information repeatedly and repeatedly. He did it again tonight. And then, of course, he packed up his things and he's gone. This is what we have to deal with.

Mr. Speaker, sir, the Barbados figure - 264 293. Of course. And we are the worst in the Caribbean, at the bottom, performing the worst, doing badly. Nobody wants to come to Barbados. This is what we have to contend with. And I must say a thanks to it. Like the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, who I know knows better, says that I tried to give the impression - I heard it from the other fellow too, on the radio programme - that the point I made about the growth and the allocation to UWI was not true, and that it was incorrect for me and I deliberately lied by saying that the combined contribution of the nursery schools, the secondary schools, Community College and SJPP was worth it. No, no, no, no. If you read the tenor of my statement, I was speaking specifically about the growth in the allocation. I went back - don't tell me - I went back to 1999 and I traced the growth of the allocation to the university. And if you take the growth in the allocation, not the absolute allocation, the growth in the allocation - take what they were getting -

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, sir, on a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member - I really don't want to interrupt at ten to one in the morning - but the Honourable Member is misleading the House. At page 63, the words are: the stark reality is that since around 2006 or so, the total contribution by the Government of Barbados to UWI has exceeded the combined contribution to all of our nursery schools, primary schools, secondary schools, BCC and SJPP. As I said in my speech yesterday, if it was a mistake, fine. But if this is what it is, it is not true.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, sir, you see, it's a typical lawyers' thing. You take one particular part of a speech and you pull it out without looking at the entire context. You have to read the entire context of what I was speaking about. And I referred to the growth of the university allocation. And I traced it to say, look what was happening between 1999 and 2003. And from 2003 to 2007, when you had the expansion. And then I said, look at what happened after 2007, eight straight to 2011. And if you look at the growth in that allocation, it is more than the combined allocation for those other entities. That is a fact. The estimates include everything in the estimates - building for school meals, basic teacher training, a whole set of things - and throw them all in and say, well, if you take all of this, that can't be true. It's a fact. But they want to give the impression in the public that I put out misinformation because I want to. I said it. I know it is there. I wrote it. I wrote it myself. Nobody didn't write that for me. So I know what I was saying. But the same way you could pick up estimates, I could pick them up and read them too.

And all of these crocodile tears that we hear about poor people's children - when the Barbados Labour Party government, the last one, waived \$85 million for a bank. First Caribbean. When already - don't want me to talk? Mr. Speaker, sir, let me tell you something. I am trying to constrain myself because I am not going on there against the best advice of the Solicitor General - against the best advice of the Solicitor General, the Honourable Member for St. Peter. The Honourable Member for St. Peter - we have \$84.5 billion for biting Barbados to be formed in line taxes - and then walking around giving the people the impression. Let me wrap up this thing and go home. Against the advice. And then pretend, Mr. Speaker, sir, that many cabinet papers came to cabinet.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay, Honourable Member. Please, please settle down. Order, please. Can I call to you, sir? Just a minute. Let's have some order, please. Let's have some order, please. Okay.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, sir. The Honourable Member that you follow - that is your real leader - with \$85 million in transfer tax for the formation of a bank. You normally for people with children that can educate. If I had that money now, we would not have had

to introduce any fees at UWI. And all he was doing was taking one bank and putting it with the next. \$85 million of the taxpayers' money. And they walk around and talk about cost you less. That was cost you more. That is what it was. Now, I don't know what iPads, what vehicles, what condos, what beach houses or villas came out of that. I ain't dealing with that at all. I am exercising discipline when it comes to that because nobody is going to scuttle this process. Nobody's going to scuttle it. The only point that I will make, Mr. Speaker, sir - save me, please.

Mr. SPEAKER: No, this one has obviously raised some kind of sensitivity.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Yeah. The \$85 million man can't get over it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay, please.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: But I know, Mr. Speaker, sir, that in time, the facts will come out. The facts will come out, Mr. Speaker, sir, about education. And I am saying that the fact that students will have to make a small contribution to their education tonight at the University of the West Indies is because of this barbarous Labour Party. I tell you that, you know why? Because as I said, they say the way to hell is paved with good intentions. They were. You ready? Watch and see. There were great intentions, Mr. Speaker, sir, for expansion of tertiary education and university education and a graduate in every household. Great, brilliant. But you know where the poorness came? The poorness came in poor financial planning and management. How could you unleash such a potential expenditure or revenue-consuming project without planning properly for its financing? How could you allow a doubling of the student population without a fundamental basis for saying this is how it is going to be financed five years from now, ten years from now, fifteen years from now? All you do is write a blank cheque. Do it. Do it. Just do it. Just bring in the students. Bring them in. Don't worry about the cost. Just give them education. These are the people who speak about the economy, you know. Barbados is an economy first. But they weren't studying the economic cost of such an escalation. Nobody in the Barbados Labour Party paused to say, but if we were to butt up on a recession and all revenues came under pressure, what would happen? You know nobody asked that question. The right honourable senator, if he didn't ask that question, he wasn't interested. But we know that after the 2003 election, he started working anyway. We know that. The hardest thing, you all remember, done between 2003 and 2008, was to have a man, as we say, in draft from Black Rock. That was his single greatest achievement. And we thank him for it too. But no planning went into it. No thought about if the university expanded this way in that way exponentially, how were you going to pay for it? And I submit to them, Mr. Speaker, that even if we did not have

a recession, that model was unsustainable and is unsustainable. Cannot continue at that level. Now, what this does is it buys us a little time. I think it buys the Minister of Education some time so that we can come up with an appropriate model that can be sustained over time into the future. But we have an immediate problem that we have to deal with right now. And I always say to the people in my Ministry, as I said to them in the Ministry of Education, where we meet at estimates, if you have a pipe and the pipe is burst, you really believe that getting a couple of dry towels and mopping up the water is going to solve your problem? No, you got to fix the burst pipe. You have to fix the burst. If we are spending all of this money and creating debt, should we not be almost up to \$200 million in debt? Now I can go to the bank and borrow the \$200 million and pay. But what is going to happen 18 months from now if I don't fix the pipe? You can still be back there with more dry towels trying to mop up the water. You have to fix it. So rather than deal with the issues, they front-load all the money up at UWI, community college can't get expanding. You know, that is why the honourable member for St. Michael North - he has gone - because the honourable member knew where he was going with this argument. BCC can't get money to expand so has to turn back 3 000 students a year. They did not understand that they should have expanded the BCC's capacity. About 1 500 from the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. University College of Barbados - that was just a title. If you don't have any capacity to take the students, having a university college means nothing. You spent a hundred million dollars on a dump called Greenland. And we cannot take one more student at Barbados Community College. The Democratic Labour Party left office in 1994 because it had no capacity. And that is in your constituency. You love poor people. So you travel them up to the University of the West Indies at a cost on average of about \$30 000 a head. And this is what we had to inherit as a government. This is what I have to deal with as a Minister of Finance in Barbados.

But Mr. Speaker, sir, the point that I am making is that we have an issue and we have to correct it. We have come in. We are going to work with our students to ensure that we can, in fact, when the Minister of Education builds out some more capacity with the campuses - the northern campuses of the BCC and SJPP - over the next year or so, once we get the financing organised, some of those students will be taken off the university and put where they really belong. And when you do the two and two, they will have two less years to pay fees at the University.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I omitted to tell you that the financing model that the Barbados Labour Party supports with the Beccles Commission - that financing model actually also includes BCC and SJPP. They wanted students to pay for both. It was the whole system. It was not just UWI. It was the whole system.

So we have done that. We have come here, Mr. Speaker, sir. We have done a fiscal consolidation package backed by a strong growth strategy and a growth initiative. I have not included a lot of the things, Mr. Speaker, sir. I included what I know can go on now. But there are other things that are coming that are going to make a fundamental change in this economy. All we ask is for the cooperation of Barbadians in a difficult time so we can work together. Your government, my government, the government of the people of Barbados. The people who in the Labour Party have not gotten over the election defeat, who are suffering from post-election stress syndrome - I say to them, get over it. Take your medication. Take your medication and let us get on with it.

Saying that I don't know how the foreign reserves dropped - I know. I know how these things have been triggered. You see all that walking up and down the street and whipping up people into a frenzy and trying to incite potential violence in this community. All of that wild talk was designed to destabilise Barbados and it caused a lot of investors to start taking fright. It had nothing to do with me. As soon as that election was finished, those who didn't get the government they wanted and those who they were trying to frighten off by stirring up mischief in this economy - not the honourable member for St. Peter, not the honourable member for St. Peter, because he wouldn't do that.

But Mr. Speaker, sir, as I close, let me wrap up this thing. We have come to the country in all openness and fairness and transparency. We have said what the issue is. The opposition say you have a deficit problem - cut your deficit. They have not said yet what you are going to cut. They haven't told anybody what to cut, just cut. You got a deficit problem, cut it. But spend some more money and give the people a salary increase and cut taxes and spend it for reserves, and then by the time you are done, you are in such a tizzy you don't know your head from your foot. We have come with a clear strategy. We have put that strategy before the country.

As the honourable member for St. Philip West said, if we say X project - because this is one of the other things that they try to prosecute me on - I say Four Seasons can start in six months and it starts. Why am I running Four Seasons? I can only take the best advice I am given by the people who are responsible for it. So if the honourable member for St. Michael North tells me, and I take the honourable member at her word, that it can start in six months, I will say it can start in six months because I have no reason to doubt that it is true. If I say that the peer review project can start in two months and I read the ministerial statement, that is what the developers said. And their lawyers. That is what their lawyers said. That is what their banker said. That is what they told to us. I had no reason to doubt the veracity of their statements. So saying

that, oh, you said that X project can start on this day and it didn't start, so therefore you have no credibility - wait, the project is not running, I am not running the project. I try to facilitate as much as I can the project. You give them all the concessions they want, you give them this, you give them that, and you hope that it starts. So you give all of these things and you hope for the best. What more can you do? But I am not taking that for granted anymore. I am making sure I get behind all of them, private and public. And that is why we said that we are going to establish a committee that is going to report - and the honourable member for St. Philip West chairs the Infrastructure Committee on the implementation of these projects. And the Prime Minister is going to chair a projects review committee to ensure that these projects get going. That is what we said we are going to do. We are not taking this chance anymore with private, public, or any other type of officer. We have to ensure that these projects get off the ground. We can define the talent, we are going to hire that talent, and we are going to ensure that those projects get off the ground because that is what will pull Barbados out of the hole that it is in. And that is the assurance I can give with the backing of my colleagues in Cabinet and with the authority of the Prime Minister. And that is the most that I can say in any circumstances.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, as I come to a close, I crave the indulgence of the nation that we can pull together collectively, that we can work as hard as we can to ensure that we can pull the Barbados economy and society around, and we will get there. Those who don't want to get on the train, who prefer to stay in the train station quarrelling and arguing and cussing and abusing and suing and accusing and all of that, they can stay there. We are on the move. Get on the train and let us proceed with the business of the people of Barbados. And with those few words, Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that this resolution do now pass.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and the House divided as follows:

AYES: Hon. F. J. STUART, Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, Hon. R. D. JONES, Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK, Hon. M. A. LASHLEY, Hon. R. L. SEALY, Hon. S. D. BLACKETT, Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE, Hon. D. O'N. INNISS, Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, Hon. S. A. LASHLEY, Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN, Mr. J. D. PAUL and Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON - 15.

NOES: Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS, Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN, Mr. G. A. CLARKE, Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Miss C. Y. FORDE, Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC, Mr. E. G. HINKSON, Dr. M. M. AGARD, Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND and Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW - 14.

The question was resolved in the affirmative and the Resolution was passed.

ORDER NO. 7 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
BORROWING OF UP TO \$500 MILLION IN THE
CURRENCY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
ON THE INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL MARKET

Mr. CLERK: Order Number Seven, sir. Order Number Seven - the honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs to move the passing of a resolution to approve: (a) the borrowing of up to \$500 million in the currency of the United States of America on the international capital market by the issue of securities through Deutsche Bank Securities Inc. as lead manager and underwriter with CIBC World Markets Corporation acting as co-manager; (b) the establishment of a sinking fund for the redemption of each issue of securities made under the said Act and for the monies necessary to maintain and service that fund; (c) the repurchasing of a maximum of \$250 million in the currency of the United States of America of the Government's outstanding international bond issues maturing in 2021 and 2022, respectively, in the tender offer/liability management exercise through Deutsche Bank Securities Inc. acting as lead manager and CIBC World Markets Corporation acting as co-manager, to facilitate the provision of budgetary support, to finance fiscal operations, build foreign reserves, and improve and extend Government's external debt maturity profile.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Minister of Finance.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the matter before the Parliament, as I would have said in the financial statement and budgetary proposals, that the intention of the government - in fact we said it from the estimates - was to go to market, the international markets, when the conditions permitted for us to do so, relatively safely and with some success to procure foreign financing to assist not only with the financing of government's deficit but also to help build the reserves and support the government's balance of payments position. The original intention was to go for a basic issue, and this is a new issuance of bonds, paper in the market for 250 million U.S. dollars. And the intent at the time - this is in March when we were speaking - was to ensure that we locked in the favourable interest rates in the market at the time, which were pretty low. And we were watching to see how that situation would have unfolded.

Of course, since then, as we said in the debate which we have been having across the country and in here, we have had a decline in our foreign reserves. And it was our intention to go a little later in the year, but given the situation and given the need to finance our deficit and of course to support our investment programmes, we decided that now would be a useful time to go to markets. Equally

as well, Mr. Speaker, Sir, quite interestingly, after the United States Chairman of the Federal Reserve Ben Bernanke issued his last report, he indicated that the United States Federal Reserve will be easing - well, backing away from - the quantitative easing that they have been doing over the last more than a year, a year and a half, to be exact. And having done that, he, whether deliberately or unintentionally, has contributed to an increase in the interest rates in the United States. They are still very much low, but they are above the sub-1 per cent range, and they are now going into just over 2 per cent on the markets. And we decided, given that situation, and given our own requirements, that now is a good time to go to market and to lock in a low interest rate.

Now, as you know, because Barbados has lost its investment grade rating, there are some institutions - institutional investors who would normally have participated in Barbados' paper - who at this stage will be unable to do so because it is not investment grade. Now, the representation from the financial institutions, both the ones that we have now locked into in terms of lead manager and co-manager - that is Deutsche Bank and First Caribbean International Capital - is that if Barbados could do an issuance of 500 million U.S. dollars, or anywhere near what they call a benchmark issue, and the liquidity in the issuance was sizable enough, there are participants that normally would not look at a Barbados issuance, which tended to be small. You know, the most we probably go for in the market, Sir, is about \$250 million U.S. to \$350 million U.S. But if we could get up to a benchmark market yield of between \$400 and \$500 million, that then brings in a whole set of other people who now look at it and say, yes, this is sizable enough for me to spend the time investing in.

As you know, Barbados paper trades very, very soundly. When people invest in Barbados' bonds, they keep them in their back pocket because they know of Barbados' reputation as a credible borrower - that we always meet our debt commitments, we always pay our liabilities, and if you get a good interest rate, then you hold on to the paper until it matures. And we still have that record in the markets. In fact, when I went there in April of this year, the enthusiasm about having Barbados come to the market was very high. People were saying to us that their investors are telling them: you are offering us different countries in Latin America - Bolivia, Argentina, and even Venezuela and Dominican Republic - but why don't you get us a Barbados? Because Barbados is solid. We believe in the future of the country. We believe that even though it is going through a tough period, it will rebound. And isn't Barbados interested in coming to the market? And for them, fortunately, on this occasion, we are interested in going to the market.

Now, normally Barbados would not go in the market and borrow \$500 million - that is really beyond our scope

normally. So to get up to the \$500 million, what we were advised is to do an asset liability management exercise - that is, you look at your maturities in the system, you see where you may have peaks and bullets existing, and you seek to flatten that maturity spread out so that you do not have or run into financing or refinancing issues when those come up. And in looking at our maturity profile over the next 10 to 15 years, we see that on two previously arranged bonds in 2021 and 2022, there are two significant peaks,

both in the vicinity of \$200 million to \$250 million Barbados dollars. So we said if we could lock in a buyback of those bonds through an asset liability management - and that is what it really means: you buy them back, you offer a tender in the market, you say, I am going to go to market and lock in a new rate, so I am going to buy back from you the existing bonds that you have in Barbados' name, and then do a new issuance of \$250 million of new money - then that will get you up to the \$500 million. And that is what we are trying to attempt to do.

Now we know that in the markets generally on a buyback, a tender offer or swap - because you can swap them as well - that ordinarily the participation rate is around 40 to 50 per cent in the best of conditions. And since the market is taking an uptick in the interest rates, we believe that given the solidity of Barbados' paper and the appetite of the investors, it will be possible to get that 40 to 50 per cent rate of participation, and then we will take out the rest generally. So we are not borrowing exclusively \$500 million of new money. And I want honourable members and members of the media to understand this. Do not go out in the public and say that Barbados is going to the market to borrow a billion dollars in new money. That is not so. We are doing an asset liability management exercise. We are buying back the 2021s, we are spreading out on the benchmark the maturity retirement of those - rather than have bullets, we are going to spread them over three to four years, so therefore the 2021s and 2022s then go down to 2023, 2024, 2025, and you amortise it in those three-year periods, rather than have to look for all of that money at one time. So it makes your maturity profile flatter, it makes it a lot easier for you to manage, and it of course eliminates the rollover risk in the market.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, both the purposes and the basis upon which we are going to do it, I just want to indicate the term sheet - the conditions for the borrowing. The amortisation will be exclusive of the liability management component. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the tenure that we are seeking to get out - of course, Barbados being the issuer, the credit rating is B1/BB+. Deutsche Bank Securities is the lead manager. The transaction is for a new 12-year benchmark of U.S. \$250 million, and that assumes no liability management. So if we do not succeed in getting a successful rate of participation on the buyback, we will not do the buyback - we will just stick with the new

issuance. But we expect that the buyback will be successful. So if that goes, it will be a 12-year benchmark of U.S. \$500 million, which assumes the liability management component, as I said. And that will be amortised over three amortising years - years 10, 11, and 12.

The UST benchmark is 1.750 per cent due 2013 and on, for the straight loan, and for the asset management it will be the same thing, of course amortised as I said over the three years - that will be 2023, 2024, 2025. The benchmark rate is 2.5 per cent on both ends with a 592 basis point spread. The offer price is for a par offer on the discounted rate of the coupon, which is now trading at 7.22 per cent. The reoffer yield is 8.5 per cent on the straight \$250 million, and on the benchmark issue it is slightly lower at 8 per cent. The coupon is 8.375 per cent on the straight issuance and 8.875 per cent on the asset liability issuance.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, of course this is listed in the United States securities market. As I say, Deutsche Bank and First Caribbean International Capital are lead and co-lead in the market, and we propose, as soon as parliamentary approval is given and they give the indication that we will complete the offer book - which is almost near completion - we will await the signal of the lawyers and then we will open the book for filling as soon as possible. Usually these things are completed in a couple of hours. The last issuance we had was done in, I believe, 45 minutes. It was oversubscribed. We expect that this one is going to be equally as successful.

I would say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that one of the decisions that we have taken - since you were speaking about the University of the West Indies - as you know, we do have some liabilities to them. And one of the things, one of the decisions that the Ministry of Finance took, as I said before when I spoke early in the budget, was that we would advance the university part proceeds of these resources until the university's issuance with the Scotia Bank, backed by the Government of Barbados, is put in place a month or two after this. And of course they will then do a restitution of our account accordingly. The rest of the money of course will go towards supporting our programmes as indicated.

So with those few words, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and given the lateness of the hour and the fact that we have had a full debate on the economy of Barbados - which really would be the issue that we will discuss in relation to this issuance and the need to go to the market for these resources - I beg to move that this resolution do now pass.

AN HON. MEMBER: Seconded.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you. Good. Yes, Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have come to be wary of matters introduced at 20 past seven. This bill was circulated to us. It is now half past one in the morning. We have had - no, not today. We got notice at 20 past seven last night. It was last night - no, because it's after midnight. And to bring a billion dollar proposition - the minister is intent that this is not a billion dollar loan of new money, but this is a billion dollar proposition - of indicative terms on the back of, look at it, barely two pages that does not provide sufficient information for the opposition to make an appropriate judgment. And I say so for a number of reasons.

One, at page eight of the approved estimates, which was laid yesterday, which reflects what we approved in March of this year. The approved estimates has under foreign financing the sum of \$350 million because that was what the Minister of Finance indicated would be the non-project financing that he would need on the commercial markets when the House approved these estimates. Subsequent to that, we would have raised the issue as to whether he was not going for \$500 million, and the Minister subsequently confirmed that he was going for \$500 million, as opposed to \$350 million listed here in commercial. \$500 million Barbados, \$250 million US. What is before us today has potentially \$500 million US in the recital, whereas the Government of Barbados deems it necessary to borrow up to \$500 million US dollars on the international capital market by the issue of securities through Deutsche Bank and CIBC World Markets, acting as co-manager, on the terms and conditions set therein. And whereas the Government of Barbados deems it necessary to be able to repurchase up to a maximum of \$250 million US of its outstanding international bond issues maturing in 2021 and 2022, and a tender offer liability management exercise through the same entities.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Minister wants this asset management liability exercise. But what these recitals do not make clear - and quite frankly at this hour of the morning nothing will be clear - is whether the \$500 million US in paragraph four of the recital is a separate exercise, because you're borrowing up to \$500 million US. And then the next paragraph in the recital does not say that the repurchase is to come from the proceeds of the \$500 million US and therefore leaves it open to doubt, such that what you may end up authorising here is a separate exercise. Because the exercise, even in the resolution part of it, asks this House to approve the borrowing of the sum of up to \$500 million US at paragraph A. Then it says at paragraph B, approve the establishment of a sinking fund for the redemption of each issue of securities made under the said Act and for the monies necessary to maintain the service of the fund. And

then it goes on to paragraph C, which is to approve the repurchase of a maximum of \$250 million.

Now the natural legal interpretation of this resolution would suggest that what is before this Honourable Chamber will facilitate the approval not of \$500 million US but of \$750 million US. Now if that - I understand - and if that is not the intention of the minister, then the resolution needs to be amended, because immediately at paragraph B of the resolution is the desire to establish the sinking fund for the \$500 million US. Now if paragraph C was inclusive or to come out of the \$500 million US, then it should at least follow before the paragraph on the sinking fund. Now, if that is the intention, we will cooperate with the amendment to this. But this makes absolutely no sense and it would suggest to us that we are being asked to approve \$1.5 billion.

Secondly, other concerns. And I mean, we have now come out of a lengthy budget debate, so I'm not going to detain members by repeating our concerns on the financing of the deficit. But I will say this - the Attorney General would have had to certify this as fit. But this is a genuine question now. This is a genuine question. In the estimates, at Appendix C - if it is intended to be inclusive, then make the amendment and we will change it. Mr. Speaker, at Appendix C of the estimates, the statement of public debt and sinking fund as of December 31, 2012 is contained. And specifically under the external loans, which we need to check too, and to make sure - which we have not had the chance to check because we only just got this tonight. And we just need to make sure that there are no issues in relation to the external loans and any limits.

But the point is this: the interest rate of the \$150 million US dollar bonds is at 7.25 per cent. Those are the bonds due to be redeemed in 2021. The interest rate of the \$200 million US dollar bonds is 7 per cent. Now the schedule which is before us - and Honourable Members are free to follow it - states, and it is clear, that the minister - the government - has not gotten this money yet. This is to approve, as I understand it, a road show where investors will come and subscribe and say, this is how much I want. And therefore, what is before us are a tenor, indicative coupons, indicative price, indicative reoffer yield, indicative benchmark rate, indicative spread to the benchmark, indicative rate basis, which is the basis on which interest is charged.

Now, part of the difficulty that I would just want the Minister to explain to us is the interest rate that currently obtains on both bonds is lower than the interest rate that you are likely to borrow at now. The interest rate which obtains on the \$150 million bond is 7.25 per cent. The interest rate on the \$200 million US 2022 bond is 7 per cent. The indicative coupon is 7.875 per cent to 8.375 per cent area. And we accept that it will be a range, but we also

know this: Barbados does not have investment grade anymore. And one of the consequences of not having investment grade is that not only are certain types of funds prohibited from lending you - which is the issue with Pacific and other insurance companies as we know - but those who can lend you will inevitably ask for a higher interest rate because of the risk that they're taking on. In addition to that, the issue of their interpretation of our fiscal circumstances, as well as the comments perhaps even made by the Minister in the Budget here yesterday, all will go to a determination as to the level of risk and to the quality of the investment which they are going to make, and may well end up costing us another 50 to 100 basis points. We don't know. But what is clear is that on the face of it, you are refinancing at a higher rate of interest than you currently hold the debt.

There has to be a reason. And even with the flattening out that the minister talks about in the asset liability management exercise, you're moving from 2021 and 2022 to 2023, 2024, 2025 - and then the first part of the schedule, because I've seen term sheets, sir, and this term sheet is as bald as it would get. It talks about a bullet payment as well. And therefore the bullet payment along with the three equal amortisations in each of the following years would suggest that what we're dealing with is two separate transactions and hence the interpretation that this may lead to a cumulative position of \$750 million US, which is \$1.5 billion, which is in effect almost just about 18 per cent of GDP.

Now, that is significant. I don't know that this Parliament has ever been asked - and I'm being serious now - I don't know that this Parliament has ever been asked to approve this kind and this quantum of loan under these circumstances and with a level of complexity that - look, we understand that the country's position is difficult and we will not stand in the way of government trying to stabilise its financing of the deficit. We may not agree with you for why the deficit got there. We may not agree with you in relation to aspects of the budgetary policy. But we're not going to stand in your way on this, but we need to understand what we are agreeing to. And on the face of it, this document presents queries that we would need to have answered if we can appropriately support it in a way that we would like to. You can't ask us at 20 past seven to agree to a \$100 million loan, far less \$1.5 billion - because this is now \$1.5 billion. And in the absence of it, could you explain?

The second point is that the tenor is really not that long. 12 years in this context is not particularly long. And in the circumstances - and my memory serves me correctly - this \$200 million US dollar bond was approved by this Honourable House in either 2010 or 2011. A member for St. Joseph might help me in my memory with this, but this was 2010 or 2011. And the minister should have the file

that can confirm to us when this \$200 million US dollar bond was approved. So that it seems mightily strange that a bond which was financed before we lost investment grade should now be refinanced after we lose investment grade at a higher rate, unless there is a fundamental problem that the government is not sharing with us in terms of the access of the money in the first place. And is it - the Minister said that people may be interested in lending more than \$500 million - is it that people are only interested in us if they really feel they can fleece us and want us to borrow more than we need? Because we really don't need this. We have a debt problem. And Barbados, as the Prime Minister said tonight, we have a debt problem. And the problem is, do we want to unnecessarily increase the level of debt, or is it that that is the only way that we are going to be able to access the funding?

And I want to say this, sir, for the record. I believe that there are certain matters, especially in the next few months going forward, that consultation between government and the opposition ahead of time will smooth out a lot of matters, because we are equally conscious of the country's situation at this time. I want to make this point with all sincerity. And if we can pause - suspend for 10 minutes - I'm being serious - if we can suspend for 10 minutes and understand what is here, other than that, we will have at least to abstain. I don't want to vote against it because of the signals it sends to the market. But we would have to abstain because we don't know whether we are approving \$500 million US or \$750 million US because of the way in which it is drafted.

Mr. Speaker, sir. Mr. Speaker, sir, I understand. Mr. Speaker, you know, there's a limit to our reasonableness too, especially at quarter to in the morning. And, you know, I don't mind being called a miserable woman at quarter to in the morning. That is the right of any woman after midnight.

I am trying to address a serious matter. I am just as tired as you. I am trying to address a serious matter. The resolution has a disjunctive paragraph and the disjunctive paragraph is the creation of the sinking fund. The creation of the sinking fund is the finite act, and the members for St. Peter can speak to this. When you create a loan, a sinking fund has to be created. Therefore, having that paragraph come immediately after approving the borrowing of \$500 million US says to us that paragraph C - that says approve the repurchasing of a maximum of \$250 million US - suggests that it is two separate transactions.

And secondly - I'm making a second point, sir. This schedule has a title called amortisation. I'm trying to be helpful, you know. And under amortisation, you cannot both have a bullet payment and amortisation in 2023, 2024, 2025. A bullet payment means exactly that - a single payment. So if you have a bullet payment and then you

have amortisation in 2023, 2024, 2025, it has to be two separate sets of transactions. And that's all we're seeing. And if it is that those two separate transactions do in fact have a cap of \$500 million US, then all we're saying is: suspend for five minutes. Let us clarify this, because the last thing that the Minister of Finance wants - or the people of Barbados - is that they go into a room and the lead people take this document and then cause us to ask for \$750 million US. If that is not the intention of the government, then there should be no objection to making it clear. But you can't have a bullet payment and amortisation in three separate years at the same time and call it a single transaction. We're in the hands of the government. We suggest that we suspend for five minutes, ten minutes, and get it right. That's all.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, sir. If there's one thing that I would concede, I hope that because of the lateness of the hour, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is a little jaded and therefore is not tracking entirely right in her interpretations and her comprehension of basic and simple issues. Either that or the Honourable Member was not listening when I spoke. I said very clearly - she's not listening because the Honourable Member is being distracted by the Honourable Member for St. Peter and a whole set of people and not listening. I said very clearly when I spoke that we have two potential exercises. We are going for \$250 million -

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute. I remember, though, in the interest of time - I take it this is the wrap-up. Yes. Unless there are any other members who want to speak on the resolution? Can I speak after? Fine. That's what I want to know. So I don't get people telling me I was explaining.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, sir, I said we are going into the market to borrow, to borrow \$250 million of new money, issuance of new money. However, we want to take advantage of the favourable conditions of the market, saying that we have two bullet loans to repay in 2021 and 2022, to do a tender offer to buy back those loans and spread the maturity out. I said specifically, Mr. Speaker, sir - if they are not listening, just put the question and go. I am trying to explain this because I do not want this misinformation to go into the public. I said very clearly, if we go to the market and we make a tender on the 2021-22s and the rate of participation is not favourable or the interest rate does not meet with all requirements, we would just do the new issuance. That is why in the resolution, in the term sheet, you will see on the left-hand side, bullet, which means if you do the \$250 alone, that is a bullet repayment. If you do the asset liabilities management for the \$500 million, you then do the spread on the amortisation over three years. That is so simple. Now, secondly, this point - I think our member just does not understand this business.

Then this point on the sinking fund. Because it says here very clearly in paragraph one, approve the borrowing of the sum - the second - up to. Up to. Now if somebody tells you up to \$500 million, how could you be going to borrow \$750 million? I mean, it is simple.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Oh, my goodness. But one is speaking to what is in the terms of the resolution written before us. And I repeat it for the record again. The resolution says, be it resolved that this Parliament approve the borrowing of the said sum of \$500 million U.S. dollars - says sum up to, says sum up to - which includes \$500 million U.S. dollars. And then it also says, approve the repurchasing of a maximum of \$250 million U.S. No. That is the first point. That is the first one of misleading. The second point relates to the fact that the bonds which are being repurchased both have a substantially lower interest rate than the interest rates which are here. So that one is at 7 per cent and one is at 7.25 per cent. All of the interest rates on page five of the resolution start either at 7.875 per cent to 8.375 per cent in the indicative coupon, and then in the indicative reoffer yield - and one is able to assume that the reoffer yield relates to the repurchase - is 8.85 per cent area, again 100 to 150 basis points higher. Okay, so those are the two separate points of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not remember - please continue. I think I have dismissed the first point, so let's get on to the second point.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Because this issue about saying that you are going to repurchase - so the repurchase is \$250 million - and therefore you add the \$250 million to the \$500 million when it already says in the resolution up to. So it means you cannot. The Parliament is approving up to. So nobody can go beyond the up to. And then it says repurchase \$250 million. Now let me get to the point about the interest rates. The reason why they are indicative - if I hold Barbados paper and Barbados wants back its paper, and note the reason why I said, Mr. Speaker, sir, we are buying it back. We are buying it back to eliminate the two peaks, the two bullet peaks in 2021 and 2022, and spread them over an amortising period of three years. So it makes it a lot easier on the Government to repay. So if you are going to buy back the paper, you have to offer somebody something. If somebody knows Barbados is a good borrower and you have an interest rate of 7.25 per cent and you hold the paper in your pocket and somebody comes to you and says, I want to buy back that paper - people offer them something for it. But you offset the cost of what you have to offer and an additional payment to get back the paper as to the risk that you may run by having the two bullets and then buying them on them in 2021-22 and then locking yourself out. So you do a risk analysis. I mean, it is simple. Mr. Speaker, sir, with those words, I beg to move that this resolution do now pass.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and the House divided as follows:

AYES: Hon. F. J. STUART, Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, Hon. R. D. JONES, Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK, Hon. M. A. LASHLEY, Hon. R. L. SEALY, Hon. S. D. BLACKETT, Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE, Hon. D. O'N. INNISS, Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, Hon. S. A. LASHLEY, Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN, Mr. J. D. PAUL and Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON - 15.

NOES: Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS, Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN, Mr. G. A. CLARKE, Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Miss C. Y. FORDE, Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC, Mr. E. G. HINKSON, Dr. M. M. AGARD, Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND and Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW - 14.

The question was resolved in the affirmative and the Resolution was passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Yes, sir. With this, we have come to the end of Government Business for the morning. And I beg to move that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, August 20, 2013, at 10 o'clock in the morning. Sir, speaking on the adjournment just quickly - I mean the hour is early as we said - but I want to express on behalf of the Government our appreciation to the staff, the Clerk and his staff at the table, including the Marshal, and of course the officers, the police and their security and the other security and all the technical staff, the media, and of course the caterers who would have fed us over these last three days. And of course, importantly, the Barbadian public who would have followed this 2013 Budget Debate on local television. With those few words of appreciation, I beg therefore to move that this sitting of the House be adjourned until Tuesday, the 20th of August, at 10 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I wish to speak on the adjournment and to also lend my voice of thanks and appreciation to the staff, the Clerk of Parliament, police, caterers, security, and all the others who made this possible, sir.

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, August 20, 2013 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

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BOSTIC, Lt. Col. J. D.
BOYCE, Hon. J. D. E. (Christ Church South)
BRATHWAITE, Hon. A. D. (St. Philip South)
CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
ESTWICK, Dr. the Hon. D. C. (St. Philip West)
FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)
INNISS, Hon. D. O’N. (St. James South)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, Hon. D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
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LASHLEY, Hon. S. A. (Christ Church West Central)
LOWE, Dr. the Hon. D. S. (Christ Church East)
MARSHALL, Mr. D. D. (St. Joseph)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
PAUL, Mr. J. D. (St. Michael West Central)
PAYNE, Mr. G. W. (St. Andrew)
PRESCOD, Mr. T. A. (St. Michael East)
SINCKLER, Hon. C. P. (St. Michael North West)
STUART, Hon. F. J. (St. Michael South)
SUTHERLAND, Mr. D. G. (St. George South)
SYMMONDS, Mr. K. D. (St. James Central)
THOMPSON, Mrs. M-J. M. (St. John)
TOPPIN, Mr. R. St.C. (St. Michael North)

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while correcting and preparing this report. Members are named as in the 2013–2018 Parliament.

Q1. Front matter. The source does not record the PRESENT list or the officiant at Prayers; the Members listed are those identified from the record. This was the resumed Sitting of Wednesday, August 14, 2013. The source gives ‘10.00 a.m.’ as the time of meeting; the House had been suspended until 9.30 a.m. (‘we start promptly at 9:30’), and the resumption line gives that time. The actual time of resumption is not recorded; please confirm from the Votes and Proceedings.

Q2. Throughout. The bracketed time-checks in the source are out of sequence (for example ‘[12.30 a.m.]’ during the morning and again early in the afternoon, and ‘[4.30 a.m.]’ after the House had resumed at 8.45 p.m.) and have been omitted.

Q3. Throughout. Several short interventions from the Chair were run into Members’ speeches in the source (for example ‘Please wind up. Your time has expired.’ during the speech of Hon. M. A. Lashley, ‘Fine. Please continue.’ after Mr. R. St.C. Toppin’s withdrawal, and ‘Honourable Members, would you address the Chair, please?’ during the speech of Miss C. Y. Forde). They are printed as separate speeches, as are the words ‘Mr. Speaker, sir, on a point of order’ that precede Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley’s point of order during the speech of Hon. C. P. Sinckler.

Q4. Order No. 3, heading. The Order was not read at this Sitting. The heading is taken, as in the report of August 14, 2013, from the Clerk’s reading on August 13, 2013: ‘Order number three ... to present the financial statement and budgetary proposals for the year 2013’. Please confirm the formal title against the Order Paper.

Q5. Morning of Thursday, August 15. The proceedings from the opening of this report to the suspension at 1.00 p.m. are titled in the source as Part 3 of Wednesday, August 14, but they record the resumption after the suspension ‘until 9:30 tomorrow morning’: Mr. G. A. Clarke opens with ‘good morning’ and Hon. S. D. Blackett refers to ‘this date, the 15th of this month’. They are printed here as the opening of the Sitting of Thursday, August 15, 2013. Mr. SPEAKER’s formal resumption of the sitting is not recorded in the source; please confirm.

Q6. Order No. 3, Hon. D. St.E. Kellman (point of order). The point of order beginning ‘Point of order. The

honourable member is misleading the House’ is headed ‘HON. PETER R. PHILLIPS’ in the source; he was not a Member of the 2013–2018 House. Mr. G. A. Clarke had just referred to ‘a minister, the member for St. Lucy’, and the speaker refers to a file awaiting his approval, so the point is printed under Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN, Member for St. Lucy. The source runs Mr. Clarke’s continuation into the same speech; it is printed under Mr. G. A. CLARKE, preceded by Mr. SPEAKER’s ‘No point of order’, which is in the recording but not in the source.

Q7. Order No. 3, points of order (morning). In two places the opening words of a point of order are split from the speech in the source (‘Honourable Member is misleading’ printed with Mr. SPEAKER’s words during Lt. Col. J. D. Bostic’s speech, and ‘It’s misleading the House’ printed with Mr. SPEAKER’s words during Hon. S. D. Blackett’s speech). The Chair’s recognition is printed under Mr. SPEAKER and the words ‘The Honourable Member is misleading the House’ under the Member raising the point. Please check against the recording.

Q8. Order No. 3, Mr. G. A. Clarke (point of order during Hon. S. D. Blackett). This exchange is confused in the source. ‘Mr. Speaker, it has not reached St. George’ is shown in Mr. SPEAKER’s words and is printed as part of Mr. Clarke’s intervention, with Mr. SPEAKER ruling ‘No point of order’. Some of the words printed under Mr. Clarke (‘I don’t remember. I didn’t hear. I mean, confession is good for the soul’) may belong to Hon. S. D. Blackett. Please check against the recording.

Q9. Order No. 3, Mr. J. D. Paul. Mr. Paul refers to ‘the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East’. In 2013 the Minister of Finance, Hon. C. P. Sinckler, was Member for St. Michael North West, as Mr. Paul says at the opening of his speech; corrected.

Q10. Order No. 3, Mr. J. D. Paul. Two passages of Mr. Paul’s speech (from ‘So anywhere in which we can encourage farmers’ and, after Mr. SPEAKER’s five-minute warning, from ‘Yes, sir. I thought I had 10, sir’) are headed ‘HON. G. P. IAN GOODING-EDGHILL, J.P., M.P.’ in the source; he was not a Member of the 2013–2018 House. Mr. SPEAKER had called the Member for St. Michael West Central, the speaker refers to shops ‘in St. Michael West Central’, and the caption labels the second passage Mr. James D. Paul; printed as part of Mr. Paul’s speech.

Q11. Order No. 3, Mr. G. W. Payne. Mr. SPEAKER twice directed that interjected comments be withdrawn and struck from the record. The source shows only ‘[Interruption.]’, so the comments are not recorded here.

Q12. *Order No. 3, Mr. T. A. Prescod.* Mr. SPEAKER's call reads 'the member for St. Michael North East' in the source. The caption transcript has 'for our Michael East', and the Member who spoke was Mr. T. A. Prescod, Member for St. Michael East; corrected.

Q13. *Suspension at 5.45 p.m. and resumption.* The second Part of the source for the afternoon of August 15 was not supplied. The preceding Part ends with the suspension until 5.45 p.m.; a short unnumbered Part records the resumption and a further five-minute suspension; the next Part opens with the resumption and the speech of Mr. D. D. Marshall. Part of the proceedings may be missing at this point. At the resumption Mr. SPEAKER's words 'Mr. Eastman, just a minute please' have been omitted, as they name no Member of the House. Please check against the recording.

Q14. *Order No. 3, Mr. D. D. Marshall.* Mr. SPEAKER's call reads 'Yes, you are a member first, and Joseph' in the source; printed as a call of the Member for St. Joseph. Mr. D. D. Marshall then thanks the people of St. Joseph.

Q15. *Order No. 3, Hon. M. A. Lashley.* Near the end of his speech the source reads 'I want to thank the people of St. Michael North' (captions: 'Saint Paul North'). Hon. M. A. Lashley is the Member for St. Philip North, and he began by thanking the constituents of St. Philip North; corrected to St. Philip North.

Q16. *Order No. 3, after Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe.* A line headed Mr. SPEAKER reading 'I have a question. See you in court.' cannot be made out and has been omitted. Please check against the recording.

Q17. *Order No. 3, after Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur.* Headed 'DR. THE HON. ROMEL O. SPRINGER' in the source. He was not a Member of the 2013–2018 House. Mr. SPEAKER called the Member for St. Philip West, the speaker refers to 'my responsibility ... in regards to the sugar industry' and to water augmentation, and the caption transcript labels him 'Hon. David C. Estwick', so the speech is printed under Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK. Please confirm.

Q18. *Order No. 3, Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick.* The source reads 'the first Lomé agreement in 1770'. The first Lomé Convention dates from 1975. The figure is printed as in the source; please check against the recording.

Q19. *Order No. 3, after the Prime Minister.* The words 'Oh, I didn't hold up my hand. I had my head down.' are headed 'MS. DEPUTY SPEAKER' in the source. Hon. C. P. Sinckler then thanks 'Ms. Deputy Speaker', so they are printed under Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER. Elsewhere the Chair is headed as in the source.

Q20. *Divisions.* The House divided on both Resolutions. The Ayes and Noes are compiled from the Clerk's call of the names and the result he announced (15 to 14). In the first division the answer of Mr. G. W. Payne is not heard in the source. In the second the Clerk's names are given without the answers; the Members are listed as they voted in the first division, which agrees with the 15 to 14 result. Please confirm against the Votes and Proceedings.

Q21. *Order No. 7, heading and Clerk.* The heading is taken from the Clerk's reading; no Act is named in the source. Please supply the formal title. The Clerk's reading gave the co-manager as 'CIBC Royal Markets Corporation'. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce's notice and Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley both give 'CIBC World Markets', so the Clerk's reading has been corrected to CIBC World Markets Corporation.

Q22. *Order No. 7, seconder.* The motion that the Resolution do now pass was seconded ('Seconded.') by a Member not identified in the source; printed under AN HON. MEMBER.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed at 9.30 a.m. on Thursday, August 15, 2013, the Sitting of Wednesday, August 14 having been suspended, with Mr. SPEAKER and, for part of the day, Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER presiding, to continue the debate on Order No. 3, the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals for the Year 2013. Mr. G. A. Clarke led for the Opposition, arguing that the \$400 million deficit should be met by growth rather than cuts and that past graduates rather than parents should contribute to university costs; Hon. D. St.E. Kellman rose on a point of order about a file awaiting his approval. Mrs. M-J. M. Thompson, who has two daughters at Cave Hill, supported the measures. Lt. Col. J. D. Bostic spoke on the decline of Bridgetown and asked the Government to reconsider the fees; Hon. D. St.E. Kellman said work at Garden Land was continuing.

Hon. S. D. Blackett, Minister of Social Care, said welfare relief in kind cost \$14.8 million a year and that the constituency councils had \$3 million and 420 members. Dr. M. M. Agard criticised the \$35 million reduction for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and asked the Minister to find the \$42 million elsewhere than in tuition. Mr. J. D. Paul cited a survey of more than 1 000 economists in 123 countries and welcomed an initiative of at least \$2 million to encourage crop production. The sitting was suspended at 1.00 p.m. until 1.30 p.m.

When the House resumed, Mr. G. W. Payne contrasted the Minister of Finance's 2010 position on cuts with the present measures, told students already at the University not to pay the new fees, and asked about CLICO and the Coverley and Lancaster projects. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce cited the United Kingdom Chancellor, George Osborne, on the global economy. Miss C. Y. Forde opposed spending on a football tournament (\$300 000 in 2011 and \$600 000 in 2012). Hon. D. O'N. Inniss said that a four-year degree would cost a student \$22 500, or \$414.37 a month over 60 months at 4 per cent from the Student Revolving Loan Fund, and withdrew a remark about inciting violence on a point of order by Mr. Payne. Mr. D. G. Sutherland urged development of local oil and gas and asked whether bus fares would rise; Mr. SPEAKER required him to withdraw an accusation of misleading. Hon. A. D. Brathwaite spoke on the role of the Opposition and transfers in the Royal Barbados Police Force, and Mr. T. A. Prescod on the \$400 million gap. The House was suspended at 5.45 p.m., resumed, and was suspended for five minutes more.

Mr. D. D. Marshall said that 36 people had been laid off from the Barbados Water Authority. Hon. M. A. Lashley announced a \$2 million contract for the Jos River Bridge and denied, against points of order by Mr. Sutherland, that bus fares would rise. Mr. R. St.C. Toppin cited a near 20 per cent increase in food vouchers and withdrew a remark after Mr. SPEAKER ruled that the Minister of Finance could not be called a liar. Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe cited wastage under the previous administration, including \$1 million at East Street House. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce gave notice of a Resolution to borrow

up to US \$500 million and of Supplementary Estimates No. One, 2013–2014 of \$3 741 500, and Hon. S. A. Lashley moved the first reading of the Culture Industries Development Bill, 2013. The House was suspended until 8.45 p.m.

Hon. R. D. Jones, Minister of Education, relied on the Beckles Commission and gave costs per student. Mr. K. D. Symmonds warned of the cost of means testing. Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick said that austerity alone was not a strategy and promised to double sugar support to independent growers. Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur warned that a contraction of over \$400 million after five years of stagnation risked further recession. The Prime Minister, Hon. F. J. Stuart, quoted a paper by Owen Arthur and defended the Student Revolving Loan Fund. Replying, Hon. C. P. Sinckler cited the Commission's 85, 10 and 5 per cent funding shares and answered a point of order by Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley. The Resolution was passed on a division, 15 votes to 14.

Under Order No. 7 Hon. C. P. Sinckler moved a Resolution to borrow up to US \$500 million through Deutsche Bank Securities Inc. and CIBC World Markets Corporation and to repurchase up to US \$250 million of the 2021 and 2022 bonds. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley argued that the drafting could authorise US \$750 million and that the new coupon of 7.875 to 8.375 per cent exceeded the 7.25 and 7 per cent on the bonds being repurchased. The Minister replied that 'up to' capped the borrowing. The Resolution was passed on a division, 15 votes to 14, and the House adjourned until Tuesday, August 20, 2013 at 10.00 a.m.