
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, March 22, 2013

The House of Assembly resumed on Friday, March 22, 2013, the Sitting of Thursday, March 21, 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)

Mr. G. A. CLARKE, J.P.

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)

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY (Minister of Transport and Works)

Hon. R. L. SEALY (Minister of Tourism)

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)

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

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

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

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS

Mr. E. G. HINKSON

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

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR

Mr. SPEAKER: Good morning, honourable members. This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken last evening, we were in committee and to that we shall revert.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in committee. Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

HEAD 72 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, FISHERIES AND WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, sir, I am grateful for this opportunity to say a few words under this Head 72, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. And I must of course first compliment the honourable member for St. Philip West for his positioning of the entire agricultural scenario in Barbados, which he did so eloquently and scientifically. Because it is important. As we learned during the presentations and the admissions from the other side, acceptance of the scientific realities surrounding the potential of our soil to produce agricultural products is an important factor. And these are realities which inform farming and agricultural processes all over the world.

Sir, again, there was a lot of discussion about the philosophy of the two political parties in Barbados. Certainly the reference to the 1994 manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party indicating what would have been then an ideally timed and a well-rounded restructuring of the entire sugar cane industry to take into account falling potentials on European guaranteed markets along with the real potential of diversification into other forms of energy generation and of course, the important byproduct of ethanol for the automotive substitution fuel additive. These are important things that if they had occurred, had not only been a figment of the imagination of the honourable member for St. Peter, but if they had been put in place, the Barbados agricultural sector, the Barbados cane industry, would now have a much more acceptable economic structure from which we could continue to build. As a matter of fact, as we glance at the realities of the world market, prices on sugar will tell you that even though the European prices for cane sugar are beginning to move up again because there are threats now to the beet sugar sources - and these are real threats - these are the kind of realities and fluctuations in world markets which keep informing government strategy.

So the honourable member for St. Peter would like to coach himself into some kind of aura of satisfaction - that is to his personal benefit and to his personal protection. But the reality is that the important transformation which should have taken place in the period 1994 to 2008 was absent. And the only philosophy that I can recall - and I am sure the younger members on his side, the younger members on the side of the Barbados Labour Party must recall, if they are honest - is that the only mouthing from the honourable member for St. Peter in respect to agricultural reform was that land in Barbados must fetch its best price. Therefore, there was a wholesale transformation of our priorities in this regard. So that is certainly a debate which I am sure those who wish to will continue.

The reality is that the honourable Minister of Agriculture, the member for St. Philip West, has outlined the strategies that are going to inform this Government's entire transformation of the sugar industry, acknowledging the realities of ownership and the protection of jobs and the protection of people's rights. And these things cost money.

Sir, again, I want to turn now to the question of fishing because, as the honourable member for St. Michael North East pointed out, Barbados - and we have to go back to the point that they made from this side - I think the honourable Prime Minister made this point that we keep bashing ourselves, and the truth is Barbados is by far the biggest regional competitor, way and ahead in terms of product quality, product development, infrastructure and all these realities. And all of us are under threat in this harsh economic climate. But the facts are that we have been continually able to keep this country, this little island,

hunting ahead in terms of our regional neighbours. So there is no question about the fishing industry in Barbados. It is not ideal. I engage with the fishermen in my Oistins village very often and I know the challenges which they face.

The honourable minister pointed to some of them and the major challenge these fishermen face - besides of course the environmental realities of the potential of the sea to have fish near shore, how far they have to venture to catch these fish - is the land-based infrastructure. And again, if we wanted to, we could say that the Barbados Labour Party, for 14 years when they had money, refused to do anything significant in this regard. And the honourable member for St. Peter can glance around and fidget as much as he wants - that is the reality. That is the reality. The honourable member for St. Peter has got to face those realities, as he tells his colleagues and he tells the members of this side. He goes home, sharpens his tongue on both sides and comes back in here to lambaste people. Let us deal with the facts. Let us deal with the facts.

Mr. Chairman, sir, we need to deal with the facts. The fishing industry needs to be offered a significant infrastructural change. And as I will say, the minister - the honourable minister - made the point that one of the first things we have got to look at is how can we garage, for lack of a better term, these boats, these fishing vessels, during the off season when it is typical to carry out repairs and remodelling of these vessels. And the space Bridgetown has to store craft, sir, would be an understatement. To store craft is an understatement. At Oistins it is just as challenging. And you know we have a season - Easter of course - when the Oistins Fish Festival is celebrated.

Let me divert for a little bit and indicate, sir, to you and to the honourable members that of course the Fish Festival is next weekend, Easter weekend. And I want to invite all of you to come and join us in Oistins and be entertained. Share of our wonderful fish cuisine. The fish are plenty. Now I do not know the current price, but I know next week is Good Friday, so watch out. And fish of course is in special demand, certainly for the next couple of days. The festival is on. I want to invite all of our members to join us. We always have a good time. Be entertained. Come and see our cultural displays.

The festival has transformed a little bit in that we have a street parade now starting at the Dover Playing Field in Christ Church, and that parade will continue up the Maxwell Road and into the festival village itself. It will include floats. Some sponsors are on board. This honourable member of course is playing his part in respect to that sponsorship, sir. And we will have the vintage car parade and some cultural icons of the area - local cultural icons - will be participating in this float parade.

The other events like the tattoo and the lecture - I am not sure about the lecture. I get the impression that the committee have cancelled the lecture this year, unfortunately. The lecture which commemorates the career of the Honourable Sir Harold St. John is something which I have said to the committee often they need to upgrade. It should be a signature thing. And I certainly will look forward to next year because this year, admittedly, we were busy in other endeavours while the core festival was being planned. But I think that the Honourable Sir Harold St. John deserves that memorial and I certainly will work on my part to make sure that lecture next year is brought to the level that we expect. Maybe we could have the honour of the right honourable member for St. Peter speaking at that lecture next year.

So the challenges of the fishermen are real when they have to haul their boats up for repairs. The cost, of course, because the facilities at the boat yard in Oistins are so limited, the cost of moving their boats to Bridgetown - indeed, the timing to get these boats transported safely to Bridgetown - is very challenging. You see, it used to be a situation where you could move these boats early in the morning. The traffic people will give you permission and the licensing authority, et cetera. But even that now is a challenge. Finding a time when the roads of Barbados - the highways, Highway Seven, the ABC Highway - when these roads are free and uncongested for this kind of transportation to take place is an extreme challenge, and this is a difficulty.

And of course, then we get to the centrepiece - the access to funds for these boatmen to invest in their facilities and to find funding to improve them. Of course, there was a time when the Barbados Development Bank used to provide this very important financing arm. In discussing with the fishermen, of course, I get the distinct submission that this opportunity is becoming more and more challenging and they have to line up like anybody else at a banking institution. I think that if we as a government can do anything to make some allocation at some time in the medium term or so, I would certainly want to support that kind of move where some friendly financing - friendly in the sense that the interest rates are attractive and that there is some consideration for the timing. I mean, you may carry out an \$8 000 upgrade on your boat today, but the potential for recouping that revenue is going to be a little further away. So that is what I call friendly financing. It is not readily available anymore. So it is a consideration which I am sure the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Agriculture would love to be able to deal with. But I think we all understand the challenges that attend to that kind of solution.

Sectoral concessions for fuel have always been in place. They remain in place. And as was indicated, the only thing that we have been trying to promote is the entire

management - self-management - of that fuel distribution at Oistins. And that has its challenges. And I heard the honourable Attorney General in his presentation speak to the fact that sometimes our service providers - because that is what I term us in the different corporate entities in Barbados, we are service providers - and sometimes you get the impression that we do not appreciate the extent to which we need to upgrade our act. So in his case, the honourable Attorney General was speaking to the foreign investors. I am talking about local fishermen, where you constantly get the impression that the cooperation that should exist between the different entities who bring about the kind of solutions that would assist these fishermen is not always there. And this aura of one-upmanship - I am in charge here and that kind of thing - it needs to be beaten to the ground. It needs to be worked right through. And we have to understand that in order for the fishermen and our fish markets - the Oistins market, whether it is the Berinda Cox Market or Six Men's or the Speightstown market or Consett Bay or wherever - the Ministry of Agriculture must hold hands with the fisherfolk in order to bring about the maximum solution. And all that we plan would then redound to the benefit of our fishing industry, sir.

But all in all, we have had a very difficult period - about 12 months to almost 18 months. But I am happy to relate that things have turned around. The fish are back. There is dolphin and there is flying fish aplenty in Barbados again. And I think that those who work in this industry are obviously more satisfied, sir. I think that as we move into this five years of stewardship as a government and as I continue to represent the good people of Christ Church South, the plight of the fisherfolk in Barbados will certainly be at the centrepiece of a number of my presentations. And I really look forward to being able to report significant progress in this area which would help us to build a stronger, better community, would help us to build a stronger, better Barbados. With those few words, sir, I am obliged to you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I'm happy to enter this debate under Head 72 and to make the point that what is needed more so now than ever, sir, is the linkages between agriculture, tourism, environment and industry. You know, Mr. Chairman, we always hearing about funding, how much money was left to build sugar factories and all of that. But what I want to speak to this morning is that I came to this House in 1994 and I heard about the Northern Fisheries project, sir. Since 1994 we have been hearing about this Northern Fisheries project and this is now 2013 and we have not seen any progress. And we were told in this House how money was satisfied by the EU since 1994 for this project. But we have not been able to see it.

What I want to say, sir, it is no doubt now if there's one industry that this country owes a lot to is the fishing industry. Because when there was the world crisis with food and so on, it is the fishing industry that provided the opportunity and increases to their stock, sir, because the fishermen really held the hands of the consumers and ensured, sir, that they got that protein at the right price. And I'm saying, sir, that we are obligated to have some deliverables to the fisher folk of ours because they have really served this country well. And I find that it's regrettable, sir, that in 2013 that the Minister of Agriculture now will have to look and have seen the petition that came to him from the fisher folk in the north of Barbados. And I want to say support it, because when one looks at the situation between Speightstown and Half Moon Fort, it is no doubt that we have to tackle that problem and we need to set up proper facilities for them. And I think he might have to look and see if the funds that the European Union had offered by them since 1994, if they are still there. Because one is clear that all the talk we are hearing from the other side, it is clear that we cannot expect to have any deliverables from them. Because since that we heard about jetties where everything has differed to the fisher folks in the north of Barbados.

And this, Mr. Chairman, I also want to make the point that we have to recognize that we cannot any longer continue to have the fisher folk of Barbados in a situation where only 25 per cent to 50 per cent of their boats can be repaired at any one time. And that when the fishing season starts that you cannot have 50 per cent of your boats in the water because we do not have the necessary repair space for it. I remember when in the Ministry of the Environment, we recognized in that Ministry that we, because of the strategic nature of the fishing industry, that we were quite prepared to work and have some synergies with the Ministry of Agriculture and we were discussing things about having repair shops for the fishing industry away from the fishing bays of our beaches. And there's another thing, sir. In this day and age, there's no reason why people should be still hauling up boats on the limited sea space, beach space that we have in Barbados, that we should be building proper workshops for them and allowing Barbadians to have the opportunity of using those beaches and not being hindered from having that opportunity. When we have enough space in Barbados that we can allow all the boats to be hauled at any one time and so that when the fishing season starts that they can go and have equal opportunity. Right now, as it stands, that opportunity is not there for the fisher folk. And if we are not getting the deliverables from that industry, we cannot blame the fisher folk, we have to blame ourselves because we have not provided the opportunity for them.

I also want to make the point. I was in this House when money was spent on Skeete's Bay. And if you go to the record, you will see that the Barbados Labour Party was

advised not to spend the money on Skeete's Bay because when the parliamentary representative for that area finished delivering his speech, all of us on the opposition side understood quite well that it would have been a waste of time to spend the money on Skeete's Bay. And the same thing we warned the Labour Party about turned out to be quite correct. The truth is when you look and see what is happening, that money should have been spent on Consett Bay. That money should have been spent on Consett Bay. And that is why when in the Ministry of the Environment we look at the possibility, because in Consett Bay, where there are no repairing boats, that area can easily be dredged and a channel could be cut to the east and those boats can have a safe harbour at Consett Bay. And to the west of Consett Bay you can easily have an operation like what goes on at Oistins and the other areas of Barbados. And I'm saying, sir, that what is needed, instead of people bastardising their ideas and making people believe that they do not understand that things are too high for them, they must admit that they do not have the ability to understand these preferences and accept that they are wrong on these issues and put them in place.

Look, the truth is that Skeete's Bay and Tent Bay should not be landing sites. What they should be there should be vending sites. And that is you use Consett Bay or break Consett Bay and then you channel the fish to Skeete's Bay and Tent Bay and you will save large sums of money. You will not stop fishing activity in Consett Bay. What you would do is use Consett Bay as the landing site and then channel the fish to the beach markets because you will still have your consumers. All of those things were offered and as usual were not accepted by the Barbados Labour Party. What they did, they wasted the taxpayers' money on Skeete's Bay. You go up there and you will see the white elephant. And you know, Mr. Chairman, after I delivered that speech, the Speaker at the time struck it from the record. Even though it was the admission - it was the admission of the Member for St. Philip North, who said it. But the response was so damaging that they had to protect their man.

I am saying, sir, that we have to understand that we have to stop looking over our glasses at the fisher folk of Barbados and recognize that they have a serious contribution to make and that they have been making a serious contribution. And that is why, sir, that people can tell you a lot about competitive advantage and never can see the importance of import substitution. Look, we have over a \$700 million market to tap into and once we can fully tap into that \$700 million market, we are on a good foundation to do anything we want. But instead of us tapping into that \$700 million market, we concentrate on trying to export to a limited market, before recognizing that there's a larger market to be had. So Mr. Chairman, I am saying that we have to recognize that we have to do something about it. We have to recognize that the first

thing that we must be able to do is capture the local market, the CARICOM market and then seek to capture the wider regional market. If we do that, then we will be having more added value and we will be creating the impetus for CARICOM. But instead of doing that, we focus on China and all of that before recognizing that we are focusing on markets where we cannot have the advantage, and the market that we have the advantage and the market that can create the jobs for us, we are ignoring.

So Mr. Chairman, I am saying that I'm totally in support of the fisher folk always having the right equipment, the right places to repair the boats. And I'm saying that there's a strong relationship between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of the Environment. Mr. Chairman, I was hurt in this House - Mr. Chairman, please - Mr. Chairman, to hear people speaking about the environment in this country the way the Barbados Labour Party spoke about it in this House. They said that reaping grass is a crime. That is the impression they created. They did not even understand that if you are running an economy that builds on services that one thing you have to do is to make your country look good. And Mr. Chairman, when you pass the highways and you see the wonderful work that these people are doing, sir, for the first time, sir, I am seeing these people doing a tremendous job and looking after the environment of the country. I was in this House, sir, in 2007, sir, speaking about the environment and the green economy. And now, sir, instead of us focusing and appreciating, sir, the green economy and what these people are doing to help us with the green economy, we come in here cursing the people who are doing a good job. Sir, when you do not reap the grass, sir, they come and say oh, the place is overgrown with grass and everything. No, you are correcting it. You are still being cursed. You know why? Sir, if we were employing people with equipment to cut the grass and so on and paying large sums it would not be a problem. But now that we have empowered the people of Barbados and asked them to help with the environment of Barbados, we are now hearing all these things being said.

So I'm saying, sir, that I am now hearing also about our country - what they wanted me to do is to go and sign off and give all of our oil rights away in that fishing agreement. That's what they wanted me to do because anybody who understood the negotiation realised it was not just about fish, but there's a relationship between the flying fish and the oil rights. And that is what they wanted me to do. Yes, they just wanted me to give the balance of the bargaining rights to Trinidad. That's what they wanted me to do. But I will tell you, sir, nobody could have gotten me to give up the balance of those rights because the Barbadians - they wanted two minutes. So, Mr. Chairman, if there's one thing that got people angry in this country, especially the older folk of Barbados, sir, is the selling of the National Bank to Trinidad. That is it. Because all

people who recognise that Barbados is respected - especially older folks - respected the Bank and how they respect the land, and they would never understand that point. So don't come in here talking about fishing rights and fishing agreements. Why should we want a fishing agreement, sir?

We have an abundance of fish. What we want is the right to be able to fish in freedom where we want to, but not to go and sell ourselves. And you know what is interesting, Mr. Chairman - Mr. Chairman, listen to this argument. We argued that we should ever follow the flying fish. And we used that as an argument. We used that as an argument that the flying fish migrates. So we should be able to follow the flying fish. But all it comes in the plan too. So if we can follow the flying fish, then we can follow the plan too. But they did not understand that technical point. They did not understand that, and that's why they wanted to give up all of our rights. But, Mr. Chairman, I'm saying, sir, that we have to understand the importance of the fishing industry to the economy and stop looking over our glasses and looking down on our noses. I understand, sir, that the fishing industry has a tremendous contribution to make to this economy, and it affects many lives. Sir, I will -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Come back, sir. Okay, just a moment, just a moment. Members, I just want to take the opportunity to refer you to the rules of debate within the House. I try, as Chairman, to be as impartial - in fact, to be impartial in terms of the operation of the rules and to ensure that applies to every member. When we get to the point where members push the rules, I will not be able to defend you, and certainly whatever sanctions are provided for in these rules will be given without fear or favour. I just want to refer you to Rule 28, which states that: no reference may be made in debate to the character or conduct of any person except in his official or public capacity. We have seen, in some cases, developing into speeches, references made to persons outside of the public official capacity. If that is done, I will strike it from the record and the member will be asked to withdraw the statement.

I just want to speak to this matter about withdrawal of statements. As Chairman, once I see an infringement, I will ask the member to withdraw the statement. There can be no conditions imposed on the Chairman in terms of that request for withdrawal. Once the statement is made and I ask for it to be withdrawn, it must be withdrawn without any terms and without any conditions. If that is not done, the sanction will be invoked on the member. I just want to make it very clear. The other issue relates to the question of asides. We saw in the last session an issue that resulted from an aside. I will not sit as Chairman and permit asides to be made in this House without, again, something being done. Because at the same time, we have to uphold the integrity of the House. We are being watched. People make

decisions on us based on our behaviours. Again, I make the point, if an aside comes to my attention, it will be dealt with. Whatever appropriate sanction is to be meted out, will be meted out. I'm asking members on both sides to respect the rules of the House so that we can at least ensure that when we finish, at least we can have a Parliament in which the integrity of the institution is preserved. That is all I am trying to do - preserve the integrity of the institution. So I'm asking for your cooperation in these matters.

I just also want to be clear on a matter referred to last night. I want to say this. It is my understanding that the statement that was made last night - which I know all of us understand what it was - that statement was withdrawn without any condition. Any condition seems as if there is a lack of clarity as far as that is concerned. And I would just like the member who made the offending remark to clearly indicate that the remark was withdrawn without condition. I want to be very clear.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, sir. Yes. This Ministry - the Ministry of Agriculture - also has responsibility for water. I'm going to respond to you, sir, if she would just let me finish my sentence. Yesterday, during the course of the debate, I made a reference that she was asking me to withdraw, and I withdraw today, sir. I want to - okay. Accept the fact that I have withdrawn the statement. Okay.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Hold on. I remember. No, it must be withdrawn before any explanation of the matter. It must be withdrawn.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The matter has been withdrawn. Thank you very much. This Ministry has responsibility for water management -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honour. Let's break. Let's break. Okay. Thank you. All right. So that is noted and therefore I wanted it to be noted that it is clear that it was withdrawn.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, sir, this ministry has responsibility for water management and issues in respect of zoning. Of water zonings is even now before the ministry and it's important that the House understands the process by which changes are made to water zones, especially in the light of the debate that took place yesterday, where it was stated that a minister, other than a minister responsible for water, can initiate and take action in respect of changes in the water zones. And that in relation to a matter involving me as a minister, and it begs this, sir, that I refused an application for one person while in a position to approve a similar application for somebody else. The matter to which reference was made yesterday, sir, was a matter of Norwoods. And here are the facts, Mr. Chairman, and I'm happy to be able to represent the facts.

An application was made for change of use of Norwoods on the eighth of May 1994. It was made in the name of the owner and it was made by the agent of the owner. And I'm calling the person's name in his capacity as an agent, sir - Mr. Clifton Neblett. The Ministry of Public Works at the time had responsibility for water and in 1997 the Ministry of Public Works sent the following note to Cabinet, and properly so. The Town Planning Department received an application on eighth May 1994 for the change of use at Norwoods from agriculture to residential. The land at Norwoods is in zone one protection zone. A hearing was held on 30 October 1996 under section 184 of the Town Planning and Country Planning Act, Chapter 240, to determine the outcome of the application. The Barbados Water Authority, which was represented at the hearing, advised that it had no intention of developing a public water source in the Norwoods area. The Barbados Water Authority therefore recommended that the zone one area of Norwoods - 181 acres, including Older Plantation - should be released from zone one classification to zone two. The Barbados Water Authority also recommended that the opportunity should be taken to release the following areas from zone one to zone two: Cap Hill, St. Lucy; [Inaudible.], St. Andrew. The Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing supports the recommendations at paragraphs three and four, and Cabinet agreed to the release. And that is the clear process by which the zoning was changed.

Mr. Chairman, the application was in the name of the original owner. Yesterday an allegation to which I responded was made that the original owner made an application, that I refused it and gave permission to somebody else. Mr. Chairman, on the 22nd - on 22 December 1997 - the following letter was written to the agent of the owner, Mr. Clifton Neblett. I will read it. Read the application written by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. Read this application. The caption: change of use from agriculture to residential purposes at Holders Plantation. The application made on behalf of Holders Dairy Industry Limited was referred to the Minister for his decision in accordance with section 18 of the Act. This is to inform you that the Minister has approved planning permission for the application. Mr. Chairman, sir, so I approved the application made by the original owner for the change of use at Norwoods.

And I make the point, and I make this point very strongly, that the accusation that a minister received an application for one entity, refused it in relation to change of use of land, and then gave permission to another entity for change of use of that same land is an accusation that accuses the Minister of improper conduct and discriminatory behaviour. And that if it was true, it would mean that the action by the minister could be made the subject of action under the Administrative Justice Act, and that the penalties for ministerial discriminatory behaviour

of that nature are considerable. It is therefore not a matter to be taken lightly when a member comes on the floor of Parliament and says that I received an application for permission to have a change of use, I refused it and gave it to somebody else. It's not a light matter. If it was true, Mr. Chairman, I would be guilty of ministerial misconduct. And I make these things clear to the House because the reality is that the process by which land is moved from zone one to zone two requires a transparent process involving a public hearing. That transparent process was gone through. The Ministry of Public Works and the then minister took it to Cabinet. Cabinet agreed, and it was on that basis that this matter was dealt with.

Now, I'm not even going to get into the fact that the application was before us in 1994, before we became the government - that is an immaterial concern. The fact is that a transparent process involving the use of the law was gone through, and that the original owner, through his agent, was given the permission, and that the notion that there was some ministerial impropriety in the decision is not true. The owner was given outline planning permission. He subsequently sold the land. When there was a requirement for detailed planning permission, then until issues arose, there was another minister in place and you will notice that another minister made comments - not by the department. The notion, Mr. Chairman, that I made an arbitrary decision to change land from zone one to zone two in favour of somebody at Norwoods, sir, is not true. It is not true. What was said in this House yesterday - that I refused the application for the original owner and gave a similar permission to somebody else - Mr. Chairman, sir, is also not true. The permission was given to the original owner. And sir, I think I will have to make the permission I gave to the original applicant a document of the House.

Now, Mr. Chairman, in today's debate, sir, we were told that nothing had been done for the sugar industry by the Barbados Labour Party. The member for St. Lucy made the point. It seemed to me that, having built the Bridgetown fishing complex, the Oistins fishing complex, having done the fishing complex at Weston, having done the new market at Speightstown, having done the fishing complex at Tent Bay, having done [Inaudible.] Bay, that it is a little far-fetched to accuse the party of having done nothing whatsoever for the fishing industry. In addition, sir, the member for St. Lucy speaks with reference to the facts -

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I want to make clear - I never said that -

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sorry, the Honourable Member misled the Chamber, sir. I never said that nothing was done for the fishing industry. I said nothing was done

for the sugar industry. I said the fishing industry needed assistance and I went on to outline where I thought that assistance was needed and never came. But I certainly recognise all that the member is outlining as developments in the fishing industry, part of which happened at Oistins -

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: - Member, because you were speaking of fishing and Oistins, I said that it was done for the fishing complex by the member. The Minister of Agriculture yesterday spoke in terms of the work that he wants to undertake in relation to a commission. And I want to follow this debate because it's an important debate. The member for St. Michael North East quite properly made the point that the initiatives that are being proposed - that came out of the agriculture commission - will be important in having to transform Barbados. We could not fight against them, but they need to be funded. And I seem to remember that on the occasion when that commission met, the minister on the occasion spoke outside the context, apparently, of a prepared speech and complained about the need for there to be appropriate funding for his ministry and the initiatives about to be embarked upon.

That matter becomes important, Mr. Chairman, because on other occasions he says that he had to speak in the terms in which he was speaking for reasons that clearly had to do with his relationship to the Ministry of Finance. We have come to this House and once again the funding for the initiatives on which the minister is pinning his hopes for agricultural transformation have not received funding support in the estimates. Now it becomes an important issue because the Minister of Finance apparently seems to believe that directing the minister to an alternative source can get the job done. And that alternative source, as I understand it, is that the Minister of Finance seems to feel that he can direct the National Insurance Fund - not on investment, as the law says, but a fund that may not yield investment returns - and that can be the source from which these initiatives are met.

More to the point, Mr. Chairman, those initiatives announced by the minister have not been acted upon. There is great division of opinion and in fact the rate of opinion is that the National Insurance Board can accept the directions of a minister to make investment, to put funds in an investment, but that to create a fund that may not satisfy the purposes of an actuary is an entirely different matter. And therefore the issues that the minister was addressing last year remain relevant in the absence of any support in these estimates for the various and, I think, quite important initiatives that he believes are necessary coming out of the commission that he established. But there's no point making these statements. There's no point complaining about the lack of funding when the moment comes - as this House has the moment - to make decisions in relation to funding, and those decisions are not made.

It is interesting that the minister has not yet spoken about water, but I'm absolutely sure that a number of issues in respect of the Water Authority that his colleague the Minister of Finance had been raising require now to be brought into discussion. And I believe that it would be greatly helpful if the minister could give us a status report on issues relating to the construction of headquarters for the Barbados Water Authority, and if the minister, sir, could settle the issue of the signing of a letter of comfort - he has already three minutes - three minutes, sir. I made allegations. If he could just give us a status report on the matter.

Mr. Chairman, in dealing with the plan for sugar, we mentioned that there were a number of issues that had been set in train that we would have hoped would have been complete over the course of the last years. All other sectors in Barbados operate under the certainty of legislative arrangements - tourism, international business, agriculture, housing. But the agricultural sector is a sector that has a whole wealth of legislation going back to the housing spring and it needs to be put in the context of an Agricultural Development Act. We contracted the services of the FAO and there was a vast amount of agricultural legislation to coordinate. Some have been modernised, the incentives are discretionary and not written in any law. We engaged the services of the FAO to help us to prepare an agricultural development act and the work started. And the House will be pleased to be told that we sought to engage, on a consultancy basis, the best agricultural economist in Barbados to help us to work as a consultant on the project. That person has been recently elevated by the Government to high national honours.

Mr. Chairman, the work on developing a new Agricultural Development Bill was well advanced. It was engaging the attention of the FAO. It had reputable consultants helping to prepare the bill. But five years has elapsed. I'm absolutely sure that unless and until there is an Agricultural Development Act in this country that puts agricultural activity within the same context of legislative certainty as any other sector, then the sector is going to continue to falter in the same way. I ask the minister to give us a status report on issues in respect of the Barbados Water Authority headquarters. I believe that it would be useful if, after five years and after important work had been done on a very complex issue - and I stress this: there is no other sector that has a wider range of legislation than agriculture - it would be useful if the minister could give us a status report on exactly where that particular matter is. I will continue for -

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I wish to join this debate first by complimenting

the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Food, Fisheries and Water Resources for a very lucid presentation on the path which he, along with the officers of the Ministry of Agriculture, intends to take. In fact, he has brought great clarity to the process going forward. There was a time in Barbados when rumour, and I do not necessarily attach much meaning to rumour, but when rumour was quite rife that the former government wanted nothing to do with agriculture in Barbados. And I call it rumour because it was a piece of silliness that one could not attach much sense to it. That is what I said. So listen, there was also the view that the headquarters, which was located at Graham Hall, was to be sold, just like it was a rumour that the land on which Coercion Parry stood on that elevated terrace was to be sold because it was to fetch its highest value. I also dismissed that rumour and all of that was being said at a time when the Barbados Labour Party was in power. So you had the piece of land located at Graham Hall, you had the land located at Station Hill in St. Peter to be so. But I dismiss all of that because sometimes silliness abounds on the landscape.

All great civilisations had a foundation - agriculture. If you look at Mesopotamia as it emerged, if you look at the Levant as it emerged and how it was civilised and how some of the greatest developments in agriculture came about in that area, led principally by the Moors, who would move from northern Africa into that part of Europe, if you want to call it that - the Levant in the seventh century. Wheat and its cultivation and other food crops. Even the United States has its foundation. Brazil has its foundation now. Large swaths of land under cultivation, expansive poultry, cattle farming among the landscapes of these countries. And then out of those, one developed what I call the secondary industries. Agribusiness developed out of that, and out of agribusiness flow some of the great restaurants utilising the products of the field, the products of the farms. Industry is supported - right across the world - a trillion dollar industry.

There was a time in Barbados when we produced what we ate. Yes, it came about as a means of necessity, because it was in the war years when we were told you had to plant to eat. And the state made laws which said to sugar plantation owners that a certain percentage of your land had to be dedicated for the production of root crops - those crops which we use and which to some extent were extremely beneficial. So yams, sweet potato, cassava, eddoes particularly, because tanya and eddoes were mostly grown across the OECS, but some were still grown here. And corn came - another staple. And you had across Barbados small mills that turned that corn from its state into flour. And we were able to have it as a cereal. And even up into recent times you could still go to, I believe, Lionel Seafeld's mill and get your corn or the maize corn turned into flour.

Cassava was also used. Of course, in many homes there were many fingers that were bruised as a result of the use of the grater - pounds upon pounds of cassava was grated, dried. All of that is a preparation for the feast. I know your feast, but all of that was done and you had old man hat as a result. So there is a history of the production of food, but a few things happened. Before I make that point - along in our villages, as they were known then, every house had essentially the same smell. Nobody scoffed because there were pigs in the yard. There were ducks defecating all over the place. Free range chickens roamed. They had the broken parts of grain - what yard fowls now called free range chickens, for which you pay a large amount of money, yard fowls, as we call them. But let us give them now their more modern name. Free range chickens, reared by nature, took a longer time than the ones which now are penned, and you are ready to eat them in six weeks. But our chickens grew, moved around yards and out into the open fields, and they ate what they found was necessary for their own survival.

So everybody had pigs, some sheep. They were not the black belly. They were of different varieties. The black belly was there, but they had also different varieties. Ducks and chickens and whatever else. And we sought to feed our families, and we sought to rear our children. And there are many persons today whose income flowed only from the land and from the pens which they had. But then we started to develop so many other parts of our economy and society. And persons were turning up their noses from the smell of the dump, from the pigs or from the sheep. And then you started doing something called zoning. And where a farm existed before, and then somebody turned a piece of the land for housing, the persons who came second started to complain. We do not want those smells in our homes. And all kinds of complaints forced big farms and sheep farms, small chicken farms to close down. Because a new consciousness was emerging that we can buy everything out of a can, but we were not producing the cans - or what was in the cans - in our country; they were coming from other countries. So we were actually forcing people out by changing lifestyles.

We have now gone full circle, recognising that we have essentially not fed ourselves, not made a significant contribution to what we eat. And therefore, that is why it is so important for education - or re-educating our people - to take place, for scientific applications to be brought to bear on the production of our food. If it is grain, if it is tubers, if it is animals, poultry, whatever we are producing - in certain countries of the world, I am not necessarily saying it must be done here, because we tend to be a little skittish in what we eat. So if you tell a Barbadian you are going to eat crocodile tails - and not crocodile tears, but crocodile tails - they might scoff like that. But in some parts of Africa, the tail of the crocodile is used. It is a delicacy. It is quite tasty. If you go to Zimbabwe today, you can have

crocodile. And cou-cou, as we would call it. Not a problem. If you go into the great Co-operative Republic of Guyana, some people call it wild meat, but meat is utilised. Human beings use what is necessary for survival. In some parts of the world, what we consider to be a pet is a food source. The dog that we consider to be a pet is a food source - in parts of Africa, in parts of Asia, South Korea, the Philippines, across the world. It is the environment in which we come. So we have to tell our people the necessity of feeding themselves, of trying to ensure that what is produced on the farms is consumed in our homes.

I spent many a time growing up as a youngster, joining my grandmother or my father and many others from the village, getting into the back of a horse and cart or mule and cart and going - as the word produced in the present farm - going to the plantation and digging sweet potatoes, digging yams. I am sure the honourable Member for St. George South would be familiar with what I am speaking about. His hands became calloused as a result of doing the same thing that I did. The honourable Member for St. Peter - St. George South. Yeah, he is familiar because that is still the breadbasket to some extent of Barbados. It is only a few years ago I was still digging yams at Thicket Plantation. Nothing wrong with that. We feed ourselves and we have to get it out of the minds of our people that there is something wrong with feeling soil between our fingers. I remember as a youngster planting carrots and beets and much of it still remains with me. I remember cleaning the cesspools where the pigs - the offal - went out. Nothing wrong with that. We are feeding ourselves and providing for our families. Let us get that back.

I remember the honourable Member for St. Peter some years ago using his fork backward. And there is nothing wrong with that. You can turn your fork in different directions and you can pull the soil to you or you can turn the soil away from you. When I saw it, in the paradigm he understood what it is. He was using his limited strength to dig the soil up and to plant. We need to plant, we need to grow, we need to feed our people. That is what has to be at the base of our agriculture. It is easier to import. Something in a can comes in at the port, you go and clear it, you break bulk, you sell it. That is easier. What is more difficult is that you face the ravages of the environment. You face predial larceny that is even becoming even more pronounced now than it was in the past, because people in the past respected the hard work that farmers put in for the production of food and the production of animals.

Only in December, I have an uncle in Charlottesville in the constituency of St. Philip West who went out doing some missionary work - he also does farming - came home to find that 28 black belly sheep were removed in the daytime, and three cows. In December of 2012, 28 black

belly sheep were stolen - were stolen - and three cows. And as he slept in the night, three prize rams were also taken. That kind of behaviour to me is painful. I would not want to say what should be done to those miscreants. I really do not want to say what is done to those persons who would go and take a hard worker's produce. It takes time to grow a ram, to grow a ewe, to grow sheep. And we have to confront it. We call it PDL - that is nature's teething. But because we call it predial larceny, it is teething. It is criminal when persons work hard in the soil and then somebody who just drives around or walks around and monitors goes to reap. There are persons who would plant acres of melons and they would monitor. And then in the midst of night they go and just drag up and pull down everything. They do not even know if they are ready yet to be taken from the soil or taken from the land. So as we also look at expanding and redeveloping our agriculture, we have to put in place serious enforcement provisions for those persons who grow and for those who steal the produce of those hard workers out in the field. In the earlier days persons would have held blues if they were found. We do not want to encourage that. So legislators have to protect our farmers. That is what we have to do.

And therefore I wish to encourage you to continue your journey. Let us not get sidetracked about a well or water and who gave permission or who - I do not know a lot about those things. It was a great place for something that has been knocking around for nearly a decade. And I never heard the Member so stridently get up and defend his name. But it is your name. Unless you think that in this classification, go right ahead. But the tales and the stories have long been told and I am not going to get into it. We know what kind of country we live in. I do not know about that. You deal with the clarification. The point is we need to grow more and we need to feed our people more. I will return.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I recognise the Member for Christ Church West. Christ Church West.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: Mr. Chairman. I rise at this time because I feel so strongly and I wish really to continue from the vein left by the honourable member for Christ Church. Essential because I too believe, Mr. Chairman, that education plays a very significant role in how we view agriculture and its associated facilities. Now I listened to the honourable member for St. Michael South about two days ago when he challenged us to step away from the numbers and the percentages and so forth and to look at the bigger picture. And I really believe that there are times when it is incumbent upon us to do just that. And that is what I am going to do today.

Now, like the member for Christ Church Central, I know of a time in Barbados when we basically fed ourselves. We were a collection of villages. We had no

money, but we had food. And then as we transitioned and our trades emerged, we had money but no food because we started to rely on the importation of food to feed our people. But, Mr. Chairman, we must be careful, because the economic environment is such that we may find ourselves at a point in time having no money and no food. And even though this may be a little dramatic, and it may be a stretch, I believe that at times one has to be melodramatic to make the point, because we cannot speak of our desire or intention to become a developed small island state unless we are putting very tangible plans in place to feed ourselves, because a nation that cannot feed itself cannot declare to be truly free nor developed. That is my view.

So, Mr. Chairman, I want to start at the beginning, and I ask myself, what is our national perspective on agriculture? Because we can take a very romantic view and we can speak of the need for developing the sector. And indeed, we need to develop the sector, because there was a time when the sector contributed as much as 6.4 per cent to our GDP, then it went to 5 per cent, and it has now fallen virtually to about three or 4 per cent. And that is just not good enough. But we ask ourselves, how did we find ourselves in this position? And even though you may think that I am deviating from our culture, I want to say that we found ourselves in this position simply because we have not truly fulfilled the vision of our leaders who fought for the children of labourers to have free education.

I honestly believe that when our leaders fought for the right for people like myself and others like me to have free education, it was not simply for us to pursue employment. I recognise that there are some people for whom employment will be their complete goal. Yes, and I accept that, and I respect it. But I do believe that the vision of our leaders was that our people were educated so that they could transition from employment to entrepreneurship and enterprise, because I believe that is where true stability and even true wealth is generated and secured. But unfortunately, we have seemed very comfortable with employment rather than enterprise. But I want to position agriculture as a sector that can fulfil the role of providing enterprise.

For those who aspire to that position, it will require a reeducation, a virtual national reeducation, because not enough people see agriculture as a vehicle not just for wealth, but power as well. And that reeducation is required. I am yet to hear of an emerging national scholar saying, I want to go into farming. We have not heard that in a long time. Everybody wants to be a doctor, lawyer, everybody want to be an actuary. Those are the traditional professional jobs that people want to pursue. And I am asking, why do they want only to consider those things when in other countries it is an honour to work in agriculture. In fact, not

long ago it was an honour in Barbados to work in agriculture.

So it is absolutely essential, Mr. Chairman, that we support if it is going to happen. And I really hope that the honourable member for St. Philip West would pursue this as a critical initiative in developing his sector, the reeducation of the whole concept of agriculture and the position that it holds in Barbados today. Because I honestly believe that if we take the right reeducation approach, that agriculture could again take its rightful place in making a contribution not just to GDP, but also in terms of wrestling to the ground that very high unemployment rate that we have. Because when you have 16 000 people unemployed, but yet we have an underdeveloped sector, surely this is a pathway for us to deal with our unemployment situation.

But I want to make the point also that agriculture is critical, not just in itself, not just in terms of being able to feed Barbadians, but it transcends several sectors. Agriculture is relevant to our tourism industry and we must support a position where 60, 65, 70 per cent of the foods used in tourism be garnered from our local agricultural sector. It must happen. People come here not for french fries and steak, but people come here for cuckoo and okra, slush and jug, jug and pudding and souse. And all the breadfruit products. All the breadfruit products. We must have a certain faith in what we produce, Mr. Chairman.

But it is not just critical to tourism, it is also critical to health because I also recognise the emergence of the chronic non-communicable diseases as a result of the foods that we are eating. And if we have \$600 million in imported food, much of which is processed food concentrated with sugar and salt, then no wonder, no wonder that we are seeing an emergence of obesity and diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and all the associated cardiac diseases that follow as a result. And Barbados has a very infamous designation of being the amputation capital of the world. And if we are not careful, we will also be considered the stroke capital of the world because we are now registering two strokes every three days. So I am saying to you that the development of our agricultural sector will also allow us to manage the health of our nation.

And it is critical too, to our finance sector, because we should be able to reduce our import bill. \$600 million in imported food, sugar, salt and genetic modification is not good enough for my people. Mr. Chairman, what we need to do is to look very critically at the development of this sector from a 21st century perspective. And if we are able to do so, use our technology, we should be able to attract our intellectuals because our culture today is more than just the use of a hole and a shovel. All of our technologies can be brought to bear upon this sector. Research can be brought to bear upon this sector. The challenges of

efficiency and productivity in a landscape nation should titillate and challenge our young people in the same way that it happens in Israel, for example, how do we use our greenhouses to increase our productivity and efficiency in the food choices that we select?

But like I said, Mr. Chairman, and like I started, it begins with that reeducation and repositioning of the sector in the minds and the hearts of Barbadians that it is a noble pursuit. And I want to ask the government, the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister to ensure that they offer the honourable member for St. Philip West, the Minister of Agriculture, all the support that they can give him. He should not have to come in here and throw a tantrum and threaten this august chamber with resignation to get what he wants. Mr. Chairman, so critical is the sector that I believe that it borders on national security even, and so we should all give him that support so that we can have a marriage between our national development with the agricultural sector taking its rightful place in that marriage. And I have no doubt, Mr. Chairman, that if we are able to do so, that it would bear good fruit.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: St. Philip. [Inaudible.]

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: I think sometimes when we speak of the agriculture sector we tend to utilise the numbers and speak of the sugar industry contribution to the agricultural sector and to GDP. And then we speak of non-sugar agriculture, its contribution to GDP. And we come up with these numbers that average around 5 per cent or so for the last 20 years. Some people seem to conjure up in their heads that the agricultural sector in Barbados really does not do anything at all. What I would want to do in a few minutes is just to bring not only to the chamber, but to bring to Barbadians the results of a set of research that would have been done by the Inter-American Institute on Eco as well as led by Dr. Charleston Brathwaite and the University of the West Indies, which looks at the production of a number of agricultural products in the country, both crop and non-crop.

And what we may be surprised to appreciate is that in Barbados in terms of the total demand, for example, cucumber, sir, we produce 94 per cent of all the cucumbers that we eat. We also produce 98 per cent of all the cassava that we use. We also produce 85 per cent of all the tomatoes that we consume. We also produce 99.5 per cent of all the sweet potatoes that we consume. We also produce 90.6 per cent of all the yams. Mr. Chairman, in addition to that, 94 per cent of all the poultry consumed in Barbados is produced in Barbados, in addition to 100 per cent of the eggs. Let us understand what we are saying here. So this whole notion about the agriculture sector somehow not making the type of natural contribution and so on in terms of numbers is a joke.

One of the things that we have been trying to do is by having this research, we are looking, sir, to look at those items that we know have a demand for and that we produce 60 per cent or less of those particular items at this time. And we have done that research so that we could now target our production in such a way that we target it to produce those items that we know we consume and that we know we utilise within the secondary agribusiness side of production. That work has been done as well, Mr. Chairman, and the items that the research has suggested that we can produce - where we now produce 60 per cent of the total demand required - are as follows: beets, cabbage, carrots, lettuce, melons, hot peppers, sweet peppers, pumpkins, arrowroot, broccoli, herbs.

Mr. Chairman, we have also worked out the annual acreage of those particular items, part of that we have planted down and how many additional acres we need to plant. And we have already worked out, sir, for example, we need an additional 11.94 acres of cabbage planted in Barbados, an additional 22 acres of carrots planted. When all worked out, sir, in order to increase the production to match the demand we would need to plant a little over 1 104 acres in those particular crops. But we can do that, sir. But what has happened is that we have never had the statistical research done. It is now done. Therefore, we can allocate the lands either utilising the Agricultural Society or any other agricultural society to assist us with using their farmers in a structured way to deal with the particular products that we are talking about.

And I intend to, with the support of the Ministry of Finance and the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, to look very closely, Mr. Chairman, at utilising two principles in relation to WTO. The first one is the de minimis rule where we are allowed to subsidise 10 per cent of the overall output in that particular industry. We can use that. Secondly, Mr. Chairman, what we are going to do, because WTO rules allow for state trading enterprises, we are going to ensure that these items, in regards to importation, this country falls under the state trade enterprise and we will do it for a period of time so as to give our local farmers the opportunity to build up the domestic production side to deal with the overall demand for all the products. That is how we intend to utilise the state trade enterprise.

of the BADMC. In addition to that, Mr. Chairman, the way we will use it is not the way the former member for Northwest spoke about setting up supermarkets to compete. No. The problem in Barbados is as is now utilised by state trading enterprises worldwide, you use the state trading enterprise to make sure that the cost of the inputs into your productive sectors is at the minimum. So as a result of that, the state trading enterprise will import both the irrigation systems to be used by all the farmers that are linked in the catering operation, both fertiliser, both all of

the various materials that you will utilise in agriculture. We can bring them in at the lowest possible duty impulse and therefore you give your sector the best competitive edge. That is how it is done worldwide, sir, and we are going to do that very shortly in Barbados. And I can assure you that the work has started.

We have the statistical information and I said in my earlier presentations that what we are now doing is creating the institutional capacity within the BADMC by strengthening the marketing side, by strengthening the side in relation to branding, strengthening the side that deals with the matter of what you call your production chain and management of your production chain elements - that is the production side and your consumption side. So, Mr. Chairman, I am very confident that this will be done and based on the work that is ongoing, I believe I am looking possibly about 18 months or so to be able to establish this particular structure so that we can deal with these particular individual crops in Barbados and produce almost 100 per cent of what we now demand. Mr. Chairman, and I am sure, sir, that you will work very closely with me and the other agricultural organisations to ensure that our farmers become part of the production strategy in this context. And as I spoke earlier in relation to the food production zones, this would fall very nicely within that particular context.

Mr. Chairman, the member for St. Peter spoke to the Agricultural Development Act, the Sustainable Agriculture Development Act, and whatever he wants to say to the member for St. Peter. And he spoke to the Scotland District Authority legislation. He also said, sir, that the Scotland District Authority legislation was brought to this Honourable Chamber in December 2007. Elections were held in January - I think it is 2008 - January 15, 2008. Now, what I must say to the other member is this: I am not in any hurry moving the management structure of the Scotland District into a statutory corporation. I am not in any hurry. We have a system in place where we are evaluating legislation. We have to determine, sir, even though when I have discussed this with the technical persons in the ministry, they had major concerns in relation to the human resource functions, major concerns in relation to the specific functions that the ministry ought to execute, which functions are better executed within the ministry structure, how you manage your interface of management and technical interface, and a whole lot of issues. And what I was saying to the member for St. Peter is: hold on. If after we have done our due diligence and evaluation, and we believe that - and it would have come to our various committees of the cabinet, and then the cabinet agrees that this is the road that we ought to go down - that is the road that we will go down. But we are not going down that road simply because you brought the legislation here in December 2007. So let us rest that for the time being; we will get to it and we will make the appropriate decision based on the evidence that comes to us.

In relation to Scotland District, I want to also mention one other thing with respect to Scotland District. And part of the problem in the Scotland District, sir - I do not think one has to get very technical, but sometimes you have to take difficult technical subjects and make them simple. And the best way to describe that area, Mr. Chairman, is to define it as an area that does not have a significant coral cap. That is the best way to describe it in our geological formation. As a result of that, Mr. Chairman, what you really have down there is an essential accumulation of what you call oceanics, which represents old ocean deposits of sand, deposits of clay, deposits of mud that stack up for years. Because of that, Mr. Chairman, it means, therefore, it is susceptible to shifts and movement because you do not have a coral stability component to it.

What is important in understanding that is that it requires, therefore, that one - the area is properly evaluated in terms of underground rivers, underground streams; the area is properly evaluated with respect to gully systems and so on - because the major challenge to that area essentially is water, whether it is bulk water, whether it is stream water or whatever it is, whether it is surface water. That is the major challenge. And outside of that, even though you may have done the best in relation to how water is managed in the area, you may still end up getting slippage because of the geotechnical elements of the area. I say all that to say this: that many of the conservation elements that would have been defined over time would have been to try to deal with things like groynes and water management operations, et cetera. But on a more agricultural side as opposed to an engineering side, Mr. Chairman, it is all really about holding the soil together in the best way that you can. So therefore, what you have to be able to do in managing that area, sir, is you have to choose very carefully the type of agriculture that you are going to introduce into that area.

And as a result of that, Mr. Chairman, thank you. You have to use a type of agriculture that has what is classically called adventitious root structures - that is, the root spreads out and holds. Now, because of that, Mr. Chairman, we are going to utilise the Scotland District very effectively to assist us with biomass production and for our multipurpose chicken factory. Evaluations have already been done by Bosch Engineering out of South Africa over a three-year period, and they have come to Barbados and evaluated the plant known as leucaena, which everybody would know as wild tamarind. It has all of the root characteristics and it presents at a particular stage in its age all of the characteristics for high thermal output when burnt. And as a result of that we are going to engage in the Scotland District in managed agricultural farm-type setups that will execute and will result in two success stories: one, stabilisation; and two, the provision of a product that now has agricultural value in relation to our electricity coal generation facility.

And in addition to that, we have tons and tons of river tamarind growing all over Barbados and people can opt in time to be able to harvest theirs, bale it, or however they want to do it, and be able to bring it to the factory and sell it. So you are creating a new agricultural product, a new agricultural industry out of what used to be called a pest. And what is important here, sir, is that the science has already been worked out. I have the reports as well as the Barbados Cane Industry Corporation has theirs. We copied the report and the two entities that we are now working with, sir - which is the Morbini Corporation and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation - they also have copies of those reports. So, Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to fly through those particular areas and I will deal with one or two other areas of water, et cetera, a little bit later. Thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: At a late stage, because first of all I was listening very carefully to the minister, I listened very carefully to other members' presentation and then I was also thinking in my mind that the contribution of all honourable members were so apt and applicable to this discussion that I really enjoyed the presentation of all honourable members on this head last evening and today. I, however, want to make two interesting observations because I grew up in a predominantly agricultural community, heart of St. George and I, like the member for Christ Church East Central, was involved in harvesting my parents' sugar cane. I was involved in pig farming. I was involved in all types of farming activity in the Ghana area. And therefore I am aware of the problems associated with agriculture and the successes of agriculture because I know that my parents helped to ensure that we were able to be raised with the produce of agriculture.

But interesting enough, I believe that the same conditions that existed as in the agriculture still exist today. We still have tropical climate, we still have limited water resources. But Mr. Chairman, one of the things that we need to educate Barbadians about is this whole notion of commercial agriculture. And I want to start my presentation by saying that this is what has changed over time. The whole notion of going into commercial agriculture has changed over the past 20 years. And why do I say so? I say so because when we were growing up, when we were children, we were told about our sugar and our commercial activities in the Caribbean, bananas and all other types of produce. The stable products of the Caribbean went to Africa, went to Europe and Europe were taking the products of the Caribbean on a preferential treatment. But since the world has changed over time, we now have to look at new arrangements in order to be involved in commercial agriculture. Because commercial

agriculture, Mr. Chairman, is one area that provides the foreign exchange and that provides the help for our society.

But one has to look very carefully at why it has changed over time, why this problem has changed. And as I read over and over again, I am of the view that the conventions that helped the Caribbean over time do not exist today. For example, the Lomé conventions that helped the Caribbean agriculture over the past 50 years or so have not helped. I once saw that by the end of 1989 when the treaty was committed to an end, that a new order, a new world order replaced the old conventions which helped the Caribbean islands and the African countries. And therefore Caribbean countries and African countries are now left to be in a world which is more liberalised and have to fend for themselves. We have found, Mr. Chairman, that a number of African countries have now gone out of agriculture production and are relying heavily on tourism. They are relying on services and they are relying mainly on some industries. But this whole question of preferential treatment does not exist now.

And what has caused this? I heard the ministers talk about the minimalist theory that they are going to do some subsidies. And under the WTO rules generally subsidies should not exist. Even though the country that took the rest of the world to the European court still provides subsidies to their manufacturers, they provide subsidies to the agriculture farmers. And when you look at what happens in North America, one finds that the North American farmer gets direct subsidies from the state. And that is why they are able to keep the cost of foodstuff so low. So that you ask yourself how can we compare? How can we compete? How can a Barbados farmer compete? We cannot compete, first of all because we do not have the large-scale production - most of our farms in the Caribbean, in Barbados, are small scale relative to what happens in the rest of the world. So we cannot compete based on size, we cannot compete based on subsidies and we cannot compete based on finances. And that is how it is.

So that it is now left to this government, it is left to all governments to be in a liberalised society. And therefore the choice for the minister, the choice for the ministry and indeed for the government is very limited - so that you cannot compete. And that is why we heard that both sides have provided a lot of subsidy, quiet subsidy, to the sugar industry - providing over \$500 million in subsidy to the sugar industry. Because we recognise that sugar is important. Now as I said before, Mr. Chairman, sugar was and is a product that we must hold on to. We have to hold onto it not because of its financial commitment, yes, but not because it is providing much to us. But we hold on to it because it provides employment for over 2 500 people. It helps to make our society look good, aesthetically beautiful. It helps to provide also a sense of pride in what we have been accustomed to. But the truth of the matter is

commercial sugar cannot be grown successfully without the help from government. And therefore we have to be able to hold on to it.

Now my view is, Mr. Chairman, that we have to look at what is the optimum size of the sugar industry. And many persons have various views. We have to be able to involve the society in providing labour. The cost of labour is basically the highest, and the cost of transportation is so high. I remember my father saying to me as I grew up that the cost of cutting cane in the old days and going to the factory was relatively low. But now the cost of transportation is so high, the cost of labour vis-à-vis. And therefore, when the member for St. Lucy spoke to me yesterday, he is of the view that we still have to go to a situation where we use the cane-cutting method. He is of that view. It may be very beneficial for persons to be involved because it is really predominantly for labour, but we have to use some form of mechanisation in the sugar industry. But the cost to the farmer is high, so that you sell your sugar at a lower price, but the cost of producing it is high. And therefore we have to evolve.

In some societies, like Cuba, in some societies like certain areas like India, the cost of labour is relatively cheap, maybe \$2 US, even less than that. But how can a Barbados farmer compete now? How can a poor society like ours have government continue to subsidise the industry? But we have to. So that you take from the linkages of the tourist industry, tourism, the linkages of offshore banking, and you have to put subsidised agriculture and we have to be able to find the best mix. And this is the problem that we have. And this is a problem that the minister will continue to have on all governments. And when you look at what the previous government did and what you are doing now, ten years from now, somebody will come up and say, what is it that the Stuart administration did for agriculture? But they did not know that you have spent much money in agriculture, which you do not necessarily see, but you have to. If you go to Toronto, if you go to Quebec, you see the produce of potatoes, of meat and so on being subsidised. They are being subsidised. And therefore, Mr. Chairman, we have to continue to keep agriculture. We have to keep agriculture because it helps to provide a means of some foreign exchange, not much. It helps to provide employment for our people and it helps to make our country look good.

But over time, this government and the Barbados Labour Party government has done a lot of work to push forward agriculture. If you look at the poultry industry, for example, Mr. Chairman, by 2008, we had been able to meet 80 per cent of our needs in poultry; in fresh pork, we were able to produce almost 60 per cent. So that we were doing these things and I hope the programme will continue. I have always said to people, especially those persons that are in education, those persons who are at a university -

some of you, and everyone in this society must have the bacon and eggs, everyone must have chicken and pork. But do you understand that it comes from the hard production of persons who have to get up morning and night, day after day to produce these things? I have told my students years ago, you like these eggs, but you don't like the smell of farming. You like these beautiful things, but you don't like to do this. You like bacon, you like eggs, but you don't like to smell what happens on the farm. And we have this in society today where persons get up in the mornings, go to work, come home, sleep, but do not understand what happens on the farm.

And I would like to remind members, finally - if you look, there is a poem which was written in Jamaica, the Song of a Banana Man. And that poem expresses the view that you see people daily going to work and you do not understand what they are doing, but they are all providing something for the rest of society. And you sometimes look down on those workers in that sector. And I must say that the workers in the agriculture sector are the hardest working. And some of them still go along day after day. And what do they get? What pensions do they get, Mr. Chairman? What do they get at the end of the day? And therefore, society must be prepared to help that class of people who are working hard to keep all of us. All of us will go to lunch in a few minutes. But have you taken time out to realise that it came from a man and a woman who had to produce those things and who have to do the things in order to keep society? And therefore, we have a duty to subsidise this agriculture, to subsidise those people and help those people to understand that they are worthwhile producers.

And that is why I like the agriculture. I go to the agriculture show every year now. And there is one thing that the government must be thanked for, and that is the resurrecting of the agricultural society with the help of Agrofest, with the help of that entity. And I must say it must continue. It may not be profitable at this stage, but I believe eventually we have to put more money in it in order to survive and to revive our agriculture. Mr. Chairman, I am thankful.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Our member for Christ Church West Central.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Chairman, I am happy to join this debate on a very interesting topic, the topic of agriculture, because, in fact, the agricultural policy of the government, as you know, is very much intertwined in the whole question of youth development and how we are going to transform the outlook for young people in the area of new enterprises and new career paths. You will recall, Mr. Chairman, that last year when we introduced Infinite House, the National Youth Policy, one of the pivotal areas of that policy had to do with the creation of new

opportunities for young people in the area of agriculture. And as I listened to at least one of the speakers on the other side who was wondering how do we transform the outlook of young people who are looking for new career paths and how do we interest them in the evolution of what we consider to be new pathways to agriculture?

It is certainly informative to recall that when we did the groundwork leading to the National Youth Policy which, as you know, was largely written by the young people of Barbados - a very successful National Youth Policy, one that of course the Barbados Labour Party has given us high marks for - that National Youth Policy, which was written by young people, identified the involvement of young people in agriculture as one of the key drivers for youth development in Barbados. And I believe that is the point from which this government has determined that it will start as it relates to rekindling the interests of young people. Because in fact we have a policy initiative, a policy agenda which suggests that young people are, yes, interested in agriculture, but they are interested in getting involved in agriculture through new means which are driven by new technology.

And we have seen that over and over again within the context of the Youth Development Department of my ministry. We have been able to pilot a very successful garden project which was led by one of the inspiring youth commissioners within the Christ Church Primary Schools zone. And that particular project was able to not only get our young people to understand the rudiments of agriculture, but they were able to embark on a project of growing produce with a view to exhibiting that produce at Agrofest. In fact, I went to the activity later that year and was very proudly presented with some of the produce coming from that particular project. Now we have determined that project will in fact be repeated and used throughout the various zones across Barbados in cooperation with the Ministry of Education to excite the interests of our young school children in the art of agriculture. And this is critical, Mr. Chairman, because getting our young people focused on agriculture has got to start. And I certainly agree with the member who spoke - I believe, Christ Church West. But in fact we have started on that path already.

We have already put in place mechanisms to ensure that our young people can become interested in agriculture at the bedrock, so to speak. Mr. Chairman, our approach has always been the focus of the government to ensure that we could tackle the high food import bill. In fact, the medium term development strategy which we would have brought to this House of 2010-2014, etched in the annals of this parliamentary record the clear intention of the government to adopt a new approach to agriculture based on saving our country foreign exchange and ensuring that we could move rapidly towards a strategy of food security.

And I want to take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to certainly congratulate the Ministry of Agriculture for staying the course in terms of putting in place some fundamental strategies amidst of course taking on board an agriculture sector that was largely ignored by the Barbados Democratic Party. But the current Minister of Agriculture and of course the technical staff of the Ministry of Agriculture have put in place some critical fundamental policy initiatives which are critical to transforming the agriculture sector. And it is informed by a number of key initiatives which of course has already been explained by the minister and I don't need to repeat.

But I would like to say that certainly part of the transformation of the economy of Barbados we recognise must be focused on a transformation of the agriculture sector. It is correct to say that the food import bill is too high, but we also recognise that having a vibrant agricultural sector and certainly a vibrant agricultural industry is critical and central to any move to transform and to restructure the economy of Barbados. I want to say too that my ministry certainly over the last financial year - and we are going to accelerate the pace of this project, moving into this financial year - has embarked on a youth in agriculture project which so far, Mr. Chairman, we have been able to partner with the Ministry of Agriculture and the varying relevant state agencies in relation to putting in place a framework upon which this project can unfold. We've already identified a number of lands which we intend to take this project forward on. And indeed, over the next couple of weeks the high level committee which has been established within my ministry will be accelerating the work in relation to that youth and agriculture programme.

And it is our intention, Mr. Chairman, to bring together all parties. We are certainly aware that this is a key concern of the Ministry of Agriculture. We have been talking with the Ministry of Agriculture with a view to bringing all parties on board to having a very robust youth and agriculture programme designed to ensure that we could start on the path of food security and from a strategic perspective, reducing the food import bill in Barbados. So I also want to say, Mr. Chairman, that we know that if we are able to implement some of the strategies to modernise the agriculture sector in Barbados, that holds the key to the earning of vital foreign exchange in Barbados.

It is unfortunate that the current Minister of Agriculture is now the one to champion a strategy that ought to have been championed many, many years ago. And this has to do with the transformation of the sugar cane industry in Barbados. And I have to congratulate him and the Ministry for articulating a strategy that is designed to, for once and for all, move Barbados along the path of transforming this industry that has so much potential in terms of helping us to earn foreign exchange while at the

same time protecting our ecosystems and protecting our environment in Barbados. And I want to say that the idea of certainly ensuring that we could move towards specialty sugars remains certainly for me - and I've heard the minister articulate his own position on this - as being a key ingredient of that strategy, where moving forward we have got to get to the point of moving towards the manufacturing, the actual creation of specialty products, because we still know that perhaps the best sugars are produced in Barbados and we have to now take that brand and make it work for our agriculture industry.

I also believe that part of the strategy which I've seen articulated by the Ministry of Agriculture has a lot to do with ensuring that not only do we grow more foods locally, but that it has to be that approach because that is one of the key ingredients of reducing the cost of living in Barbados. If we have such a huge food import bill, then it follows naturally that if we approach it in this way that we will also reduce the food import bill in Barbados. Initiatives such as ensuring that we could accelerate the four H movement and develop that further, I believe will also go a long way towards the kind of strategy which is necessary and which we have articulated in terms of moving forward in terms of the development of agriculture in Barbados.

So I just wanted, Mr. Chairman, to make that intervention to signal that it is already a policy initiative of this government to utilise modern technology to very extensively get our young people involved. And we do have good and credible evidence that our young people are interested in agriculture. They're interested in agriculture and I've seen many of them utilising modern technology, some driven by very high tech computer programmes that will help us to really move this industry forward, but along different and modern lines. So I don't want it to go abroad that our young people are not interested in agriculture, but they will get involved in agriculture based on new strategies that are driven by technology. And we intend certainly with this youth in agriculture project, we intend to make sure that this particular project is informed by the best technological expertise and equipment and that once we start on this, we develop a project that can be replicated across Barbados, but with a view to tackling our food import bill and certainly increase the level of food production in Barbados.

It has got to be the purpose and certainly the intent of the emerging generation of entrepreneurs in Barbados, namely our young entrepreneurs, to be at the forefront of this effort. And to that extent that is what is going to inform the strategy within the Ministry of Youth as we relate to the involvement of our young people in agriculture. And this strategy, Mr. Chairman, is a strategy that certainly I believe is the right one for Barbados and it is one where we will see the partnering of several agencies and I've said certainly welcoming the partnership of the Ministry of

Agriculture. And I want to take this opportunity as I speak on this matter to also appeal to young entrepreneurs in Barbados generally to see agriculture in its various components and various component stages to be a very exciting business proposition and an area in which they can make a livelihood in Barbados. Once, of course, they are determined to concretise their vision based on a structured forward thinking strategy which will obviously help them to roll out in the months and certainly in the years ahead. Mr. Chairman, I'm obliged to you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Chairman, I shall not pay any attention to your choice. I shall respect you highly, sir, and your ruling. I want, Mr. Chairman, to at the outset congratulate the folk in the horticultural society for the excellent work they have been doing over the years. Barbados has been winning quite a few medals overseas whenever they participate and I think a lot of it has to do with the cut flower industry. And that is one area which I would want to ask the honourable minister to pay even more attention than has been paid before because I am very aware of what is happening at Canefield, St. Thomas, the heliconias, the ginger lilies and other forms of flowers because that type of land is very honourable and tends to lend extra assistance and potential to the flower industry. I know that at Springvale, St. Thomas, going into St. Andrew, there is another area there where the cut flower industry I am sure will grow by leaps and bounds. And we are all aware, sir, of the great potential that the industry has for bringing in foreign exchange into this country. And I think closer attention must be paid to such an investment.

My big concern though is to do with the land for the landless. And you will appreciate, sir, that I have never lived anywhere else but in the countryside. So I consider myself a country person. But when I reflect on where we have come from in the parish of St. Thomas and where we are now, it really burns my heart. And perhaps it is a good thing that I love our poor parents who laboured in those various fields that helped to raise large families and to feed them are now deceased. I think it is a terrible disgrace that the parish continues to deteriorate in the way it does when it comes to bush, the courage and all the other things that go with it, including the criminals and so. And I can say that, sir, for most of the parishes in rural Barbados - St. John, St. Andrew, St. Joseph, sections of St. James and so on. And I think that we as a government have got to pay special attention to what is happening in our plantations and where they are being underutilised and perhaps being held back. To be able to grow houses instead of produce, I believe that we must make a serious attempt to get back those fields into production.

It is unfortunate that within the last two weeks, I do not know if it is a nationalist act, but every area of open space or that has the bush has been burnt and it is not to do with any brush fire. It is a deliberate act according to what I am witnessing. And it is unfortunate, Mr. Chairman, that the fires are being set close to schools. So every school almost in rural Barbados over the past two weeks has had to be closed and productivity in the school had to go to nil because of burning fires in the area. And a lot of that is to do with the grass and the bush, the overgrowth that is very evident in the place. So Dayrells Road Primary had to close earlier this week. Blackman and Gollop had to be closed. They burned Holy Innocents in the field before, above Holy Innocents on Sunday afternoon. And we are not thinking about the respiratory problems that people have, how the smoke impacts on almost everything and of course, the component to do with nature and the burning and how it will affect. And so I would love to see the plan for rural Barbados and I am focusing particularly on St. Thomas because that is where there is a lot of neglect. When I see St. Philip - Israel, St. Philip is growing lots of crops. It hurts because St. Thomas has that potential and the rainfall is there every day.

So I would love, sir, for more of our dispossessed to be given that opportunity through leases to be able to cultivate the land. We must not assume that every young person is disinterested. There are many young people who have an interest in agriculture, but they do not have the land in order to be able to give effect to working the land. And I believe that more negotiations should take place with our plantation owners, who have large tracts of land, to be able to buy them in perhaps a five-year lease, a ten-year lease, so that those individuals can access the land and be able to help us to feed ourselves and to feed Barbados and indeed for export. The export market has great potential. We had sweet pepper contracts. We had contracts for all forms of produce. But of course, if the productivity is low, then we cannot meet the demands for the contracts and we lose them over time. So I believe that negotiation should take place and where the penalties are in the law, those plantation owners that defy the use of those plantations, that there should be some kind of enforcement where that is concerned.

The other points that I would wish to raise, of course, is to do with praedial larceny and the few persons in the parish that are really trying very hard, including some of my relatives. My sister's garden was raided five times in two weeks and the garden is at the back of her house. And of course people are saying, why do you not set a trap? Why do you not do this? No, we believe in conforming with the law. But I think it is heartburning when the little old lady has an ackee tree, mango tree, whatever crop it is, or the little old man for that matter, and people go and reap the harvest before they can get a few cents to help pay the land tax or to help pay for the

insurance for the houses. And I think that Barbadians have suddenly gone mad - most of them who are into the negativity or into the criminal acts. They even go into churches and steal candles and different things. I do not know. One time we used to talk about certain villages, but something is going wrong in the psyches and we are boasting about all this free education. Education does not teach persons to breach the law. And therefore I think it is significant that the larceny be given even a second look.

I heard an advertisement on the radio last week that Graham Hall was given out and advised the person that the produce that was stolen was recently sprayed - and that is the government's entity that the person has now entered into. I think it is wrong. And I can see, Mr. Chairman, and you are into the agricultural area with your expertise, and you know that when you hear of two bulls that are harvested in a gully in St. Thomas or St. Lucy or St. Peter, you can see the professional hand that is in it, where you only see the carcass of what is left. But you do not see anything else. No ordinary person will go and take down a bull and be able to take away all the beef and just leave the frame there in the field. And I do not know - they are breaching every health rule that we are trying to promote as well. And who is buying it, who is selling it? It is so wrong. So I believe that we need to look at the vendors as well, Mr. Chairman, who are on the street - like this morning down Cheapside. You will see them at the roundabout selling sugar cane and they never even got cut with the same blade. It is wrong and it is packaged in plastic bags. And people whom I expect to know better are stopping and buying it and sucking it. They do not even know if the boys or the girls - because girls are all into everything negative now - are even washing their hands after they do whatever. And I think it is wrong for persons to be out there labouring, investing their funds, themselves, taking their children, all the high costs of the diesel and the different things they have to use in the production of the products, to have to lose them by night.

We have heard of people who own cane fields and when they start to cut the canes, the whole centre of the cane field has been already taken by criminals, because that is besides what they are. We cannot mix matters in respect of that. And so I hope, sir, that we will be able to encourage those who are buying to refrain and ensure that the ticketing system that we were hearing about with the big supermarkets and the other agencies - even ordinary people who are buying - I hope that will continue so that we can identify the perpetrators and let them be brought to justice. The justice system has to be a bit more proactive when it comes to matters of that nature. And we have to make examples of those who are out there breaching the rules and destroying the livelihoods of innocent Barbadians who toil in the sun, in the rain, in the heat, who go out there and the work is backbreaking. We know it. The honourable member and Minister of Education, he knows it. Many of

us of all ages know what it is like to go out there and to be able to assist in projects that will help to supplement the income in the household. So we know it is hard work, it is a thankless job, but we did it and we understood. And people are still doing it. They need the encouragement, they need the legal support, they need the incentives that government will offer to be able to reach that stage.

And Mr. Chairman, the final thing I would wish to mention - because since I am not going to be too much on the youth in agriculture, other honourable members would have spoken of it - the only thing I like to caution the honourable minister is that the information I have been able to gather about the four-H clubs is not good to the ear. I understand there were 30 clubs that were functioning before. Now there are only ten. And this investment that is given does not seem to be reaching the targets. If we are to develop our culture, we are to develop agriculture and embrace the youth in it, I believe that whatever funds are put there should be so well expended that it trickles down to those who are the users.

And I will close on that particular one - the agriculture, really, the youth. But to speak to the monkey population, I will reiterate the challenges that we are getting in rural Barbados, where the monkeys now seem to be developing attitudes like some people I know, and they do not care if the Seville orange cannot be eaten. They are just picking it, biting it, throwing it away. And there are so many other fruits and vegetables that the monkeys are pulling up. They know they do not want them because they seem to be very special monkeys. I must tell you, Mr. Chairman, I had the unfortunate experience on two occasions in Roebuck Street where monkeys almost attacked me. One snatched the food from my hand and I am not going to come to Belleville because there will be more monkeys there. But the monkeys in Roebuck Street two weeks ago almost snatched the food from my hand. And the honourable member for St. Philip North is talking about monkeys from the back of Harrison College and the Barbados Labour Party headquarters. And it is that to which I am referring where the monkeys are. But as I said, Mr. Chairman, I would rather not go to Belleville or George Street because I know the monkeys there would be bigger and more ferocious. So I would prefer to stay in Roebuck Street where I am.

But the point I am making as I close here is that the destruction is really tremendous. I know once upon a time there was a policy where the tails of the monkeys would be brought in. I know persons would set traps to hold them and sell them and so on. And I understand that the green monkey has some kind of special health value - something is done with the green monkey in the health arena to be able to add some kind of incentive to the service. I am not going to deal with the research now. The point I am making is that the numbers are growing large. And I think a lot of it

is to do with the fact that in the past we had so many small holdings and what we now call the gully, where people still grew food and crops and so on. The monkeys remained in that habitat, but now they are moving into communities and villages. If the monkeys have come to town in the way they have, then, sir, you can imagine how they are in the countryside where we are. And therefore, I will want to know how will the minister and the Ministry of Agriculture - not just the minister - what strategies will they come up with to help us? Because the loss is as tremendous as the praedial larceny. And therefore, if I could get that kind of response, it will help me a lot. Because the farmers in St. Thomas are really crying out for the devastation of the crops by monkeys, with the praedial arsonists and of course the challenges that they have with the water. But the minister, the honourable minister, had identified some of the strategies earlier. And therefore, I would not want to rehash that again. But I am extremely grateful, sir, for the opportunity and for your protection, sir, from the honourable member for St. -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, Mr. Chairman reported progress and asked leave to sit again, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended for lunch until 2.00 p.m.

The question that the House be suspended until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting of this chamber is resumed. Members, when the suspension was taken, we were in committee and to that we shall return.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in committee. Recognize the honourable member for.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make a few comments. It's under this head, which I believe is Head 72, because in particular, I just wanted it to be absolutely clear that based on the discussions that I've heard, there is no seeming divide about whether or not as a country we need to have a sugar cane industry. Indeed, I think the difference is that the other side seemed to have recognised this late in the day and put together a programme, but did nothing about it. Indeed, it is to my recollection that I think in the 2006 budget of the then Prime Minister, an amount of US \$150 000 000 was supposed to be set aside to be invested in the sugar cane industry. There was something about generating electricity or a plant, and there was lots of talk about what they would have done, but nothing happened. And I think part of the problem with agriculture at the time was really the mixed signals being sent by the government, because on the one hand, you had the Prime Minister of the day saying that land must fetch its highest value. And then when you look at the treatment given to agriculture, and I am almost tempted to say, when you look at to whom the ministry was assigned, you get the impression that in fact agriculture as a ministry was not taken very, very seriously by the last administration.

Look, there is no doubt that in terms of sugar, even me as a layman understands that as a country, what we are getting in terms of our yield. I saw some figures that suggested we were getting about 21 tonnes per acre. And when you compare that to what somewhere like Brazil gets - about 80 tons per acre - when you compare the cost of our production to many other jurisdictions, the fact is that it does not make sense on its own. And that is what some people tend to focus on - whether economically it makes sense for us to still be in the production of sugar. Indeed, sir, my understanding is that in Brazil - I have not been to such large plantations, but I am told that there are some plantations as big as Barbados. So is it difficult to compete with some of those jurisdictions?

The other side of the coin, though, is that it is my understanding that given the nature of our soil, the one crop that seemed to have agreed with our soil - because of the depth, or lack of depth, of our soil - seems to be the sugar cane. My understanding is that our soil - and I am sure most of you who have built, certainly I have done that, realise that you are not very far from coral in many places - so my understanding is that as a crop, sugar seems to be the one crop that has been able to survive in our soil, given the tenuous nature of our soil, and not to mention the fact that almost every component of the sugar cane plant is still reusable. That is, the trash can be reused in terms of manure; if you go into the sugar, you have the molasses and all that can be used. Well, I am not going to even mention rum. But the point, though, is - and then there are other reasons why we have had to continue this. I also understand, if my memory serves me correctly, that if we

abandon sugar today, we also have the challenge of whether or not the alternative crops that we plant - that is, the yams and the potatoes and the eddoes, et cetera - whether or not they will be able to survive. I am not an abolitionist, but I am told that in fact we would have serious challenges if we believe that we could just abandon sugar and still be able to continue producing the other crops that the honourable minister mentioned in terms of how we now produce most of the potatoes that we want, the yams, et cetera. So there is also that issue that we have to come to grips with.

Now, there are some jurisdictions, like St. Kitts, that took the decision that they are going completely out of sugar. Sir, it is a risk, I believe, if Barbados took the decision that it is going to go completely out of sugar and relied primarily - like St. Kitts decided to do - on tourism. I am not sure if it is a wise thing for us to do. Certainly I believe that as a country we have decided - and I think the other side, whether knowingly or otherwise, took that decision when they decided that they were going to invest still in the sugar cane industry in 2006 and 2007 - that it does not make sense for us to rely solely on tourism. But I know we do have financial services, but certainly to transform our sugar cane lands and plant hotels and golf courses instead creates the risk of - if a hurricane comes, you know how tenuous that industry is.

But there are other reasons. I mean, look, there is also the simple fact that we could simply import sugar from Guyana or Brazil and import ethanol, et cetera. But the benefits of us having our own sugar cane industry is what we need to look at - what we have looked at and come to the conclusion that as a country we are better off having such an industry, not only because we can then produce our own molasses and help boost our rum industry, but the energy that can be created. And that is why, sir, when I listened to the honourable minister, even as a layman - and I am going to describe myself as a layman in this regard - it made a lot of sense, the vision that the minister and his ministry has in terms of how they move this industry forward. And therefore, my only concern is that we can move on towards the implementation. That is my only concern. My concern is about whether we are going in the right direction. I am satisfied that we are going in the right direction. My concern therefore is that we need to ensure that. And if I know the minister - and I do know the minister very well, I know him better than lots of persons in this honourable House - I know that he is the kind of character that when he has something between his teeth, he will not let go. Therefore, I am satisfied that we will. In fact, and I believe the minister said nine to 18 months, that we should have everything in place so that we can actually see this industry being transformed in terms of where we are going with the sugar cane industry, and therefore it merits my support.

But however, as a member of parliament for rural Barbados, there are a couple of other areas that are of some concern to me. In particular, sir, there are a considerable number of men, young and old, who make a living from fishing in Oistins. And there are some issues - as you know, just last year I believe we had two more of our boats that were arrested in Trinidad. There are some issues there and we will continue to see if we can find a solution to that. And I know that from time to time the other side makes it an issue in terms of why there is not a fisheries agreement. But simply put, an agreement requires both sides to agree. And whereas as a country we want to have an agreement in place, we cannot say that the other side has been moving with the kind of speed that we would like them to. And frankly, it is not a case where we have the type of leverage, in my opinion, that could force them to give a standard agreement that we would like. So I just want to signal to my constituents and to those listening to me that in fact it is certainly not a case of the government being able to take steps to have some kind of a fisheries agreement in place with Trinidad and Tobago and have not done so. To reach an agreement, you need both parties to agree, and from time to time, based on my knowledge of those negotiations, we have had difficulty with getting our brothers and sisters in Trinidad to come to the table so that we can have a meaningful agreement in place.

That notwithstanding, there are some other issues in terms of getting the boats hauled up, in particular during the hurricane season. It is my understanding that that is being addressed. And in fact, we have sent some members of the ministry across to Trinidad - no lesser place than Trinidad - to look at how they now store their boats. And we are going to use a stacking process so that we will have them on top of each other, as opposed to now, where we have an issue in terms of getting all of the boats out of the water and onto the sand in a timely manner. So we are finding a solution for that. From time to time we know that there are issues that pop up because the reality is that in any industry that individuals are involved in, from time to time things will crop up. But I can say that based on my knowledge - I go down to Oistins from time to time; in fact, I could probably say I go down to Oistins more than lots of members in this honourable chamber to buy fish in particular - and so I have reason to chat with the fishermen down there. And I know that in fact we are heading in the right direction in terms of fishing in this country.

We have promised to modernise our Fisheries Act. In particular, we want to ensure that boats adhere to minimum standards, in particular to ensure that they can be located in the event that the engine breaks down or something. There are some minimum standards that we want to ensure that our fishing folks, our boat owners, adhere to. That is something that I think will come up in our legislation once we have addressed it. In particular, wearing my hat as Minister of Home Affairs, it is one area

that we are concerned about - not only for the safety and security of those persons on board, but certainly we want to ensure that if persons are in our waters, we have no idea who they are and where they are. And it makes a lot of sense also from a security perspective. So I look forward also to working with the ministry to bring that piece of legislation before this honourable chamber in the not too distant future.

Now, we have heard from time to time about the issue of praedial larceny. I do not believe it is as simple as having legislation in place. There are some other things that we need to do. Again, I am satisfied that the minister is going in the right direction. We want to have joint patrols. We want to encourage the public to purchase their produce from persons where they understand them to be legitimate dealers. Not every car that comes up to your house and says that they are selling old fruits or bananas, whatever they are selling - that you purchase from them. So I am also satisfied that we are going in the right direction in that regard.

Again, being very parochial, I look forward to the use of the lands at the Homs Agricultural Station. They have been there for too many years and unused. And I believe that there are plans afoot to let that be part of our cassava project. I therefore urge the minister and the ministry to move on that with some alacrity. There is some sadness when I pass and I see all that acreage there not being fully utilised. So I also want to use this opportunity to signal to the minister and to the ministry that I look forward to having that matter addressed.

Now, before I close, I just want to make those couple of points. The member for St. Thomas raised the issue of monkeys. We may have laughed about it a bit, but it is a real issue. It is a real issue in many parts of Barbados. In particular, I can say to you that many of my constituents across St. Philip itself have complained about losing their produce. But there are also those constituents who are very philosophical about it and who say that at the end of the day we are taking up more and more of the land and the monkeys have to eat. And therefore, I know, for example, there is a chap - very philosophical about it - who says that they take some and he takes some and they are happy and he is happy. But the reality is that as we move more inward, as more houses are constructed and we utilise more of the gully spaces, it is going to become more and more of a problem, and therefore we have to put our heads together in a humane manner and try to come up with a solution. Just in front of my house there are families upon families of monkeys that I see every morning. They do not bother me. They are there to eat, just like you do. So they do not concern me and I do not feel threatened at all.

I should wrap up - 15 minutes already. I was just making two or three points. Well, thank you, sir, for this

short intervention and if reason arises, I will come back. Thank you, sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable member for St. James Central.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I am obliged, Mr. Chairman, I wanted to make a couple of points which I think might reinforce that which I have tried already to convey to this House in earlier aspects of this debate. I unapologetically come from a philosophical perspective that it is pretty much useless for us not to manfully and womanfully confront certain economic realities that we face. And sir, the reality which is most overarching and confronting this country is that Barbados in all of its sectors, in all of its areas of commercial enterprise has to be more competitive and the players and stakeholders have to be brought together to a point where we can realistically be building not just the capacity but also the earnings of those commercial enterprises and sectors, sir, to a point where they play a much larger role and take a much larger stake in the future direction of this country.

I have heard and in fact I have responded to it already in this debate. I don't know, sir, that we can wish away the reality that people from the north will want to come to the south and eat our lunch. I don't know, sir, that railing against that changes anything. As I said before, I said yesterday sir, you know, it is as certain as the sun over our head and the ground under our feet. That is the way of life. That is the nature of capitalist and commercial endeavour. What we have to do, sir, is to be as able to adapt as is humanly possible and to move with as much nimbleness as is possible, to make ourselves as competitive as is possible.

So that brings me to the question of the empowerment of micro business in Barbados. And I, sir, see the fishing industry as micro and small enterprise which has tremendous potential. But a lot of that potential, sir, has been left unnurtured and has gone a begging. A very interesting study, sir, was done by the Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill campus, sir, looking at - in fact it sought to collect and collate small business data in a number of areas. It was done, sir, in January of 2009 and one of the things that study does, sir, is to make it clear as to the type of revenues which certain sectors in small and micro enterprise in Barbados are bringing in on an annual basis. When we come to the area, sir, that is under the head of fishing, it is interesting, sir, to see that we are talking in the tune of \$16 plus million on an annual basis. That is not small potatoes. And we are talking, sir, small as we like to say in common Barbadian parlance, small black people, poor black people.

The reality is, Mr. Chairman, that in much the same way that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central spoke this morning about the need to feel the soil, the real problem is not just the feeling of the soil, sir, but owning the soil. And in fishing, sir, there has to be a stake, a greater stake in that which is taking place. And my concern, Mr. Chairman, is how we move the fishing industry of Barbados, how we transform it into a status that is even more competitive regionally, more competitive hemispherically. And, sir, able, sir, to reach international standards. Let us not assume that cannot happen. We already benefit from a highly competitive advantage in the region in the context of our fleet of boats, which, when compared to that which exists in the eastern Caribbean, is vastly superior.

But we also have an opportunity that humbles me, quite frankly, because it continues to go a begging. In 2008, 2009, we completed and signed off on an Economic Partnership Agreement with Europe, sir, and part and parcel of that - what that did for us with respect to the fishing industry was to open up that which never existed before: a marketplace for millions and millions of maws and bellies for all the fish, quite frankly, that we can produce but do not choose to consume domestically. But, sir, to access that market remains impossible because of the fact that we do not meet the sanitary and phytosanitary requirements which would allow us to have market access. Now, there is a matter about which the Minister obviously must be aware. I think he has alluded to the problem. But, sir, we can't just talk around it. And the problem in Barbados is almost akin to spinning mud. We spend a lot of time talking about these things, but the implementation has to come to pass.

Now, Mr. Chairman, sir, what makes this issue of sanitary compliance so critical is that jurisdictions in the eastern Caribbean with more impoverished capacity in terms of their fishing fleet - and I give you but two examples, Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grenadines - and, sir, I speak now with firsthand knowledge, having only last year, a year before, spent some time down there doing consultancy work for their governments. And the fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, that what St. Vincent has been able to do is to build marketplaces where the counters like what we see in Oistins and what we see in so many other places in Barbados no longer exist. We are into a realm of constant temperatures, both docked and fish removed and placed in an environment, sir, where it does not fall beneath a certain temperature. The idea of room temperature is unheard of in that marketplace. The stainless steel benches, sir, with washed-down facilities immediately so that all the flies and mixtures of blood and so on and so forth don't exist. And therefore, sir, they are in a position to carry that process from landing through to packaging, inclusive of boning or whatever else needs to be done, in a way in which we, with vastly superior - to use the language

of the Honourable Member for St. Peter, even though he often misuses it - competitive advantage, are not able to do now. So that is a situation that must be corrected and I think it must be corrected urgently.

Now to do so obviously requires money. The estimates - and I am not allowed, sir, to see strangers in the gallery. But there is a former Minister of Agriculture, sir, who it was rumoured was around these premises today. And I shared with him on several occasions lively interaction in the other place on this matter. And so I know that his heart is with me and his mind is with me on these issues. The reality is, Mr. Chairman, that from, since 2008, a team of officials came here from Europe to do an assessment of our markets. And that assessment, sir, was to test to see where we were in terms of our compliance and what we needed to do in terms of building out what they call the necessary capacity in order to meet the requirements of entry into this vast new marketplace. It cannot be continued to be allowed to go a begging. And the fact is that between 2008 and where we are now in 2013, I have not seen it in this place or the other place any sort of update which allows us as relevant and concerned participants in the governance process - which allows those most important to the process, which are the stakeholders, the men, sir, who are going out on a boat and women on a daily basis risking their lives and so on and so forth. But sir, these people are engaged not in a hobby, it is not just a pastime, maybe for one or two, but we largely have, sir, commercial fishermen, people who are feeding their families, people who are doing this, sir, as a serious enterprise, the same way that Honourable Members, when not in government or when in opposition, go about their own professional and other vocations.

The reality is, Mr. Chairman, therefore, that we must be able to have a serious and sensible understanding of where the Government is in the process of making sure that Barbados will one day - and hopefully coming soon - be in a position with respect to accessing the European market. Or are we not interested in accessing it? Are we content to watch those who are less endowed in this business come and eat our lunch? But they are coming from the south where we are. So that, sir, you know, I am not into the business of railing against the world. I am interested, sir, in the business of adapting to the challenges of the modern economic age in which we exist. And, sir, finding creative solutions in as speedy a way as possible.

Now, sir, on the question of solutions - these estimates, the rumour of a former Minister of Agriculture being around the precincts being correct, sir, I am sure he would bear me out that between 2008, when the opportunity arose for this level of market access, and now, the estimates have not reflected any drawdown or any benefit by way of access to European funding for this particular type of project. And, sir, there are no shortage of

facilities in Barbados which need the necessary upgrading. Oistins automatically comes to mind because I think that is perhaps the largest of all and certainly the busiest. But Bridgetown follows closely behind it. Sir, if I put in a plug for my own constituency, there is a little thing in Payne's Bay. But, sir, there is Kates Bay, sir, there is Consett Bay, Kent Bay. Mr. Chairman, sir, there was also, I believe, in 2007, 2008, some talk about a northern fishing project which would have been located, sir, somewhere in the vicinity of Speightstown. But these markets all - if we are supposed to benefit from the opportunity of transforming small and micro businesses into powerful fleets and the businessmen who operate those businesses into big players in an industry which we call a fishing industry in Barbados, which without all these benefits and potential can be bringing \$16 million into this country, but perhaps has the potential, sir, of tripling that, quadrupling that - then, sir, we can't allow it to continue to languish without attention.

Now, the drawdowns from the European Union, sir, were part of the development chapters involved in the EPA. And if we don't seek, therefore, to access - and this is a point that had been made last night - the accessing of development funds, it is not always going to work the way we would like it to work. You may try to get some and not get in. You may try to get some and you only get a percentage of them. But we have to understand, sir, that there are other jurisdictions which are making the necessary effort to source that kind of financing. And, sir, I really ask that we be given an update, a detailed update as to where we are on those matters.

Sir, there are a few other matters which I think we have to think about. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter spoke today, sir, about a challenge of the past which I think - I am not sure I heard the Honourable Minister of Agriculture respond to that, sir - is a concern that I have had: the question, sir, of what we do in terms of agribusiness and agribusiness investment within the context of certainty. Now it is true to say that tourism, because you wanted to have certainty of law for people who are going to make investments in the tourism sector, sir, you had a Tourism Development Act. We are proposing, sir, to bring one in the context of culture so that those people who are stakeholders in the cultural industry, sir, will have certainty of law with what they are doing and what they can and cannot do, sir. The same thing has been done with offshore energy. If we are going to demarcate a sector of the Barbados economy for restructure - and I am understanding the Government to be saying that it is committed to restructuring the agriculture industry in significant ways - I want from this place at this time, sir, to say to the Honourable Minister of Agriculture that I take him at his word that there is in fact a substantial difference between the adaptation strategy and that which the Government now has. But I walk by faith and not by sight in that regard and I want to walk by sight. And I would be

anxious, sir, to read it if the Minister would only bring it to this House later, or even give it to me privately, so that he does not continue to shield this brilliant new policy from my tender eyes.

But the reality is, Mr. Chairman, sir - I remember time is inspired, sir. But sir, I will come back, sir, but I want in closing, sir, to restate my interest and my concern that the Minister needs to speak to us, sir, in the context of the draft Agricultural Bill, because I think the Government again must make it clear what its view and its direction is in that regard. I am obliged.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, just before lunch we had a discussion in this House and we heard a lot about the monkeys. But what the honourable member did not tell the House that prior to the change of government, that a minister on that side at the time in government - when it was proffered that in order to correct the problem before it became a major problem - it was proffered that we should go back to the good old ten days and to replant the gullies' fruit trees and also to expand on that. And instead of just planting trees, we say planting trees that some of the space on the highway that was far from the road, that we could have used that as an opportunity to plant some fruit trees also, so that we would not now have the problem that everybody in Barbados is experiencing.

But instead of that we were told in this House that there is no way the Barbados Labour Party will do it. That if they were to plant trees in the gullies and on the highways that persons will steal them. Can you imagine that, Mr. Chairman? That if you plant fruit trees out of the pocket of Barbadians that you did not want Barbadians to have any of them. But now instead of listening to what was offered we have a situation in Barbados now that they have the gall to come in this House and to complain about the monkeys when they have created the problem with the monkeys. And I also believe that they should apologise to every Barbadian in this country that is now being affected by the monkeys and the birds, because previously the birds and the monkeys found their food in the gullies, but because they did not replant the gullies - as is being done by the current Labour Party rehabilitation - but I want them to know that as a matter of policy we have started planting fruit trees so that we could alleviate that problem.

And what is interesting is that you will hear them now talking about the NEAT programme, understanding the importance of a programme and the NEAT programme to Barbados. Could you imagine - every Barbadian loves their country and the people of Barbados, of course, you know, they love their country and they love to keep their country clean. But they say this is because they do not understand the old values of Barbadians, because all of us knew that white lime and so on - that these things were

used to keep the shrubs and so on away and that the older folks of Barbados took pride in keeping their properties clean. But now what we are hearing from the Barbados Labour Party is that we should allow the environment of Barbados to run amok and to invite people to a place that looks bushy and scruffy.

I am saying, sir, that when they came in here in 2007 talking about the environment, that they were not talking about the environment for Barbados. They were speaking about an environment where they can invite people to the environment of Barbados for money. And I am saying, sir, that this Government - the Democratic Labour Party Government - need not apologise about the NEAT programme, because the NEAT programme was not started in 2008. Neither was it started in 2013. That NEAT programme started as far back as the 1960s where we had the parks and pictures doing the same setting. And what was interesting is that back in those days the programme even went into the gullies. Yes, it entered the gullies and it had a tree planting programme in it. So do not think that what we are doing now is anything new, because we have always been protecting the environment of Barbados and we have always had pride in ourselves, and that is what they have to learn - that this country, Barbados, must be protected.

And that is exactly what the Democratic Labour Party is doing. We are not only protecting it as an economy, but we are protecting it as a society too, because it is the society that is important to build the economy. And that is why they will always have a problem with the people - where they are caught up in looking after the interest of the investors. We are interested in building a society for the masses of people in the country, of which we will also invite investors. Sharing as we build out, not billing. And that is the difference between the two political parties. And do not ever let it be said that there is anything similar about the two political parties, because we know their mandate and we understand ours. And that is why you will see they have a problem when you empower the masses of people in this country. But when you empower too few, they are happy about it. And anybody on this side will tell you that I have spoken about it - too few where it relates to them - since 1994 and even before. And nothing has changed. Because when you hear them speaking about employing those people in the programme, then you could better understand their policies. Those are the people that they believe should only get money once every five years when they get their last rent. But we are saying no - they are still creating people who are dependent on them; we will create people who are independent.

So, Mr. Chairman, I am happy for this intervention and to make the point that we will empower Barbadians. And that is why we are proud that they were prepared to drop agriculture and manufacturing, that we were prepared

to pick it up and create the right mix in the economy, because we understand where the problems were created and we are solving them. Another thing about this Government - we understand where to create the synergies. And that is why you find on this side that ministers are prepared to work with each other and prepared to create the necessary synergies to create maximum output. And that is why it is not hard for us to understand those synergies. And that is why it is so difficult for them to understand what we are doing. And that is why they were a bit surprised to see that we have been able to report progress even when the world is claiming that they cannot do certain things. And you look right through the world - as a small developing country, we are in a good position. And it is because we understood the importance of growing people and growing the economy at the same time - we grew the economy for Barbadians. We did not grow the economy for others to come and dictate to Barbados. At the same time we were inviting people to come, we were empowering the small man in this country, and that is the difference between the two, because the others believe that you empower the outsiders and ask the small man to beg them for a couple of jobs.

So, Mr. Chairman, do not let there be any doubt - there is a significant difference between the two political parties. We know where we stand and we know, sir, that we are not about the carrot. We are about creating the carrot. I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Member for St. James North.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise to make a contribution under this Head 72 aspect of the debate and listen carefully to speakers on both sides. I think we all agree that there is need for greater food security among Barbadians and for our people and for greater food safety. And this, of course, should be a principal objective of any government of Barbados. We need to give greater financial opportunities, Mr. Chairman, for the small farmers to expand their enterprise and their businesses. And this comes clearly to the issue of subsidies, Mr. Chairman, when we look in the estimates, we see, at least from what I can see, some of \$300 000 to be given for subsidies to farmers, to the agricultural industry. And we wonder if this is enough.

We know, Mr. Chairman, that as was said, the developed countries, in spite of all the WTO and international trade agreements of which we speak, most of the developed countries, if not all, highly subsidise their agricultural industries. The United States, I believe, subsidises their cotton industry by about \$3 billion a year and the industry is worth \$4 billion. But they recognise the need to protect jobs and to build food security. And we really, in my submission, need to realise the significance of subsidies to the agricultural community and to increase that

amount beyond what we give each year. I would rather certainly, and I believe all of us would rather give our own small farmers money in subsidies rather than pay farmers, et cetera, and other farmers from developed countries.

The money through importation of food - I believe that we spend now about upwards of \$600 million a year on food importation. And all of this is foreign exchange and money going to farmers in developed countries, in other CARICOM countries too, if the truth be told, which can go to some extent to our own farmers and to build up our own industries and to create employment and greater food security among our own people.

It is true, Mr. Chairman, that we cannot compete realistically on the world agricultural export market. We just don't have the size to be able to do that. But we must still be able, in my submission, to develop and implement our own food security plan, which will see us being more self-sufficient as a people. We must be able to eat what we grow rather than to import. We must be able, in addition, Mr. Chairman, to protect those industries arising from agriculture in which we have created a reputation and carved a neat market. We have some of the best, if not the best, rum in the world, for instance. And we must be able to protect our industry and rum from unfair competition on the outside, in spite of what we hear about in terms of WTO. Other countries do it. And all we are being asked to do is to protect our own industries, our own rum industry, for instance, from unfair competition from the developed world.

We need, Mr. Chairman, in my opinion, to expand the land for the landless programme, a programme which was started by the last Barbados Labour Party administration. My colleague, the Member of Parliament, Honourable Member of Parliament for St. Thomas, earlier on touched on that point. There are people, including people in my constituency, who have expressed interest in farming, but they don't have the access to land. And I believe that a government must have one of its principles in terms of agricultural policy the availability of land to small farmers or to people who want to get into agriculture. And of course, all of this is tied in as well to what we spoke of earlier on both sides of encouraging young people in terms of farming and agriculture.

And in that regard, Mr. Chairman, I don't know that this present government has taken any initiative or any role in terms of developing on the initiative of Jagdeo, the Jagdeo Initiative, the former President of Guyana. And again, this is, in my submission, a failure on the present government's policies in terms of its relationships in CARICOM and with other Caribbean countries. We have a situation where Guyana, of course, for instance, has 83 000 square miles of land. And if CSME is to be given any real feeling and reality, why can't young Barbadians who want

to have a career in farming - why can't there be initiatives in terms of them going down to Guyana, for instance, and doing their agriculture, where clearly the cost factor will not be as great as if you do it in Barbados, and being able to export their produce to Barbados through the arrangements which CARICOM has in place? And these are initiatives and creative ideas which should be explored. I always say, Mr. Chairman, that with political will, anything is really possible. And I certainly would like to see a government of Barbados exploring these kinds of options with greater initiative and greater passion.

We need, Mr. Chairman, to embark on a policy - and I hope the government will be doing this - to upgrade our markets. The last speaker, my friend, the Honourable Member of Parliament for St. Lucy, always likes to speak about what he considers differences between the two parties. In a lot of cases, in my opinion, Mr. Chairman, where he criticises us is based on fiction rather than reality. But the reality and fact, Mr. Chairman, is that the Democratic Labour Party has never established any public market in Barbados. All the public markets in Barbados have been built by the Barbados Labour Party and that is the fact - that is not fiction. And I would really hope that this government has as one of its policies the upgrade of the public markets in Barbados, because, of course, we have a large body of people who are small business people working in these markets and they need to be able to expand their business and to work in environments that are conducive to work. And I would really hope that in its cash-strapped position, the government will still be able to upgrade markets. We have, of course, one in my constituency at Weston that would have been renamed last year, and I really would urge the government to do that.

And finally, on my intervention at this stage, Mr. Chairman, I want to speak a bit about the fisheries case and our relations with Trinidad on this issue. The previous Barbados Labour Party government, of course, with the Honourable Leader of the Opposition then leading - she would have been Attorney General at the time - would have embarked on an arbitration case, a court case between Barbados and Trinidad. The court gave a ruling. I think most of us Barbadians interpreted the ruling as more in favour of Barbados than Trinidad. And as I understand it, the two sovereign nations, both members of CARICOM, would have been mandated to try to go, post the court decision, and work towards an agreement which would have been beneficial probably not only to Trinidad and Barbados, but to other Caribbean islands as well.

And I know my friend, the Honourable Member of Parliament for St. Lucy, would have alluded to this state of affairs earlier and seemed to shrug it off that people are still able to fish. But the reality is that even up to last year, I recall some Barbadian fishermen were held fishing off of Tobago waters. It is still an issue. And even though the

Honourable Minister, Member of Parliament for St. Lucy, would have been ambassador for a three-year period, part of this administration, and even though we were, of course, told by a late Prime Minister that this was an issue that could have been solved on a Saturday afternoon over a fishbowl of soup in Martins Bay, the issue is still outstanding and we have heard no status report from this government on the matter. And I really think that the Honourable Minister of Agriculture or someone else on that side, on the front bench, needs to tell this Parliament and consequentially the people of Barbados what is the state of affairs of this matter. We would have spent a few million dollars on the court case and after all, this was a matter that could have been solved at a social event. But yet the Minister of Small Business, who likes to shade the Barbados Labour Party, couldn't solve the issue. Or certainly, to my knowledge and information, the issue still remains outstanding. After three years of his ambassadorship, he has graduated and gone to a higher level and we have someone as ambassador to Trinidad who of course has highly reputable negotiating skills in trade unionism and other aspects of life. But yet we have heard nothing on the status of this issue from any authority representing the government of Barbados within recent times.

This is a very serious issue, Mr. Chairman, in my opinion, because fishing - as I understand it, the fisheries industry provides jobs and livelihood for about 6 000 Barbadians. Certainly in the constituency of St. James North we have a fishing community surrounding Weston and other areas who are affected by this issue and need certainty and need to know where we are going on this. The Member of Parliament for St. Lucy implied, and I accept that, that this has implications not only for our fishing industry, but it also has implications in terms of our oil exploration, which we obviously on both sides agree that we need to develop.

Mr. Chairman, there are some things that don't go away by miracle. They have to be faced up front. They can't be whisked away. It isn't that tonight we go to sleep and tomorrow they disappear and are gone. What is the status between two sovereign nations, both with similar historical background, culture, both developing countries seeking to improve in this world and to move towards developed country status? What is the position between the two countries on this issue? So that Barbadian fishermen - and many of us in here have constituencies with fishing communities - so that our constituents can have certainty on this issue and know where we are going in the future. Because fisheries must be able to take its place as being a more significant aspect of our economic development than it is at present. I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Member for St. Michael South.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, just a few very brief remarks on this Head 72. Any debate on agriculture in Barbados is necessarily a very important debate. Agriculture in any country is a very important sector, since it has an organic link to human survival and of course human survival through food security. And here in the Caribbean, because the modern history of these islands was rooted in issues of agricultural production, a debate on agriculture is the more important in a place like Barbados.

I should like to begin by congratulating the Minister of Agriculture for the hindsight, the insight and the foresight which he has brought to the discharge of his responsibilities as Minister. I have followed Ministers of Agriculture here in Barbados from around independence and we have had some brilliant, thoughtful and hardworking Ministers of Agriculture over the years. But this Minister is the first Minister who, in addition to being hardworking and being passionate about the sector, has sought to accentuate the link between science and agriculture. And therefore he has brought a completely different perspective to the approach to problems of agriculture here in Barbados. And the country confidently expects that we will see some changes resulting from his very wise and very insightful interventions in the sector.

Now, during the debate, we have had some attention paid to the sugar industry here in Barbados and I don't think we can have a serious debate on agriculture without focusing on the sugar industry either, because for the better part of our history the sugar industry has been critical to Barbados' survival and to its development. But the fact has to be faced early. The sugar industry is facing challenges now. These challenges are not new. The sugar industry of Barbados, and in fact the sugar industry in the English-speaking Caribbean, has faced challenges now for centuries, except for the period between the 1640s when sugar was introduced in Barbados and the end of the 18th century. And during the 18th century, Barbados was described as the British jewel in the British Crown because of the efficiency of its sugar production and the quality of its sugar exports to the United Kingdom and to Europe.

Outside of that period, though, the sugar industry of Barbados has faced daunting challenges and has, quite frankly, been in a state of decline from the early 19th century. In fact, it has always faced challenges from the Cuban sugar industry, it has always faced challenges from the Haitian sugar industry. And of course, in the 19th century it faced challenges from European beet sugar. And as we came into the 20th century, things got progressively worse. And that is why we are where we are now in the year 2013. I don't need to read any books on this. I don't even need to read any Landon Mills reports, important though these are. It is true that books are written on the British West Indian sugar industry in the 19th century. It is true that many sugar industries faced labour shortages after

emancipation, that books were written on the ordeal of free labour in the Caribbean and, of course, particular emphasis being placed on Barbados. But I only have to go back to the parish in which I have lived and moved and had my being from birth until now.

When I was a teenager, Mr. Chairman. There were five sugar factories in St. Philip, five working sugar factories in St. Philip. There was Oldbury Sugar Factory, there was Four Square Sugar Factory, there was Three Houses Sugar Factory. My father lost his life there. There was Carion Sugar Factory and there was Harrow Sugar Factory today. And for some time now, there are no sugar factories, no functional sugar factories in St. Philip. Around the same time, there were large sugar plantations in St. Philip. I could think of Ruby Plantation, I could think of Sanford Plantation, I can think of Mangrove Plantation, I can think of Grove Plantation. All of these - Baileys Plantation as well - all of these producing high quality sugar, all of these encircled by impressive looking cane fields. None of that exists that way.

In fact, one of the problems the industry has had is that it has had to face this competition for land because of the need of successive governments of Barbados to house the population. So then you, for example, look at Ruby. Look at Ruby Park and Union development in St. Philip, or Mangrove Park and Mangrove development, or Sanford. You ask yourself, if these houses were not built here, where would these people be living? Because there has always been a competition between the agricultural sector for land and the housing sector for land on which to build houses. And because land used for housing has yielded greater returns than land used for the practice of agriculture, the housing sector has seemed to win out over a period of time.

So we have now got to the stage where we have far less arable land at our disposal for sugar production than we have ever had in our entire history. And this is the point at which it is going to become, and has become, very important for modern scientific methods to be applied to the sector, so that with less land at our disposal, we can still produce the kind of sugar we need, not only to satisfy domestic demand, but, if possible, for purposes of export. And it is not without significance that Barbados moved in the direction of the production of specialty sugars, which I contend have great potential in the marketplace. Because the approach to the sugar industry appropriate to the present has to be far different from how we approach the sugar industry, say, 50 or 60 years ago.

And that is why the Democratic Labour Party in government in the early 1990s, as part of its structural adjustment strategy and programme, sought to restructure the industry to give it a new lease of life. We lost office in 1994 and indications are that those restructuring initiatives became progressively anemic. And here we are again,

trying once again to do what we can with the industry, to make it. But it has always had challenges, not only of competition from housing, but also had labour challenges. Because for some time we were forced to import labour from the eastern Caribbean, St. Vincent and St. Lucia and elsewhere. But even that labour has not been available to the industry in recent times. And because of that, we have had to mechanise the industry, not always with the most positive results for the planters or for the people of the country.

So the government is doing the best it can. I have heard the contributions from both sides of the House, and I do not think that any of the contributions have been spectacularly unreasonable in what is being asked of the government, what is being said against the government, or what is being said in the government's defence. Because I think that across the aisle, there is a commitment to ensuring that we get the best out of our sugar land. We have seen places like Antigua and St. Kitts-Nevis go out of sugar production altogether, and not always with evidence of the most positive results coming out of that.

Sometime last year, I think it was, we had a presentation done to the cabinet by stakeholders in the sugar industry. And one of the points made by a number of persons who spoke to the cabinet on that occasion was that there is a link - and I claim no expertise here - there is a link between the production of sugar and what it does for our soils and the production of items in non-sugar agriculture, and that we could do some damage to our non-sugar sector if we just abandoned our sugar sector altogether. As I said, I lay no claim to expertise here. I was just listening to people who have spent their lifetime in the industry. So we are trying to apply modern scientific methods to our management of the production processes in the sugar industry and also the consumption processes in the sugar industry, because we recognise that the industry cannot be approached in the year 2013 as it was approached in 1960.

Now, the link - I will move on very briefly from the sugar industry. The link between agriculture and food security is a necessary one. And the last honourable member who spoke, the honourable member for St. James North and others before him have mentioned the JAGDEO initiative. I think one is entitled to speak about what one knows. It just happens that I was around a long time before JAGDEO. I know in the 1960s and in the 1970s, when the late Dr. Eric Williams, then Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, was talking about a regional food plan - supported stubbornly, not only in voice, but in writing, by that great West Indian economist, William Demas. So the JAGDEO initiative is really nothing new. I know then Forbes Burnham of Guyana, a predecessor of Mr. JAGDEO - Bharrat JAGDEO was talking about, was offering Guyana as the breadbasket of the Caribbean. And West Indian

leaders then - Barbadian leaders supported it strongly. West Indian leaders then were not able to bring it to fruition, as in fact they have not been able to bring it to fruition now. So this is a work in progress.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that the islands in this region spent more time balkanised, competing with one another and fighting one another than they have spent trying to work together. And we have a tendency to mistake a moment in time for eternity. But it is not quite like that. We are working our way towards some of these solutions and I am confident that we will get there with the requisite political commitment and with the right objective conditions.

Mention was also made of fishing and of course the Democratic Labour Party's manifesto 2013 deals with the issue of fishing. But mention was also made of the fishing agreement. Now let the word go forth, Mr. Chairman, that when the Democratic Labour Party came to office in 2008 there was no fishing agreement in place. It is not a slowly functioning one. It had expired and we have refused to put one back in place. There was none and had been none for the full duration of the Barbados Labour Party's incumbency between 1994 and 2008. And there was none, I believe, since 1990.

The learned Attorney General is quite correct and the honourable member for St. James North is a lawyer. I can verify that because we were at law school together. As Barbadians say, one hand can't clap, it takes two to tango. Barbados and Trinidad have to agree, no matter what Barbados wants. If Trinidad and Tobago does not agree, we do not have an agreement. I personally met in December 2011 with the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago after the Cuba-CARICOM summit. We met about 11.30 in the night. Our officials and their officials and we talked this matter through and it was agreed that our CARICOM Ambassador and their CARICOM Ambassador, Dr. Edwin Carrington, and our respective Attorneys General would put their heads together and come up with a document on the basis of which negotiations could take place.

I am aware that the government of Barbados has produced a draft agreement which Trinidad and Tobago is still supposed to be studying, but we have not had any concrete response from the government of Trinidad and Tobago on the matter. But Ambassador Morris and Ambassador Carrington, along with the Attorney General of Barbados and the Attorney General of Trinidad and Tobago have been talking this matter through. So it is not as though we have turned our back on a fishing agreement. It is possible to get one and we have not been refusing to get one. The two countries have been talking, but you do not have an agreement until both sides agree. There must be, as the honourable member knows, consensus. They

must be agreed on the same thing. And that has not happened yet. The negotiations are continuing.

So I do not think, Mr. Chairman, that we should mark ourselves too hard and try to give the impression that we are achieving nothing in agriculture or that we are achieving nothing in our regional efforts. We are. But as the poet Robert Browning said, a man's reach should always exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for? There must always be things at which we aim, because our aim on this side and on that side is to make life in Barbados better, to make life for the people in this region better. And that is the basis on which this government proceeds. It is certainly the basis on which I know the present Minister of Agriculture is proceeding, committed to solving some of the more knotty and troublesome problems in the agricultural sector and dealing with the issue of food security.

Let it not be forgotten that in a historic speech in Georgetown in 1986 by the late Errol Barrow, this issue of food security and producing what we do not consume and consuming what we do not produce was raised. And he said in that speech that Colonel Sanders, the Colonel from the Confederate South, had long ago won the battle for the palate of the people of the Caribbean. This has been a problem for some time, but we have to continue trying to educate our people to consume what we produce, to support the jobs here, rather than supporting them elsewhere where the food we import is produced. Politics is about continuing public education, getting people to see the light, changing attitudes - attitudes that are ingrained because of the long history of dependency which countries in this region have passed through.

We have to be a little more charitable in dealing with ourselves. We have all been trying to make this island better, this country better, trying to make this region a better region. And on any objective evaluation of what has gone on, not only in Barbados but across the Caribbean - the Caribbean is a far more enlightened and developed place than at any other time in its entire history. That has to be faced. I know the tendency that if a dog bites a man, that is not news, but if a man bites a dog, that is news. So we tend to focus not on what we have achieved and celebrate those achievements, but we tend to accentuate what we have not yet done. We have not yet got to the stage where we count our blessings. We are still people inclined to count our curses. And that is something of which we have to be weaned as well. We are a great region. This is a great country. Let us face that reality and continue to fight the battles that need to be fought to bring a greater sense of fulfilment to the lives of our people. I am obliged.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I come to this intervention. First of all I do appreciate the words of the Honourable Prime Minister. And of course it is news. When a man bites a dog. That's news. And it is also news. When the Prime Minister said some years ago that the fishing agreement between Trinidad and Barbados could have been solved over a bowl of soup, that was headline news. That was headline news. And all Barbados, all Barbados expected the next week that, damn it, over the bowl of soup that agreement could have been resolved. But I'm glad the Prime Minister realised the whole problem because he says there had to be a mutual agreement and meeting of the minds, and the truth is that agreement - I remember when we were the government at the time, the then Prime Minister's leading officer said that we were taking too long. I remember St. Lucia was of the same mindset and he became CARICOM ambassador and he tried his very best and he made Barbados believe that it was an easy task. But he now realised that task was not as easy as he felt and he too has failed. Admit that you have failed and let's go forward. You have failed and this government has failed. We have failed to reach the agreement because it was a meeting of the minds. It was not an agreement between the government of Barbados and the government of Barbados but an agreement between their government and us. And one found that there's a difficulty.

Mr. Chairman, you all remember the Honourable Member saying that he was raising on a point of order. I remember the Honourable Member telling the House, sir, that when he took on the mantle of ambassador he went to give the last 10 per cent to the trade dance. I never agreed to that, sir. We don't worry about the details of these things. We know that you would offer anything. The only thing you would not offer is the Motown or the land for the airport at St. Lucia. The only thing I know that you would not offer. But we in government recognised and we were able to look at the economic zone between Barbados and Trinidad. A lot of work went on in our time and I believe that in time we may have an agreement but we look forward to that day. We look forward to that day and we appreciate what is happening so far.

And I would just want to say, Mr. Chairman, that it is not that easy in meeting agreements within CARICOM. It's not that easy in meeting agreement even between the two sides here. But I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that a lot of work has been done so far in the Ministry of Agriculture. But I think more has been done. I think you, Mr. Chairman, are more appreciative of what has been done in agriculture, especially at the ministry's level. I must say that I recognise that they are hardworking individuals within the Ministry of Agriculture. But I don't think that these officers and the various technicians have confidence in themselves. From what I have been reading, many of them still believe that agriculture is a backward place to be. Many of them

still believe that agriculture is not really a profession to follow. And I think it is a mindset. And I hope that this debate today - I hope that there can be, following this debate, I recognise that the Parliament of Barbados has given it prominence and that hereafter these officers will recognise that they are just as good as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Because somebody believes that once you're in foreign affairs - and every officer, it is a dream of every Barbadian to go and represent the country abroad, in the dream of every Barbadian to get into the foreign service, in the dream to go to the Ministry of Tourism, in the dream of every minister to be Minister of Finance or the Minister of Tourism or the high-flying ministers, Minister of Education. But nobody likes the hard work.

So it is left to the good Member for St. Philip West. It is left to the Member for St. Philip West to really show what mettle he is made of. He has to roll up his sleeves, put on some big boots, and we want to see the doctor over there - some big boots - going back, going through the dirt and really showing his staff that he knows what it is not only to be in a doctor's office but also to be in agriculture. I will never say he is a micromanager because he is setting the path. And I believe that there must be a day where the entire Cabinet could follow the minister and really set the tone for agriculture. Because I have made this intervention, because I've said before in my first intervention that people do not recognise. People do not recognise that agriculture is important to the livelihood of all of us.

I also want to make a point too, that I understand that when we talk about commercial agriculture, Barbados really stands at a disadvantage because we do not have any large farms. There is no large-scale production in Barbados. What we call large-scale production - it is really difficult in terms of even Caribbean standards, because Barbados is a small state, so that our cost of production will always be high and therefore the cost of marketing, the cost of financing, the cost of borrowing money to a state and to a Barbados farm will be higher than, let's say, a farmer in the Dominican Republic or in one of those big states. And we have to be more cooperative. I think it is very important that the CARICOM states start looking at doing things together.

I give you one example. The production of feed. The cost of feed for livestock, poultry, for cows, for all these animals is still high. I am told that 70 per cent of the cost of producing animals is feed. 70 per cent of feed is very high and we are not producing much grain, we don't produce much corn nowadays. We don't produce a number of these - hay and so on - so that we are at a disadvantage when it comes to looking at the cost for livestock. I believe that there must be some mechanism where we can reduce the cost to the Barbadian farmer or the Caribbean farmer. I'm not sure what the purpose of the CARICOM Secretariat is, as it is referred to. I'm not sure what they are doing. I hope

that the minister, when he goes to his usual meetings in CARICOM, can raise the issue because, you see, even though you're in CARICOM, you are still in the individual country. And I think - I'm not sure it happens in Europe - I think European farmers usually get more benefit from the eurozone. I think they get more benefit than we do. And therefore I think we need to carry further where we can buy things at a larger scale, where the cost of production will help. Because at the end of the day the cost to agriculture is becoming higher and is not, in my mind, going to be reduced over time.

I think, Mr. Chairman, the cost will increase over the next couple of years because the cost of labour in Barbados is still high when you look at it vis-à-vis other CARICOM countries. But in terms of Barbados standards, I think the cost of labour is still relatively low over the past three or four years. And we have to look at that very carefully.

I heard members talk about the competition for land - construction versus agriculture. Now, I was in a different field over the last couple of years and I saw that there was a need, a competitive need for housing. And the truth of the matter is there still must be a limited number of acres of land. I don't know what is the optimal level. There was a time when agriculturists were talking about 38 000 acres of land to support the agricultural belt. And we need to look at that. We need to look at what is the optimum level. And it is difficult to ask many farmers, Mr. Chairman, to allow their land to remain in agriculture, because we saw that on every estate, there were marginal lands that could be used for housing. But today, many farmers, many estate owners, want to turn the entire estate into housing. And the government sometimes must say no. There must be a case where some of the land in the estate can be used for housing, but of course, it has to be determined by the Town and Country Planning Department. It has to be determined by the technocrats.

And we must allow - for example, I noticed in the Buckley area, Buckley's estate, land within the estate itself - you have land that can be given for housing, but the St. George Valley is surely not. We can't ever think about turning the St. George Valley into a housing construction zone. St. George Valley is pure land for agriculture, and I hope it remains like that. I hope it remains like that. Hamilton land is really outside the St. George Valley. But what I'm saying is that in every estate, on every estate, you have land that can be used for housing, but the land that is used for cultivation should always remain in conservation. And we need to understand that when you take land out of production for housing, it goes forever. It does not return. It does not return. And we have to look at that.

The other case is youth in agriculture. Many people talk about that.

We need to be able to attract a number of young people into agriculture. And I made a point. Someone was saying to me that it is not necessarily so, but I feel that a number of persons at university now are doing management courses. Almost everybody at university is doing management courses. There are more managers than Indians. Everybody is a chief. Everybody's a chief. So that you have a situation where everybody is a manager. More chiefs than Indians. But the point I'm making - once you understand the point - it is important that you need to turn some of these managers into the agricultural sector to help in the agriculture belt. For example, they can manage some of the estates and use some of their expertise to help in this sector. I believe that you can find jobs, because some of them are not finding enough jobs, and we need to have direct payment. I think the subsidy where the government can involve and pay the wages of some of these experts in the agriculture area - the use of chemicals must be looked at too. I think sometimes people feel that there are too many chemicals being used in production and this has been causing a lot of health hazards. I hope, Minister, your technocrats can look at that. The chemicals in the use of agriculture and how we can reduce some of this - I don't know if it is possible because, you know, the spraying of weeds is preferred today over the weeding of weeds. Our member should wrap up. So we have to look at that. Mr. Chairman, I'm obliged to you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Our Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Chairman, sir, I want to almost pick up immediately from where the honourable member would have left off because I think that in coming to the close of his speech I identified some issues that I believe are worthy of further distillation on this House in relation to the head which we are discussing in terms of agriculture. And I would have made references to it yesterday because the whole issue of land use policy, I think is absolutely critical to what we do in agriculture. Honourable Prime Minister, of course, would have touched on it, I think quite succinctly when he made the point that the competing interest against agriculture in relation to how our lands are used and what they are provided for and the challenges with providing adequate housing for a growing and demanding population.

And we have a situation where, for example, now when I was growing up and you, Mr. Chairman, sir, I know with some certain knowledge we would have hung around at home for a lot longer with our parents than the young people today. Young people today now either on their own or even by their own parents sometimes are being told that they should go out on their own, strike out, look for somewhere to go house themselves and whatever little families they may create. So we don't get extended families anymore, at least not in the way in which we had them. We

also have a situation where there is an intergenerational issue, particularly in our housing estate developments where you could find more people than would normally be advisable residing in a unit. So there is pressure to have housing, to provide housing for a population. And as Prime Minister quite correctly says, Barbados' land space is not growing.

And since we are not growing in that way, with all the competing interest for development purposes in housing, in economic development and expansion, whether it is in tourism or otherwise, then agriculture, which once was king around here, now has to have a fairly bleak existence competing for arable land to be able to survive and to grow. And therefore we have to look for new techniques with which we can increase the level of our production, be far more sophisticated in doing things such as agroprocessing to add value, to make the return in terms of value added much more than we would have done in the past when we were doing the bulk production of sugar or mass production of whatever product it might be. So these are absolutely critical questions of a developmental nature, and I think the last honourable member that spoke touched on it, and I want to commend him for that, because at least I know he grew up in the rural areas of Barbados. He would have seen the drift.

I remember when I was Minister responsible for Urban Development, the Urban Development Commission put on a lecture by Professor Carl Watson. I believe it was at the credit union's auditorium, Barbados Public Workers Cooperative Credit Union auditorium. And Professor Watson was tracing, quite interestingly enough, Mr. Chairman, sir, St. Philip - he was tracing the growth, the outgrowth of housing development in St. Philip as opposed to what St. Philip would have been 50 years ago. And of course he had the benefit, luckily then, of an aerial shot of St. Philip taken by the then colonial government of St. Philip as largely agricultural. And then he took the modern day technology of Google Earth and superimposed it on that to show exactly how so many plantations in St. Philip that provided agricultural pursuits were now taken up by housing. Absolutely remarkable thing to see how it has grown in terms of housing. So it is a question that we have to seriously address.

The second corollary to it, Mr. Chairman, sir, is water, and I think the honourable member for St. George North mentioned the issue of water. That is another important and critical aspect. If we are going to sustain not only agriculture, of course, if we are going to sustain the level of development in Barbados, we know, for example, that the Water Authority is challenged in relation to certain parts of Barbados, particularly in the southeastern part of the country, where we want to both intensify our agriculture effort in that area, but also to do some development. And I know the minister has been scratching

his head to try to balance the competing demand, first of all to try to find the resources to be able to get water to that part of the island because we are a water scarce country and therefore getting the infrastructure put in place as part of this ministry, to get the water up there so that those developments can take place and also that we can sustain the agricultural reinvigoration in those parts of the country.

But it was not too long ago, Mr. Chairman, sir, on the west coast itself, there were challenges in terms of water being provided and how we will deal with the explosion - yes, it is still there to some extent - the explosion of development in terms of the high end tourism plant that occurred particularly in the last decade as the world economy was booming and any additional efforts which may have to be undertaken going forward. And of course we hear it often enough where people in the deep western part of Barbados have problems with getting water. We still have issues when crop is in season where water plays off and you have to wait some long hours. Ever so often we get fire trucks having to go up there unfortunately and have issues accessing adequate water to deal with fires and so forth and so on. So it is an absolutely critical issue.

And that is why even last night when we had that little banter between us, the honourable member for St. Peter and myself, yes, in relation to that matter, it was an issue that I raised in all genuineness because I believe that it was a matter that needed to be addressed. And like him I went and I did my research too and I know the honourable member took the opportunity to come here to do a recitation of a decision that was taken by the Cabinet of Barbados under his leadership and his government to put in a defence in relation to a matter. And I think that it is important, Mr. Chairman, sir, to reflect on the record because this is not the first time that this issue was raised in the House of Assembly of Barbados and to my certain knowledge, at least from the Hansard records which are true and exact recordings of what took place in Parliament, when this issue was raised first, not one objection came from the honourable member - the right honourable member for St. Peter. Not even an aside.

And I want, Mr. Chairman, sir, to quote from a speech delivered by the then Leader of the Opposition in a budget reply in this House of Assembly to the budget delivered by the right honourable member for St. Peter in relation to this matter, in relation to aspects of this matter and questions that I think were validly raised and still need to be answered. For the record. And I quote, Mr. Chairman, sir - in fact the speech was delivered on Wednesday, December 8, 2004. Those are the days when we used to get the budget almost at the end of the year. I want to make this a document of the House. I believe it is probably already but anyway I want to speak to this. And I quote, Mr. Chairman, sir: few Barbadians know that in 1998 the Barbados Water Authority had to borrow a private well

from the Royal Westmoreland resort. Could you imagine that? Could you imagine when the outage was at its peak and impacting golf courses in terms of water supply? There was no response from the government at the time. We were closing the well at Molyneux.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable member for St. James Central with the point of order.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: The honourable member, sir, by his own admission made it clear before he sought to go into the Hansard that he is aware that the right honourable member for St. Peter came to this place today and made a document of the House - empirical, documented evidence of the transparency of the process with respect to that which took place at Holders Plantation in St. James. Now, Mr. Chairman, sir, for the honourable member for St. Michael North West to now come and seek to bring into the record, sir, that which is purely conjecture on the part of a former honourable member of this chamber - that, sir, which is really tantamount only to hearsay - could hardly be getting this chamber anywhere and can hardly be proper.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: St. James Central is a little ruffled and sore about it but, Mr. Chairman, sir, this belongs to the House of Assembly. As far as I recall, the rules of this House allow me to quote from speeches delivered in the House of Assembly from the official record.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, the Honourable Member is misleading the House by reading a document from Hansard with the intent of giving the impression that what he is reading is an allegation that can withstand scrutiny. Given the fact, Mr. Chairman, that the right honourable member for St. Peter this morning laid before this House all of the substantive documents and facts. To allow him to do so now would be to pervert the whole process that took place earlier today and last night. To say that a member cannot document that which he knows to be untrue, and then to continue to refer to Hansard in those circumstances when the matter has been resolved in this debate definitively, is a perversion. And this House above all else will not through its rules allow debates to be perverted.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think you are presuming something and all we ask is that the member continue. Go ahead.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Yes, Mr. Chairman, sir. May I proceed, sir? Yes. Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman. I'm not laying any allegations at anybody on anybody or against anybody. I am reading the record. And I believe it is a record that this House should be called upon to reflect on. Even again, in the context of the debate which

we are doing, there are some pertinent questions that were asked and in my view, in spite of the information provided this morning, which I have seen, have not been answered. And therefore, since the Honourable Member for St. Peter opened up the can of worms, I think that the questions asked in that presentation, brief as they were, ought to be reflected upon by the House. The Honourable Member for St. Peter can respond if he wants. Our members of his team can respond if he wants. I continue.

At the time of the closing of the well at Molyneux, we were borrowing a private well, according to the then Honourable Member, sir, not me, from the Royal Westmoreland. And therefore we could say nothing about golf courses where you borrow, you have to pay back. What is the payback? This is after the closure of the Molyneux well. The quotation continues. I ask again, was the well at Molyneux closed so that the land at Holders could be sold to some private individual and then resold for a profit of \$9 million Barbados dollars? We want to know.

The quotation continues, sir. Mr. Speaker, we need to revisit the entire episode. I believe that it has a direct bearing on what is happening on the west coast as it relates to the water supply and maybe, just maybe, the increased flooding in the area of Sandy Lane. Mr. Speaker, why would they, during the time of drought and increased water usage of golf courses, close a well at Molyneux and borrow a well from the Royal Westmoreland resort just to the north?

Quotation continues. Mr. Speaker, you may recall that the land at Holders Hill, adjacent to Sandy Lane, was classified as zone one. Research shows that the zoning of the land in Barbados is determined by the Barbados Water Authority. In a study done in 1963, issues of a biological nature with respect to the contamination of water arose. It was considered that viruses and pathogens can get into the water supply. Mr. Speaker, zoning depends on the time travelled by the viruses and pathogens. I am not an expert, I am just reading what is here. If they take 300 days or less to reach the water table, then that area is classified as zone one. If they take between 300 to 600 days to reach the water table, the water supply, that area is classified as zone two. Now that we have chemical pesticides and insecticides to be concerned with, which could get into the water table and the water supply. In any case, the question is what could have inspired the Barbados Water Authority to change that area from zone one to zone two in the shortest space of time.

The quotation continues. Mr. Speaker, do not forget that this land was owned by a Barbadian who was refused permission to develop it because it was classified as zone one. An application dated May 18, 1994 was refused by the Chief Town Planner. An appeal to the Chief Town Planner Tribunal in December 1996 was also turned down. All of

this was confirmed by the Minister responsible for Health on May 15, 2003, that that Barbadian then received an option to buy the land for \$4 million, subject to certain conditions. And he entered into an agreement on January 14, 1997, which, of course, we would have seen from the document, laid the conditions that were given.

Quotation continues. Why would anybody take an option to purchase in these circumstances unless they had knowledge that the Barbados Water Authority was favourably considering the removal of the land from zone one to zone two? Remember, Mr. Speaker, it was previously refused on several occasions. Therefore, why would you have a situation in which there is a period of drought and one of the most productive wells, the Molyneux well, was closed and water then borrowed from the Royal Westmoreland resort?

Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing you cannot do in politics is to distort the importance of research. All of this has been done, sir. Now you can begin to understand the relationships. You can begin to understand why decisions might have been made and why it is that one individual could not secure permission but the other could. You could begin to understand why an individual will feel so secure in the knowledge that if he purchased the land, he can get it changed. He would get the zone change from zone one to zone two.

Mr. Speaker, I was told that I cannot call a name or name a name because I did not seek permission. But the name is the same. We also learned from the Minister Thompson, or the Minister at the time, that the Cabinet in October 1997 dealt with that recommendation, which came from the Barbados Water Authority. Who or what prompted the Water Authority to act in 1997 after external rejection of the other Barbadian application in 1996? On August 7, 1998, the Barbadian who previously owned the land completed the sale to those individuals who then applied for planning permission to divide the land on March 3, 1999, believe it or not, nine days after permission was granted. Nine days after permission was granted.

Mr. Speaker, one can ask, why is all of this relevant now? Why is it necessary to rehash the history at this time? Sir, decisions taken six years ago can have a tremendous impact on lives now. A country does not operate in a vacuum. The past is bearing on the present and the future. The people of Barbados therefore demand to know why the land was changed from zone one to zone two. Why the Molyneux well was closed. Was it closed to facilitate the change or was it as a result of the change? What impact, if any, has the closure had on the water supply on the west coast? How is this affecting the Barbados Water Authority's ability to service the west coast of Barbados?

Mr. Speaker, sir, there must be a relationship between all of what I have revealed. Those individuals made \$9.5 million in profit from the sale of the land. What has it cost Barbadians and the Barbadian taxpayers? That is why it is important and relevant - we are paying for these decisions today. How are these decisions impacted on the indebtedness of Barbados? How would they ultimately impact on the lives of Barbadians? Remember, the higher the monkey climb, the more he shows his tail. This was said and now in this context, authored by the former Honourable Member for St. Michael North West and former Leader of the Democratic Labour Party opposition, formerly the co-leader of the Barbados Labour Party, one-time economic adviser to the same party and sidekick of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. It wasn't said by me. So it is not precisely clear that he is making any allegations. These allegations were made and at no point in time during that presentation or after any reply to the budget - which is then given the honour of the Minister of Finance when the debate comes to an end - did he get up and refute it? Did he get up on a point of order? Nothing.

Anybody made a comment last night and was abused and called a liar in this House - these issues were raised. I am saying, as Honourable Members say, those issues then affect us now because when we get in here and try crocodile tears about how agricultural land is disappearing and we are so concerned about Barbados' agriculture, when we knew that the policy of the Honourable Member for St. Peter had nothing to do with agriculture, he wasn't interested in it. It was not part of his makeup. I remember. So we know this. So therefore the record is being corrected. The whole record. Give us all of the information. Not in drips and drabs five or six and ten years after. Give us all of it. Give us the conveyance, let us see who bought it, who got it, who resold it. Let us get all that information and then we would know exactly who benefited and who didn't benefit, who granted the subdivision, who signed off on the law. All of those things are issues that need to be addressed when we are debating this. Hopefully we will be able to move on because I doubt very much that those answers are going to come anytime soon.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: [Inaudible.]

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am amazed at the fact that at a time when we are in the middle of an Estimates Debate that presents us with a set of figures and circumstances worse than the worst case scenario of Government's own medium term fiscal strategy, that the Minister of Finance could spend as much time as he just spent not giving this House an update on his initiative in 2011 to recapitalise the Agricultural Development Fund - a fund whose sums, according to the Estimates of last year and this year, have moved from \$18.9 million to the sum of \$10.2 million. An Agricultural Development Fund that was established essentially from the revenue from the bound

rates that were introduced in order to protect domestic agriculture by keeping higher import duties on items that may have a level of domestic production and similarly from the revenue from the Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust.

Now let me read what the Minister said, Mr. Chairman, on Tuesday August 16, 2011, and let us be clear. The Estimates are laid in March. The Estimates of March 2011 showed that the Agricultural Development Fund - if he has recapitalised it - would then ensure that people could borrow from it at a rate of interest of 5 per cent instead of six and a half percent. The Minister will be telling us whether those things have been done and if they have been done, how many people have borrowed at the new rate of 5 per cent and what have they borrowed for and what has been the progress in that regard. I would have expected, Mr. Chairman, that a Minister of Finance would have been telling us about the initiative which he announced in this House on June 26, 2012 for the establishment of a \$20 million hotel refurbishment fund.

energy Efficiency and Food Production fund. This is now ten months after the announcement of that fund, and on page 62 of the budget, the Minister of Finance said that over the next five years, agro businesses will have access to \$20 million in financing. Facetious. Because let me make the point. Given the scale of the problems that agriculture faces in this country and that the minister has outlined, there is no way on God's earth that \$20 million can meet the needs of the agricultural sector, the tourism sector and the alternative energy sector. And even if we were to say that all \$20 million is for agriculture, the Minister of Finance made it clear it is over a five year period, which means a maximum, if all were to go to agriculture, of \$4 million a year in that fund.

Now I am asking these things, sir, because the Minister of Finance spent the better part of his 15 minutes speech reading a document from Hansard. And it is curious because, having had the denial in here, as well as the making of documents of the House of the cabinet paper in 1997 showing that the Barbados Water Authority would have asked for change from zone one to zone two for Norwoods, 323.4 acres at Crab Hill and 504 acres at Sedgepond and 181 acres at Norwoods. It is amazing that the Minister of Finance could still seek to make, in my view, a mockery of the whole issue, by trying to read a document from Hansard from a former leader of the Democratic Labour Party who at the time clearly was misled without having the benefit of the information and facts, but who, now that he has the benefit of the information and the facts, would never associate himself with the comments made by the current honourable member for St. Michael North West. It is easy to make allegations when you do not know the facts.

But the fact that the minister would choose to dwell on that at 4:00 on the last afternoon of the estimates - that has a set of figures that presents a worst case scenario, that presents estimates and numbers that are worse than a worst case scenario of his own revised medium term fiscal strategy - tells me that the minister cannot face the facts and wants us to remain in a holding pattern until such time as we can find the solution. Because, you know, the answer is, sir, that we cannot come here today and tell the Minister of Agriculture that he is going to get any of the funds that he needs to be able to transform agriculture in this country.

I want to know, sir, not only whether the Agricultural Development Fund has been recapitalised, I want to know, sir, whether the catastrophe fund that was established for farmers in 2004, whether that too has been recapitalised. Because we all know that all farmers need is a bad rainfall, a bad windstorm, and all of their money and all of their work goes literally within a matter of hours. And that is the reason why, in fact, I think it was one of the tropical storms that led to a decimation of a number of chicken farms in Barbados, including in the parish of St. Lucy in particular, that led to the establishment of the catastrophe fund for farmers. Now, are we in a position, as the hurricane season will start within less than two months, to be able to say that should something unfortunate befall this country, will the farmers be protected by having access to a capitalised catastrophe fund in order to ensure that they will not reap the losses for the investments they have made both in terms of their livestock and in terms of the non-sugar food production in this country?

I want to know, sir, as well, what is the position in relation to us being able to have the Minister of Agriculture pursue any other substantive loans or access to funds from our concessional partners, be it from the European Union or from the Inter-American Development Bank, even in spite of the fact that the pace of progress with the Inter-American Development Bank will not give the bank comfort - because under the National Agricultural Health and Safety Project, and I noticed that there is \$3 million, I believe, in the estimates this year to start, I assume it is allocated for that. But the reality is that the one thing you need concessional funding for is in fact our productive sectors. We have already had extensive debate in here today about the high costs of production, the low scales, low output and therefore the inability to be able to control costs. And if we are going to maintain the essence of who we are as a society, if we are going to meet the obligations of the food security plan put down previously by the Labour Party, endorsed now by this government, how are we going to do it without access to the concessional funding? How are we going to do it without this House voting money?

And this is not an idle debate. This is not an academic debate at Cave Hill. This is the reality of the

livelihoods for thousands of people across both the farming and fishing industry who expect this government as well as the opposition, quite frankly, to be able to point a way for them to stabilise against the losses that they have been confronting both in sugar and in non-sugar agricultural production. And in some instances, and I take the minister's word about the battles in relation to the expansion of the fishing industry, it is something that I would wish to join with him to be able to fight because I think it is a wrong thing against the people of Barbados for us to be inhibited in our expansion of the fishing industry because of arbitrary conventions from 30, 40 years ago.

Now I also want to say this, sir. I do not know how the Minister of Finance was planning to capitalise this food production fund of \$20 million, but in the same budget he spoke also about a tertiary education fund which would have been capitalised from the National Insurance Scheme. And we have continually made the point that the National Insurance Scheme can only invest its money once there is a rate of return that is in excess of inflation. Now if government - in this case it would have to be a minimum of 7 per cent in order for the National Insurance Fund directors to be satisfied that they are complying with their fiduciary obligations - it would therefore mean, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, that government would have to subsidise the interest spread if it was going to make sense for the farmers to be able to borrow. Because the cost of money is also a critical factor that many farmers in this country have to face, because a lot of the enterprises are under-capitalised. And unless the cost of capital is concessional - in other words, 5 per cent or 4 per cent - farmers very often are unable, as well as some of the tourism people, to service the debt that they undertake at this stage.

And it is that kind of detail, sir, that I would have expected the honourable Minister of Finance to be engaging us in just now, and not a sideshow on a matter that was already appropriately settled and resolved this morning by the right honourable member for St. Peter. I also want to say, sir, that in relation to the capitalisation of whether it is that new food security fund with hotels and energy, or whether it is the Agricultural Development Fund, this is a serious issue and we may have to be able to find the concessional resources from the international financial institutions. But as I said, government may have to make a commitment to subsidise some of the spread. Now, if government is making such a commitment, it has to be in these estimates, it has to be on budget. So that if, for example, government were to borrow \$20 million from the NIS at 7 per cent and it wanted to on-lend it to farmers at 5 per cent, it means that those 200 basis points on the \$20 million would have to be covered as a subsidy from central government through the Ministry of Agriculture every year for the period of life of the loan. And that is what I mean when I say about the interventionist role that

central government can play in order to reposition domestic farmers in this country.

It may sound like the right honourable member for St. Peter - it is because I am saying the right thing. Because this economy, this economy is in dire need of an injection for its enterprises. Governments for the most part do not trade. It is enterprises that trade. And the same thing is happening in manufacturing. It is happening in tourism. The viability of our businesses is what is at stake. And what these estimates ought to be telling us is how are you going to stabilise the viability of our enterprises? Because it is the enterprises that will send home people in order to make sure that revenue matches expenditure. It is the enterprises that will become insolvent that then have to close down. And then when you start a new business from scratch, it is going to take you two to three years before you start to see anything again. And therefore, when we say that we need a rescue plan for the enterprises within the private sector of Barbados, it is in the context - not because we have any special relationship with them - but because we recognise that if you do not save the enterprises that you have now, if you have to start from a blank page again, then it is going to take too long and the economy will not get the growth spurts that it needs, so that government's revenue situation and public financial situation can be stabilised. And we all know that.

But I also believe, sir, and I will say this before I sit, I thought the electorate sent both parties a message last election - both parties, not me. And the message must be - I do not know how many different ways to put it - the message must be to move away from the blame game of the past. Looking in the past does not help any of us right now. Barbados requires every ounce of our energy to move this country forward. And I feel that if we are going to be fair to the people of this country, that is where our efforts ought to be directed as political institutions in parliament. I am not saying that it is easy to go and find this money, and quite frankly, the Minister of Finance is going to have a very difficult job because the expenditure levels are too high, without a doubt. And the revenue reflects the very desperate state of the enterprises that I spoke of just now, whose viability is threatened - the \$110 million decline in VAT. And this does not affect agriculture because agriculture has no taxes on its inputs or outputs, but it reflects the lack of economic activity in the rest of the society whose disposable income is necessary in order for agriculture to have a bright future in terms of a market to purchase its outputs. Thank you, sir.

So I am saying to you, sir, that we need to be able to find a way to rescue and stabilise our enterprises if we are going to stabilise government's public finances in a very desperate and dangerous situation. That it is. And I believe, sir, you know, when I talked about the \$500 million fund for tourism, a lot of support was made before elections.

Elections done. Now I am simply saying, sir, that we can source concessional funding from international financial institutions and other governments like the Chinese and others, and that if the interest rates at which we are sourcing the funding are still too high because of the desperate state of our enterprises, then government determines at what level it wants to carry a subsidy on interest rate spread to make sure that we can provide oxygen to these Barbadian enterprises that are in danger of insolvency or closing. And if we can do that in the productive sectors - I am not suggesting in retail and distributive trade, but in the productive sectors - then I believe, sir, that we will at least start the path to allow the economy to go back to growth in the traded sectors in particular, which has been the nightmare of the Barbados economy. And when you have the non-traded sectors not growing as well, as has been happening recently, then you really have the beginnings of an apocalyptic situation. And none of us want to go there. None of us want to go there.

So let us get back to the reality of Barbados this evening. Whether a member said, when he was on this side or that side, something - the right honourable member for St. Peter did not come in here and just deny it. He produced documents. And let us move on. Because whether Norwood is zone one, zone two, zone three, four or five, will not put a cent on anybody's table or in anybody's pocket today, tonight, this weekend, next week. But whether we can stabilise the agricultural sector, whether we can allow events to take place where more Barbadians - because you are going to have a problem with Barbadians working in agriculture, and others in this debate have said it, for sociological reasons and for reasons in relation to the reserve price of labour. Because if a person can get a higher price in terms of his employment for cutting bush, they are not going to go and work in agriculture at a lower price. So in any circumstances, sir, if we can create enterprises that will allow people access to greenhouses, then I think that might be the only route by which Barbadians may come back into agriculture in a serious way in this country and on their own terms - as owners of the enterprises or as owners of the livestock - but not working for anybody. Because we have a serious sociological and historical set of issues to resolve if that prevents the level of Barbadian labour that we would like to see in the sector.

But there is no doubt in my mind, sir, that we have to get the food security issues right and we have to get the sugar industry issues right, if only because there are too many other reasons in tourism and in the production of rum and in the ecological and environmental stability of Barbados that requires us to get it right. I am obliged to you, sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Philip.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Chairman, I wish, sir, to wind this debate up on Head 72. And I want to thank all honourable members on both sides who would have participated in this debate. I have listened attentively to the other side. Several of the proposals were reasonable, some of them I did not agree with at all. But that is politics. I think that what is important at this particular point in time is that whatever we do, Mr. Chairman, it must be done based on what is evidenced as the best way forward. And I believe that we as a government are being advised by the same advisors who advised the previous administration. We have access to the same international developmental partners and we are therefore quite capable, sir, of making determinations as to the best way forward in relation to the agricultural sector and other statutory corporations that are related to this particular sector.

There are some elements that I thought I need to respond to and try to bring some clarity in relation to how we may go forward. And one of the areas that was raised continually was this whole notion of what do we do with the destructive green monkey in Barbados. One of the things that we ought not to do, Mr. Chairman, is to fire off at the hip and act in a way that is not sustainable in relation to the ecological development of this country. What we have to understand is that in any ecological system, when you have a negative in relation to the behavioural patterns of any organism, whether it is animal or a plant, there is always another side that one has to consider as a repercussion. What I would want to say, sir, in understanding the destructive nature of the green monkey in relation to the agricultural sector, I would want to suggest that before we think of moving into widescale destruction of the animal, that we should engage ecologists and other specialists to evaluate depopulation, evaluate the other elements in relation to what food sources, elements of what we will call their habitat in general, and how their habitat is being changed or encroached on, et cetera. And if we need to engage in any systematic destruction of the animal, let us learn from the international agencies. There is a programme where you can cull animals, but in order to cull animals you must have a knowledge of the characteristics of the population, the number of males you have, the number of females you have, their breeding scenarios, so that you can maintain a stable population over a period of time. So I would want to suggest that what I am going to engage the ministry to do is to engage the ministry, the University of the West Indies and also ECA and other institutions to assist us with setting that study out before we take any other major drastic steps.

Sir, one or two other issues were raised in relation to agricultural incentives and the member for St. Peter is largely correct. There are many incentives given to agriculturalists, but one of the things that we found out a few months ago was that the majority of the incentives were backloaded, they were rebate centred. Therefore, what

happened, many of the small farmers had difficulty going and paying a few thousand dollars upfront for irrigation systems and other types of apparatus that you need to engage in reasonably large to medium size agriculture. And we took the decision, sir, at the ministry to make a policy change where we develop an upfront agricultural financing programme where farmers now can get what the rebate dollar value would be in an invoice that they can use upfront to discount at the site of purchase from the supplier and therefore assist them with the cash flow elements and so on. This is running concurrently with the rebate system in the event that some of the older players and so on want to maintain that system because they have a better cash flow reality. Now that system is in place, it is in operation at the ministry as we speak, and I am confident, sir, that it is going to bear fruit over time.

In addition to that, sir, it becomes important that we look at this whole notion of the financing of the agricultural sector and it is not only in relation to the Agricultural Development Fund and how it is funded in relation to bank rates, et cetera. I think what is important is that we need to start to expand the mandate in a significant way, sir, of the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited as well as Fund Access. And in addition to that, sir, we need, if they are not at this stage under the Central Bank credit guarantee scheme, they need to be brought under the Central Bank credit guarantee scheme because the majority of these farmers in Barbados are either small or medium. And the Central Bank credit guarantee scheme is specifically designed in many ways for small and medium sized businesses so as to take the pressure off of the commercial institutions and probably state-led institutions in relation to providing some guaranteed cover for loans for agriculture. I believe that if that is done, if it is not already done, sir, in relation to the Agricultural Development Fund, that would go a long way, because I am still getting too many complaints from persons who suggest to me that they would go to Fund Access and also the Enterprise Growth Fund and they are not usually entertained in respect to agricultural projects, et cetera. This needs to be resolved and I would call on the Minister of Finance, if in any way he can use his influence to work with the Central Bank, so that if they are not yet under the scheme, they should be brought under the scheme and let agriculturalists benefit from that guaranteed cover for at least 95 per cent of whatever their loan happens to be.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, it was raised earlier, sir, that the way forward for the agricultural sector is to engage in technologically driven, scientifically driven agricultural outputs. Now, this is precisely why the ministry is recognising that this is the case - where we do not have a set agricultural curriculum defined within the school systems and defined within our post-secondary school educational systems - that the University of the West Indies established the University Centre for Food Security and

Entrepreneurship. It is precisely that institution that is set up to train agriculturalists beyond just simply an individual who has basic skills, so that individual can have an institution to go to, to upgrade their management skills, upgrade their understanding of the technology that needs to be applied, for them to appreciate what type of crops they should be planting, whether the soils are right for this type of crop or this soil, et cetera, and also to understand pest management and so on. And that system, sir, under the University Centre for Food Security and Entrepreneurship, will then establish a relationship with the Polytechnic, the Barbados Community College, and then allow for a diploma certification in agriculture that a person could now use to go forward into a formal four-year programme within the university, within the agricultural programme in Trinidad and Tobago. We believe this will fill that gap. And part of what the university will establish is a model farm that will model out the technologies that are what one will call the best evidence-based technologies for the individual crops and how you manage it, sir - that is what is going to happen at the university. And so I am very confident that centre will be the first one in the entire Caribbean. And that is the way forward, Mr. Chairman, for the agricultural sector in terms of applying science and technology to the area of production.

In addition to that, sir, a lot of concerns were raised in regards to praedial larceny. And let me just say this, Mr. Chairman. At this particular point in time, my ministry is conducting town hall meetings. There is a draft legislation, there is a set of policy framework around that legislation. And we are out there conducting town hall meetings around Barbados so as to get some legitimate feedback in relation to those persons who that legislation is supposed to serve - that is from the farmers themselves and from the consumers as well. And we believe it is important to help us to strengthen the legislation itself, because sometimes we sit down and we somehow believe that we have a better understanding of how a farmer ought to be protected than a farmer who farms himself. Obviously that does not make much sense to me. So it is important, sir, that before we actually make this legislation and have it debated as law, let us get their evaluations of it to determine whether we ought to have the administrative structures that we were considering - administrative structures like an agricultural praedial larceny hotline, establishing a particular set of praedial larceny desks at the ministry,

establishing a set of database systems, making sure that you look at potential possible preliar larceny squads, relationships with the police department and a whole lot of other administrative issues that we have contemplated. But what is more important is that the previous legislation that we have on the books - that these are certification - we are going to continue that certification, but we are going to ask all farmers in Barbados to be registered and registration would be further subcategorised so that you know who is a

wholesaler, who is a retailer. What that allows you to do is to do exactly what happens in the wholesale retail business so that you can follow and establish your proper traceability system. Once you know who is a retailer, who is a wholesaler and who is a producer at the farm level, that allows you to put those systems in place, sir. And that is one of the strengths, we believe, of the new legislation - that traceability system that will allow you to be able to trace projects from the farmer down to the consumer.

We are confident, sir, that we can get this done. We have one or two areas where we need to apply some technology because we may have to, in terms of ruminants and so on, do some branding or some choosing the chips on the ears and so on - things that they are doing in the United States and other parts of Brazil and so on that we have learned from. Those are the things that we have to put in place. But then obviously they come with the regulatory framework to be able to roll them out and the administration. So, Mr. Chairman, those persons that were now suffering from the impact of pilferage on a day-to-day basis - I am just asking them to give us about another six months, a year, and let us set this thing up properly. Let us make sure that once we have put it in place that it would do the job that they are asking us to do on their behalf.

Mr. Chairman, we also spoke about how do you modernise the agricultural sector? The agricultural sector, sir, can only be modernised if the agricultural sector is moved simply beyond how it was structured before. You cannot use the same structure that was a colonial structure to modify the agriculture sector out of a colonial structure. They got to know what the colonial structure was and be able to then analyse what you ought to do to make sure that the lands that you have - that used to be all in sugar one time - is now going to be including sugar and other things that you need to support a diversified Barbados economy. So in order to do that, sir, you cannot do it by just building figures. You had to do the research. And what that research therefore has brought us to is an evaluation that we can execute the modern agricultural infrastructure by utilising four pillars.

Those four pillars, sir, are: one, the linkage with the tourism sector. Because if you bring 600 000 tourists in Barbados, you are going to feed them. Why should you bring tourists in Barbados and import the food to feed them? We are sending back with a little bit of our own exchange that you make - that makes no sense. It makes more sense for us to therefore set up a system that allows for the state trading enterprise to understand what it is that the hotels will buy and other types of providers of services to tourists, and to be able to link that to the farming production site in a structured and organised way. Once we can get that established - and I said that a study has already been commissioned by the FAO, it is known as the National Marketing Market Information System, and I said

that the money has been allocated and it will start in this financial year in October 2013 - so once we get that information, sir, and we can tie down the production side and know how much of what is being produced in Barbados, what were the total quantities, when it is going to be harvested, and we know how many tons or pounds of pumpkins and yam and tomatoes or whatever the various hotels want, then you can put them together in an organised and systematic way. That is how you can do this thing, Mr. Chairman.

And outside of the same systems that you put in place for tourism, you put it in place for manufacturing and driving the agribusiness side. When I was minister responsible for commerce and trade and I toured the small manufacturers in this country, the majority of the condiment makers in Barbados had one complaint. And I believe that the former member for St. Lucy would have recognised the same thing. They simply say, sir, that they import inputs into their jams and condiments and so on, simply because they could not get a sustainable supply at a sustainable quality and at a sustainable price. And that told me, sir, that because the supply side or the production site, sir, is so fragmented, the only way to resolve that is by putting an institutional framework that will set up the standards and be able to move those products through the standard, Mr. Chairman.

So the link is, Mr. Chairman, in relation to tourism, in relation to manufacturing. And the other two that are critical are the linkages to energy and the linkages to health care. The linkages of health care are well defined in that once you tend to utilise more plant provisions, you utilise more fruits and vegetables. There is scientific evidence that there is a lower incidence of chronic non-communicable diseases and as a result of that it is going to have a significant impact on your overall health bill over time. And in relation to energy, sir, the best example of the relationship between agriculture and energy, sir, is the relationship between utilising biomass or utilising bagasse gas in the production of electricity.

Mr. Chairman, that is the modern agricultural infrastructure that we need to have. And what we need to do is to build it around a food and nutrition plan and build it around providing food security in Barbados and build that therefore, sir, around having agriculture make a greater contribution to the national development of the country. So, Mr. Chairman, it is therefore along those lines that I can assure you that we will try to utilise this \$89 million that has been provided to the sector and also the funds that we are going to get from the Food Promotion and Food Development Fund. And as a result of that, sir, I want to again thank the Minister of Finance for his support. And I want to thank the members of the cabinet for their support. So, Mr. Chairman, I therefore want to beg Head 72 stand part, as amended, of \$68 304 746.

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

On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, Mr. Chairman reported progress and asked leave to sit again, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move the suspension of the sitting until 15 minutes past five o'clock this evening, at which time we will resume and commence consideration of Head 78, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, the guillotine, Mr. Speaker, sir, is expected to come down at about 6:58 to 7:00 this evening.

The question that the House be suspended until 5.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members are sitting as resumed when the suspension was taken. Yes, Mr. Clerk.

PAPERS

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Minister.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, sir, I am commanded to lay the Duties, Taxes and Other Payments Exemption, Coastal Zone Management Unit Order 2012; the Duties and Taxes and Other Payments Exemption, Barbados Squash Club Order 2013; and the Duties, Taxes and Other Payments Exemption, University of the West Indies Fourth Travelling Caribbean Showcase Order 2013.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Leader.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I give notice of a resolution to approve the sum of \$93 539 841 granted from the Consolidated Fund and be placed at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 2012–2013 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 19 2012–2013 which form the schedule to this resolution.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is the order of the day. On the suspension, the Government Notices - we would have been in committee, and to that we shall now revert.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

HEAD 78 - MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS AND YOUTH

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Head 78, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, in the amount of \$42 186 854.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I rise on this head which deals with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth. And I am happy to report certainly that in relation to the policy direction of the government that we have been able to put in place a number of significant policy initiatives and programmes in relation to this particular head. I intend, however, Mr. Chairman, to deal frontally with the area of culture. As you know, the government in 2009 would have approved a national cultural policy for Barbados and to a large extent that policy is what governs the initiatives within the Ministry of Culture, more specifically the division of Culture, when we had enunciated that policy. The policy was designed, Mr. Chairman, to make culture an integral part of the experience of Barbados and to ensure that we could move forward with our development agenda within the context of a Barbadian cultural experience. Of course, that policy also looked to refine and strengthen Barbadian identity and promoted the whole concept of respect for preservation of Barbados' cultural heritage. But of course, one of the most important facets of that policy was to enunciate a policy initiative in relation to building out infrastructure with a view to enhancing the expansion of the creative sector and the cultural industries in Barbados.

To that extent, Mr. Chairman, the cultural industries has been given a significant focus within the agenda of the ministry. Only recently the government of Barbados would have benefited from the expertise of UNESCO where they would have provided to us initial technical resources to commence a mapping exercise in Barbados to more accurately gauge the contribution of the cultural industries to the economy of Barbados. And that initial exercise has resulted in some preliminary findings in which we are now moving to accelerate a definitive programme or plan of action to have that mapping exercise conducted. But the reason why, of course, the government would have marked the cultural industries as being of prime significance is essentially because of the global impact of the cultural industries in Barbados. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in 2000, the creative economy was worth some \$2.2 trillion. And at that time the projection was that it would grow at a rate of 5 per cent in 2010. The UNCTAD report also placed the creative sector in terms of contribution to global GDP between the

years 2002 to 2008 as reaching some \$592 000 000 000 in 2008. And of course, Mr. Chairman, there are a number of areas that encompass the creative sector, whether it be advertising, architecture, craft design, fashion, video, performing arts, the whole gamut. Music, publishing, even sports now are part and parcel of the creative sector. And we believe that, particularly in Barbados, we are poised and we should focus our attention on the creative industries.

Of course, this House would be aware that there is pending, before coming before the House very shortly, the Cultural Industries Development Bill, which will be the signal policy, legislative initiative of the government to concretise much of what we would have enunciated in the national policy on the creative sector and to place that within a legislative framework, essentially to provide a number of incentives, but more than that, to create a regulatory framework for the creative sector in Barbados. But I want to say, Mr. Chairman, that of course, the work which is the concern of the Ministry of Culture, and certainly what these estimates have been concerned with, extend beyond just the Cultural Industries Bill, because much of what we have been concerned about in Barbados is the whole question of the preservation of our cultural diversity and taking steps to preserve our cultural heritage.

One of those initiatives, as you know, had to do with the protection and preservation of our tangible and intangible cultural heritage. That is a key aspect of what we are about. We would, as you know, have looked towards the creation of a national arts gallery. The board would have been set up and we are now poised to have the national art gallery established. Of course, the intention is to secure the building, the Garrison building, which used to house the CXC. And as soon as the CXC vacates that building, we are positioned to take possession of that building and to have the national art gallery housed in that particular building. So we will continue our planning work along that direction and, of course, to move also towards ensuring that the national art gallery becomes part of the national psyche of Barbadians. One of the initiatives that we want to pursue this financial year is to work towards having a policy activated within the government where art can be acquired and certainly displayed in government buildings, certainly to encourage the various ministries to acquire art of Barbadian creation and to display them within the ministries and government departments across Barbados. This, of course, once we can get this done, would redound to the benefit of Barbadian artists because these pieces will be bought and certainly they can be displayed not only in Barbados but across our embassies and missions across the world. This would obviously give our artists much exposure and would create the kind of national response which I believe that our creatives would certainly cherish going forward.

Mr. Chairman, one of the other initiatives, of course, we would have brought the Preservation of Antiquities and Relics Bill, which of course we had reviewed because of some of the public concerns in relation to that bill. We have completed that exercise after conducting a series of public consultations with one major national public consultation to refine a number of the provisions. But of course, that particular bill remains an important component of the responsibilities of not only the state, but certainly the private persons in terms of our responsibility to preserve our national heritage. And that bill will be taken back to Cabinet shortly with a view to having it resumed in the upper chamber very shortly and to certainly ensure that we can comply with a number of international treaty arrangements as well.

The heritage component of the Ministry of Culture has been given significant push of late with the inscription of Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison. That site, which is now an international treasure, is governed by a management plan, and we will continue over the next financial year to accelerate provisioning for the management of the management plan. One of the initiatives we will be putting in place is establishing a special unit within the Ministry of Culture designed particularly to oversee the management of Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison. We believe that this is important, of course, because the conditions under which Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison was inscribed was such that we did put to the international community a very strong case for a part of the world which we consider to have outstanding universal value. It means that we have to maintain the status and the quality of the site in order to maintain the designation. And certainly it is our intention to do all that is necessary to maintain the world heritage status for Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison.

There are within the site a number of important opportunities for entrepreneurship and also for the preservation of built heritage. While the site was not inscribed to a large extent on the built heritage or by extension the buildings, the buildings in Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison still constitute a critical component of the character of the site. And therefore last year I would have taken to Cabinet a proposal to establish a special task force to work with the government on sourcing of funding for the preservation of our built heritage in Barbados. That task force has begun its work and I certainly look forward to the actual outputs of that task force because we believe that there are several areas of international sourcing. There are also persons within Barbados who have indicated a willingness to work with us in relation to the preservation of several of our historic sites and that would be one of the key tasks of that task force.

I would also like to say to the House that very shortly we can expect to see work commencing on the

restoration project for the Empire. The Cabinet would have made a decision to award a contract to a private investor who would have provided to the Cabinet a sufficiently solid proposal which would have met with the requirements of the World Heritage Committee in Barbados for the preservation and restoration of the Empire. I can say to you that the developers are currently working on obtaining the necessary compliance from the Town and Country Planning department and they expect within some months to commence that project. That project is being done at a cost of just about \$10 million Barbados dollars and is expected to employ about 75 persons. I also would like to say that part of the proactive stance of the Ministry of Culture is also to secure the restoration of the Queen's Park buildings and in particular the Daphne Joseph-Hackett Theatre. We are at an advanced stage of discussions with a private sector concern as well, that has indicated a willingness to work with us towards the restoration of the Queen's Park buildings which, as you know, fall also within the World Heritage site.

So, Mr. Chairman, the whole context of heritage will continue to be one of the key drivers of the policy agenda of the ministry during the financial year. Within the context of the preservation of Bridgetown and the whole historic and cultural components of Bridgetown, we are also poised to work very closely with the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry which has indicated by means of its own programming within Historic Bridgetown, in particular a plan to resuscitate life within the city, both commercial and otherwise. We feel that, of course, Bridgetown is critical. We are not only looking at commercial activity, but there are persons who live within Bridgetown, particularly the young population of Bridgetown, that we believe should have a stake in the commercial opportunities that Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison will offer. So there are a number of projects designed to train tour guides who live within the city. The Commission for Pan African Affairs is embarked on a very interesting project which will be headquartered from the Spirit Bond building and which will also serve as a point of an information centre for the World Heritage site as well.

I would like to also refer to a number of the other initiatives which we will be pursuing this year. One of those would be the initiation of another nomination process before the World Heritage Committee. Another site which we want to nominate before the World Heritage Committee will be the industrial heritage of Bridgetown. The story of sugar and work has already started on that particular experience and that would incorporate a number of the estates across Barbados which we want to present as another site in relation to the cultural richness of the heritage of Barbados.

I would like to say to this House that certainly one of the key initiatives of the cultural division within the

ministry has to do with the support for various festivals and the management of various festivals. And I speak in particular not only of Cropover, but the division continues to encourage the development of festivals. We do partner and work with the Oistins Fish Festival, the Holetown Fish Festival, the St. Philip Festival, the Barbados Workers Union May Day celebrations, Gospel Fest, as well as the Holders Season. And we are also exploring the possibility of initiating a Barbados arts festival which will be the first such festival of its kind. I do not need to remind the House that certainly the impact of festivals in Barbados are directly related to the value added created for our tourism product. The Cropover festival, as you know, over the past three or four years in particular, has grown in leaps and bounds and certainly we have revolutionised the approach to Cropover and therefore Cropover has been expanded into a festival that has generated significant amounts of revenue and created much needed economic activity in Barbados.

I just want to say that we will continue to seek to expand the Cropover festival. We have been able to secure the successes in Cropover through a number of collaborative efforts. One of the key initiatives which we would have used is to bring our stakeholders to the centre of the planning of Cropover. As you know, Cropover is launched now every year in November, and this year's Cropover would have been launched last year. We would have done that through a sponsors' breakfast. And I am pleased to say that the private sector in Barbados continued to respond very favourably to Cropover and we are seeing increases, significant increases in sponsorship. One of the innovations, of course, to the Cropover festival is to seek to encourage wider private sector participation. Some of the events within Cropover, such as Cohobblot - in the past there have been efforts to invite the private sector to bid for some of these events, but of course those efforts have by and large been not as successful as one would expect. Certainly the Cohobblot product is now seen to be at the cutting edge of the key events in Cropover, and this year again we will invite the private sector to bid for Cohobblot, and I certainly hope that the responses will be good. We have spent quite a lot of time reinvigorating a number of the aspects of Cropover. We reintroduced, for example, the folk and the gospel concerts, and we have seen Cropover also as a means of development of our artists by means of a number of workshops and so on. The marketing of Cropover has been fuelled largely by the conclusion of an MOU with the Barbados Tourism Authority, which has been extremely successful in creating that kind of presence and appeal throughout our major markets, including the Caribbean, and we will continue this year to work with the BTA. I believe the agencies across the world have already since last year [Inaudible.]

November would have started the marketing of Cropover and certainly if Crop Over last year was

considered to be huge, then we could look forward to even a bigger Crop Over. Crop Over has been with us for some 40 odd years. I believe next year we'll be celebrating the 40th anniversary of Cropover. And I think that Cropover has certainly, particularly in view of the economic activity and the interests of the stakeholders, artists as well as designers, we constantly continue to review Crop Over with a view to ensuring that we can take it even to bigger and better places. We have focused on ensuring that Cropover can return to where it ought to be, that it becomes a Barbadian experience fuelled by the community dynamics of it. And there's still room within Crop Over for more community participation. And I remember years ago we would have much of the Crop Over experience happening at the community level, and I think that this is the time that we can probably get our communities to revisit their participation in Crop Over moving forward.

Of course, we have NIFCA as well. NIFCA. I believe this year will be celebrating its 40th anniversary and what we have done with NIFCA is to focus a lot of the attention at creating authentic Barbadian music and Barbadian creativity within NIFCA. Last year we introduced the Jackie Opel Award in the area of original compositions, and I must say that the response was phenomenal. What we have to do now is to take this particular experience even further and to seek to work with our artists towards developing even more local music and of course, to market the products and services that they develop.

Mr. Chairman, the other projects, of course, that we will be looking at over the next financial year would be a number of the institutions within the Ministry of Culture which we have responsibility for. We have responsibility for the Community Independence Secretariat, and that Community Independence Secretariat has to a large extent focused its attention on ensuring that there could be particular events every Independence, particularly at the community level, where we can have Barbadians reflecting on Independence. This project, while being very successful in the past, we recognise that there are certain aspects of it that are in need of review, and we will be reviewing a number of the areas within the Community Independence programme. The spirit of a nation show, the role and function of the parish independence committees. One of the challenges that we have had in that respect is the whole question of participation at the community level. In the past, of course, this has been governed by a system of elections, and the initial reports made to me so far suggest that system may not be working because of some of the dynamics of getting quorum as such within these organisations, within the communities. And I can say to you that we will be relooking that to see whether or not having elections within the context of Community Independence, the parish independence committees, is really the way to go, or whether we should not move to

having a nominated system almost similar to the constituency councils. This is obviously now still in discussion, still in discussion stages, and we are going to canvass, of course, the various constituencies with a view to ensuring that we could get that feedback. Much of that has happened already, but there will be a very focused review of the Community Independence programme.

Of course, the major institution which is responsible for the execution of government policy in relation to culture is in fact the National Cultural Foundation. The National Cultural Foundation, which would have been established quite some time ago, has been focused, of course, on festival development. But a large component of what the NCF's role is, is the whole question of cultural development. And I must say that one of the things that we will be seeking to strengthen going forward is that component of the role and function of the National Cultural Foundation. The National Cultural Foundation in relation to its key focus, is now in need of being restructured, particularly within the context of how we intend to roll out the cultural industries development regime, which itself, under the proposed legislation, will have a separate regulatory framework. And therefore the National Cultural Foundation will be focused on its root business, which is the development, cultural development, particularly at the community level, because I believe that a robust community development programme in the area of culture can feed into the cultural industries as we see it within the

context of the development of our cultural practitioners. In anticipation of the passage of the Cultural Industries Bill, one of the things we are currently working on is developing a national registry for artists and cultural practitioners. That will be a precondition, of course, of obtaining the benefits under the Cultural Industries Development Bill. It will also be a precondition of ensuring that our cultural practitioners are registered and that they are known to be registered, particularly when they have to interact with the various entities, both public and private sector entities. That registry, of course, will be an online registry. Most jurisdictions that have actually gone this route have seen the benefit of having an online registry. It is easily accessible, it is public, and it is one in which we can actually utilise both, not only in Barbados but internationally as well.

One of the key areas that we recognise we have to continue to look at even as we move towards having a cultural industry development fund. In the interim, of course, we will continue to provide assistance to artists. And the Minister of Finance has assured me that there will be at least some monies made available to provide assistance to artists. And I'm sure that all the members will be aware that from time to time, artists, particularly the micro business artists, those who need to access small bits of finance from time to time, in order to proceed in relation

to their particular areas of endeavour. And therefore we will continue to provide that to our artists from time to time as well.

In the last two minutes, I will come back, of course, because there is more that I will have to say on this area, but the cultural industries focus of the government and of course, the whole question of how we will move forward with culture generally is more than just ensuring that artists and cultural practitioners can have access to incentives and can grow their businesses. We consider that in terms of the Barbados experience, that cultural development has to do with cultural identity and that the issues which are critical to wider development of our psyche as a nation. That is why you will see, for example, going forward, that there will be a completely revisited role for the Commission of Pan African Affairs and as I said, the Community Independence Secretariat. These agencies will of course be working much closer together, along with the National Cultural Foundation and of course the new entity which will come about when we enact the Cultural Industries Development Bill. But at the crux of it all is the enhancement of our cultural offerings in Barbados. We see this particular part of our cultural presence, our cultural identity, as being key to the transformation of the cultural industries and transforming the sector into one that creates a livelihood for Barbadians who are practising it. The international element, of course, is that we feel that there has to be a convergence of where the sector goes in relation to the international business sector. We talked about it a bit in this debate so far and therefore the focus will be on ensuring that we could create the kind of critical foundation pillars on which we can move this sector along. So, Mr. Chairman, those are my initial comments on where the cultural division and culture in particular will be taken forward in Barbados and the role of the government in spurring development in this particular area. I'm obliged.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Our member for St. Michael South East.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise to make my contribution as it relates to Head 78 for the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth. Let me say from the outset that I had actually hoped that the initial presentation by the Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth would have started with a historical background as to how we have gotten to this position as it relates to this particular ministry. I, however, was disheartened to hear that the impression conveyed was that we seem to have started with a cultural policy of 2012 as opposed to giving a more historical perspective that the cultural policy document and framework with which the ministry is currently operating would have originated after a series of several discussions, several task force over the years, which would have culminated in several documents being prepared to inform the Ministry of Culture and the

respective stakeholders as to the value of the sector, but also the various areas of potential which needs to be exploited in the creative industries.

I say that, Mr. Chairman, because it is sometimes, I know, difficult for members on the other side to appreciate that both political parties have played their part in respective sectors and I think for the benefit of those listening, it is important to appreciate that there would have been a framework with which the Barbados Labour Party would have operated to create the cultural industries and to champion the cause of the creative economy.

Now, much is often said about the creative industries. We have heard it referred to as the new economic sector. A lot of emphasis is often placed on it when we stand in this chamber and other places to speak about how much can be generated from the sector and the various tie-ins with tourism and other areas of international business. But I believe one of the common mistakes that we make when we speak about culture is that we often refer in this country to one particular or one main festival during the year which is Crop Over, because many of us know that Crop Over generates almost \$80 million for this economy. But the reality is that a lot of the income that is generated by the persons who actually work in the sector, creating the music, creating the artistic expressions involved in dance - a lot of those monies are not actually trickling down to the very people in Barbados who actually are at the forefront of creating a number of the things that we enjoy.

And I say that because even in listening to the minister, it was clear that whilst there are a number of initiatives which have not only been continued under this administration, but there are a number of new initiatives which are being explored, I believe most of the people who operate in the creative sector right now are perhaps wondering exactly how these particular estimates will advance their potential to generate income for themselves and their families. I say that because we have spent a long time on both sides creating a number of documents, consulting with various persons in the industry, but oftentimes we fail to realise exactly the mechanisms that we need to put in place in order to generate income for the sector.

We have at the forefront of a number of initiatives the National Cultural Foundation, which has been severely criticised over the years for losing its focus. When it was first started, the focus was supposed to be developmental. And I think in fairness, we have seen the role of the National Cultural Foundation change over the years. Some have criticised it for becoming more and more competitive with the persons in the private sector. And I say that because it often appears as though to a number of the players in the industry now, particularly at Crop Over or

even for events during the year, the private sector finds itself competing for the very limited revenue to be generated from a number of the private entities who they may seek to sponsor events. So you often have situations at Crop Over where the NCF is approaching a number of the businesses in the community to be able to seek funding, as well as a number of the private entrepreneurs who themselves are also trying to find a place within the Crop Over calendar. And I think it is something that we need to certainly address.

There was a time, I know, under the current administration, when the Honourable Member for St. John was alive, where the focus of the Democratic Labour Party seemed to have been more upon encouraging private investors, private entrepreneurs, to become more and more involved in the creative industries, and to certainly play a greater part in hosting events. Since the Democratic Labour Party came to office, we have not really seen that materialise in the last few years, but I know it was certainly a focus that was articulated on previous occasions.

We have heard a lot about the funds that are available to the sector. A number of promises have been made by this administration as it relates to funding. I would say to the current administration that I believe we need to seriously look at the way we fund the creative industries. A number of funds have been established. I know, since 2008, funds like the Cultural Action Fund, the Export Promotion Fund, which was in the division of the Enterprise Growth Fund, and the Special Technical Assistance Fund at the BIDC have pretty much - I would say they have dried up - because access to a lot of these monies have become very difficult or in some cases a lot of the monies no longer exist.

You also had the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund which was established by the Barbados Labour Party, but which, in fairness, despite almost 60 per cent of the monies coming from the lotteries, you have seen over the years that very few funds have actually been disbursed from this particular fund. And it is quite unfortunate because I think one of the challenges with the fund at the time and which continues to plague the fund is that a number of the persons who were to sit on the particular committee to determine a number of the proposals - a number of them are persons drawn from various agencies who themselves are obviously busy dealing with other matters in their respective industries. So you have a situation where there is no dedicated agency dealing with the aspect of culture and the funding of the cultural industries.

You also have a situation where on previous occasions the Minister of Finance has indicated that there were monies available in the micro enterprise fund. But the fact remains that we can have all these monies placed in different funds, but if we are not able to educate and inform

the persons who administer these funds as to how the creative industries operate, we are basically wasting time by saying to the people of Barbados that these funds exist. Because we hear much talked about by this administration about the Cultural Industries Bill, now the Cultural Industries Development Bill. But I would say that when the bill was first drafted, it was against a background where there were a number of funds available to entrepreneurs in the industry to access. It was a recognition that there were a number of different market entrants. There were persons who were working at the bottom tier entering the industry to train, who needed artist development. There were persons also on another level, who may have had established businesses in the industry, persons who were working within the local market, persons who were also seeking to establish their businesses outside of Barbados. And therefore there were different funds to be able to enable those persons to access the funds in the industry.

The Cultural Industries Bill was therefore the almost final tier amongst those other pieces of legislation and funding that was available to the sector. And that piece of legislation was really to enable persons who were on an even higher platform to be able to access the funding, in particular for what was described in the legislation as cultural projects. And I think what was anticipated in that piece of legislation is that those were the persons who were looking to upgrade their existing properties, the persons who were looking to engage in large-scale projects, and not necessarily the persons who were looking to produce a CD or to be able to attend a seminar in one of these islands or the territories internationally. So I think we have to seriously look at the fragmentation in the government agencies of funding available to the sector.

I know the current administration, and I believe in its first budget, sought to address what I guess it thought was one of the solutions to the industry by providing - I think it was a grant fund to the Richest Out Team Talent at the time - a much needed fund for an individual who has contributed much to the development of Barbados. But I would go so far as to say that alone will not help to stimulate the Barbadian economy. What is necessary is also funding available to the persons who train the artists, to the persons who provide the makeup, to the persons who do the styling. There are a number of persons down the creative chain that also need to be able to have access to funding if they themselves are to be able to fully allow the Government of Barbados to realise the investment that they have made into one particular entity.

Certainly if you have a number of incentives for persons in the film industry, you will have persons who have participated in the Richest Out Team Talent, for instance, being able to benefit from music videos. And you will also have persons who may be involved in vocal and performance training, being able to train the individuals

who win the competition, to be able to hone their skills and to be able to not only perform locally and generate money for themselves, but also to be able to generate income externally as well. So I think we have to take a more holistic view of funding. We cannot see it in isolation that we give our friends or we give persons who may be affiliated to a political party. But once there is a clear policy being articulated by the government as to what is necessary in this sector to generate employment and also to generate growth, then we need to take a position that there needs to be a trickling down of the funding that is able to be accessed in the industry.

Because as it stands right now, artists find it difficult to access funding, for instance, to attend seminars overseas. Apart from the trade missions that are organised in some cases by either the Barbados Coalition of Service Industries or even Invest Barbados - and those pretty much have come to an end in recent times - the harsh reality is that there is no funding available to someone who wants to be able to export their talents beyond Barbados's shores. Those organised trade missions have had benefits for a number of persons in these sectors. But the reality is that if you are an artist who has been able to identify a potential opportunity in another territory, when you come back to Barbados you need to be in a position to find or access funding, to be able to either change the type of product that you have to meet a particular market. You need to be in a position to be able to access some kind of financing to enhance or improve the business model that you have. And unfortunately, a number of the structures that we have existing have not been able to review adequately the type of needs that are necessary in the industry.

So I would say to the minister, really, this is an area - this is a critical area - that we need to address urgently, because the missions on their own will not yield the results if we do not put systems in place to assess and to evaluate and to ensure that the proper reporting is not only done by the persons who have attended the trade missions, but also to ensure that there are officers who understand what it is that the creative entrepreneurs require in order to be able to generate revenue for the particular business and in turn for the sector.

There is no doubt that there is potential revenue to be generated from the sector, but we have seen a crippling of several artists, several businesses, several film entrepreneurs in the industry. We have not seen the attention given to the establishment of a film commission. And I await word from the minister as to what is happening in that area because I do not see anything budgeted in the estimates for the establishment of the film commission. But we have other jurisdictions in the region which are very successful in not only working with their local partners to produce local films and produce films for the external market. But we have a situation, even, for instance, in

Jamaica, where they are able to attract large film companies to come to their shores, bringing with them a pool of talent - not only actors and actresses, but also a film crew - that is able to transfer their knowledge to a number of persons in the local film industry.

And it is also a potential revenue generator for Barbados. There are significant returns to be had from the returns on investment in tourism because a number of the people who come here, whether in the film industry or the music industry, attending seminars or just coming to conferences on the island, actually do return to Barbados. A number of them are not caught by the statistics or the data that a lot of the individuals or the agencies carry out. But the fact is a number of them do come back to Barbados. A number of the money is fuelling back into the country and we need to find a way to capture that revenue that can be generated.

We have one of the leading international artists in the name of Rihanna, and we need to be able to capitalise on other international recording labels and companies coming to Barbados searching for talent and being able to not only improve the talent in Barbados, but also to exchange and to transfer business knowledge into the sector as well to generate revenue. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to rejoin the debate to not only thank the honourable member who just last spoke for her contribution, but to be able to shed some further light, particularly in relation to some of the areas which she would have raised.

Now, it is true to say that within the context of the cultural industries, which of course encompasses so many areas of creativity, including film, including music, including dance, that to a large extent, Barbados for many years has been behind many jurisdictions in relation to not only infrastructure, but provisioning of very vital support levels for artists. So I'm happy that the honourable member recognised that those are areas that we obviously need to work on. The absence, though, of a legislative framework within which this has to evolve has been perhaps one of the critical areas missing from the Barbados development plan. And therefore the Cultural Industry Development Bill which will come to this House shortly is actually going to provide the kind of legislative base upon which many of these areas will actually take off from.

The very exciting area of film is one that we have targeted and earmarked as being one of certainly critical strategic importance for us. We are engaged, as I speak,

with the relevant interest groups in Barbados. We will be talking with the local organisation and we have already had the Cabinet approve the establishment of a film commissioner in the first instance, which is preparatory to the full establishment of a full-fledged film commission. It is clear and certainly recognised that Barbados has been losing out over the years on some very lucrative business in the area of film. And one of the areas that has been missing is how you actually manage that, how you market Barbados, and how, of course, you provide the kind of arrangements to manage when film businesses, film companies, come to Barbados. So that would be the role of the film commissioner in the first instance, and that person will be charged with responsibility of preparing a number of critical areas and doing some legwork prior to the establishment of the full-fledged film commission. We are certainly committed to that. It is part of the strategic plan within the context of cultural development that we are moving rapidly ahead with.

Within the context of the proposed Cultural Industry Development Bill, we have taken a position of providing a support mechanism not only for persons involved in music, persons involved in other areas of cultural activity, but we have targeted film development and the film industry as a major plank for incentives, because we recognise that it is indeed a lucrative area upon which we need to build. So the film commissioner will be established.

Now, in relation to funding generally, I do agree that in the past, this has been a very disaggregated kind of approach to funding of our creators. That is why, within the context of the Cultural Industries Bill, we have sought to incorporate the budgetary proposal for the establishment of a cultural industry development fund, which would be based on the injection of an amount of \$10 million on an annual basis, initially for five years. But this does not replace existing areas of funding. For the first time, what we want to do is to create a structured framework by which persons involved in the creative sector can access funding, both at the level of grant and both at the level of loan.

Now, that is why we felt, after very careful study, that this particular function should be separated from the current function of the National Cultural Foundation, and that the National Cultural Foundation will be focused on areas of development, whether that be in terms of the artistic development that will spring from the community level or festival development. So the whole question of funding - whether they be artists, under the Bill they are called cultural practitioners - there is no cut-off point as to whether you are a large cultural practitioner, a medium-sized or small. So persons, for example, who wish to access funds for CD development, for attending conferences, workshops - all of this is encompassed within the context of the Cultural Industries Development Bill, and the authority which will be set up under that Bill will be

responsible for processing, and not only processing applications, but providing the kind of counselling and guidance and business facilitation of our creatives so that they can be assisted in the formulation of their particular projects.

Now, one of the things that we recognise is going to be necessary is that persons who are currently engaged in areas of cultural endeavour will need obviously to be able to develop themselves to the point where they can form enterprises of various kinds. And that development, of course, will require the injection of funding for specific high-end areas, and also the initial workshops that are necessary to prepare them. And therefore, there are going to be avenues for that development within the context of the Cultural Industry Development Bill as well.

Now, one of the other initiatives that we will be looking at will be, of course, ensuring that we could continue some very important areas of collaboration. We have started some interesting work with the copyright society, composers, authors and publishers, which is COSTCAP. And we will continue to work with them because we believe that the intellectual property rights of our artists and our creatives must be at the forefront of what we do. We are talking about a highly lucrative opportunity in terms of the cultural industry development. What we don't want to do is to move ahead without recognising the need to protect the intellectual property rights of players in the sector. And I must say that COSTCAP has been working with us. We have established a number of systems. We have partnered with COSTCAP, making contribution to a number of the areas of activity. There is one called the Guardians of Music programme, and that particular programme is designed to sensitise young people to the importance of intellectual property rights in general and copyright in particular.

One of the things that certainly I believe that coming out of our focus on the cultural industries must be positioning Barbados to take a leadership role within the Caribbean in relation to where we are going to take the cultural industries and perhaps establishing Barbados as the centre for the development of not only music, but the impulse of music in its various forms. I'm hoping that perhaps there will be a particular institute established in Barbados, and I know the honourable member who last spoke referred to Rihanna, who has done so much in terms of the exposure of Barbados as a country where there is a wealth of creative talent. But I'm looking forward to the establishment of perhaps a national institute for the creative sector in Barbados. And perhaps if Rihanna hears my plea, that perhaps she'd be willing to put her own stamp onto that particular institute. But the reality is that there are many more Rihannas in Barbados, and certainly we have seen the development of artists such as Cover Drive, and there are many more. There are persons who engage in

poetry, who engage in spoken word. We have seen through Cropover several of our artists at the community level demonstrating the artistic prowess, which of course is what the world is asking for. But I believe that we

have to hone the skill and package it in a way that can reap the kind of dividends that will actually translate into the earning of vital foreign exchange and income for our artists. Many of our artists, of course, who are either engaged in design - design is one of the areas that is highly lucrative, and there are many of our local practitioners involved in the area of design, both fashion and at the level of creating different types of design. What we need to do, though, is to work. And you will see very shortly the establishment of an interministerial body to work collaboratively with other agencies, the BIDC and other government agencies, so that we can move forward based on a singular and focused approach.

There are resources, of course, within other agencies of government. I believe that the Ministry with responsibility for Small Business, the Ministry of Industry - there is also avenue through the Rural Development Commission and of course the Urban Development Commission - where we can work together to make sure that we are singing from the same hymn sheet. We have started this initiative already. We have had some initial meetings. But the intention, and certainly from the perspective of the Ministry, is to institutionalise a multisectoral approach to how the cultural industries will evolve. I believe that if that is done, that we can move forward in a much more rapid but focused way. And issues such as funding, issues such as providing critical support in terms of design of various areas of art form, will be something that now can be harnessed in one focal strategy that redounds to the benefit of the artists themselves.

So those are some of the areas that I feel that we have to look at. Cultural entrepreneurship must become one of the buzzwords in Barbados. It is happening, but we have to be able to provide the kind of structure to allow it to become much more a rapid development. So the extent to which the Cultural Industry Development Bill is enacted and the establishment of the regulatory body - I believe that will provide an answer to some of the issues raised by the honourable member for St. Michael South East. Because of what has obtained in the past and that we have had, to a large extent, an unstructured approach, both in relation to funding, in relation to engagement. Marketing is going to be a key area of focus because many of the players involved in the creative sector are going to need very precise marketing. They are also going to need specific legal services because I believe that many of the persons who have been discovered in Barbados have not necessarily benefited from those kinds of services in a way that protects them from various types of arrangements which may not necessarily be in their best interest. So that

will be the focus of the regulatory body within the context of the Cultural Industries Bill. And of course the partnerships which we will continue to form will be expanded. And of course one of the key developments will in fact be the establishment of the Film Commission in Barbados. I'm obliged.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sir, I support a lot of what is being said in relation to the engagement of Barbadians in the whole cultural explosion. I think it is significant that as a people we go forward taking advantage, let me say, exploiting all those various avenues that will not only bring in revenue but indeed help to bring our people together for respect, appreciation, awareness and all the other things that go with it. I want, sir, to touch on the throne speech at page three on the youth where it speaks to the government will create employment opportunities for youth through entrepreneurship and other empowerment strategies. And I had the opportunity to hear the Honourable Minister speak yesterday about the Endless Possibilities project which has been instituted by the youth department. And I am extremely interested to understand what is the status of the project because this would not be the first time I would have heard the Honourable Minister make mention of that particular project. And I think it has been such a deeply held secret that I am not hearing endless possibilities. Endless possibilities where? I have never heard anybody else in Barbados speak about it. And I am interested in knowing because at the end of the day, all youth in Barbados are important to us, despite whichever location they may come from. And I believe that if a project has had that kind of success, as was expressed by the Honourable Minister, that we need to at least know what are the figures, what is the expenditure this year that will go into that project so we can see it now spiralling across Barbados. Because I believe that for the period of time it will not necessarily be still their pilot, but it will be able to impact on the lives of many other Barbadians. Because we all know that there are more than 3 500 children coming out of school every year and many of them are looking for employment, they are looking for further training. And I believe that the youth affairs department should continue to look after the needs of those persons.

I do not want a project that refers to the areas that were in the past occupied by students who were on their work experience programme, from the Barbados Youth Service, from the secondary schools at fifth form, from the polytechnic where students did courses and they came out of the school, spent most of the summertime working to be exposed in a number of departments, both in private and public sector. And I want to laud those private sector officials as well who have opened up their businesses to allow Barbadians to get that opportunity to enhance the

CV, but more importantly, to be able to get an idea about what their work ethics are like and how to prepare themselves for the world of work. I have absolutely no problem with that.

What I would also like to say, Mr. Chairman, is that the cultural aspect of things, particularly now Crop Over, still continue to plague my mind. And I am sure many of the other Honourable Members on this side of the House. We know that in the past the Cultural Foundation will have cavalcades in every parish. And since this government took over five years ago, cavalcades are now put specifically in locations that, as far as I am concerned, represent those persons on the other side of this distinguished chamber. And I believe that the people in St. Thomas, the people in St. Andrew, the people in sections of St. James and in other parishes should be able to get that opportunity, not only for the entertainment, but to bring out the talent in those various communities as well as to be able for them to get that viable trade that I am sure will come through from small businesses selling at the pavilions and the different locations, to be able to put some money in people's pockets, especially now that we are in these hard times. And I think it is very, very significant that Barbadians do not continue to feel left out of the equation because of the sidelining that I recognise has been going on. I will continue, Mr. Chairman, to speak about it because I think it is wrong. We cannot have two Barbadoses. The people in rural Barbados, especially in the north, want to get that piece of the cake that they deserve.

I speak from a background of being involved with the youth affairs department in the past, and I know things will change and I know the harsh economic situations will really make some differences. But I have not seen a youth commissioner in the parish over the last four years. There are absolutely no projects. Mr. Chairman, I am a community person. I came to this distinguished chamber on the platform of my experience, both in the classroom and in the community and for all the times that I have been here. People have voted for me because of my involvement and my engagement. And there is absolutely not a single programme, Mr. Chairman, beyond what regular community groups are doing to be able to generate interest and to occupy the minds of young people who we know, especially at this time called the Lenten season. An idle mind will always get into trouble. There are too many youth on the streets with nothing to do, nowhere to go. My pavilions have not been upgraded. I would have loved some of the money that was given to CDC that they denied because it was from the T-shirts were red. \$200 000. Only a small percentage of that, Mr. Chairman, last year would have helped me to be able to introduce programmes in the constituency that would have empowered more of the people of St. Thomas and the surrounding communities. And St. Thomas is just not the constituency. It spreads all over to St. Andrew, St. Joseph, St. James Central, St.

Michael North East and so on. We are not out here complaining for complaining sake, but we are taxpayers too, and our people need to get the piece of the cake that they deserve.

Now Mr. Chairman, my other concern is to do with Rock Hall, the Freedom Village. The other Honourable Members on the other side, most of them, not all, make laughing sport and so on and so forth. I am not going to go into the intricacies as to how the monument came or who designed it or who put it up, but I am concerned that September 2012 would have been two consecutive years that six small shops were placed in the area. If you take a look today, Mr. Chairman, you will look tonight. The structures are there, the hoarding is still there, the grass is taller than this building, and every day tourists and other visitors are going on the site. I have a message on my phone from a distinguished civil servant who expressed concern first thing on Monday morning - what is happening here and carrying people. This place is a disgrace. And I do not think that a project that the government funds, whether it came through the Barbados Labour Party, as a government then, or through the Democratic Labour Party, should be sidelined in the way that it is, if we are talking tourism and building out the project, the country and talking about built heritage. Rock Hall, Freedom Village has as much history as Bridgetown Garrison has, and therefore for that project to stay languishing - and we are talking about supplying or creating employment opportunities for the youth - the youth at Rock Hall and Fire Hill, St. Thomas are waiting for opportunities to be able to assist. Unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, they were not given the privilege to even pull a grass digger hole when the project was being constructed. It is not that they did not seek to get employment. And if we do not treat the people in communities and we keep bringing in all forms of strangers to do the civil works and to do the other things, Barbadians are not as controlled in the mind as most of us who are of the older generation are. I am not saying that I am inciting anything, but the youth in Rock Hall are angry that none of them got a chance to even lift up a soft stone, to lift up a piece of wood, a nail, when they approach the contractors to get an opportunity to help to build the shops in the village that they want to be a part of - the termites may have started. And the thing is, Mr. Chairman, the whole project has been changed around because those six shops have been put where the car park and the bus parking should be. It is a variation of a very important project and all that - now absolutely nothing is happening. We are talking about heritage and the replica of the slave hut was decapitated three and a half years ago. Where are we going?

It is the same thing I said when I spoke about the Garrison Secondary School that is a part of the Bridgetown Garrison and the environment and the name has changed. We have taken away something really very significant from

that aspect of our heritage location. And that bothers me, Mr. Chairman.

Now I want, sir, to indicate - I did not go to the Garrison, Mr. Chairman, nor do I go there at night or any other time. But the point is, if we are talking heritage tourism and if we are talking about educating our people about appreciation, it brings me to the next point, because I will make my document a document of this distinguished chamber where I am still saddened and nobody has answered. And that is the reason why I am bringing it again in this aspect of the discussion. How do we remove the chandeliers from Government House to put money in the pocket of a party friend or a friend from families first, when we know that those chandeliers would have been at Government House for many, many years, for centuries - where are we going? And if the chandeliers have been removed, as we know, why are they not in this distinguished chamber to help to light it up? Because for me, if the chandeliers are not functional, well, we have very important and distinguished electricians and others who would have restored it, who would have put in the bulbs and done whatever. Where are the chandeliers tonight? And wherever they are, Mr. Chairman, I want those chandeliers to be placed in the Museum of Barbados so Barbadians and visitors can go in and see. These are the vintage chandeliers that were found in Government House. And this document is safe. The Honourable Member needs for me to place it there, sir.

My final comment, Mr. Chairman, is to do with sports. And we know that every year at this time, leading into Easter, in the same way most people want to fly kites, make kites, families like to get together. We know that this is the school term, second term, where all, for the past probably 45 years, all of our secondary schools are intimately and integrally involved in sports. At the National Stadium, the end of school - whatever sports we call them - the students at primary level, that is when those students are identified, especially the ones who are getting ready to go to secondary school, that we can see their ability to be able to become sports persons. Unfortunately, this year the stadium has been developed. The timing, Mr. Chairman, was wrong and I know it was wrong. And I wish that the Honourable Member had the dialogue that he keeps talking about in the consultation with those persons involved in the sports to get the proper direction that was necessary. The meeting has happened only a week ago after all the confusion, and I have learned that it has impacted seriously on the identification of those from primary who are coming to secondary, as well as those who are secondary who have to go to the Carifesta Games, because those performances - yes, sir, Mr. Chairman, the closing up of the stadium at this time was wrong. That is the point I want to make. And if we are so short-sighted as to the impact it would have had, because we had to know the magnitude of the task. And all I am saying is Barbadians are extremely upset because they

have not been able to join any funds. The children have not been able to come together and to do what they have to do. And we have lost an opportunity to tap into the great talent and the other skills of the children who have taken advantage of the opportunities. We have lost an aspect of our development.

I am not going to go into the youth mainstreaming because of time, but the Honourable Minister has been distributing weed whackers as well through the youth mainstreaming project. The Labour Party was pilloried. Youth commissioners were treated untimely over the project called Project Oasis, where 25 jobs - 25 jobs - were developed under Project Oasis. I want to know what is happening in youth mainstreaming, why the people of St. Thomas are not getting opportunities for training in Bobcat operations, leathercraft, nail technology, digital film media and the other aspects of development that the people of St. Thomas, like the people across the rest of Barbados - St. John, St. Philip, Christ Church, wherever they are - are getting the benefits. I want the best for my people too. That is the reason, Mr. Chairman, why I am here. And I will speak till I die on their behalf. And I wish to thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Like the last member that spoke, I would like to know when the house at the garden in St. Lucy will be fixed, because I remember that the family of the owners were destroyed. All the visions were destroyed because even though they owned the property at Chaka Hall, known as the garden, that the Barbados Labour Party came and said that they wanted to repair the property at the garden. And instead of repairing the property at the garden, they were interested in taking away the land from the family, even though there was enough land for both of them to share. And the only request that was made by the family, by the relatives of the owners, was that they be allowed to own a piece of land to the front. And the Minister of Housing at the time said to them that if they wanted any of the land, they would have to live in the back.

Also, sir, we discussed heritage tourism and culture and ecotourism. And as we speak, the Barbados Labour Party is on Facebook criticising this House for speaking towards putting back trees in the gullies so that the green monkeys can have access and the birds can have access to food. Could you imagine that, sir, when everybody knows that the feeding of monkeys and birds is becoming one of the biggest tourist attractions and cultural patterns of Barbadians. So I don't know how monkeys is only about agriculture. But what I'm saying, sir - and you got to forgive them - I'm saying, Mr. Chairman, that we have to understand that they are not in tune with what is going on in the world. And they are harming Barbados by putting that on Facebook because it is now a big tourist attraction

in Barbados. Feeding monkeys. I know the member for St. John is saying something, and I shall hear from the member for St. George North. So I'm saying, sir, that any of them - especially the honourable member for St. James North and St. James Central -

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The member states categorically that Moontown is now engaged in the habit of feeding monkeys.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment, please, before you start back. We have - I'm surprised - at this time, 30 minutes to go before we end. And therefore I will not be allowing speeches to go on the full 15 minutes. Is there any member who wishes to speak? I will let them indicate. If not, I would like to give the Minister ample time in which he can wrap up. So please, any members who would like to speak, indicate now. And as I said before, we will not be going for the full 15 minutes. The Minister has to be given a certain amount of time. Just a minute. I remember, St. Andrew - I don't need you to dictate to me how much time the Minister should be given. I consider it disrespectful that you go in that direction. I think we have maintained a certain level of decorum in the House throughout today and I will please ask for the cooperation of all members from both sides in terms of maintaining that decorum. Thank you all very much. Our member. Please continue.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: So, Mr. Chairman, what I'm saying is that I expect to have a working relationship with the Minister of Culture, sir, and I expect soon to have a tour, sir, to ensure that we can sort out the problem at the garden in St. Lucy and that we can correct the error created by the Barbados Labour Party to ensure that the house is repaired and that the family is also allowed to live on their land. I thank you, sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment, sir. Honourable member for St. Michael East.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to make a few comments in conversation with you, as well as by extension to the honourable Minister. I am not so concerned about the legal instruments, the structures and all the festivals at this moment. I am concerned about the cultural focus I am observing over a number of years. My view is that the bottom layer of our culture is very important - the layer that is described by cultural specialists as mass culture. The dismissal of things like the Orisha faith in a Black population, where Christianity is the religion accepted and sets the standard for what religion is supposed to be, in a Black population of over 95 plus percent. There is one country in the Caribbean that has no respect for West African culture, and it is the country which has the majority Black population.

Now, Orisha is extremely well respected in Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, Jamaica. Why is it that in our culture, people make a mockery of this traditional West African culture which is part of us? If we agree that culture begins in the cradle of civilisation and it does not begin in 1627 on the arrival in the western hemisphere, why are we allowing that suppression of everything that is us to continue? I am saying that the culture that we witness today is that culture that was endorsed and supported by our oppressors - that is the word I will use. The dominant class suppressed all other forms of culture, whether it was Asianic or whether it was African, because I don't want you all to talk about some form of discrimination or any form of racism in my speech. I'm looking at all the cultures of the region. The Asianic culture was also suppressed, but not to the lowest level of social acceptance like the African culture. We all know that the elements of African culture are at rock bottom because of imposition in the culture. And nobody in the cultural core that is responsible for ministerial responsibility, or the bureaucracy in general, will work to give the liberty and free expression to the same creative talent.

What we are calling the creative talent of our people is not our talent as we define it. The reality is that the standards that we are guided by are set by those who determined that this is the standard we must uphold. We are measured by those standards. And if you don't adhere to those standards, then you are not accepted as having culture of any great value. And that is my concern.

When I was in the Ministry I recognised that we were looking at that time for an opportunity to bring males into the mainstream. I had a long discussion with a number of the cultural artists and those young men indicated what they wanted to do. But they said they didn't want to be part of NIFCA because they feared that NIFCA had an effeminate touch. The men were expressing themselves through movement by getting involved in hip hop dance, urban dance - a kind of culture that derives from the ghetto which is not socially acceptable. And you see it in Johannesburg, you see it in New York City. The men were doing it under the trees in the Lowe Green. The men were doing it at the Esplanade in Queen's Park. They were doing it at the bus stand. They were doing it in St. Thomas. They were doing it in the Ivy and the Pine. And I discussed those matters with these men and I started what we called then independent dance, which was later changed to the Dance Fest. I don't know what is not true about that, but as far as I can remember that is exactly what happened on the first appearance of this event. They had 6 000 plus people at the gymnasium. Since then the present Minister took that event to Kensington - and we probably saw more than 6 000 people. Is that not enough to demonstrate that if we go into other spheres of culture like the film industry - I'm seeing young men making films in the districts with a small video camera - don't you think we will open up opportunities for

videographers, choreographers, script writers, all of these things? I believe that there is a space for us to even create an opportunity for a lot of the cultural artists if we probably go into some of these directions.

Mr. Chairman, I am conscious that you have limited time and therefore some other time in the future we will have an

opportunity to discuss these matters - not a contentious issue at all.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Our member for Christ Church West Central.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It is quite refreshing to hear the energy that has ensued in relation to the other aspects of the ministry, particularly from the member for St. Thomas. And I would just briefly respond to some of the concerns that she would have raised. The first one, of course, has to do with the whole question of school sports. And she did say that. One member did say that we dug up the stadium and it was the wrong time. We didn't dig up the stadium. What we did was to embark on a project that the Barbados Labour Party for many years, ten years or so ago ought to have started, which is the relaying of a stadium that had lived its natural life. So I believe, though, that the honourable members should be very careful trying to point a finger at this government in relation to the stadium project. They had the project to do for many years. It was etched in their manifesto, repeated on two occasions, and they never embarked on the project. We have actually expended in excess of \$2 million to correct something that ought to have been corrected for many years. In fact, when the last track was laid, many of the angles and the infrastructure was wrong, and therefore anything done at the national stadium in terms of international competition could not live up to international standards.

Now, the delay in the completion of the stadium track is not the fault of this government, the National Sports Council, but it had to do with the fact that when the stadium, the initial layer of Barbara Green was exposed to the international inspectors, they referred to a number of areas that they wanted to be corrected, and those areas are now being corrected. And therefore the time period for the completion of the track had to be pushed back. Now, at each juncture of the project, at the stadium, the National Sports Council was engaged in discussion with all of the partners. In fact, I toured the stadium on numerous occasions and there were several press conferences and therefore everything in terms of the preparation, the timescale is known to the public. We have given several updates, so there's no mystery about the project, and we've given the explanations that need to be given. But the stadium project had to be done. And I think the opposition

should be congratulating the government for embarking on the project in the manner that we have, as opposed to seeking to somehow create a missive that does not tally to this particular situation.

Now, in relation to the school sports, only recently, myself and the Minister of Education would have convened meetings with both of the coordinating bodies of the NAPSAC and the BSAC. And we would have agreed certain parameters in terms of ensuring that they could look at their calendars and come back to us with proposals to engage to ensure that these games can be held. Now, I am aware that there are certain logistics and certain difficulties that they have raised, but we are determined, both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Sports, we are determined that the games for these athletes will be held. They may not be the NAPSAC or the BSAC, but I am assuring this House that very shortly after completing our dialogue with interested parties, we will certainly be in a position to announce to Barbados when these games will be convened.

I would just like to say, though, that the efforts at refitting the stadium with a top of the line new track is one that is of a strategic nature. We are seeking to ensure that the national stadium can be re-outfitted and that a facility that has largely outlived its relevance in terms of its infrastructure - we, in difficult economic times, are putting the resources behind that project to ensure that we could respond to the same aspirations of the same young people that the member for St. Thomas is apparently at this late stage so concerned about.

I would also like to respond to the honourable member in relation to Rock Hall. Now, the Rock Hall Freedom Village project would have started on the Barbados Labour Party since I became minister. I'm sure that the member can confirm that I did a tour and she was present during that tour and I have not indicated any unwillingness in proceeding with the project. Now, the issue in relation to the delay in the project again is as a result of a resident of Rock Hall who lives within the vicinity of the project. The honourable member is fully aware of the difficulties that particular resident has posed in relation to the development of the project. Now, the ministry has been engaged in discussions with this particular resident and after significant dialogue we have made a decision in relation to moving forward on the project, which would not entail a resiting or relocation of the resident. But we are very focused on ensuring that the money spent on that project are not wasted funds. The relevant decisions have been made in relation to making the necessary adjustments to the project.

Now, that project is governed by the financial rules of the government in relation to the retention of a contractor. We cannot dictate to a contractor to go and hire

the constituents of the member for St. Thomas. The contractor is hired in the normal way. And if the honourable member, perhaps if she was in contact and in close contact with her constituents, she might be able to exercise her own influence to ensure that they get work. But the purpose of this project is not for us to instruct the contractors to give work to the people in St. Thomas. The beneficiaries of that project would be Barbados. It is positioned in St. Thomas, but the project being the kind of project that it is in terms of a momentous project celebrating the contribution of the first free village of slaves in Barbados, is a project that is for the benefit of Barbados as a country and it is not to be just subsumed and reduced to just a pet project of the honourable member for St. Thomas.

The project, as I understand it, is proceeding and the delays which had ensued are not the result of this minister or the government. We worked with the resident to make sure that we can talk matters over. But after careful consideration we've come up with a solution that will not now entail the resiting of the resident, but would entail ensuring that we make certain adjustments and move towards completion of the project. So I hope that meets the satisfaction and we will continue to - there is a committee that was in place, a committee of the residents, and I have given instructions that that committee be reactivated and the honourable member for the constituency continues to be engaged in this. So I don't know why she has chosen this House to raise issues. She knows she can pick up the phone and call any of the relevant officers in the ministry, including also calling me to get information on that.

The issue was raised in relation to Cropover cavalades. Cavalades cannot be held in every village of Barbados. But what I can say is that for the first time in the history of Cropover you have never seen the putting on of the number of events that you have gotten in Cropover since this government came into office. A record number of events. We've had, for example, the community mini kadoomants which have started; cavalades are held on a zonal basis. So we move them around the country based on zones - north, south, east and west. And the events, the folk concerts, the events in the city, all of the events are there for the enjoyment of Barbados. So there's no intention or desire to have events only in certain parts of Barbados. I would like to say the Cohobblopot for this year again will be zonal. And every intention, every effort is made to make sure that every part of Barbados feels Cropover. We also encourage communities to have their own events as well.

Now there was also a query made in relation to Endless Possibilities. Now I did say before that this programme, Endless Possibilities, was a mentorship, training, mentorship and job placement programme which we started as a pilot designed to provide gainful employment to young people who were not engaged. And

it had been largely successful. We've had two cohorts of the programme today. 51 young people were trained. All 51 were given job attachments. 26 private sector and public sector agencies participated. More than 50 per cent of those young people are still in full-time employment. Now after reviewing the programme, the Cabinet has given the direction to the ministry to come up with a strategic plan to make sure that this programme can not only become more effective, but that we can expand this programme into a full-fledged national programme. It has been largely successful. It has been embraced by the private sector. There is an industrial relations consultant who was hired as part of the programme and that has worked. That particular model has worked beautifully and I will endeavour to update the Parliament in relation to our move towards having a strategic plan to inform this particular programme.

I believe those are all the issues that I've heard raised. Now in relation to the absence of a youth commissioner from St. Thomas. The last time I checked, there were youth commissioners in all constituencies in Barbados. The last time I checked, the honourable member for St. Thomas in terms of her constituency continues to benefit from all of the programmes under the youth development programme, including the youth mainstreaming programme - nail technology, all those programmes. I would like to encourage members to avail themselves of the information from the youth department in relation to the programmes that are available to all Barbadians. There is no segregation or discrimination and these programmes are funded by Zack Spirits of Barbados and they're available to all Barbadians. And I checked because the honourable member made an allegation before in relation to the fact that in her estimation, her constituents were not benefiting. And I have checked in relation to not only the summer camps, but in relation to the youth development training programmes. And there are persons from St. Thomas. I don't know if the honourable member is aware of this, but there are persons from St. Thomas who are engaged and are involved in these programmes. So I don't believe there's any merit in the charge. The programmes, as far as I'm concerned, are working. They're working much better than the Project Oasis programme that was done under the barbershop programme. And any equipment that is provided to entrepreneurs are now informed by a very rigid system of accountability, and not the programme that was used on Project Oasis where equipment was sold on the blocks of Barbados. That is not what is happening in this programme.

So, Mr. Chairman, I believe that I have answered those queries. There were some issues raised in relation to the cultural programme of Barbados. I mean, Cropover, for example, as you know, occurs within the season of emancipation. And we have made concerted effort to incorporate emancipation events within Cropover. And we are very conscious of the need to ensure that our country

remains focused on our ancestry and therefore heritage components were at a very early stage incorporated into the Cropover festival. Now this government, in relation to ensuring that we could continue to educate Barbadians on things African, we have been very gracious and very proactive through the Commission of Pan African Affairs to ensure that through programmes such as the Mabalози programme and other programmes, we have been able to train a number of Mabalози teachers within the schools. And you know that every year you have Africa Day, where the children are able to demonstrate their knowledge of things African. All of these programmes are currently done. And we were the first administration only recently to put in place a national task force in relation to reparations, a national task force for reparations. And that task force is currently at work looking at reigniting the whole drive towards reparations across the Caribbean. And that programme, that particular task force was set up not by the Labour Party, it was set up by the Democratic Labour Party government. I don't know why the honourable member for St. Thomas is so alarmed and concerned.

The focus continues to be one which is based on research, very serious research, because that programme has a component which entails the involvement of the University of the West Indies in doing some very interesting things in terms of ensuring that through reparations that we can have inflows of development funding into Barbados. That will help us to not only develop institutions in terms of ethnicity, but to develop institutions of development that can focus on the broad issues in relation to development of Barbadians. So that is our focus. We have taken a very strategic approach in this regard and that particular task force is in place and will continue to work. And I will certainly endeavour to update the Parliament on the work of that task force in relation to the wider issues.

In terms of the cultural projects which I would have itemised, we are focusing a lot of our attention on ensuring that we can continue the signage programme in historic Bridgetown and its Garrison. We have started that and of course we have a very interesting programme which we have started and it's being done in collaboration with the World Heritage Committee, the Commission for Pan African Affairs and other concerns, of training persons in the art of tour guiding. And there'll be other initiatives where we are going to also be creating artefacts and other memorabilia in relation to historic Bridgetown and its Garrison. These are empowerment programmes and there are programmes that we feel will help to create the kind of upliftment of our young people, particularly within the historic site, and offer opportunities for entrepreneurship in relation to historic Bridgetown and its Garrison.

So, Mr. Chairman, let me then - I believe that is it - wind up. Let me therefore, Mr. Chairman, thank members

who would have contributed to this debate. We do recognise that we had a short time in which to focus on the area of culture and I was happy to give some information on the sports component. We have not gone into depth in relation to the sports programme.

But of course, there will be other times that I can give more information on the strategic plan for sports in Barbados and of course, the efforts that we're making to identify a green site, hopefully to attract investment to creating a multipurpose international stadium in Barbados. In relation to the other projects, I did speak to the project in relation to the restoration of the Empire and the Queens Park buildings, and those will be the component of the first component of our efforts to restore historic buildings. We have the Dale Carnegie Library in Bridgetown and other historic structures that we have put in place, as I said, a task force to help us to source funding for those programmes. So, Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank members who contributed in this debate. We will have more to say when we bring the cultural industries development bill to Parliament. And of course, I believe members will be available and all ready to engage in a robust debate on how we can take cultural industries forward in Barbados. Quite a lot of work has gone into this bill already and I know that the stakeholders are looking forward to the passage of this bill into law. It is the bedrock upon which our focus on the creative sector lies in Barbados and therefore we are very excited about the opportunities that will be made available. So, Mr. Chairman, with those few remarks and having thanked all members who participated in this debate, I now move that Head 78 stand part.

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

Head 10 - Governor General - in the amount of \$714 128 was called and passed.

Head 12 - Parliament - in the amount of \$11 163 473 was called and passed.

Head 13 - Prime Minister's Office - as amended, in the amount of \$110 019 080, was called and passed.

Head 15 - Cabinet Office - as amended, in the amount of \$12 213 341, was called and passed.

Head 16 - Ministry of the Civil Service - as amended, in the amount of \$9 066 223, was called and passed.

Head 17 - in the amount of \$912 322 was called and passed.

Head 19 - Treasury - in the amount of \$54 million was called and passed.

Head 21 - Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs - as amended, in the amount of \$145 962 535, was called and passed.

Head 23 - Ministry of Health - as amended, in the amount of \$258 945 232, was called and passed.

Head 27 - Ministry of Tourism and International Transport - in the amount of \$124 969 877 was called and passed.

Head 28 - Ministry of Home Affairs - in the amount of \$29 558 756 was called and passed.

Head 29 - Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions - in the amount of \$354 029 was called and passed.

Head 30 - Office of the Attorney General - in the amount of \$69 279 285 was called and passed.

Head 32 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade - in the amount of \$47 865 778 was called and passed.

Head 40 - Ministry of Transport and Works - in the amount of \$88 368 579 was called and passed.

Head 42 - Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development - as amended, in the amount of \$80 339 496, was called and passed.

Head 50 - Post Office - in the amount of \$12 085 185 was called and passed.

Head 73 - Ministry of Environment and Drainage - as amended, in the amount of \$116 343 808, was called and passed.

Head 75 - Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development - as amended, in the amount of \$65 119 507, was called and passed.

Head 76 - Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development - as amended, in the amount of \$62 626 336, was called and passed.

Head 77 - Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation - in the amount of \$289 676 375 was called and passed.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2, as amended, was called and passed.

Clause 3 was called and passed.

The Schedule, as amended, became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, Mr. Chairman reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Appropriation Act, 2013.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 2012 - 2013

Mr. CLERK: In the name of the Honourable Leader of the House, to move that the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of this island.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for the service of the island.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. J. D. PAUL, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

RESOLUTION - SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 2012 - 2013, NO. 18

Mr. CLERK: In the name of the Honourable Minister of Tourism and International Transport, to move the passing of a resolution to grant the sum of \$3 202 615 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 2012 to 2013 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 18, 2012 to 2013, which form the Schedule to the resolution. Head 55 - Ministry of Tourism - in the amount of \$3 202 615.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, these funds that are required are for two different purposes, both under the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism. A sum of \$35 615.28 is required for the central ministry itself, that is related to the Tourism Master Plan unit, in order to remunerate the project coordinator and the deputy project coordinator. There is a shortfall in the estimates and this sum is required to make up for that shortfall. The larger sum of \$3 167 000 is required for Barbados Conference Services Limited, which is under the responsibility of the

Ministry of Tourism. This is related to the work that is going on at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre. Part of the agreement with Scotiabank, who provided the financing for that project, was that the Government would guarantee to make up for any difference between the actual cost of the project and the loan amount. So there is a shortfall of \$807 000. And there are also some other costs that have been certified by the quantity surveyor and the project manager related to overtime charges for having to work outside of normal hours for the conference centre to continue operating, and also related to some fissures that were found when they started to excavate the work. So geotechnical investigations had to be done and adjustments had to be made to the foundation and therefore additional work was required both from the professional side as well as the overall works.

It is still heartening to say, Mr. Chairman, even though it is necessary for us to come for a supplementary, that we were under budget with respect to the construction of the car park. We were under budget with respect to the demolition work that was done. We were under budget with respect to the kitchen renovations. It is only because of these unforeseen circumstances that we had to come for these additional monies. I think that the project team has done extremely well. 72 000 to 235 000 square feet of Class A lettable space coming in at \$467 a square foot is enviable by any standard - private sector, public sector, local, international. That is quite good and I think that this should be saluted. It was not an easy project. We literally had to demolish what was an amphitheatre that was there. Quite a bit of the work had been completed and to put in, literally to wedge in, as I said, just under 80 000 square feet of Class A office space that is lettable is still quite good. It is a good investment to the Government and people of Barbados and therefore I ask that this sum do now stand part.

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

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Chairman, not seeking to detain the Chamber, having heard the Minister in his contribution just now, I just query the amount of the overall contract price for this particular project and note the shortfall of \$3.1 million. And he has indicated that there were no doubt some cost overruns. But I think just for the benefit of the Chamber it would be useful to know the amount of the entire project. I just want the Honourable Member to indicate the cost of the entire project and also who is the contractor for this particular project as well.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Members, please.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Yes, Mr. Chairman. As I get it, to wrap up this work. There's nothing to hide - the demolition work was done by Ajax Construction, a

company well known to members on the other side of the House, and they earned the right to have the contract and they delivered under budget. Congratulations to them for doing a good work. And that work was just under \$900 000. The car park, the 321 parking spaces, that was done by Preconco, they were contracted for the sum of \$8.4 million and they too came in under budget. I will also go on to say that the main contract in the percentage of \$35 million was done by CRS. This is a black-owned construction company and we thought that it would be a good opportunity to give a contractor an opportunity. And they have delivered on time with the delay, the extensions that they applied for, that we're going to complete the work in July, work that was scheduled to be completed in June. And they have done very well. As I've said, we have delivered on budget and on time. And I don't have to ask for some to be converted from us to Barbados or anything. We have delivered. And I want to commend the entire project team, all of the professionals, for having done quite well with those few words. Therefore, I think I've answered the questions. I beg to move that this head stand part. I just said \$35 million.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I didn't hear the contract price and if that is what the minister said, I would be grateful. I entered Parliament.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment, please. Is there a second to the motion? Thank you very much. You're raising on the motion. Yes.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: And saying that I thought it was a basic request by a new member of Parliament to have the full facts of the supplementary. Now, I believe that when a request is made of us to agree to a sum, that the information ought to be specific and sufficient. No allegations are being made. In fact, the minister was very defensive, talking about a black contractor as if the one he called before was equally a black contractor. I don't know what is in his mind that will cause him to be going down that road so fast - discrimination - and to want to speak in those terms. But suffice it to say, sir, that we would like to know what was the contract sum for the building out at the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre and whether that contract sum for the building out - not for the car park, not for the demolition - whether that has been exceeded or whether it is within budget. And it's just a simple question on this project and no other. That's all.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: The Member for St. Michael North East asked a different question to the Member for St. Michael South East. If you want to know the specifics, I can tell you, but she asked the overall contract price. The Member for St. Michael South East, you are asking specifically. You don't want to hear about the other ones because they came in at budget. You want to hear about the one that, as I said, had some adjustments. The budgeted

amount was \$35 607 000. The contracted amount was \$33 136 947.37. And as I explained to you, that value had to be adjusted because of the features that they found - the foundation issues, the challenges, and the issues with overtime - and not wanting to let the centre run down, the variations. So let me make it very clear, Mr. Chairman, because I don't like the imputation there. The Honourable Member - new member or old member - requested some information which I answered. The Member, the Leader of the Opposition, doesn't like how I responded for whatever reason and now tries to suggest that there's something amiss. I have given you the specific answer to the question that you have, and it's no problem. As I said, I think the project team has done well on this and there's really nothing else to say on this matter. And therefore, I just ask that this matter do stand part. Let's move on.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Can we just repeat the motion again, please? Just the Head 55, Head 50.

ORDER NO. 4 – RESOLUTION – SUPPLEMENTARY
ESTIMATES, 2012 – 2013, NO. 19

Mr. CLERK: Going to Order Number Four, in the name of the Honourable Leader of the House, to move the passing of a resolution to grant the sum of \$93 539 841 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 2012–2013, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates Number 19 2012–2013, which formed the schedule to the resolution - Parliament in the amount of \$2 351 836.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$2 351 836 is being requested to supplement the Estimates 2012–2013. The amount approved for 2012–2013 was \$10 341 788, but expenditure to date amounts to \$10 340 403. So the balance available is only \$1 385. But Parliament has had to incur some expenses in the meanwhile. So there is now a revised estimated expenditure of \$12 693 624. So the difference is the \$2 351 836 being requested.

If I may just indicate to the House where some of these sums are coming from - the amount of \$166 466 is needed to pay constituency assistance of former members of Parliament who lost or did not contest their seats during the general elections of 21st February, and to pay the staff of the former Leader of the Opposition. \$10 000 is required because that sum is payable to each member of Parliament to purchase office equipment for their respective constituency offices. Then there is a sum of \$305 306 required to pay suppliers and creditors for services rendered during the opening of Parliament on Wednesday, 6th March. And then there is a further sum of \$96 373 required to defray the cost of the removal and replacement of some carpets here at Parliament. During the opening of Parliament, it became apparent that the carpets which adorned both chambers and the office of the President of

the Senate needed to be replaced. These carpets were installed in 1999, and the years between 1999 and the present have certainly taken their toll and it has been thought that these need to be replaced. And then there is the additional sum of \$183 592 required to purchase equipment to facilitate video recording footage in both wings of Parliament. It is thought that the provision of this facility can only redound to the benefit of Parliament in particular and to other agencies of government who deserve the usage of these facilities. The absence of the facility in a modern Parliament is, of course, glaringly highlighted on ceremonial occasions. So it is thought that this is a deficiency which needs to be remedied. So that, Mr. Chairman, gives some indication as to why these sums are requested. And therefore, against that background, I beg to move that Head 12 stand part.

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

Mr. CLERK: Head 23, Ministry of Health, in the amount of \$22 592 239.22.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, sir. The sum of \$22 592 239 is required basically to meet the cost of some arrears over the period, which currently extend back as far as June 1998 to March 2013. Of course, there may be some outstanding payments which would have had to be tidied up over time in terms of making sure that all the deliverables have been executed. This money will go a long way to meeting the arrears of a number of creditors at the hospital for the services that they render from time to time. And there are details of every item, but I'm sure at this time it would not be necessary to detail every item owed. But if there are any specifics which are required by any member, then I can provide those details to them. So I therefore move, sir, that Head 23 stand part.

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

Mr. CLERK: Head 28, Ministry of Home Affairs, in the amount of \$395 000.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Head 28 - there is an amount of \$350 000 which is to make up a shortfall of payment of salaries, subsistence and acting allowances. And there is also an amount of \$45 000 which is to cover some additional costs for the increased number of inmates who will be leaving the institution by the end of this month. So it is actually very simple. So with those few words I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

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

Mr. CLERK: Head 40, Ministry of Transport and Works, in the amount of \$12 363 200.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$1 863 200 is required to meet the cost of road improvements and the purchasing of supplies and materials until the end of the current financial year. The sum of \$5 500 000 is required, particularly on the special projects programme, to meet the cost of road improvements until the end of the current financial year. The further sum of \$5 000 000 is required to meet the cost of providing traffic and street lighting to all parishes and also to meet the cost of erecting street lights to the Urban and Road Development Commission until the end of the current financial year. I beg to move that Head 40 stand part.

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

Mr. CLERK: Head 42, Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development, in the amount of \$2 500 000.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, the Ministry under Head 42 has allocated some \$18 million for the financial year 2012–2013. For the Welfare Department, expenditure up to the end of September last year was estimated at some \$11 384 541 and the projected expenditure from October last year until December 2012 was some \$5 955 693, bringing a total of \$17 340 234 up to the end of December 2012. When this is taken from the \$18 million that was allocated for the financial year, a total of \$659 766 remained. Now, the projected expenditure from January to March this year, the end of the financial year, is estimated

at \$5 467 597 and we therefore found some savings in the Ministry totalling some \$3 million. Therefore we are seeking this \$2.5 million to supplement the estimates up until the end of this current financial year. I beg to move that Head 42 stand part.

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

Mr. CLERK: Head 48, Ministry of Family, Culture, Sports and Youth, in the amount of \$918 223.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$918 223 is required under Head 48 to meet outstanding payments due to various service providers in relation to the Crop Over Festival of 2012, and that amount represents a shortfall based on the budgeted sum. Therefore Parliament is being asked to supplement the provision on Head 48 to allow for the meeting of those outstanding sums to the tune of \$918 223. I move that Head 48 stand part.

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

Mr. CLERK: Head 54, Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, in the amount of \$39 272 307.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, the funds under this head are to cover both economic costs of \$34 941 130 and tuition fees of \$4 331 177. Members would remember that in the Estimates of 2012–2013, some \$71 300 000 was voted for the economic costs and, as usual, supplementaries are required to provide for the University of the West Indies in the entire system - UWI Cave Hill, St. Augustine and Mona. We are therefore asking the House to approve these funds to satisfy the requirements to the end of the July period for the university, or the financial year for the university up to the end of that period. You should know that funds were also due to St. Augustine and Mona and those funds have in fact been paid to cover Barbadian students in those two locations. You would note further that there is a continuing exercise on behalf of the Government to reduce this indebtedness to the University of the West Indies and we will continue, as I mentioned, to work with the University of the West Indies to bring that indebtedness down. But we are trying to keep as current as possible so that there is no further build-up of arrears at the University of the West Indies for Barbadian students. So I beg to move that Head 54 stand part.

AN HON. MEMBER: I beg to second that, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, sir. Sir, just to ask of the minister - he had indicated earlier this week that Government would announce the plans for the clearing of the arrears. I may be wrong, but my understanding is that the Government of Barbados has committed to \$45 million now, \$45 million in July, and two more instalments of \$45 million next year, next financial year 2014–2015, which would bring it close to the near \$200 million that is currently owed. The difficulty is, sir, that when we add these sums, this means that we are still short by five and a half million from what we committed to be the first instalment. And in those circumstances, this is not part of the \$45 million. So this is separate.

Hon. R. D. JONES: This is to date. If this is for the current financial year's current period for the university, the sums owed would have gone back to, I believe, 2009. So the first payment for the University of the West Indies - this is a separate tranche, a separate set of money - would be done in early April. So this is to cover the period that we are in now and not the indebtedness. The indebtedness will start as outlined by yourself.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I thank the minister for his clarification in respect of this 34.9. That means, then, that the \$180 000 000 presumably would be funded by a mechanism not on budget, because it is not reflected in the estimates for next year that we have now approved of, which the sum of \$90 million should be there to clear those arrears. But equally, does this now mean, given the obligation to the university for economic cost is on or about \$125 000 000 a year, will this now mean that we are short by still some \$20 million for the financial year ending next week 2012–2013, in which case the arrears will go to just over \$200 million?

And secondly, given that 80 per cent of this goes to Cave Hill only - in other words, the university at centre takes about, along with the other two campuses, takes about 20 per cent of the economic costs because of the structure of the university. You have the centre, then you have Mona, then you have St. Augustine, then you have Cave Hill. Cave Hill, on average, takes about 80 per cent of the monies through economic costs that we pay. My understanding is that Cave Hill has about \$21 million in invoices that it has not been able to pay. So when they receive 80 per cent of this, which should only be about \$25 million or so, it is not going to leave them with much elbow room to be able to get on with the business of running the university. In other words, \$21 million will go straight out to pay previous suppliers because their suppliers have told them that they will only supply if cash is paid.

Can the minister therefore tell us whether the debt arrangement is such that they will receive it in April so that they do not end up in a situation again where their suppliers cannot supply product, goods, paper, et cetera? And two, where is the funding coming from for the \$90 million that will move towards clearing 50 per cent of the arrears? And three, since it is not in the estimates, and since we have given the commitment to keep current and the 2013–2014 estimates only provides for the sum of \$71.3 million for economic costs, is the government intending to make up the difference or is it intending to change the terms and conditions of access for Barbadian students at UWI?

Hon. R. D. JONES: The last one first, as customary. I believe the University of the West Indies presents the bills to the Ministry of Education for payment. And when those bills are presented, you go through the process of honouring those bills and therefore the same process which has been followed over time in this House will be followed. We have come for supplementary on this occasion and I believe we have come for supplementaries on eight, nine or ten occasions. So there is a possibility - a very strong possibility - based on the presentation of the bills by the University of the West Indies that we will have to come before this House for supplementary to cover the cost of Barbadian students. That is the answer to the last question.

The one which you asked first, in relation to the payment - as I have said to the House, the contribution to economic cost for the Government of Barbados is assessed at about \$125–\$126 million. Cave Hill is about \$106 million of that. St. Augustine is about \$2.8 million, the Open Campus \$2.1 million, University Hospital \$1.8 million, the centre \$11–\$11.5 million, and CMHI - the Caribbean Meteorological and Hydrological Institute - just slightly over a quarter of a million dollars. That gives the figures which we are talking about today. We have expended most of those funds to cover up to the end of the university's year, which concludes around June–July. And that is why the \$34 841 000 would cover up to that period before the start of the new academic year - the 2013–2014 academic year - when the allotment in the estimates would kick in, both that and the higher education awards which contain the tuition fee.

So just more than that, because we would have paid St. Augustine and Mona - they would have been paid - so more will be going to the University at Cave Hill. The \$4 million is to cover tuition costs to complete the first semester. They tend to present the tuition receipt bills at the end of the period, so that would become due when they present and that too would be paid.

As I have said, and I do not hide these things, it has been a difficult three years for the state based on declining revenues or stagnant revenues, et cetera. But we tried our best with the efficiency models being utilised at Cave Hill. And it happened right across the Caribbean where these campuses are located. In fact, this year Jamaica and Trinidad have not even notified OTAC - the Technical Advisory Committee - what would be their commitments to the University of the West Indies. And that would only be clarified, I believe, next week when all of these governments would then state to the UGC exactly what their commitment would be. Barbados will most definitely state its commitment and I can assure the House and I can assure the people of Barbados that commitment will be given in the context of our resources. But it will not deny Barbadian students the opportunity to continue their education across the university system.

Relative to the payment, I believe the Ministry of Finance is better able to address that. All I can assure you is that we have had discussions and the repayment - or the payment - to the University of the West Indies was decided at the highest level of the Government of Barbados and the University of the West Indies. And the process - we will, where possible, seek to accelerate the payment to the University of the West Indies of the debt, which will give them some cash flow, help move the system along, help finish off the structures, because we know we had committed some \$20 million to the new library and they would have used some of those funds. So the funds being given will help even move that process along.

The commitment remains there. We will continue to exercise good judgement to ensure that Barbadian students continue to be educated at the university. So we are not changing the access for Barbadian students at the University of the West Indies. You would note - and I am not going to be long on this, just for clarification - that in 2007–2008 there were 7 311 students at Cave Hill. This is a cumulative figure. In 2008–2009, 7 781 - so that would be some 470 more students who went in to Cave Hill. In 2009–2010, it was 8 342. And even in difficult times one saw an upward movement and several of them were Barbadian students who were gaining access. In 2010–2011, 8 674 students had access to Cave Hill. In 2011–2012, 8 841 students were at Cave Hill - that being the highest point. There was a small decline in 2012–2013 to 8 763 students, a very small decline.

I can further tell you that Cave Hill is attracting more and more students from the OECS, particularly in the medical faculty, which is supposed to be a self-financing endeavour of the University of the West Indies, and therefore you can be rest assured that this will happen.

I will also want to share with you - because sometimes persons get the impression that no money was paid - that in 2008–2009, \$134 000 000 was paid to the university. It was not the full amount; there would have been \$28 million trailing. In 2009–2010, \$138 000 000 - just slightly over that - was paid, so we would have been about \$24 million short. You had a cumulative build-up. About \$127 000 000 was paid to the university in 2010–2011. This is both economic costs and tuition costs, because the Government of Barbados, over time, has taken the decision that it will pay the tuition fee for Barbadian students. And in 2011–2012, \$110 000 000 was paid to the University of the West Indies. And what we are doing here would bring the figure to be paid to the University of the West Indies to about \$121–\$127 million when all is told for this current period. So there will be a small trail but that will be liquidated.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman. I speak on Head 54, of which you are seeing that second supplementary that we spoke to when we said that the initial payment is only the normal payment that is made. And for the last 19 years, sir, we would have made an initial payment to the University of the West Indies and we are now bringing that supplementary of which we would have spoken to earlier. And this is now the confirmation that the University of the West Indies never paid - or never budgeted - in full, that there is always a second supplementary. And this is the second supplementary of which we spoke to earlier.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move, therefore, that Head 54 stand part.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Head 72.

Mr. CLERK: Head 72 - Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management - in the amount of \$13 147 036.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, this total sum can be broken down into three individual sums. The first sum of \$810 000 under the head of grants to public institutions - those monies would be required to assist the BAMC in attempting to deal with its payments in regards to the bond issues. The total sum would have been over \$19 million. That would have been understated by the \$810 000 that we are now asking so as to cover the debt service for the BAMC within the financial year just gone.

The other sum, sir, relates to funds for the Barbados Water Authority so as to pay a debt service crunch in relation to the \$150 000 000 bond issue that would have been had by the Water Authority some time ago. That related, sir, around the time when there was the increase in water rates by 60 per cent. What happened, sir, when the valuations were done, there were correlations done in relation to changing demands and as a result many more persons went into the lower-paying category than would have been anticipated. What ended up happening was that instead of the Authority actually experiencing over \$11 million that it would have expected to get on a monthly basis, we ended up essentially only getting a little over \$9 million, which left us with a deficit carrying forward of over \$1.2 million as a result. In addition to that, the matter was compounded because we had a 25 per cent increase in electricity rates in addition to a 21 per cent increase in the rates charged by Ionic as a result of the electricity situation. And therefore that has left us in a scenario where our cash flows would not allow us to be able to make this payment. However, after making this payment, we are going to see a \$1.3 million improvement in the cash flows of the Barbados Water Authority in that regard.

And then the third payment has to do with the standard arrangement in regards to IDB projects where you normally would have to execute a payment in relation to the project and then there is a reimbursement. This has to do essentially, sir, with the water and sanitation upgrade project that we would have discussed earlier today. And that sum is for payments for the first batch of 10 000 meters that are to be replaced within the Barbados Water Authority. The problem that we have, sir, is that we have about 15 000 meters that the Water Authority are not working. What is causing is that essentially we are losing

as a result of that well over another million dollars a month in that regard. So this is to start that process of changing out all of those meters that are not functioning, so as to improve the cash flow to the Barbados Water Authority, Mr. Chairman. I beg to move that Head 72 stand part.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the Minister for the information that he has given the honourable chamber and this committee. It really sounds like almost every other enterprise in Barbados - reduce revenue, increase fixed costs through electricity costs and inability to service debt and therefore the viability of the enterprise being at risk in the absence of shareholder commitments, reasons or blame. Yet I talk about the state of affairs and inability to service its operations without the assistance of its shareholder. And earlier this afternoon I would have spoken about a crisis in the viability of enterprises and government only needs, therefore, to look at the circumstances of the Water Authority, larger as it may be, to understand what almost every enterprise in Barbados is going through - reduce revenue, increase fixed rate costs, especially as it relates to electricity, and increased burden of debt servicing and inability to remain solvent.

Now what concerns me, however, and perhaps I am really speaking to the Minister of Finance, the honourable Minister of Finance, and not so much the honourable Minister with responsibility for Water, is that the government would have laid a revised medium term fiscal strategy in November 2011. And this revised medium term fiscal strategy was premised on a number of things. One, a containment of expenditure. Two, enhanced revenue measures which the Minister of Finance introduced as far back as his budget in 2010. And indeed, sir, it was revised to give the government the comfort of not having to introduce cuts in 2012–2013 but instead in 2013–2014 to the tune of three quarters of one per cent of GDP, or, if we are to be specific, now to the tune of about \$70 million. Now given the revision on GDP, nominal GDP, even though there was no growth in the economy last year and there was a reduction in revenue. But suffice it to say, sir, that our page in the revised medium term fiscal strategy are to be, from these words, eliminate transfers to other government owned corporations and authorities, such as the National Housing Corporation and the Barbados Water Authority.

I think that it is now clear to see, sir, we started this week by making the observation that the figures in the estimates for 2013–2014 showed an outturn for 2012–2013 that was worse than the government's worst case scenario in the medium term fiscal strategy. We are ending the week, sir, by showing a further repudiation of government's revised medium term fiscal strategy by coming here to do the very thing that the revised medium term fiscal strategy said you will not do, and that is to be

able to vote money for the Barbados Water Authority. But sir, even if we thought you could get away with it once last year, on March 16, 2012 this House, after estimates as well, met to vote for the National Housing Corporation the sum of \$8 million and \$82 444 equally. Last year, prior to that, supplementary in February 2012, the House met and voted under three different sums, a combination of \$6.5 million, \$3.25 million for the National Housing Corporation and then equally for the National Housing Corporation a sum of \$10.7 million on December 4, 2012 to meet operational deficits of the National Housing Corporation.

Now, sir, I really am not trying to be difficult, but we have clearly reached a point where the revised medium term fiscal strategy is redundant, or to put it another way, has been repudiated by virtue of the inevitable actions of government. I am not getting into the blame game. I am trying to focus on what is the plan, honestly, because if we are in this position, in circumstances where we have staved off all kinds of people - credit rating agencies, IDB, all others - we have done it on the premise, Mr. Chairman, of a medium term, a revised medium term fiscal strategy as the government's blueprint. The opposition genuinely had its concerns from the beginning because we said it was premised on concessional funding that was not available. Fine, we let the government have the space to be able to do what it has to do. But in respect of every outturn and in respect now of what you said you would not do, even down to containing personal emoluments costs but allowing growth only to the equivalent of the sum of increments - an objective that was outlined first by the former honourable Member for St. John at the Sherbourne Centre when the first medium term fiscal strategy was laid on the eve of the estimates of 2010–2011, an objective that was reasserted by the current Minister of Finance when the revised medium term fiscal strategy was supported - so that if we are now incapable of holding faith with the targets that we have set, as well as the strategies that we have said we would employ, I wonder whether the Minister of Finance will indicate to us how soon

will government develop a new strategy? Because there is no sense revising the revision. How soon will government develop a new strategy that will literally shore up not just the public finances, but also allow this country to move to a position of growth? Because if we are increasing debt and we are avoiding growth, it is the worst of both worlds. And unless this country can return to a path of growth, we are not going to make any change in our condition. And what is happening to the Water Authority will happen literally to every enterprise, and unless the shareholders are prepared to pump money into entities beyond their economic and financial viability, then we are going to see a slew of problems across the business sector in this country, with its own human tragedy following.

I do not want to detain the House because I am conscious that it is after a long week, but I would be grateful if the Minister of Finance perhaps, and even if not fully, bear in mind that the country expects of him a new strategy because the one which is here effectively is no longer working and has effectively been repudiated out of necessity, without getting into the issue of being obliged to, sir.

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

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Chairman, if I may, Mr. Chairman. I would want to entirely support the very cogently argued point made by the honourable Leader of the Opposition with respect to the revised medium term fiscal strategy. There are one or two other concerns that I had, sir. I thought that I heard the Minister say that part of this was with respect to water metering. Is that correct?

And, sir, generally speaking we are looking at a supplementary which is targeting the support of the operations of the BWA in circumstances which, sir, I think compel us as a responsible opposition to ask the Minister to bring some clarity to a number of issues with respect to the Water Authority's operations generally. It bears note, sir, that we have not heard anything from the Minister - even though this head was debated earlier in these estimates - with respect to a special audit ordered by the Water Authority in which, sir, we were made painfully aware about a number of contractual issues which caused the Auditor General to comment, sir, in the most serious way about those breaches. We also, sir, had not heard from the Minister about the question of the headquarters construction.

And may I say, sir, that it is my understanding that there was a public-private partnership agreement, sir, and that in its initial conceptualisation the Water Authority headquarters should have been a \$35 to \$40 million project. Now, sir, it would appear - and again, the Minister has not spoken to this publicly - but it would appear that the public-private sector arrangement, that partnership, sir, which should have seen the contractor be in a position to finance the building of the headquarters, did not so materialise. But rather, sir, that the financing of the headquarters seems to all appearances to be coming largely out of the operational budget of the Water Authority itself. I am also mindful, sir, that it also appears that a very responsible and reliable firm in Barbados, Deloitte, has raised serious concerns about the viability of the project as it was conceptualised.

There is no secret, sir, largely because of the letter written by the Minister himself directing his staff not to attend meetings called by the Minister of Finance. There is no doubt, sir, in my mind at all that there was a long-

standing issue with respect to a letter of comfort that was expected to have been signed by the Minister of Finance but appeared not to have been signed. And I would want to know, sir, whether it has been signed yet. Then, sir, we know that up to this stage the Water Authority has paid the contractor at least \$5.8 million that I am aware of - \$5 million by way of fees, about \$875 000 odd in value added tax on those fees. There is the ongoing concern, sir, that we have to be clear about the status of the land on which the headquarters now stands.

The question of the status of the land on which the headquarters now stands and whether that may actually be now held as security in some form for the payment - the ultimate payment, whatever that cost amounts to - because I believe it has mushroomed beyond the conceptualised \$40 million at the start of the project. But, sir, all of those issues, sir, which require some clarity, should have been ventilated before this House when once this supplementary came. Because the larger point in all of this must be that a Minister who went through an election exercise and who must have heard that these were questions raised by the opposition night after night, and he did not condescend upon the public of Barbados to once break his silence on this matter, sir - that the Minister should know that he has the opportunity to come to the Parliament of Barbados, having been given a vote of confidence by his Prime Minister and kept in precisely the same Ministry with the same authority, that he would come now and break the code of silence and say to the country, well, these are the facts. I want a little bit more money for the Water Authority, but these are the circumstances surrounding that which the Water Authority is doing. But nary a word fell from the lips of the Minister, sir, and that is the concern that we have.

Because I did not come to cast aspersions. I know that there are members of the Cabinet who have been provoking me all day to go after him, some of them sitting very close to him. But I am not getting into that, sir. I say, sir, that in fairness to the chamber, the Minister of Finance I think has an opportunity - a glorious opportunity, sir - that he could now do that which he did not do when he entertained this House for over three hours today. And that is, sir, to speak candidly to the people of Barbados, through the Parliament of Barbados, sir, on these matters with respect to the headquarters and the millions of dollars of the public purse that are at stake. I am obliged, sir.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Let me just make one comment here. I only intend to make one. The honourable Member started out by saying that Deloitte, that we hired, had great concerns about the project. I will make a document - Deloitte's final report - to demonstrate that the honourable Member has been totally misleading, not only the House but Barbados. This is the Deloitte report at number 17, sir. Deloitte in their review of the final

submission has concluded that: 'We have not seen any substantive issues that would preclude moving to the next stage of the process. We believe, sir, that there may be room to negotiate around some of the financial inputs presently in the proposal and already recognised as such risk, soft cost, et cetera.' This does not demonstrate Deloitte or any reputable institution indicating that they have had any real problems with the project. And that is the only thing I have to say tonight. Anything else, take it on the platform, sir. Head 72 stand part.

The question that Head 72 stand part was put and a division was taken. The Clerk reported that 14 Members had voted Aye and 14 Members had voted No.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: All right, honourable members. Standing Order 41(6) is clear. In which, as soon as the votes have been collected, the Chairman has already cast - can cast a vote. Mine is -

Mr. Chairman gave his casting vote with the Ayes under Standing Order 41(6) and the question was resolved in the affirmative.

On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, Mr. Chairman reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER, the passing of two money Resolutions in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, the two Resolutions, taken together, were read a first and a second time and agreed to.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, with that we have come to the end of Government Business.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: I have with me the minutes of the meetings of Wednesday, 6th March and Tuesday, 12th March respectively, 2013.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I beg to move that the minutes referred to be taken as read.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, with that we have come to the end of Government Business for the day and the week - and of course the consideration of the Estimates 2013-2014 - and it is our intention to adjourn the House until Tuesday, 7th May, at 10.00 in the morning. And that is the motion which I will move eventually. But

let me, in moving that motion, sir, express our appreciation to all the members, of course, who took part in the debate, and the Clerk and his team here at the table.

And I want to especially note the Acting Marshal, Mr. Junior Jones - Wayne Jones - who of course is acting in this position because of the passing of Marshal Mr. Lewis very recently. And I am sure the House will deal with that matter separately.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to express our appreciation to the staff of Parliament - the entire staff, the recorders, the reporters, the ancillary staff who keep this place in pristine condition. I want to express our appreciation to the Royal Barbados Police Force who provide us with our security and of course observe all protocol. The support staff of the various ministries who have joined us from time to time to make sure that any information required by ministers is readily available. And not least of all, of course, our caterers, who make sure that not only staff are fed and taken care of, but that the members from time to time can avail themselves of some meals, sir.

I therefore, with those few remarks, beg to move that this House be now adjourned until May 7, 2013, at 10.00 in the morning.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Yes. As I rise to second the motion for the adjournment, I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the Honourable Leader of the House and to thank all those persons who would have serviced us to have a seamless and orderly process of debates for the last five days. I am cognisant that for the members of this chamber - the Clerks rather - and for the support staff, it does not stop tonight, but that they continue virtually all of next week with debates taking place in the other place.

I am equally cognisant that they have come into this role having had to deal with the ceremonial opening of both Houses of Parliament. And in the circumstances I think that our gratitude will be a little more this year because we know that they have gone beyond the call of duty in ensuring that we have been able to meet without incident throughout.

Please forgive me, Mr. Speaker, if I may also use this opportunity to formally congratulate all of the new members of this chamber who acquitted themselves with a level of distinction this week that causes me to believe that we are in good hands for the future, and that generally the debates of this particular Parliament hopefully will be of a level that will bring a certain level of honour to all of Barbados - from the perspective that they will feel that their business is being addressed in a manner that they expect it to be.

I would like to thank all other honourable members who spoke on this side as well. Suffice it to say that, as I say to the new members, there is a virtue in preparation. And they prepared and they acquitted themselves well.

With those words, I would like to wish every honourable member, including yourself, sir, a blessed Easter and an opportunity to rejuvenate. We are conscious that most members equally would not have had any time to recover, recuperate, or rest - whichever of the r-words you choose to focus on - since the 21st February, and indeed probably over the Christmas season, given the extent to which politicians obsess on preparation for elections.

So with those good wishes, sir, to each and everyone for a blessed Easter - sorry, that is how tired I am - I would like to second the adjournment as moved by the Honourable Leader of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you, Members. Before I put the question, let me associate myself with the comments on both sides and particularly those comments which pay tribute to the work of the staff here. I know you have worked very hard and we do appreciate it. You are very vital to what we do.

Let me take the opportunity, of course, on behalf of myself and the House, to wish the people of Barbados - and particularly those of St. Michael West, of course - a very blessed Easter.

Before we break, let me say that we are in receipt of a donation from the People's Republic of China of laptops and computers for each member of the House that are here. They are available now. You may opt either to take your laptop tonight or you may leave it and have it configured with various programmes, including an antivirus programme. So the choice is really up to the individual members.

Let me say it publicly from the House to the People's Republic of China that we are very appreciative of the gift and we will put it to good use, I am sure.

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, May 7, 2013 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

CONTENTS

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

HEAD 72 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD,
FISHERIES AND WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE.....	1
Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, 3; Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, 6, 7; Hon. R. D. Jones, 8; Dr. M. M. Agard, 10; Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick, 11; Mr. G. A. Clarke, 13; Hon. S. A. Lashley, 15; Miss C. Y. Forde, 17.	

RESUMPTION

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE.....	19
Mr. K. D. Symmonds; Hon. D. St.E. Kellman; Mr. E. G. Hinkson; Hon. F. J. Stuart; Mr. G. A. Clarke; Hon. C. P. Sinckler; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley; Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick.	

RESUMPTION

PAPERS

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER.....	39
--------------------------	----

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE.....	39
--------------------------	----

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

HEAD 78 - MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS AND
YOUTH

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY.....	39
Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, 43; Miss C. Y. Forde, 47; Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, 49, 50; Mr. G. A. Clarke, 50; Mr. T. A. Prescod, 50.	

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 2012 - 2013

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE.....	54
--------------------------	----

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

RESOLUTION - SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 2012
- 2013, NO. 18

Hon. R. L. SEALY.....	54
Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, 55; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 55.	

ORDER NO. 4 – RESOLUTION – SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 2012 – 2013, NO. 19.....	56
Hon. F. J. Stuart, 56; Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, 56, 59, 62; Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, 56; Hon. M. A. Lashley, 57; Hon. S. D. Blackett, 57; Hon. S. A. Lashley, 57; Hon. R. D. Jones, 57, 58, 59; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 57, 58, 60; Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, 59; Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick, 59, 61; Mr. K. D. Symmonds, 61.	

MINUTES

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE.....	62
SUSPENSIONS.....	19, 39.
ADJOURNMENT.....	62
Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, 62; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 62.	

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

AGARD, Dr. M. M. (Christ Church West)
ARTHUR, Rt. Hon. O. S. (St. Peter)
BLACKETT, Hon. S. D. (St. Michael Central)
BOYCE, Hon. J. D. E. (Christ Church South)
BRADSHAW, Miss S. J. O. (St. Michael South East)
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)
HINKSON, Mr. E. G. (St. James North)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, Hon. D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Hon. M. A. (St. Philip North)
LASHLEY, Hon. S. A. (Christ Church West Central)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
PRESCOD, Mr. T. A. (St. Michael East)
SEALY, Hon. R. L. (St. Michael South Central)
SINCKLER, Hon. C. P. (St. Michael North West)
STUART, Hon. F. J. (St. Michael South)
SYMMONDS, Mr. K. D. (St. James Central)

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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. This Sitting is the resumption of the Sitting of Thursday, March 21, 2013 for the last day of the Committee of Supply on the Estimates, 2013 - 2014. The source does not record the PRESENT list or the time of resumption (its heading gives 10.00 a.m.); the Members listed are those identified from the record. Please supply from the Votes and Proceedings.

Q2. Throughout. The bracketed time-checks in the source are out of sequence (for example '[01.00 a.m.]' and '[2.30 a.m.]' during the afternoon) and have been omitted.

Q3. Committee of Supply. Mr. CHAIRMAN is not named in the source; the Chairman of Committees, Mr. J. D. Paul, is presumed for each Committee stage of this Sitting.

Q4. Head 72. The source heads the debate 'Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources'. Printed with the title read by the Clerk later in the Sitting, 'Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management'.

Q5. Head 72, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce on a point of order. The source runs the question 'Honourable Member, what is your point of order?' into the speech of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce; it is printed under Mr. CHAIRMAN. 'Oysters' in the reply of Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur is printed as 'Oistins', which Hon. J. D. E. Boyce had just named.

Q6. Head 72, end of morning session. The speech of Miss C. Y. Forde ends unfinished ('the honourable minister'), followed by the words 'Philip North' under Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, with the call 'Honourable member for Christ Church South'. The call is printed under Mr. CHAIRMAN; the motion to report progress is not recorded and is presumed to have been made by Hon. J. D. E. Boyce. Part of the debate may be missing here. Please check against the recording.

Q7. Head 72, Hon. D. St.E. Kellman after the luncheon suspension. No call from the Chair is recorded before this speech, which follows that of Mr. K. D. Symmonds. Mr. E. G. Hinkson later refers to 'the last speaker, my friend, the Honourable Member of Parliament for St. Lucy'.

Q8. Head 72, call of the Prime Minister. The source gives the call as 'Member for St. Michael West', which was the Speaker's seat; the recording has 'Member for Michael'. The speaker was the Prime Minister, Member for St. Michael South, and the call is corrected. The words 'just a few very brief remarks on this' are moved from the call to the Prime Minister's opening.

Q9. Head 72, point of order by Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley. The words 'For the final order, the honourable member is' are headed Mr. CHAIRMAN in the source and run on into the speech of Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley. They are taken as her opening and printed 'On a point of order, the Honourable Member is misleading the House'. Please confirm.

Q10. Head 78. The Chairman's reading gives 'Ministry of Culture, Ports and Youth'; printed 'Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth', the title used by the Minister and in the debate.

Q11. Remaining Heads and the Appropriation Bill. The remaining Heads and the clauses of the Bill are condensed to the Official Report formulae. After the Clerk read 'Head 17 - in the amount of \$912,322', Hon. C. P. Sinckler moved and the Chairman put 'Head 18 stand part'; Head 18 is not otherwise read. No Order number or title of the Bill is read; it was passed and cited as the Appropriation Act, 2013. Please check against the Estimates.

Q12. Supplementary Estimates No. 18, Head 55. The question on the resolution moved by Hon. R. L. Sealy is not recorded. The Chairman asks 'Can we just repeat the motion again, please? Just the Head 55, Head 50' and the Clerk then reads Order No. 4. Part of the proceedings may be missing here.

Q13. Supplementary Estimates No. 19, Head 54. The words 'I beg to second that, Mr. Chairman' open the speech of Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley in the source, immediately after the motion of Hon. R. D. Jones. They are printed under AN HON. MEMBER; the seconder is not identified.

Q14. Supplementary Estimates No. 19, Head 72. The words 'I beg to move that Head 72 stand part' are headed Mr. CHAIRMAN in the source; they close the explanation of Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick and are printed as his. The division on Head 72 is printed as the Clerk's declared result (14 Ayes, 14 Noes) and the Chairman's casting vote under Standing Order 41(6) ('Mine is - I am sorry, I think the ayes have it'). The roll call in the source is incomplete and the names are garbled (for example 'Mr. Griffith', 'Mr. R.

C. D.’); please supply the division list from the Votes and Proceedings.

Q15. Head 78, interjection. The interjection ‘The member states categorically that Moontown is now engaged in the habit of feeding monkeys’ is headed Mr. G. A. Clarke in the source, but the caption label is preceded by ‘St James Central’. Printed as in the source; please confirm the Member.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed on Friday, March 22, 2013, the Sitting of Thursday, March 21 having been suspended, for the last day of the Committee of Supply on the Estimates, 2013 - 2014, with Mr. SPEAKER presiding and the Chairman of Committees in the Chair in Committee. Debate on Head 72, Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management, continued. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce spoke on facilities for fishermen and the Oistins Fish Festival, and Hon. D. St.E. Kellman on linking agriculture with tourism, environment and industry. Mr. Chairman reminded Members of Rule 28 and that withdrawals must be unconditional; Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur withdrew a remark of the previous night and set out the history of the 1994 application for change of use at Norwoods. Hon. R. D. Jones spoke of the theft of livestock, Dr. M. M. Agard of \$600 million in imported food, and Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick said Barbados produced 94 per cent of its cucumbers and 100 per cent of its eggs. Mr. G. A. Clarke, Hon. S. A. Lashley and Miss C. Y. Forde, who raised land for the landless and the damage done by monkeys, also spoke before the luncheon suspension.

In the afternoon Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, Mr. K. D. Symmonds, Hon. D. St.E. Kellman and Mr. E. G. Hinkson, who said about 6 000 Barbadians depended on fishing, spoke. The Prime Minister, Hon. F. J. Stuart, recalled the five sugar factories once working in St. Philip. Hon. C. P. Sinckler quoted a budget reply of December 8, 2004 on the Norwoods and Holders lands; Mr. K. D. Symmonds and Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley rose on points of order and Mr. Chairman allowed him to continue. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley asked whether the Agricultural Development Fund

had been recapitalised. Replying, Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick urged a scientific approach to the green monkey and moved Head 72, as amended, at \$68 304 746, which was passed. The sitting was suspended until 5.15 p.m.

On resumption Hon. C. P. Sinckler laid three Duties, Taxes and Other Payments Exemption Orders and Hon. J. D. E. Boyce gave notice of a resolution for \$93 539 841. In Committee, Hon. S. A. Lashley opened Head 78, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, on the national cultural policy of 2009, the forthcoming Cultural Industries Development Bill and Crop Over. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, Miss C. Y. Forde, Hon. D. St.E. Kellman and Mr. T. A. Prescod, who spoke on the Orisha faith, followed, and the Minister replied. Head 78 and the remaining Heads were passed, and the Appropriation Bill was read a third time and passed as the Appropriation Act, 2013.

The House then went into Committee of Supply on two supplementary resolutions. Hon. R. L. Sealy sought \$3 202 615, chiefly for the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, and in answer to Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw and Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley gave a contracted amount of \$33 136 947.37 against a budget of \$35 607 000. Under Order No. 4 the Prime Minister explained \$2 351 836 for Parliament, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce \$22 592 239 for Health, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, Hon. M. A. Lashley, Hon. S. D. Blackett and Hon. S. A. Lashley the sums for their Ministries, and Hon. R. D. Jones \$39 272 307 for the University of the West Indies. On Head 72, \$13 147 036, for the BAMC and the Barbados Water Authority, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley questioned the medium term fiscal strategy and Mr. K. D. Symmonds the Water Authority’s headquarters; Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick read from the Deloitte report. On a division of 14 votes to 14 Mr. Chairman gave his casting vote for the Ayes. The two Resolutions were reported, read a first and second time and agreed to.

The Minutes of March 6 and March 12, 2013 were confirmed. Moving the adjournment, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce thanked the staff of Parliament and the Acting Marshal; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley seconded and congratulated the new Members, and Mr. SPEAKER announced a gift of laptop computers for Members from the People’s Republic of China. The House adjourned until Tuesday, May 7, 2013 at 10.00 a.m.