
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

The House of Assembly resumed at 9.00 a.m. on Wednesday, June 17, 2015, the Sitting of Tuesday, June 16, 2015 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, Q.C. (Speaker)

Her Honour Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON (Deputy Speaker)

Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART, Q.C. (Prime Minister, Minister of National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development)

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C. (Leader of the Opposition)

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

Dr. M. M. AGARD

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE (Minister of Health) (Leader of the House)

Hon. R. D. JONES (Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation)

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

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

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, Q.C. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK (Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management)

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C.

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

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR

Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Q.C.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the sitting of the House resumed when the suspension was taken. We were in Order Number 16. And with that we shall continue. Yes. The Honourable Minister of Health.

ORDER NO. 16 – FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND BUDGETARY PROPOSALS FOR THE YEAR 2015

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I rise to speak in this 2015 consideration of the financial statements and budgetary proposals presented in this Chamber on Monday evening by the Honourable Minister of Finance, Member for St. Michael North West. Sir, I want to start by characterising this budget in the context of Barbados 2015. I think it is important to repeat some of the points so ably made by the Right Honourable Minister - the Honourable Minister - and that have been continually supported by members of this side who have made their presentations. I want to congratulate the Minister, sir, for a very clear presentation. I believe, sir, this will go down in the records of Barbados as a budget which is obviously laid out for the people of Barbados to read and to try to help us to work towards the noble targets which it seeks to reach.

The Minister was careful on the arguments of this side, supported the view that Barbados does not exist in a world of its own, has never had and never will, but exists in a world international economic climate which nearly every country is battling today. To come to terms with the fact that we have been able to make gains - and significant gains - to the extent that we can now record a deficit in the region of 6 per cent and aim for a further reduction in this

deficit to something like 4 per cent by the end of the next financial year is indeed a tremendous achievement. Like all the members on this side, sir, I want to congratulate the Minister, the team at the Ministry of Finance, the supporting cast and all the ministries of government and those hard-working public servants who have worked with us. But also, sir, we must congratulate that majority of Barbadians who have stuck to the tasks, exercising restraint - organisations within Barbados, unions, representatives of workers, non-government organisations, business people who have risen to the cause and fought with us to bring this country around. This has been the character of most countries as they have sought to battle through this unique economic crisis.

We have reached a stage where the people of Britain, as a matter of fact just a couple of weeks ago, were faced with an election and had to choose between the consistency and the achievements of a Conservative Government led by Mr. Cameron as against wild and airy-fairy promises of the Labour Party in Britain. And I do not say this in any way to cast any kind of direct relationship between the Labour Party in Barbados and the one in Britain, but this is the truth. As a matter of fact, some members over there have boasted to me that they were part of the election, were in Britain, but that is their business. They can choose to associate with whom they want. Sir, the point is that the people of Britain, the United Kingdom, looked back and reflected and said, you know, we have made so many gains since the last election. We do not believe at this stage we can afford to upset the economic apple cart, so to speak, on the ambitions of a few members of the Labour Party. I wonder if we are going to have to make that same argument in two years' time when the election is due in Barbados. We may have to, certainly.

Based on the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, it is clear that the Barbados Labour Party has no intention whatsoever of coming into contact with the presentation by the Member for St. Michael North West, the Ministry of Finance, or the arguments which are embodied in this very important document. We have attempted to tell Barbados that, yes, we have reached the point where there is glimmering growth. That is how I characterise the 0.6 per cent growth that is predicted, or was achieved, over the last six months. And this is not something that the Ministry of Finance has made up and presented on its own, but it is supported by an agency like the International Monetary Fund - an agency which the Honourable Members on that side would have sought, as recently as six months ago, to throw their opinions in our faces, to try to condemn the hard work of the Barbados recovery model. I have heard the Minister of Finance refer to our programme as the Barbados model and I think we should be lauded for it. Barbadians should be proud of it because it has represented a steadfastness and a commitment to our tasks and a focus on our strengths and

every effort to build up our weaknesses as we seek to turn this corner and to put Barbados in a position where we can look forward to sustainable growth on the pillars of strength in the country. And Barbadians can begin to return to a level, a lifestyle which would see regular and predictable increases - maybe in salaries - regular and predictable growth in our economies, regular and predictable development of our infrastructure and regular and predictable maintenance of that infrastructure. And these are very important considerations. This is what we are aiming for Barbados.

So we do not expect that a responsible opposition would come into this House of Assembly in 2015 and try to tell Barbadians that they should cast away all the gains - all the gains on the backs of Barbadians for the last six years - cast it away in some dream, some dream of the Barbados Labour Party under the Member for St. Michael North East; a dream of which, of course, the distinguished Right Honourable Member for St. Peter disassociates himself, has disassociated himself to the extent that a Prime Minister of 14 years has been forced to leave a relationship with a group of persons who clearly have no focus, but who have a naked ambition for the coffers of Bay Street. And that is clearly the direction of the member. As a matter of fact, the Honourable Member made the point yesterday that if she could get the place to come to an end, now she is ready to go to Bay Street. If she could get the curtain to be lowered, now she is ready to go to Bay Street. Because that is all it is about. It is a play that the Barbados Labour Party is about. It is a curtain they want to raise. That is not the approach of this Democratic Labour Party administration. We have sought, Mr. Speaker, to associate every measure in this budget with a clarity of thought and a presentation which not only makes easy reading for Barbadians, but allows us to go through step by step the kind of expectations which we look forward to.

I think that Barbadians are mature enough and certainly the people of Christ Church South, whom I represent and who I have the honour and indeed, sir, the pleasure to represent and to keep in touch with and to try to assist in their many, many needs - I am sure that they are listening and they are going to decide in the fullness of time whether to associate themselves with the steady, measured, calculated policies of the Democratic Labour Party administration demonstrated in this document or the airy-fairy dreams of the Barbados Labour Party.

I made a point of noticing a couple of things. The Member for St. Michael North West, Minister of Finance, made the point that during the consideration of the new tax system - or the tax system we are evolving into - an invitation was sent to the Barbados Labour Party to make a contribution. And he indicated to this Chamber, to this nation, that no response has yet been received. And the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East boasted

yesterday that she had no intention of responding. That gives the lie to what is asked for in this House of Assembly by that Honourable Member nearly every week in here. She wants a bipartisan arrangement of experts to come together and look at these matters. If you are talking about education, she wants a bipartisan committee of experts - some expert committee or something like that - Barbadian experts to come together to look at education. She wants a bipartisan committee to come together and look at health. But when she gets a letter, an official invitation to participate in a discussion on the economy and the structure of the tax system, she refuses bluntly to participate, but comes in here to try to throw all kinds of sleights in front of the public of Barbados in the full view of the cameras. That is the stunt that we were treated to last night. And I imagine that is the stunt that will be the high mark of the Barbados Labour Party presentation for the next couple of hours that we are here.

But be that as it may, our responsibility on this side, as I said, sir, is to demonstrate to Barbadians where our programme is going, to demonstrate to Barbados where we can sensibly expect to be in six months' time, in a year's time. To what extent can we expect the growth in the different sectors of the Barbados economy to take hold in six months' time and in a year's time, so that when we come back to this Chamber in March of 2016, we can say yes, so far, so good - indeed, we have achieved the modest targets we set ourselves. We cannot therefore expect to recommend to Barbadians that we throw all this away and go in some helter-skelter give-away arrangement that sees us return to the kind of challenges and impossible situations which were characterised by what we inherited in 2008.

There are a lot of things which this government administration has had to put right and in many ways it has impeded the progress of the projects of us as a government. But we are not going to cry any spilt milk over the fact that we had to fix the SBRC arrangement - we are not going to cry about that. We are going to fix it. You see, they will pretend that the SBRC project in St. Thomas is a new project dreamed up by the Member for Christ Church East and put in place. I remember visiting SBRC as a finished product maybe about six months after becoming a Member of Parliament and Minister of Transport and Works. And we are now trying to work out the machinations of this \$23 million commitment by the Barbados Labour Party. So when they go down the road with the haulers, trying to have their demonstrations which are not based on any kind of recommendation or solution but merely for advertising purposes - the Member for St. Andrew looks up. I am not ready to deal with the BAR situation yet because that is not a threat. That is no longer a threat to the Barbados economy; it is a reality - an \$80 million deficit reality created by him, the Member for St. Andrew, when he refused to take the recommendation of the Ministry of

Transport technical people and the Tenders Committee of Barbados.

I have the document here. I can read out all of it. This, sir, is a report of the National Housing Corporation, 1998. It deals with, under chapter two, more or less building construction, office complex at Warrens, St. Michael. It talks about the fact that attendees were invited and a conference was held on November 24th to brief the contractors on the project. Higgs and Hill Overseas Limited indicated it was no longer interested - they were one of the parties in the tender for the project - and the closing date was January 12th, 1998. The following four firms tendered. This is the Honourable Member for St. Andrew presiding - the Honourable Member for St. Andrew who hardly comes in here but who wears this \$80 million bandeau around the necks of Barbadians. And he had his friends placed in the biggest chair at Transport and Works during this construction, so that Barrack and Barrack's people would tell them that if they told him anything about this project he would make a phone call. And he made many phone calls.

Anyway, here are the tenders. CARE International - approximately \$34 to \$35 million in 78 weeks. Barrack Construction - \$37 million in 120 weeks. Noho Construction - \$34 million, did not state a contract time. China State Engineering Barbados Corporation - \$35 million in 78 weeks. Tenders were also received for the following works: electrical, et cetera. I want, Mr. Speaker, that we especially note this paragraph. The tenders were submitted to the quantity surveyor for evaluation, arising out of which the following recommendations were submitted to the Division of Public Works - that is, to the Minister of Public Works at the time, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew - and the Division of Public Works for approval. Having made the recommendation for CARE International and the electrical and air-conditioning contractors, et cetera, the main contract was subsequently renegotiated with Barrack Construction Limited in the sum of \$35 986 720.75 over a contract period of 90 weeks. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew single-handedly tied that lasso of \$80 million around the neck of Barbados. And we also finished up paying China State approximately \$35 million to finish it. And amended the Act - amended the Act so that the NHC could stop building houses for poor people. That is what the members over there are now lamenting about, and the members of the City especially.

I want all members, especially the new members on the Barbados Labour Party side, to stop and consider some of these things so that when your so-called leaders and leadership are talking, you can put it in context.

I need to spend a little time on health, Mr. Speaker, sir. And I want to start, of course, by first conveying my sincere sympathy to the family of the late Valent Franklin, who would have served as a member of the Medical

Council for many, many years - a real stalwart - and to thank them for giving him to us and for the service which he rendered. Certainly on behalf of my family, on behalf of the family of the Ministry of Health, I want to convey our sincere sympathies at this time. I wish them well in this period of bereavement.

I want to also put on record my thanks to Professor Errol Walrond, who has again been a leader of the Barbados Medical Council for many years now, who has tendered his resignation to the Ministry of Health. And I want to wish Sir Errol a very happy retirement. I know that Sir Errol, with the energy that he demonstrates daily, will not in truth and in fact be retired, but will certainly make himself available from time to time in the service of medicine in Barbados - a record which Barbados is very proud of. And we really appreciate the contribution which he would have made directly to medicine and indeed to the entire management of the profession over the recent past. May he enjoy his retirement.

Mr. Speaker, sir, the theme in the Budget in respect to the Ministry of Health would have been one of dealing with the question of non-communicable diseases. We have on record the fact that non-communicable diseases have now overtaken communicable diseases as a major issue. And as many as 60 to 70 per cent of Barbadians are suffering severely from one or more of the risk factors associated with non-communicable diseases. And I think we are all very familiar with the heart conditions, diabetes, hypertension and these kinds of ailments, and of course obesity. And we believe that there must be an investment in tackling this NCD problem. It is not a problem that can be solved in a large ward at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital - you would not be able to make the ward big enough to deal with the problem. We have to invest, therefore, Mr. Speaker, sir, in Barbadian lifestyle change that will bring about a much more healthy approach.

I want to thank the Minister of Finance for taking the recommendations of the NCD Commission and indeed many private sector NGOs who have contributed to this debate. Of course, I want to also place on record my appreciation for the cooperation and the expertise offered by the Pan American Health Organization and World Health Organization in Barbados and in the region - Dr. Karisa and of course Dr. Schreib, who now heads the PAHO division here in Barbados - in supporting the Ministry and the team at the Ministry, the Chief Medical Officer and the Permanent Secretary, all the members of the Commission, including of course its Chairman, Sir Trevor Hassell, who takes a particularly important lead in this regard.

We believe tackling non-communicable diseases is a responsibility of the Government of Barbados even as we ready ourselves to deal with issues of communicable

diseases, either emerging or re-emerging. And this is the kind of stage we have reached, so that the first attempt - or the first brush, so to speak - with sweetened beverages is merely, I think, a step in the right direction as we try to encourage Barbadians to drink healthy, to move away from carbonated, randomly sweetened sweet drinks and move to a regime where we look at dealing with healthy beverages. We have not taken anything off the shelf yet. All we are saying is, in light of the fact that these products obviously contribute to having to deal with non-communicable diseases, we are going to ask Barbados to think again. And when you are spending your money, instead of spending it on these sweet drinks, let us spend it on something which is healthier. Is that reasonable? The Ministry of Health thinks that is reasonable. The technical people at the Ministry of Health have said to me, as Minister, that is a very reasonable, responsible position to take. We therefore took that recommendation to the Ministry of Finance and, thank God, Barbados has reached this stage.

It is not the first stage we have reached in tackling non-communicable diseases. We have dealt with cigarettes, we have dealt with cigarette smoking. There are some, of course, who still do not understand the question of a public place and I believe, sir, with all respect, that we are going to have, as a ministry and as a government, through the Attorney General's chambers, to look at a redefining of this public space because people are beginning to stick their head through a window and believe that satisfies the legal requirement. So you are in a public place enjoying a drink or just relaxing, chatting, playing a game of dominoes and one of your colleagues steps outside, proceeds to light a cigarette and goes to town smoking. The truth is, sir, that there is a view in some places that side-stream smoke is even more dangerous than direct smoke. So those who smoke and are allowing the stuff from their cigarette or cigar or whatever they are smoking to get in the way of the public are actually doing more harm to the public than they may be doing to themselves. So we have a long way to go.

But I think that the World Health Organization, the United Nations Health Organization, et cetera, are exceedingly proud of Barbados in respect to our achievements. And I want to thank my predecessors and recognise the work done by my predecessors - both the Honourable Member for St. Philip West and of course the Honourable Member for St. James South - who set the baselines for how we would tackle this. And I want to say that I stand proudly here today and say Barbados is on the front line of the battle against NCDs, falling in line with the ambitions of the Port of Spain Declaration of 2007 and the 2011 Declaration of the United Nations, making sure that the targets for showing our people the right direction, for taking action, to make sure that the laws are in place to help to protect our people - that these things come to the fore. And Barbadians get to make the right choices. And indeed, if we persist in going in the direction of unhealthy

eating, we are going to impose a penalty in that area to help us deal with the treatment because it sends up the cost of the treatment of Barbadians when we are obese and we have type 2 diabetes and we suffer badly from cardiovascular diseases, et cetera. It sends up the cost in that building over there that everybody likes to talk about. But thank God the Minister of Finance has put in place an arrangement which, as he said, and I quote, will take the Queen Elizabeth Hospital out of the fiscal noose of Barbados.

And while I am at it, I want to thank the suppliers, the pharmaceutical suppliers in Barbados, for holding strain with us through all this. I will never stop thanking them and expressing my appreciation to them because they have taken the full brunt of this exercise we have had to go through. And I look forward to being able to sit with them and renegotiate a final outcome which sees them satisfied and then being able to really take advantage of getting a pharmaceutical, a healthcare service which is less costly to Barbadians.

The Minister of Finance also alluded to the fact that we are embarking on a healthcare financing discussion. I want to mention - and it is part of the main speech - that an invitation will be extended to the opposition. The last time I extended the invitation to the opposition to participate in a health discussion, I must say that we had a very vibrant and lovely discussion with the Honourable Member for Christ Church West. That is why she is held in such esteem over here, because she is at least willing to come and participate in this so-called nebulous thing that the Leader of the Barbados Labour Party talks about - this so-called bipartisan one-woman affair that the Member for St. Michael North East talks about. But the Honourable Member for Christ Church West knows what bipartisan discussion is about. That is why they cannot get along, I believe. She is not a lackey. She is not a handmaiden like my friend from St. Michael South East who does the bid and call. So she has landed upon my poor friend from St. Michael South East and may God bless her and keep her well.

But sir, the healthcare financing discussion will go on. We will engage the public of Barbados in town hall sessions. We will have some other sessions in the Ministry. We will have experts come and participate. We are going to have the Economic Society of Barbados help us to lead this discussion so that by the end of - I told the management team on Monday and yesterday morning at the Ministry that I had targeted by the end of -

of November and they told me no, no, no Minister. We want this thing to be well on the way by September. So I am going to go for October and I want to see us ready with a document to share with my colleagues at Cabinet and to share with and make a final decision on how

healthcare cost goes. I don't think that Barbadians need to fear because we've been spending some. We're not coming to the discussion empty handed. We've been doing some research and most models really do not satisfy fully the need or even meet in many ways the level of health care we give. You know, we are signed on to the treaties of universal health care and universal access to health care. And the only thing we want to do with that now and the only reason I look forward to the monies that the Minister of Finance has identified out of the catastrophe fund to help us to build that fund is that we're going to be able to assure Barbados that health care is not only universally accessible but also quality - because the sense of giving a person universal access to health care and when you get there you can't even get an injection for an ailment, or we cannot deal with the hundreds, regrettably, of persons in Barbados who need from time to time to go through dialysis. This is a \$15 million bill for dialysis treatment in Barbados which, as I alluded to already, is again especially in the case of type 2 diabetes, largely something which we can fight against. I am not in any way saying that every diabetic is because of a lifestyle. I can't say that - I have no reason to go that route. But we have concrete evidence, worldwide evidence, that we can assist in how we are 10 years and 20 years from now and make sure that by investing in a healthy lifestyle. That is why I like to say this is an investment in our youth. So our obesity fight will start in the schools. We want to make sure that our children do not continue to demonstrate the extent of obesity which are the kind of figures which present themselves now. And I am quietly confident that the message is getting through to Barbados. When I see the kind of activity which is going on in afternoons and in the mornings in Barbados in terms of children and adults training and exercising, when I visit some of our programmes, and especially I was at the Seventh Day Adventist School two weeks ago along with the Right Honourable Prime Minister. And that programme with that group was so invigorating and so encouraging because here we are at the cradle stage, at the young, the tens, the elevens and the twelve year olds, teaching them how important healthy lifestyle and healthy eating and exercise is in the whole regime of being able to tackle and battle this NCD.

Honourable Member, please wait, sir. So I am quietly confident, I'm quietly confident that Barbados will continue to be able to present itself as a leader in the region and in the world. I did not even indicate, sir. And I'm winding up now, sir. I did not even indicate that we have established within the Cabinet of Barbados an inter-ministerial committee on non-communicable diseases which represents the level of seriousness, the level of commitment and the level of investment which this administration is prepared to make in tackling this NCD programme. So I believe that our healthcare programme, as part of these proposals for expenditure 2015-2016, is in safe hands. The structure of the programme is such that we

can be assured of an increasingly reliable source of financing for that much needed service. And I want to ask Barbados again to hold hands with us as we continue forward, confident in the fact that all those gains we have made are for the benefit of this great nation. And I look forward to being part of this continued improvement in healthcare service in Barbados and indeed in the entire management of this economy. I'm obliged to you, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Member for St. Andrew.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting that the member who just spoke did not address the budget. And I'm not surprised because having heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East yesterday afternoon, a number of members on that side are certainly on edge, including the honourable member who just spoke. But I wouldn't dwell on that for now. That is a matter for later. But on that same subject, Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the Member for St. Michael North East for an excellent, excellent presentation. I've been in this House no longer than the combined time of most of the members on that side. And certainly it is the best reply that I have ever heard. And one of the older members who were here a year before me told me it was one of the best presentations that has ever been made by a leader of the opposition in this House. And Mr. Speaker, certainly it mimics the presentation, Mr. Speaker, of a former leader of the opposition in 1976. And you know the results of that. The only thing that was missing is the cheques. And right now the cheques are spelled with CKs and the cheques as they are otherwise spelled - they may come a little later. But it is a little disheartening when one considers, Mr. Speaker, the fact that if 1 per cent of the things that have been put forward in these chambers with respect to those four members and what has transpired, well, then it is something very serious because we all have to understand that we are in this together and we are in this for our children and our children's children. It has nothing to do with the Member for St. Andrew or the Member for Christ Church South. And greed is a funny thing and we have to make sure that when we are confronted with greed, we eradicate it. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Michael East has given us some food for thought. And quite frankly, I would like to think that a lot of the things that have been put forward in these chambers certainly did not take place. But so much for that.

Mr. Speaker, just to repeat - because the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said before I came in here that if I got up and said that the Member for St. Michael North East made an excellent presentation, that he would pull off his pants. I would really like to see him pull off his pants at this. But that is the Democratic Labour Party. They make statements that they don't mean. And I would like to see him put on his pants, but I really don't know. Mr. Speaker -

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I might have heard - I might have heard - rising later - on a point of order. On a point of order. I wanted it to be struck from the record. I made no such promise to the Honourable Member. What I said to him was I would be really ashamed of him - with all that he said and all his lodging in the courts of Barbados - for him to come in here today and praise the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. That's all.

Mr. SPEAKER: That's a point on which I can't rule. I don't know who's right. You did say something. I was serious.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I heard it. I heard it. You did say something and I thought you had said something else. So, I mean, if you did say that, well, then I would withdraw what I said before. But, Mr. Speaker, this budget. When you look at this budget, there are two things about this budget that strikes me. Firstly, it mimics. This budget, mimics the 2008 budget of the former prime minister, the former member for St. John. It mimics to a T. To a T, Mr. Speaker. And secondly. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, one is struck by the careless way. I'm sorry, he's not in his seat. The very careless way in which the Democratic Labour Party, through the Minister of Finance, has treated the people of Barbados in his presentation.

Mr. Speaker, if I may relate to the correlation between this budget and the 2008 budget, even the language is identical. And I would urge members to look at the 2008 budget and look at this budget. And you would have to be. You would be convinced that the same person that wrote that budget wrote this one. I don't know if the former prime minister was in his grave, was giving some directions to the Minister of Finance. But certainly, Mr. Speaker, it is a little amazing. The type of language that you see in this budget. They appeal to humility and almighty God. They quote the scriptures. Except that the former Prime Minister was speaking from the book of Job, or Job as the member for St. Grace Church, so would call it. And the honourable member for St. Michael North West, he seems to have some difficulty with understanding the books in the Old Testament. And he quoted from Mahatma Gandhi, but he spoke as though that was the book of the Old Testament. But that is a question. That is ignorance on his part, Mr. Speaker.

But when you look at it, it was sort of identical. I mean, I urge members to look at the two. The two presentations, Mr. Speaker. And when you consider. When you consider. And you go a little further, Mr. Speaker, you go a little further, you won't be here after this session. I will be. And you realize that the former Prime Minister was basking in the success of the Owen Arthur administration, the previous Barbados Labour Party administration. And in that same presentation he stated, and I'm quoting from the budgetary proposals, that today Barbados stands tall in the

international arena as one of the highest ranking countries in the world. And at that time we were speaking of a Barbados with an unemployment rate of 7.4 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, on the other hand, in this debate, an unemployment rate of 7.4 per cent. He seemed to be very paranoid about failure. He seems to think, and in his own words, that everybody expected him to fail. That is all he said. You check his speech and you see about four or five, six, seven, eight, nine times. All he speaks about is failure and deception. Failure and deception. Because obviously he is dealing with an unemployment rate that is. That is skyrocketing.

But, Mr. Speaker, the correlation between this budget, this budget and the 2008 budget is further evidenced by the actual impositions, Mr. Speaker. And it would seem as though the Minister of Finance would want to make his mentor look good. Because his mentor, you remember what he did to the. To the rum shops. The rum shops. He stated in that same presentation that he had figures, the statistics suggested that the shopkeepers were doing well in this country and that they should contribute to the economy of this country. You check the debate. Those were his words. And he proceeded to impose some draconian measures on the shopkeepers in this country. And don't you know that this Minister of Finance, as if to make sure that the legacy of his mentor is maintained, he has now sought in this budget, in these budgetary proposals to restore those licences to the same level as they were when the Democratic Labour Party came to power. And similarly, similarly in many respects to the professional fees. And the similarity in these, in this budget goes to the 2008 taxes on gambling and winnings which were severely taxed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Finance is imposing a 17.5 per cent VAT on gambling operations. Even. Mr. Speaker, his tax on sweet drinks mirrors the tax on tobacco by the former Minister of Finance and the former Prime Minister. Mr. Speaker, he is so obsessed by his mentor that in trying to vindicate his failed attempts at introducing a cell phone tax that he has brought it back in a different manner. And here again with a lot of confusion. I've been in this House for every budget that the honourable member has presented. And on each occasion we have had to come back for a clarification for something that he has said in this debate. I mean, in this debate on. I mean, what he has said with respect to this particular tax on the cell phones, he has to come back and explain to us. Does it include text messages? Does it include text messages? Does it include free calls? Who is going to pay? Yeah, but you don't understand that the Minister of Finance doesn't understand what is airtime? Well, you are sitting on your airtime, so you can understand what I'm talking about, Mr. Speaker.

And Mr. Speaker, he calls to the other network services, Mr. Speaker, whether or not what the service provider will be responsible for. These are things that the minister should let us know. And this is in keeping. Every single year, the Minister of Finance comes here, remember for St. Michael North West, he comes here and he gives us proposals and he has to go back and come back with an explanation. We need some explanation with respect to this tax.

But Mr. Speaker, as I said, the other area that I find somewhat disturbing about this debate is the callousness. The callousness of this government as evidenced by the. The performance and the attitude and the demeanour. The demeanour. If the Minister of Finance was in a court of law and those members who are lawyers on that side would tell you that even before the completion of the evidence, if he was a witness, sorry, you would be able, you would be biased in giving you a verdict. Mr. Speaker, very callous, Mr. Speaker. And the callousness it started even before this debate. You know how the persons associated with the tipping fees were treated. The only condemnation I have of those people who protested is that they have to understand that when you protest, you have to do it with some commitment and you have to prepare to go to jail sometimes, you know, when you are doing things as a result of your conscience, when your conscience tells you to do things, you should do them. You know, you should be concerned about spending a night or two in jail. That happens in other countries. And maybe if they had that commitment, maybe we would not be looking across at the members on that side.

But Mr. Speaker, the carelessness of this government and the attitude and the treatment, Mr. Speaker, of people that they represent is more evidenced in the way how they have treated the policyholders and the investors in CLICO. I mean, as I said already, I have said it more than once in this debate. The treatment of the policyholders and the investors in CLICO is a national tragedy. You have a Minister of Finance who refused to come to this House to say anything on CLICO. But you had a Minister of Finance and a former Prime Minister who told you when the story first broke that the people, the policyholders in CLICO have nothing to worry about. Their money is safe. Their money is safe. That is what you were told. And the policyholders felt a little bit of comfort. The Minister of Finance made no statement in this House.

It would have been better for the Minister of Finance had he kept quiet. I would not. I would not come to this House and say that he told lies in this debate because he doesn't look to me like someone who would tell lies. But Mr. Speaker, and I'm not saying that he told lies in this debate, Mr. Speaker, I'm not doing that. But Mr. Speaker, when you could come to this House and you could talk about. The major stakeholders in debate have all been

consulted and that certain matters have now been practically settled and it is up for the court now to make a determination. Well then, Mr. Speaker, if you could say that. Mr. Speaker, you could only say that if you were speaking the truth.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Investors and Policyholders Alliance - there is no major stakeholder more major than those people. You have had. You had your chance to speak. You had four hours. Are you only half hour. You have never consulted those people. You had. You had. You have people, you tell me the Ministry, the people in the Ministry of Finance. A bigger stakeholder, a bigger stakeholder than the Barbados policyholders. That is beside the point. How many members, how many members in the Ministry of Finance. But then you don't like the word foul. You know that over here we talk about yard fowls and we are proud to say that we are yard fowls to the Barbados Labour Party. And I don't believe that the. The President. The President, yeah. Followed the Barbados Labour Party and you don't like the word foul because the President of the Barbados - her name is. Her name. I don't want to call her name. But it has fallen. It has fallen. It has fallen. But the Barbados represents the policyholders and the investors in this country. Mr. Speaker. It is a crying shame.

It is a crying shame. This story broke in 2008. The Minister of Finance at the time said that this matter would be resolved and that the people, the policyholders' money will be safe. In Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Speaker. In Trinidad and Tobago. Mr. Speaker. Trinidad and Tobago. This matter was attended to almost immediately. Almost immediately. And the Trinidadian. The Trinidad government. I was looking for my notes here with respect to Speaker Trinidad. Six years since the story on CLICO broke. The government wasted two years before it took action to place CLICO under judicial management on April 24, 2011. Contrast this with the government of Trinidad and Tobago. The government of Trinidad and Tobago put \$10 billion in CLICO Trinidad to get the company back on its feet and to compensate policyholders and investors. Today Colonial Life Insurance Company in Trinidad is a profitable company. Hear what I say. Want to repeat that? Colonial Life Insurance Company in Trinidad and Tobago, due to the swift action of the government of Trinidad and Tobago, is a profitable company.

The policyholders and investors' claims have been satisfied through a publicly listed company in which their own shares from such investors as the Republic Bank - previously owned by CL Financial - and the methanol plant previously owned by CL Financial. Mr. Speaker. But we did nothing. We did absolutely nothing. Nothing in Barbados.

Now the Minister comes here and he tells us that he had a conversation with all the stakeholders. Now he is putting up - he is stating this new company putting up \$52 million - New Life Investment Company. Now in the first place, ENLICO - the name of the company is an insult. It's an insult. You know that is like a rapist raping a woman, goes to jail and comes back and he heard that the victim is living somewhere 40 miles away. He moves next door. He moves next door. ENLICO. That name has to be changed. That's the first thing that you have to do. The connotation. You know, it is. You can. I cannot believe that a government would do that to the. To the people out there. Represent ENLICO from CLICO. But the only thing you could put in there is PARLICO. That's the only thing you could put in there. Now that is adding insult to injury, Mr. Speaker. And that's the first thing. That is the first. I'm serious about that.

I am very close, I must tell you. I am very close to policyholders. I have had, and I've said it in this House already, I have had. I don't like to see big men cry. I have had policyholders come here to Barbados from other islands in the West Indies and sat down in front of me and cried like a little child. And I can. I cannot help. I cry too. I cried. I can tell my wife about that, but I cried. It was very hurtful. And one particular guy, and I believe that the member for St. Joseph would know that guy. He came and he told me that my daughter wanted to do medicine, you know, and she was a bright child and she wanted to go to the school in Washington. I can't remember the name. Not Howard. No, no, no, not that one. And he was saving money. I'm serious. And he cried. He cried. Mr. Speaker, we have got to be serious.

But you know, the minister. The minister, he comes to the House and he says that these arrangements are made. And he makes it as though. I mean, the arrogance of the minister. Let me read exactly. The minister indicates that. Well, you know, the Barbados or other people has refuted any conversations with the minister. The least the minister could have done is to get his subordinates to meet with BIPA. And then after they meet with BIPA, he could have met or he could have taken some sort of information on BIPA and to come here and say he can't say that he met with BIPA. He didn't meet with BIPA. And he cannot say that BIPA has agreed with the proposals of which he speaks, because for BIPA to agree with the proposals of which he speaks, he would have had to meet with them. And BIPA only - only the affidavit that BIPA signed. When they indicated, Mr. Speaker, that they are not in favour. They are not in favour with the proposals previously made - the liquidation proposals previously made by the Judicial Manager. That was as a result. That was on the premise that the Minister of Finance in the past, the former Prime Minister, had indicated to them that their savings, their policies and their investment is sound. But if what is agreed now was placed before them they would say

no. They would say no. BIPA is not in favour of this arrangement.

And for the minister in his arrogance to come and say - I mean in a budget, I mean I can't believe it when I saw it - then he said here and he talks about the pain and inconvenience of thousands of policyholders and investors in the company while maintaining the integrity and stability of the financial system. And if they don't accept - if the court makes an order - and to that Mr. Speaker, we say Amen. You can't have anything worse than that. He washes. He's washing his hands. So that if they go to court, even if the court makes a decision and the decision is not in favour of what government does, he's saying Amen. But a Minister of Finance cannot behave like that. In some countries he would be fired. Cannot behave like that.

Mrs. Business Speaker. No, no, Mr. Speaker. I remember has five minutes but Mr. Speaker. Five minutes but Mr. Speaker, they - when you see this beeper - the Minister, the member for St. Michael North West, he spoke about a few matters. You see what is happening. We have to be very careful. I can understand why they don't want to meet with deeper. What is strange - the Judicial Manager had made proposals which went to court with respect to the liquidation of the assets of CLICO and all of a sudden he has backtracked. I don't know what - I would not - I don't think that the Minister of Finance is the type of person that will put any pressure on him. But all of a sudden the order which was made by the court, the order which was made by the court, has been changed, Mr. Speaker. And what is happening now is that the liquidator is supposed to be a consultant to the new company. That is serious. There has been a change. They went back to court to get the order changed and he is supposed to be liquidated.

I go a little further and this is a situation where you don't know what is going on because ministers are signing documents and you are the Attorney General and you do not know. You don't know what is going on. You're the only Attorney General Barbados has had where ministers are signing agreements and you don't know about it. You should resign.

Please. I'm being interrupted. Please. Other members, please - please show each other across the floor - will not be - please continue.

And you have a chairman who is executive chairman. Mr. Speaker, this thing is ridiculous. Mr. Speaker, you have a \$52 million injection to treat a \$400 million problem. It cannot work. This company cannot work. It would be better for it to be liquidated. And as I said, the people recommended the liquidation because they thought - they thought they were hoodwinked into believing that the Government would take care of the

policyholders. And this is not so. A \$52 million injection for a \$400 million problem.

And Mr. Speaker, I go a little further. The hon. member spoke about the appointment of a chairman. He isn't just a chairman - an executive chairman, Mr. Speaker, an executive chairman. And he is dealing with - and listen - the Minister was not candid when he talked about this company because that company only deals with property management; that is not the insurance company that will be dealing with the whole scheme of things. A property management company. And this man - I know this fellow well, a very bright man - but he is not a property manager. He has no experience whatsoever. The only experience he has and the only qualifications he has is membership of the Democratic Labour Party, and he is being paid - he is being paid \$30 000 a month. \$30 000 a month to be manager of a company. Are you dealing with Beacon? You are dealing with companies - Todd's Lime Grove, Todd's Great House, property at 6th Avenue Belleville. No money is coming in.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Honourable member - but already you see, because you cannot allow the honourable member to mislead the House. That is the point of order which I raise, and I think that it is very unfortunate because the truth of the matter is, first of all, the individual to which the member speaks, who has been selected as chairman of the new life insurance company, is not being paid a cent to be there. In fact he is volunteering his time to be on the board. There is an affidavit before the court for a company to be created - a new company to manage the insurance business of CLICO - with recommended salary scales as part of the submission of the affidavit. That company has yet to be formed. Nobody has been employed under it or with it. It has no staff; indeed it has no money. So therefore the company that Government has set up alongside CLICO to manage the assets of CLICO - none of the directors is being paid a salary and the chairman is not an executive chairman presently.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, as I said, you cannot have a \$52 million injection to treat a \$400 million problem. Mr. Speaker, the company has already put forward proposals with respect to the operations of the company and he cannot deny - he is not accustomed to telling lies - he cannot deny that the CEO: \$360 000. And these are proposals which have gone to the board. The manager: \$300 000. Administrative support: \$60 000.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, sir, the honourable member is reading from an affidavit of a proposed plan to be submitted - or submitted - to the court for the court's consideration. And it is the court who has to consider that. Tomorrow, if the court agrees to the restructuring plan of CLICO, then and only then can resources be put at the disposal of the company. So you cannot say that the company has been formed, that it has an

executive director, that the people are being paid. It is not true. Please tell the truth.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I am speaking from my notes. Mr. Speaker, you see this yellow paper here? Affidavit - and the company member.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will give you two minutes to wind up. Your time has expired.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I am not speaking from any notes. And as you know, as a lawyer, Mr. Speaker, you cannot go to court unless you are an entity. I mean - \$3 million a year. This matter has been going on for nine years. And you are putting up \$52 million. You have people who are receiving pensions, not getting a cent. And you have proposals brought forward by the company, put forward by the company. The court has not adjudicated on it yet. And as the proposals here show - \$3 million a year in terms of the expenses, the salaries and other outgoing expenses - over nine years. Nine years has gone. And if you have another nine years, that is \$27 million. And people were not aware of a lot of this.

This is the reason one can only conclude why the policyholders have not been involved in the negotiations. I think that the president of the policyholders' body should be honoured - should be made a Dame - for the work she has put in. The Government has sidelined that lady simply because she has put forward proposals to support the investors and the policyholders in this country. Mr. Speaker, it is a shame.

I would like, Mr. Speaker - I mean I haven't even been able to deal with the land tax. But in terms of one matter, if I may conclude - you know, when you are pulling wool over people's eyes. The solid waste tax has been abolished. But what the Minister has done is that you have a new tax where, with the revaluation of the land tax, the amount that you are paying now in increased taxes is the same. When the revaluation comes - because it is a triennial valuation with respect to land tax - and when the new land tax valuations come out next year, the amount you are paying for land tax now, when you add that to the solid waste tax, it is the same amount. The solid waste tax has not been abolished. This is a Government that is supposed to be representing people, pulling the wool over people's eyes. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you. A few minutes of my time has been taken away. I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. The other member for St. James South.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course I rise to give my contribution to this financial statement and budgetary process in Parliament this time

around. And of course I wish to start by thanking the people of St. James South who have allowed me to continue to represent them here in the Honourable House of Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to start by perhaps reflecting on the fact that none of the members of Her Majesty's loyal opposition have yet seriously addressed the measures put forward by the Honourable Minister of Finance and Parliamentary Representative for St. Michael North West. You see, I think when we have matters of such weighty nature here in Parliament to address that really impacts upon the lives of our constituents, we ought not to come in here and indulge in a lot of frivolous matters. For example, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, who just reflected upon what obviously was accusations and an affidavit that is still to be cited on in the court, really adds no value to the matter before the House today.

Perhaps - yes, I remember - I never misled the House. I never said anything about any affidavit. The affidavit came from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. All right. I was reading from my notes. Yes, thank you. Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Honourable Member should reflect on the affidavit filed by the Honourable Member for St. James North that reflected upon the character of the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, and that therefore belies why his conduct is as it is.

Mr. Speaker, we have more serious matters to address in the House. Let me start by reflecting upon the process by which we arrive at this point in terms of the budget. And I have always contended that there are some serious flaws in our system of government and Parliament. And you know, sometimes I think we don't want to engage in such discussion. Every year the Minister of Finance brings a budget. Those of us who sit on the front bench get the chance to see it shortly before it is presented. Sometimes you have a chance to weigh into its composition, but it does not mean that we all have to agree on every sentence and every word contained therein in the budget. I want to start from that premise - that this is a budget presented by the Minister of Finance, of which I certainly would have had an input as a Minister of the Crown as well. And therefore I believe that notwithstanding whatever is said, I have a right as a parliamentary representative to also comment on it without fear or favour.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to first reflect upon the objectives of the state - or the government, really - in looking at what we have been dealing with in the last two days. And here naturally, Barbados will still be under severe stress and strain. And we must commend the Minister of Finance for his leadership in respect of addressing a couple of issues in a very frontal manner. The

deficit, which really is the gap between government revenue and government expenditure, had actually reached 11.8 per cent by last financial year. And we settled as a government to bring that deficit down - very successfully - and bring it down to 6.6 per cent. And I think with all the harangue and things that have been going on, we must commend the government and the Minister of Finance in particular for that.

Now, that may not - when one talks about a deficit, one may say, oh, that does not really matter much to the average person. But if the state is not able to bring that deficit down, it reflects negatively upon what the international rating agencies have to say. It means the cost of borrowing is considerably higher at any given time. It translates really into what takes place in the homes of all of our constituents in this country. And we can only have achieved this by reducing the government's expenditure while at the same time seeking a boost in revenue. And along the way there have undoubtedly been some challenges. As a parliamentary representative of a predominantly middle-class constituency, I can tell you that my constituents have been and continue to be under severe stress and strain. But I have always invited them to allow us to be even-handed with them in terms of what we are trying to achieve and to ask them to walk with us along this journey.

Because remember - [Interruption.] Just give me a minute. Please leave now. You are Honourable Deputy Speaker.

As I say, we have asked our people to walk with us along this journey. We recognise that there have been tremendous sacrifices. The reality is that I encounter constituents and I liaise with them every day who have their challenges paying their bills and concerns about the future. That is the reality we face.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not going to run away from these things, but as a government we have continued to labour under some very difficult circumstances. And I believe that there is now some light at the end of the tunnel. Mr. Speaker, we certainly set out as a government, apart from the deficit reduction programme, to also start to breathe some life into the economy. We have seen some turnaround in the tourism sector, in particular in the international business and financial services sector. The cultural industries are growing out. The agricultural sector is further diversifying and growing out. And along the way, this all creates new opportunities for investments. It also creates opportunity for jobs along the way.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let me address frontally some of the issues that have been raised in this House since the Minister of Finance delivered his presentation, as well as raised outside of the House. I think sometimes we need

to take some time to read and to ask ourselves some questions rather than getting emotional and jumping to a lot of conclusions. What I heard coming from the opposition benches today tells me that they have become totally disconnected from what has been stated here by the Minister of Finance. I certainly did not wish to engage - and do not wish to engage - in a discussion here in Parliament with a preconceived notion that this government can do no good, that this government is only about raising taxes and making people suffer. So no matter what, every statement is harangued.

And one of the first issues, Madam Deputy Speaker, is this perception that it is a tax-and-grab situation on the whole. Let me reflect on the \$204 million in revenue that is designed to be raised this year - additional revenue, really - because at the end of the day we have to ask ourselves what does this mean for each and every one of us and our constituents?

The milk levy of \$5 million in revenue to be gained. The reality, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that there has been tremendous pressure upon the dairy industry in Barbados. And we have been faced with heavily subsidised dairy products coming into Barbados, which has in turn prevented our dairy industry from growing in the manner in which it ought to grow. And this is where reality really ought to allow us to connect to what has been happening in Barbados. So when we take the measures we have taken here by saying that we are putting on this levy to give support to the dairy industry, we are actually helping a lot of our average Barbadians who raise cows and who supply the milk to the Pine Hill Dairy and whatever else there is there. Why is that? At the same time we are protecting some jobs and helping to grow that aspect of our economy - the agricultural sector.

We talk about the VAT on the basket of goods now. I have heard a lot of people talk about, you know, taking items out of the basket of goods and saying that, oh, this is affecting poor people, et cetera. Let me say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that my ministry and myself were heavily consulted by the Ministry of Finance and the Minister of Finance on this measure. I too was shocked at the items that were contained in that basket of goods that were VAT-free. A basket of goods that we say was established to ensure that all Barbadians, especially the more vulnerable in society, do get access to basic foods. And that basket of goods included - and these are the items that have been taken out, because I know the opposition have not read it - chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa, carambolas, kiwi, cranberries, raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, cherries, apricots. Now tell me really and truly, how can these things be considered as necessary items in a basket of goods in the Barbadian context? Pistachios, chestnuts and walnuts, blue vein cheese - I do not even know what blue vein cheese is, but it was sitting

there - snapper, croaker, grouper, banga mary and sea trout. These things are in a basket of goods that are supposed to be VAT-free. But nobody speaks to support for the fishing industry in Barbados.

My father was a fisherman. I did not grow up on banga mary and trout and sole and all these kinds of things. Sea bass and croaker, et cetera - we had flying fish and dolphin and shark and those kinds of things. So these are items that people on the opposition benches say ought to have remained in a basket of goods to be VAT-free. Yellowfin tuna, Atlantic salmon, sockeye salmon - and the list goes on. Sirloin and tenderloin, spare ribs. Nobody can really and truly say how you can classify these as necessary items to be VAT-free in Barbados. So when the government decides that we are going to raise an estimated \$20 million by removing these items from the basket of goods, the reality is that those who would wish not to buy them now because they may be a little more expensive - I do not know that that is going to really affect the health of this nation or the health of the people in the nation, because the average Barbadian has not been purchasing them over the years. So when people talk about another \$204 million in taxes, let us realise that \$20 million out of that included unnecessary items that were contained in a basket of goods. It does not mean my constituents are going to be negatively affected by that policy because a lot of them are not buying those items anyhow.

But the reality about it, Madam Deputy Speaker, is when you look at the items that have remained in the basket of goods - berry fruit, sour salt, passion fruit, golden apples, plums and soils, apples, pawpaws, cantaloupe, watermelons - these are the items that farmers in Barbados grow. These are not the large imported items. These are items that our farmers out there slave every day to produce. And we have made a commitment to help members of the farming community and the agricultural sector in Barbados. That is what we need to focus on in this country - not talk about \$20 million more in taxes. Ask ourselves where that money is coming from and who are the ones that are really being affected.

VAT on gambling - \$20 million. The opposition benches and the apologists will talk about raising \$200 million in taxes. \$20 million - 10 per cent of that - is coming from gambling. Who on this side is going to stand up in this House of Assembly and say that gambling in Barbados should not attract a tax for the country? Which one of you on the opposition benches is prepared to stand up in here today and say that we should tax Barbadians more on food items but not tax them on gambling? That is what it is boiling down to in this society and this House of Assembly. And that is why I say that members need to read, need to study and ask themselves - not get excited like the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, who did not address anything really in this budget, but

simply got in here for three hours and fifty minutes and played politics. I am not about that.

Today, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have serious issues to address in this country. What is before us are budgetary proposals that we need to unravel and ask ourselves how they affect our constituents - the people in Westerby Gardens and Haynes and Walston and Husband Heights and around St. James South, Warren's and those places. That is what they want to know. So when they are given a narrative that says - or are constantly being told - another \$200 million in taxes, they naturally get concerned and they have called me and expressed their concerns, until we start to explain to them that \$20 million of that relates to a basket of goods that are not necessary; \$20 million relates to gambling - how many of them are gambling, and if you choose to go and do that, then you pay a tax on it.

The corporation tax, Madam Deputy Speaker, is one I think we can spend some time on and we can have perhaps a more robust discussion on. Now, I have indicated to the Minister of Finance that this is one I think we have to have a further conversation around, because the reality is that part of it relates to group losses that hitherto have been allowed to be carried forward. And from my perspective as Minister of Commerce and certainly as a business person, I certainly appreciate the fact that sometimes you have a group of companies and it is necessary - not just from an accounting perspective, but also from a business investment side - to allow those companies to carry forward losses and for the losses to be shared within the group. And that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am being honest with you, is a matter that I have invited the Minister of Finance to let us have a further conversation around, because my concern is that I want to know what are the likely consequences upon the business community's appetite for investing and taking risks in certain areas. Because if you are no longer allowed to carry forward losses within the group, that may be a matter of concern. And the reality is I have always said, you know, the budget is not something that everything we have to agree on 100 per cent. And where that occurs, I am prepared to be man enough to say to my colleagues on the front bench and the Minister of Finance in particular, let us have a further conversation around that. And that is one area that I flag as a matter that we have to certainly wrap our minds around.

The matter of income tax design - I think the net is rather revenue-neutral here again, \$9 million out of a couple hundred million dollars normally raised. Now here, the reality is that the opposition benches are saying that we have removed a lot of allowances. The devil is in the detail, Madam Deputy Speaker. I have invited the Minister of Finance and his staff at the Barbados Revenue Authority to share with us - and share with the country, or remind the country really, because he has been very specific in his speech here - but to remind the country of the current

allowances that are provided in the income tax system, because I hear a lot of people talking but a lot of them, quite frankly, on the opposition benches cannot tell you what are the allowances. A lot of them do not file tax returns anyhow. They cannot tell you what are the current allowances, the personal allowances allowed. But they come in here and they say, oh Lord, everything is gone. And when you ask them to name one thing that is gone, they cannot tell you. Let us simply get the details. If you have any doubt about it, do not jump on the bandwagon.

Let me tell you this. Periodically we have to make adjustments and changes to the allowances granted in any personal tax regime in any country whatsoever. They do not always remain the same. The state has the right to make adjustments based on where you are at a point in time, economic development, and where you want to go going forward. And there are allowances that may have been very critical five or ten years ago but cannot be deemed to be that critical today. And I think once we start from that premise, we have a right therefore to unravel these issues, look at them specifically and ask ourselves which ones should remain and which ones should go and which are the new ones that should come on board. So there are some allowances that have been around for a long time that obviously now, based on our scenario, ought to go away.

One, for example, that I feel - and I have discussed this with the Minister of Finance and others - that should come on board, hopefully in the not too distant future, relates to an allowance we should have for education, because I do not believe the state has to - we really have to find ways of encouraging Barbadians to save and invest for their children's future. I did it many years ago, certainly long before I thought about this, and that has allowed me now to be in a position to help my kids through their college education. But I think that is one that we can add - an allowance for investment in an education fund that allows us to invest and save for our children's future. It may not always be the kind of arrangement that we have today.

Now, whilst there has been some talk about cutting allowances, nobody seems to be focused on the fact that we have lowered the rates of our taxes in this country - the rates from 17 down to 16 per cent and from 35 down to 33 per cent. You know, Madam Deputy Speaker, what does that mean when we say that we have lowered the rates? It means that from the time this kicks in, which I believe is next month or so, Barbadians will see a higher take-home pay. The average worker in Barbados should be taking home, in terms of cash, more money than they were prior to this budgetary statement here this week.

Now, the reality is you cannot have your cake and eat it. If we are saying to you we are going to give you a few hundred dollars or whatever per month with immediate

effect, you cannot expect to come at the end of the financial year when you file your tax return and expect a big refund too. Now, I think what we have done in principle is the right thing. Barbadians have been under immense pressure for a while and we said, look, this is one way in which we have eased things a bit now - by saying that you are going to get a higher take-home pay with almost immediate effect based on our lowering of the rates of tax on the personal income side. And it means at the end of the year there is going to be less of a refund to come.

The other point that needs to be raised is this: the Barbados Revenue Authority - the successor to the Inland Revenue - for years has had a challenge in processing refunds that have been claimed. The length of time it takes to have them all audited or evaluated and then the time it takes to process the cheques. There are about 90 000 taxpayers - individuals - who file tax returns, and in 2013, 60 000 of those - two thirds - claimed a tax refund. Now with this measure and with the adjustments being made, there ought to be far fewer refunds to come back to the state. And I think we have to realise we need to disabuse our minds of a personal financial planning regime that says a tax refund is an entitlement and a natural part of it. Because what

the state is doing now is giving you more of your monies up front so you can make your own strategic investments and start relying so much on the refund from the tax system going forward by the Deputy Speaker. The issue of land tax is another issue. And let me say up front, if I don't get the matters of industry, international business said in detail today, there'll be ample time for me to come back on that in the House or out of the House. I don't believe as a minister for those specific songs, I have to dwell on them every time I get Prime Minister talk. I'm talking here on behalf of the people of St. James South in particular, and addressing the country on several key issues.

Land tax. Let me say it, friend. I am no big lover of property taxes. I'm being honest about that. I've always considered it a tax that I feel to be rather unfair. And for example, right now I am paying the Government of Barbados \$400 per month to live in my house that I built before borrowing a cent from the government. So there's something fundamentally wrong there. But the reality about it is that we can find a better tax - this is the one that is used by most enlightened economies and societies around the world. Now the municipal solid waste tax was in existence. That went away. I had my difficulties with that too. What has come to the fore today is, I think, a more equitable system because before you had people who owned large tracts of land and were not paying any municipal sort of waste tax on it, but certainly costing a lot of stress and strain to others. Now we're saying, look, that is gone. Let us adjust the tax rates and bands on property taxes so that

we're able to help cover some of the costs of the same solid waste management disposal in Barbados, which is a very costly undertaking.

And the reality about it is taxes invariably in society - the government operates on the basis that you collect from most people according to the ability to pay to help take care of the most vulnerable in society. So if you were saying to me before that I need to pay to have my garbage collected based on my income level, it means that those who live down the block or so who may earn less money may find that they are not in a position to have their garbage collected and disposed of appropriately either. That creates the risk to the entire society. I think that this is a very equitable manner. It means, of course, that there are some who will pay based on the adjustments - they pay a little less tax on properties - and there are some who will pay a little bit more. But let us focus on where the money is going. It's not being frittered away. It is helping us to build the kind of economy and society that we all clamour for. We want a cleaner Barbados. I don't like to drive around and see garbage thrown about the place or garbage piled up. I want to know that the SSA is adequately resourced so that they can collect the garbage. And if I have to pay another 40 or \$50 in property taxes to ensure that happens, then, Madam Deputy Speaker, I really should not complain. I may have to make an adjustment elsewhere. But let us face the reality that we are putting the money to good use on behalf of the wider society.

The issue of mobile airtime tax. I hear the Honourable Leader of the Opposition say, oh Lord, now we taxing people to talk. There should be a special tax on the three hours and 58 minutes that she spoke yesterday. And that would have solved a lot of the financial challenges the state may have had. The reality about it - here again, this is a \$32.7 million tax revenue yielded from this tax - and the opposition benches give the impression that the state has inflicted a \$32 million burden on the society. Madam Deputy Speaker, I have already decided that I'm going to talk less on my cell phone if I can't afford to pay the 0.03 cents per minute for airtime. But then let me be disciplined and thoughtful. But we're in a society where there's an average of two cell phones for every citizen, which means that there are some people in this society who have three and four cell phones. It has reached the stage - now I'm a technology buff to some extent - but it's reached the stage, Madam Deputy Speaker, where sometimes people living three or four in a household don't talk to one another because everybody is on the cell phone, or you are downstairs and you want someone upstairs, you don't holler for them, you WhatsApp them or text them or Skype them.

But the bottom line about it, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that this is a usage-based tax. It is not a case where the state is grabbing this money from your pocket.

We're simply saying, look, if you wish to talk so much on a cell phone, then contribute a little bit to helping the state provide some other services that are needed around here. And we don't realise, Madam Deputy Speaker, that \$32 million - when you look at what it costs us to administer the Fair Trading Commission, and all of these telecoms issues and fair competition and so forth - there's a regulatory function that is rather costly to the state. We don't look at the working telecommunications unit in the Ministry of Energy and Telecommunications and what they have to do to grow the best regulatory environment that ensures that Barbados and Barbadians continue to have access to the outside world. These things don't drop from the sky. It's not just the carriers alone that provide it. The state has to provide the right infrastructure, including the regulatory infrastructure, to make these things happen. And I think that, as far as I'm concerned, this is a rather fair one.

The sweetened beverage tax - now the opposition say, oh Lord, \$10 million have been imposed upon Barbadians. But not one of them has talked about the fact that it is costing taxpayers almost \$60 000 per person per year to provide dialysis services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for those who have end-stage renal failure as a result of diabetes. These are the realities, Madam Deputy Speaker, and the realities we have to connect. So I don't just see a figure here of \$10 million. I see another attempt by the government to ensure that Barbadians focus on the preventative aspect of healthcare - an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. So if we can instil some discipline in Barbadians by saying to you, consume less of these sugary drinks, because at the end of the day it is going to mean we are going to have a healthier nation, then \$10 million in taxation across the platform, to my mind, is not unreasonable. But here again, Madam Deputy Speaker, people have choices. You don't have to purchase these products. What is wrong with drinking a glass of water? We can all do well with drinking more each day. What is wrong with mixing some lemonade? When I was Minister, we had the issue of soft drink machines in the QEH and people complained bitterly, and I said I would personally go over there and have them removed. Because we have to take some things seriously in this country. And where the government uses the weapon of taxation to guide Barbadians towards a healthier lifestyle, it must be supported.

The other one, Madam Deputy Speaker, relates to a fuel cess that is eating \$35 million. That is not a new tax. As Minister of Commerce I am responsible every couple of weeks or so - one of the things I do when I'm in the island is look at the changes in fuel prices and sign off on the necessary adjustments that are effected at the pumps. And therefore you get the chance to see what we're collecting or what we're paying for fuel on the world market, the importation market prices, the distributor margins and the taxes therein. We came into office and found ourselves a

national oil company that was pretty much insolvent, heavily indebted, because the former government's policy was that they should subsidise fuel. We took a diametrically different position and said, look, no, we will not subsidise fuel in Barbados because people have to be a little bit more disciplined. And we found ourselves having to settle almost over \$100 million in debt for that entity. And we did it by instituting a cess to help reduce the indebtedness over time. That debt has now been settled. So when we say that we're taking a fuel cess here which amounts to \$35 million - Barbadians have been paying that for years. It is not a new tax that is being imposed. So when we talk about \$200 million in taxes, let us realise that \$35 million out of that has already been there. It is not a new imposition. But more importantly, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is going towards the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the provision of healthcare in Barbados. So we are now saying, instead of all the grumbling and complaining every time the CAT scan machine breaks down, every time some radiological equipment breaks down in the hospital or whatever, we are building up a fund that ensures that these pieces of equipment can be replaced in a timely fashion, that they can be well maintained, that staff can be appropriately trained and retrained to address them.

So my constituents are not being asked to pay an additional \$35 million this year towards the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the public healthcare system. It is already in place and has been for many years. So it's not a new tax as people are making it out to be. I think, Madam Deputy Speaker, we really have to stop this deep political charade in terms of going out there and saying, oh, 200 more million dollars in taxes, et cetera. Of the \$204.7 million in taxes that they're talking about, some \$117.7 million of that, as far as I'm concerned, there can never be any dispute across the political divide, because they have either been in place already or, like the airtime tax and the sweetened beverage tax and the VAT on gambling and the other items and the basket of goods, I deem them to be quite necessary.

Madam Deputy Speaker, before you ring the bell or give me a little look to tell me to wrap up, let me say that as we go forward we have to ask ourselves what is it we need to grow this economy. I know I'm not excited about a conversation all the time about taxes. The Minister of Finance and all of us have talked about the need to grow the economy. And there are three areas or three sectors responsible for facilitating and allowing this growth to take place. There's the state, there's the private sector, and there's the labour movement.

On the state's end, we've already set the agenda. I think the government has decided we're going to be a lot more fiscally responsible going forward. So that's why matters of deficit reduction and getting to a surplus on the current account is critical for us in this society. We can't

keep taking money out of the economy to shore up a large and ineffective government system. There's much more we have to do. The statutory entities, the state-owned enterprises - they need to continue to be reviewed, to be merged, to be closed down, to be downsized, to be right-sized. That is what we have to do. We cannot continue to say give us more to pay all of the expenses associated with running some of these large and inefficient organisations. A lot of these entities are going to be held to account for how they lead and direct the affairs of those organisations. The state deserves much more than that. I've also said it before that we have to constantly ask ourselves what are the areas that the state needs to be involved in, what are the range of goods and services the state has to be involved in, and those that we determine it doesn't have to be involved in - get out of them, either sell them, privatise them, or find other ways to make an arrangement. All I ask is that whatever we do, we ensure that the most vulnerable in our society are not negatively affected, because the state still has to provide much of these services along the way.

In terms of the private sector, I would like one that is far more visionary-oriented, one that is far less dependent upon the state, and one that is certainly export-oriented - not focused on what you can make just in this 166 square miles. There are not enough private enterprises in Barbados that are looking to do business in the OECS or going further afield. This morning I addressed a European Partnership Agreement Implementation Strategy programme. And here again, since 2008 we signed that agreement and we're still struggling to really get into the EU market. Yes, there are some challenges on their end, but there's also a lack of willingness and aggressiveness on our part to get up. As I said this morning, sometimes I think we as a people are so conservative. I look around the region and see other companies and countries that we used to laugh at years ago, and they're pushing it because of a level of aggressiveness and determination on the part of their private sector to get up and get out and get things done - not to just moan and groan and complain. And where government provides that facilitation environment, they have to pull their weight as well.

The other side of it, Madam Deputy Speaker, as I come down the line, is the labour movement. I am not anti-labour, as some people here and there think - I am anti-stupidity. The labour movement has to see itself as a serious partner in the development of this economy and society. It really has to. And this thing of calling out a little strike and running to the media and saying you've scored one on this body, demanding to meet the Prime Minister, saying you cannot talk to the ministers - the whole body must come to a screeching halt - Barbados is not going to move forward if you have a very irresponsible labour union movement in this country. The industrial climate of Barbados needs to settle down. Nobody is going to come in here and invest in this country if we have such a reckless

labour movement. I'm not saying they're reckless at all times. The reality about it is we have always found ways to protect the workers in this country. I don't think anybody sets out to do harm. But let me say this, Madam Deputy Speaker - employees have rights and they must be respected. But employers also have rights. I am not going to sit in government and continue to watch employers being harassed and harangued because of the egos of a select few in the labour movement in this country. I stand my ground solidly on these matters. No retreat, no surrender on some of these matters. So where you have agreement between workers and employers, those agreements must be honoured. Don't come and trample all practices and convention in the face of the law.

So I believe that the three pillars - the government, the private sector and the labour movement - have a wonderful opportunity now to really work together and raise this society and raise this economy. All our constituents and all our people are asking us, Madam Deputy Speaker and colleagues in this House, for us to sometimes put aside that petty partisan divide and focus on what is best for Barbados. There are challenging times still, but there's light at the end of the tunnel. Our children are depending on us to do the right things. Our constituents are dependent on us. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am satisfied that what is being presented in this budget here this week certainly continues to take us in that direction. And there's much more that we have to do and much more we will do. The budget cannot speak to everything. Let us go there and explain the details. Let us go there and talk more about what we have to do in our sectors to drive the economy and society forward. I'm obliged to you.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. First let me give thanks to God and certainly thanks to the constituents of Christ Church West for affording me the gift of life and always the opportunity to speak on their behalf. I too wish to add my voice to this debate on the financial statements and budgetary proposals for the year 2015. Before I make my remarks, let me just say that I listened very carefully to the honourable member for St. James South, who just took his seat, and what I gathered he was saying in his introduction was that we really ought to stand as one and give credit where credit is due to the efforts prepared by the Minister of Finance. And Madam Deputy Speaker, as a moderate person, let me say to you that I have absolutely no objection where there is advantage to be gained by speaking favourably to those recommendations. But I believe that in the full context of discussion, that we must not ever fear to raise our voices where there is discord, where there is impropriety, and to state clearly that wrong is wrong, if that needs to be stated as well.

Now, I get the feeling, and there are times I sense, that the Democratic Labour Party, they are like a group of firemen who set fire to a house, work hard to extinguish the flames, and then declare that we must all celebrate the effort and we must thank them for putting out that fire. We really cannot afford to do that if they are responsible, Madam Deputy Speaker. We have to say to them that they were responsible in the first place. And the truth of the matter is that when you look at the performance of our economy over the past seven years, you would see areas where this administration has been responsible for the hole in which we found ourselves. For example, if you look at the revenue yield, you would see that it was fairly resilient over the past seven years. We really did not have a major revenue problem, but what we had was an expenditure problem, because we had an administration that had an insatiable appetite for spending the public purse. In fact, in the first year, this administration spent \$400 million in one year. And that first \$400 million actually became embedded in the national debt account. And we have had to service that account for the past seven years. They put us into that hole. They were responsible for that. So that when they work to reducing the debt, yes, we must appreciate it. But we cannot not give them a lash for spending indiscriminately in their very first year of governance.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is believed that good things come to those who wait. And we have waited for the past 20 months for these financial statements and budgetary proposals. And I really expected and I hoped that the recommendations were going to be revolutionary. I certainly believe that on the eve of Barbados celebrating 50 years of independence, what is known, I suppose in my church as a Jubilee year, a year of favour, a year of blessing. It was my prayer and it was my desire, my hope that by our administration and our commitment to the greater good of all Barbadians, that we were going to have a set of proposals that would take Barbados into the next phase of our national development. And I certainly pray that as we approach our Jubilee year, that it would indeed be a year of favour and blessing to Barbados.

So I really expected a budgetary statement that was born out of deep reflection and introspection of where we find ourselves as a nation, how we got here, and most importantly, what economic and financial measures and what fiscal innovations the government was prepared to introduce to limit our burdensome debt, to encourage job creation and economic growth, to help Barbadians cope under these very difficult times, and finally to stimulate a plan of national development so that the country's strategic objective of still gaining the status of a fully developed society in the foreseeable future would be an attainable and a realistic goal. I certainly believe, and I hold fast, that we can achieve that goal. But there must be a commitment to discipline, to transparency, to accountability, and to doing the hard things that need to be done to ensure that.

Now, I know that the Minister of Finance and even the entire cabinet may have to grapple with a plethora of very complex issues that even those on this side or those out there in the general population may not even be able to contemplate. But as I canvassed my constituency of Christ Church West, I desired to find from the people what they really wanted to see or get from this budget. And today I believe the things that they shared with me are the things that are represented by all Barbadians in our society. And I will share these things with you.

The people of Christ Church West wanted the government to acknowledge that ordinary Barbadians stood shoulder to shoulder with the government, sharing in the struggle and suffering, the sacrifice to steer Barbados through very turbulent economic times. They were prepared to forego the income - some lost jobs, they paid more in taxes, they endured increased professional fees. But they believe that having supported this government, that they now deserve to be respected, to be supported in their endeavour to accumulate personal wealth that their hard labour has earned them. In other words, the people were hoping for a budget that would allow working people to keep more of their hard earned cash in their pockets.

They wanted the government to recognise that even as we endeavour to be prosperous, there is a vulnerable class of individuals, the working poor and the abject poor, who need our protection and support through the provision of social services, health care and education. And inasmuch as some of them suffered the loss of income and certainly the loss of jobs as a result of the structural adjustment programme, that this is not the time to abandon them in these vital developmental sectors.

And finally, Madam Deputy Speaker, they desired that the government would recognise that small and micro businesses in this country are the partners to government providing employment for a substantial percentage of the population and that these businesses need to be supported administratively. They want a government that will facilitate business, commit to opening up new markets that would lead to the creation of new business opportunities and generate employment, to reduce the frustration of doing business by eliminating all the unnecessary red tape, to reduce the cost of doing business by keeping the energy prices as low as possible. And equally as important, they wanted government to honour the obligation enshrined in law by giving people back the income tax and VAT refunds so that they can further fund their personal and business obligations.

Madam Deputy Speaker, these are the things that the people of Christ Church West shared with me that they hope to see from this budget. These were the heartfelt desires of a people, a civil society, wholly committed to supporting this government. And I have to say that this

government is lucky because you govern a compliant people that really want to work with you, no matter how much pain you inflict upon them. And you would think that the government in turn would want to advance the interests of the people.

But what have we received over these past few days? First, we have been treated to the sight of a new and improved Minister of Finance. Physically, his transformation is amazing and it is commendable. He looks good. But Madam Deputy Speaker, as he put his best face and his best spin on the delivery of this year's budget, he boasted that they were able to cut the deficit by half and lower personal income tax, that they repealed the unpopular municipality waste tax. They stabilised our foreign reserves and they have secured our dollar from devaluation. And he made a promise that they will not default from our debt.

In essence, he was implying, like me, Barbados is in fine form. But Madam Deputy Speaker, when you cut away the facade of the gains that he says we have made and you look at what this budget will do in the history of Barbados, I say that this is a budget that represents a guillotine that severs the social contract this government has with its people because of the pain that it will inflict on all Barbadians.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget is a budget that seeks to extract \$204.7 million from the people of Barbados. And I want to just go into that a little more with you. This is not the first time that we have had over \$200 million in taxes extracted from our population. In fact, I recall the last time it happened was in 2008. But the difference between then and now, if I am to put it in context, is that in 2008, when we had a budget that grabbed \$204 million from the people of this country, we were really coming from a period of unprecedented prosperity in Barbados. The people had money. We had six consecutive years of economic expansion in Barbados with growth rates of 4 per cent and greater. In fact, I believe that in 2006, the economic growth rate might have been 2.7. I stand corrected if that might not be true, but I am almost certain that it was. But certainly there was prosperity in the land and people had money in their bank accounts. They had money in their credit union savings. They had money in registered retirement plans, in pension plans - we could afford because we had a disposable income to support that kind of tax grab.

But in the year 2015, after seven years of sucking this country dry of all the disposable income therein, we are now a poor country for it. We are a poor people. We have no more money to give. None. None. Most of Barbados today are living out of their personal savings. The savings in this country has been precipitous. People are just taking money out of their bank accounts to live. And whilst

I know that there are a few that will always be recession proof, will always have disposable income, will always be able to spend on things priority and non-priority, the truth of the matter is that there will be a number of people who will suffer greatly as a result of these measures imposed on Barbados. That is a fact. The quality of life will be affected as a result.

Now, one of the things that this government has posited was that our high tax rate was justified by the delivery of social services to the country. We have always postured that we delivered excellent social services to the people of Barbados - welfare, education, health. But I want to say to you that if you look critically and you analyse the estimates - and I always go to the estimates prepared by the government, so it is your document that I am using - when you go to the estimates, you will see that over the past seven years there has actually been a contraction of the monies voted for the social services in Barbados. Seven years ago, the monies voted represented approximately 50 per cent of the total budget. Today it represents 45 per cent. That is a considerable loss. So at a time when the people need their social services the most, you have abandoned them. You have contracted the monies to their social services. You have left them without that which they need the most.

So we cannot even now today justify our high tax rates by saying that we deliver excellent social services. And the two most hit are education and health - the two most vital of essential services. A government that abandons its people in its time of greatest need is a government not fit to lead.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in the area of personal income tax - yes, I appreciated the need to reform the personal income tax because I agree that the cost of administration of taxes sometimes actually eclipses all the gains that are made from those taxes. I am happy that you have removed the unpopular municipal waste tax. That, along with the consolidated tax and the other assets tax that was due to garner \$82 million last year - the administration of that tax would have been so horrendous that you would not actually have gained anything. And no wonder you complain, even with a high tax rate, that your yields are low. We need to look at the administration of these taxes.

But I believe that the people expected - they genuinely expected - that when you told them that you would put more money back into their pockets, you would not actually have been taking an additional \$9 million from them. Certainly it is a travesty that you have repealed a number of allowances that people looked forward to. Now, I heard the Honourable Member for St. James South say that some of those allowances have been on the books for a long time, that some of them have become outdated, that they have served their purpose and therefore it is

worthwhile to get rid of them. But I remember that when a number of those allowances were introduced to Barbados - things like the registered retirement pension plan and allowances for medical examinations, allowances for mortgage interest and retrofitting of your house, the home improvements and so forth - they were introduced to serve a purpose. They were introduced as incentives to Barbadians to take responsibility for their own savings and investment and preparing for their future as they aged. So the value of the allowance was actually worth more than the actual cost. And I really would like the Minister to relook the repeal of these allowances. They served a purpose then. You cannot give with one hand and take with two. There is no ease. There was no ease. None whatsoever.

I want to move, Madam Deputy Speaker, to the whole issue of the need for a tax clearance certificate. The announcement that revealed the Minister's lack of understanding of his role and the measures needed to stimulate business creation and economic growth in Barbados was that effective immediately, all professionals under the Professional Trade and Business Registration Act shall be required to produce a valid tax clearance certificate from the Barbados Revenue Authority in order to renew their respective licences to practise in this jurisdiction.

Madam Deputy Speaker, at a time when it is desirous to grow the economy and to encourage the startup of new business ventures, the Minister will suffocate the ordinary professional with this additional layer of bureaucracy. I am not going to encourage anybody to break the law or to be a wilful defaulter because I believe that the money is deserving to be collected. But the reality is that in this country we have a small number of big defaulters and they are known to the government. And I am suggesting that rather than go after everybody and behave as though you need a sledgehammer to swat a fly, leave the ordinary man alone and go after the big defaulters that are leeching you of your legitimately due monies. You know who they are. You do not go after them. Maybe many support your campaign, so you leave them alone. But you know who they are.

And I am saying to you that with this particular measure, what you are doing is that you are criminalising people who are non-violent offenders. Because the small ordinary professional out there who might be a little delinquent in paying a tax is not a wilful defaulter. In the same way that you desire to give people back their income tax refund and their VAT refund - and you can do it, and you have asked people to bear with you as you delay in the return of those refunds - for some professionals, it is a delay and not a default in the payment of tax. And I am saying to you that it is wrong to criminalise people who themselves are struggling to make ends meet. Some professionals have to make a decision of what bill to pay to

keep the business open, to keep their employees employed. I run a business, Madam Deputy Speaker, and in as much as I pay my taxes on time, I know how difficult it is for small business people to keep our businesses open.

And at a very time when we struggle, I believe it is unconstitutional for the Minister of Finance to prohibit a professional from the right to work because of a default in the payment of tax. Even a criminal under suspicion is not prevented from working in this country. And if a criminal is not prevented from working in this country, a professional in default should not be prevented from working in this country either. It is a double whammy. Because if we cannot work, we cannot pay to you what you are owed.

But more than that, I will caution the Minister that it is an administrative burden. This tax clearance certificate that he is asking for will be an administrative burden to Barbados because even now they cannot provide things in a timely fashion. Are you saying that a professional has to have registration delayed because his ministry cannot produce a tax certificate on time? I also want to know if he is prepared to take the liability if that clearance certificate does not come in time for registration by January 31st. I want to know if his ministry is prepared to pay the penalty if that tax certificate is late. I caution the Minister on this particular matter.

And I know that as I stand here, I will speak for my profession. I will speak for the dental surgeons of Barbados and I will make bold to speak for the medical professionals of this country. We are formally governed by a regulatory board - the Barbados Dental Council and the Barbados Medical Council - that has been charged with the responsibility of determining our fitness for registration, and not the Minister of Finance. So he is out of his depth and he is out of order. And so I say to you, in your wrap-up, I urge you to reconsider that unnecessary burden. You can get your money, Mr. Minister, from those big defaulters.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is much that I would like to say. I have run out of time because I really wanted to speak to certain recommendations. And I know that the other side is always charging us to speak to the issue of recommendations. There are just two that weigh heavily on my heart. The first concerns the runaway spending by this government. You have introduced a lot of measures, but I have not heard you speak in detail about how you are going to curb the expenditure that entrenches debt on the people of this country. You need to look at that very seriously.

But let me get very quickly, Madam Deputy Speaker, to a matter of health. Now, the last time I took to my feet to speak about the issue of health, I suggested to this government that in the sector of health, you are

fortunate because, inasmuch as you complain of the high cost of health care, it is a sector that is facilitated by private endeavour in the issuance of health insurance. I believe that if you truly want to find a solution to your rising cost in health, you need to make better use of personal health insurance in this country. The last time I stood, I said educate the public on how health insurance ought to be used. But I go a step further.

Even as we speak about allowances and the need to reform your budget and to get rid of some allowances and perhaps to introduce others, I say respectfully to the Minister of Finance that if you really want to curb your high cost in health and if you really want to help the people of Barbados, one of the allowances that you ought to consider is an allowance for people who hold premiums of health insurance. Consider that we spend \$3 000 per person, of which virtually \$2 000 is financed by government per person, and that government carries 65 per cent of the cost of health care. I am saying that one of the things that will serve this country is an allowance on health insurance. Let people who can purchase it do so, so that the monies that government has can be used for the most vulnerable.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I speak on behalf of the people of Christ Church West who feel betrayed by this budget. And on their behalf I say to you that it is unfortunate I am unable to fully support these measures. I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. The Honourable Member for St. [Inaudible.]

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution which was brought to this honourable chamber on Monday by the member for St. Michael North West, the minister responsible for finance in this country. As you know, sir, these measures commonly are brought to address our fiscal situation and as a whole does not address all of our social and other issues or other programmes in the country. And as such, the measures brought here on Monday are but part of a plan that as a government we have put together to move this country forward over the next year.

Sir, when I think in terms of how I see myself politically, I describe myself as a democratic socialist. And as such, sir, as you know, democratic socialists are ones who look to see programmes that move individuals, give them greater rights and greater access, for example, to health care, to education, equality between sexes - most of the programmes that as a government and as a party over the last 50 years we have championed on behalf of the people of Barbados. An examination of democratic socialist countries - one can look at the Scandinavian countries, one can look at Sweden, Canada is seen as one

of the leading democratic socialist countries, sir, Greece also, sir. But one thing that you will note from all of these countries over the last couple of years is that they have all been challenged to continue to provide the same level of social services that they have been providing in times past. In other words, sir, I am saying that they have all been challenged by the fiscal situations over the last several years. And as you know, sir, Greece is a good example of a country that has defaulted on some of its debts, that basically had to reschedule a significant portion of its debt.

I say all of that to say that, in fact, Barbados is no exception in terms of the challenges that we have had to continue to provide the same level of social services that we have done for years gone by. A look at the United Kingdom is another example - a country that has had to cut back on its social services. We saw what happened when many British citizens and residents were called upon to contribute to their university education. They had riots in the United Kingdom. So when we speak, sir, about the challenges that we have had over the last couple of years, the opposition would have you believe that Barbados continues to exist in a vacuum, that the measures that we have taken have been taken because we are selfish individuals, we are uncaring individuals. But on the contrary, it is because we care and love this country so much that we have had the intestinal fortitude to take the tough decisions that we have taken - with a view, sir, that the country will be better off as a result of our initiatives.

We have not done like the other side does. We have not initiated policies with one eye on the clock, looking to see when the elections are around the corner or not. When we sit down and look at what needs to be done, sir, we look and we put Barbados first on a continuous basis. So it is unrealistic for us to expect Barbados to continue to provide the same level of social services that we have done in the 70s, the 80s and the 90s - with an ever increasing population, but more so, sir, with an ever increasing cost associated with the provision of such services, at a time also when we, like many of our Caribbean neighbours, are earning less in our economy.

I therefore want to spend some time discussing our social programmes, the ones that were outlined in the presentation by the minister responsible for finance. But before I do so, I want to spend a few minutes on the presentation by the member for St. Michael North East, the honourable Leader of the Opposition. Because that honourable member's presentation did not start on Tuesday. It actually started Saturday, several days ago, in the media and across social media when certain agents of the honourable member were able to place certain disgusting items on Facebook and other parts of Barbados mentioning certain members on this side. So it is no surprise that the honourable member took the tack that she did yesterday in her presentation.

The honourable member made one policy statement. The one policy statement that the honourable member made is that we should look at our debt - we should look at rescheduling our debt. If memory serves me correctly, the honourable member said that we are paying 69 cents in every dollar and therefore we should look at rescheduling our debt so we have more fiscal room, more money to do other things. That comment was made last budget in her presentation. It was made again yesterday. And we accept that, in fact, that is worthy of consideration. But having made the only point that the honourable member can make, the honourable member then proceeded to behave as if it was a Sunday afternoon meeting at one of the branches across Barbados and decided that she was going to attack everyone on this side.

Now, I know that my colleagues can defend themselves, but it irked me so much that there are one or two things that I thought I would want to touch on. The member for St. Philip North is alleged to be driving a vehicle that is owned by TransTech. Now, sir, the records in terms of ownership of vehicles are public records. I would venture to suggest that if the honourable member wanted to hide the fact that he was leasing a vehicle from an entity in Barbados, he would not have gone the route that he has gone. In fact, sir, I do not understand the silliness about this thing. When one looks at who owns MN110, which is driven by the Leader of the Opposition, sir, one sees Simpson Finance - it is owned by a company. No one says that our members should not do business with Simpson Finance or with Simpson Motors. When one looks at what the member for St. James Central drives, you see Consolidated Finance. One does not say that he should not do business with Consolidated Finance, that there is something wrong with that.

And myself as Attorney General - given a large number of vehicles purchased by the police department from Simpson Motors and Courtesy and elsewhere - if I lease a vehicle for one of those organisations I am going to be accused of being corrupt because I decide to lease a vehicle from an entity that my ministry does business with? Utter nonsense and intellectual dishonesty. And it is wrong. And it is wrong. And to further make her point, the Leader of the day spent some time about transmissions and the cost of transmissions and so forth. I know that my friend from St. Philip North would deal with that nonsense. I am confident about that. But it just irked me slightly - it really, really irked me slightly - and I thought I would have to spend some time on that.

Sir, Sir, you do not worry about me. You do not worry about me. I can fix you up when I am ready. Right, sir, that is enough. Not at all, sir. Another point - because I heard it being echoed by the member for Christ Church West a couple of minutes ago. I forgive the member for Christ Church West. I forgive her.

because quite often or not the only member reads what is given to her whether she has a full appreciation of what is presented or not. Sir, I forgive the member for St. George North for the same reason. Because, sir, the issue of a tax clearance certificate for professionals - sorry, sorry, sorry. I am sorry. St. George South. I don't forgive you for anything. You're my friend. The Honourable Member for St. George South, sir, the issue of tax clearance certificates. The member for St. Michael North West in his presentation said that they were concerned about the large number of professionals who were either not on the filing or not filing at all. And therefore they believe that measures have to be taken to bring these individuals, these professionals into the tax net. And the measure being purported is an amendment to the Registration of Professionals Act to make one of the prerequisites for registration the provision of a tax clearance certificate. Nowhere in the member's presentation did he say that if you did not provide your tax clearance certificate you cannot work. Nowhere in his presentation did he say that in fact that you had to satisfy the BRA that you paid all of your taxes due to them as a prerequisite for being issued the tax clearance certificate.

The mischief here, sir, is that the Honourable Member and the Government of Barbados wants more professionals to register for tax purposes. So it is a nonsense to suggest that we are going to stop them from working when in fact what you want them to do is to pay taxes. But that is a nonsense. You want them to pay taxes, so how do you stop them from working? So obviously, Mr. Speaker, we envision a situation where if an individual, a professional, is unable to pay his taxes, that he comes into the BRA and says I cannot pay my taxes but I want to make an arrangement. That is what we want. In fact, that is what happens even today and has been happening for years. But what we are trying to do is to bring more of the professionals who are not paying taxes into the tax net. You know, sir, the irony about all of this is that the other side knows better. And worse of all, sir, there is no civil servant in this country who does not have to pay income tax every year, every month, because everything is taken out at source. That is right. Everything is at source. Every cent. So I listen to this and I shudder, sir.

You know, I hear discussion about us having a new paradigm shift, that we need a new breed of politicians, et cetera. And what I see and what I hear from the other side continues to disappoint me in that regard, because they say one thing for the media and then in practice go behind the scenes and do everything that suggests that what the public thinks about politicians is correct. Now a good example is this, sir. Recently, sir, there was a rumour going around Barbados that the member for St. Michael North East was supporting certain individuals who were involved in elections, involved with one of our trade unions. Right afterwards I heard that the gloves were off, that in fact the previous management were soft, et cetera. And I heard

comments from the other side saying we can now show them, et cetera. That is the level of concern I have for this country in terms of the things that are happening behind the scenes. But the public pronouncements are completely different.

Sir, it is all right if you live in Sunderland and were raised up in Sunderland - you can drive a \$300 000 car, no problem. That is right. But like a poor Black boy from St. Philip, it becomes an issue. That is right, it becomes an issue. It is that same mentality, that same sense of entitlement, that has the member for St. Michael North East running up and down Barbados asking people not to invest in this country, pulling down this country at every turn, because that Honourable Member believes that there is a God-given right for her to be Prime Minister of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw that. I withdraw that. I withdraw that, sir. Mr. Speaker, strike it from the record. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw that. I apologise, Mr. Speaker. I apologise, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, the point I am making and I am serious about this - the member for St. Michael North East will stop at nothing. I withdraw the comment. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the comment. Let us move on. I will move on, sir. And, sir, my final comment with respect to the member for St. Michael North East. The member for St. Michael North East has a lot to say about the member for Christ Church East. I heard yesterday that he has a doctorate that he got online and all kinds of foolishness. I also heard the member for St. Michael - Christ Church East - raise a paper in his hand and say you do not have a legal education certificate, which I dismiss as nonsense. Which I dismiss as nonsense.

But you know, sir, the member for St. Michael North East said I went to the London School of Economics. The Honourable Member did not say that I am qualified to practise law in Barbados according to the Legal Profession Act, and I am going to look into it. I am going to look into it. I never heard - I am serious - I sat here and I looked across and I said that is such a moot point. I do not understand why the Honourable Member did not simply say, well, I am qualified, and ask him to be quiet. Not a word. Not a word. So I will look into that, between myself and the member for St. James Central who likes to delve into things. He will look into it with me and we will get to the bottom of that to see whether or not our own member has been misleading the public of Barbados for the last 26 years. We are going to look into that.

So it is all right. It is all right. Because it is only on this side you hear this nonsense about us not being honourable men, et cetera. And again, sir, I look forward to the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act, because

this thing about confidential documents appearing in people's hands, et cetera - I think we really need to get behind that. I think we really need to get behind that. You know, I do not get confidential documents off anybody's desk. As a matter of fact, the only document I got off of somebody's desk recently was a note that the member for St. James Central was driving a vehicle for which road tax was asked to be paid. That is the only thing I got recently. I do not walk around asking for documents and compromising the integrity of public officers. It is wrong to come in on the floor of Parliament and read them out like it is some big secret.

I say all the time, sir, and I say this afternoon again, there is nothing that goes on in the office of the Attorney General that is not available. Anyone on that side who wants any document from the office of the Attorney General is free to ask me. Do not go asking any secretary to bring a document out and ask them to compromise their roles as public officers. Ask me for the document. There are no secrets. Just like how we can do our research and see who owns their vehicles and see who paid their tax and who got charged for assault, et cetera - we can do the research. But let me come back to the Budget. I am losing focus, sir.

Sir, my position with respect to tertiary education, sir, is well known. I am not changing my position on that - with respect to whether or not I believe that a time had come for us to ask individuals to contribute to tertiary education. Sir, I have said that I am a recipient of free education across Barbados up to university level, in fact up to law school level. And therefore, sir, I believe that I have a responsibility to provide also for my children, and those of us who came to university in the 70s, 80s and 90s should contribute and have a right to contribute to our own children and allow the Government the fiscal room to assist those who are not able to provide for themselves. And that is why, sir, in our announcements on Monday, we have said that in the first year we will make \$2.5 million available for grants, in the second year another \$5 million, and then in the third year \$7.5 million for grants or scholarships for those who are less able to provide for themselves in this country. That is our responsibility.

That is why I began by saying to you, sir, where my philosophical moorings are - by saying to you, sir, that I consider myself a democratic socialist. And so identifying where my moorings are, I can say to you that we have a responsibility, as we are doing, to ensure that those who are less able to provide for themselves can go to university like I did. That is what we are doing. And we have not hidden this fact. There has been a reduction of numbers over the last two years, but we have said, based on what has happened in other parts of the Caribbean, that you will gradually see those numbers going up.

Sir, I am also one who, for many years, has been questioning the value of some of the programmes that we have been offering at the University of the West Indies, because when I went to Cave Hill, for example, I was convinced that there were many individuals who, if you met them at the playing field and gave them their degree, they would accept it and never once step into a classroom because they had no interest in learning. The only reason why they were interested in having a degree was because they wanted to see increments on their salary. They had no interest in learning. They had no interest in utilising their degree programme to enhance what they were doing. So we had all kinds of strange programmes. I say to my colleague, the Minister of Education, the member for Christ Church East Central, that he should do an analysis in terms of the type of programmes that people have not continued their studies in and see whether or not there is in fact a direct link between these programmes and their jobs, because certainly that was always one of my concerns. So we are addressing that.

And you know, sir, education in Barbados is still of a better quality than many first world countries and certainly than many of our neighbours. So we have nothing to be ashamed about. And the cost associated therewith is lesser than almost all first world countries and almost all countries in the Caribbean. I stand by that. You can do the analysis and see. So in spite of the fact that we have asked our people to contribute to the tuition fees, when one looks at the cost of providing a college education in the United States or Canada, it is actually almost the cost of a full-time degree in Barbados that we are asking people to pay - for one year. One year of college education in those countries is three years or more of what our people are being asked to pay for tuition fees. So you know, sir, Barbados - and this is really the issue - if Barbados was a man or a woman, you would say that Barbados has a lifestyle that it cannot afford. And that is exactly the issue: we needed to make some corrective action. And that is what we have done.

I heard the member for St. George North reading from the member for St. Thomas's favourite companion and going back to 1985 on the issue of health, and that we needed to have a holistic look at health costs in Barbados. None of us have sat down and done the kind of honest and hard-working analysis necessary, because again, sir, Barbados simply cannot and could not continue to provide the same level of health care for all of its citizens for free every year. And the member for Christ Church South owes it to this Government, owes it to us on this side, to provide the information. Every year since 2008 we have provided more and more to the QEH; every year the costs have continued to escalate. However, the nature of the services we are offering are more sophisticated, they are more expensive, et cetera. And of course you have heard that we also have some challenges with non-communicable diseases - the member for St. James South, for example,

said that a dialysis patient costs about \$60 000 a year, et cetera. And therefore we have a situation where our costs continue to escalate and we need to look to see what we can do to address these costs. Because the truth is it is almost like a bottomless pit - every year we contribute more money and every year the Minister of Health, regardless of who he is, says we need some additional resources.

And it is for that reason that we have said that we are going to encourage charities, we are going to encourage individuals to contribute in their own way to the provision of health care in this country. That having been said, the reality is that we still need to have a comprehensive approach to how we finance health care in this country so that it is sustainable, so that it is affordable, and so that the average man in the street, including myself, is able to go to the QEH and know that he can receive health care at an accepted level.

Again, sir, we spend so much time criticising the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that we fail to admit that most of us, if we were anywhere in the Caribbean, would fly home. Because we know within our hearts and within our minds that there is better health care here in Bridgetown than in many parts of the Caribbean. Most of us. There are some of us, of course, who are able to run off to Canada for their annual check-up - like my friend from St. George North. I do not blame him for that. As a matter of fact, he has actually promised to take me up with him next time.

Mr. Speaker, I have no regrets, and the reason for this is that we treat ourselves very badly. And if I am sick tonight, I will go to Toronto. I have no - that is our member. Sir, I need, sir, to just recognise a few things that we are doing that impact on my own constituency. Sir, we have said that come the 23rd of September at 10 o'clock in the morning, we should have the groundbreaking ceremony at St. Lawrence Castle - a \$200 million project there, sir. I went up to St. Lawrence Castle last Saturday morning and the place is a mess in terms of coconut shells, et cetera. People are using it as a dumping ground. There are some issues on the beach in terms of sargassum seaweed, like other parts of Barbados. But I look forward, sir, to that groundbreaking ceremony, because, sir, and I can speak for my colleagues in St. Philip - once again, bring back Sam Lord's Castle. Bring back that area. It provided employment for hundreds of Barbadians. Back again, sir.

Sir, I am also told by the promoters of the project at Foul Bay that if all goes well, they should be able to have that project off the ground by sometime next year. Indeed, as I speak, they are finalising with the banks and the construction company, et cetera. There are some exciting times ahead for the people of St. Philip and in particular for the people of St. Philip South.

Sir, this administration, sir, has come in for a lot of criticism from the other side - quite unfairly, quite unfairly, by some supporters from that side and orchestrated by that side. But we will stand the test of time and truth will bear us out. And the proof of the pudding is in the eating. We are already seeing the turnaround in this economy. We are already seeing more investors coming to this country. We are already seeing the banks - in fact, sir, I am told that one bank manager got called up and reprimanded for saying that he is seeing more mortgages in his bank, that he is seeing a return of investor confidence in Barbados. They called him up and cursed him. Because no one is supposed to tell the truth about what is happening in this country unless it is negative. Unless it is negative.

Sir, I support fully this resolution. I look forward to the continuation of our policies so that this country - this country that we all purport to love so much - can continue to build and grow. I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael East. Thank you.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, I am elated to hear that the Honourable representative of St. Philip South, the Attorney General, is a social democratic socialist. We have to have a little discussion on that. There are so many socialists in here overnight. The representative from St. James as well, he also indicated that he is a socialist. But he never at any time represented the interests of the poor. And socialism itself is reflected in the attitude of an individual - it is also reflected not simply in his pronouncements. And his pronouncements certainly don't represent any socialist interest whatsoever. So I don't have to wait on his attitude. The pronouncements alone. The level of ignorance, sir. The ignorance of understanding what socialism is makes him a guilty character of not understanding his philosophy.

Sir, I heard the Honourable Member for St. James indicate that the Barbados Labour Party - in order to indicate that we had an interest in middle class representation - he got up and indicated that the lists make reference to chocolate. And he indicated that we were offended because chocolate was still on the list of paying VAT. But there is a list - a table in the document, in the appendix - that shows the items that are taken off the VAT list. But if you examine the list, you will see that a number of items that poor people eat are there. And I want to make this clear to the Minister of Finance as well. Poor people don't go to the supermarket and examine goods to see if they are having calories or if they are nutritious or not. Poor people go to the supermarket and purchase goods to survive. We don't talk about nutrition. And you know that. I know you know that well.

Today is not what you were before. I would say that the younger Minister of Finance once could have made the

point that he was a man of a social conscience. But I don't know if it is the ministry that he finds himself in. I know he started off in the Ministry of Social Care, and in that ministry I thought that was the appropriate ministry to put a man like him in. But this Ministry of Finance has turned this man into an inverted beast. The Honourable Member for Finance thinks completely differently to when I first met him.

I met him a few years ago, and in those days when we would meet, he would talk to me about the progressive thinkers of the entire Western world. And he would talk to me about what is happening in the Third World countries. He would engage in conversation about what is happening in Asia. He was concerned about social deprivation in Africa, in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in Barbados as well. Today he is a completely different person.

I saw on the list things like broken rice. I don't know what that is, but I am assuming it is for dogs. So people eat broken rice. Peas - I don't know if you have special peas. You put taxes on peas. I mean, you are trying to acquire 10 per cent of the aggregate figure that you are trying to collect from the taxes, which came as a consequence of the adjustments that you are making on the food items. And you have mackerel. I know mackerel. And I know sardine too. And you now have to pay on these items because people are now seeing these items as items not being purchased by ordinary people. I know this is not true.

If he looks at the list of items in Appendix 2 of the financial statement and budgetary proposals, he will see items listed on the first page where it says mackerel, tuna, sardines, luncheon meat, preparations of meat of bovine animals, luncheon meat, and so forth and so on - all remaining in the basket. And Appendix 1 as well - these items are here as well in Appendix 1, so we need some clarity on that. If he looks at the tariff headings, he will see that there are different tariff headings, and therefore there are actually different types of mackerel. Well, we are probably left to the discretion of the supermarkets and the shops, because in both Appendix 1 and 2 we are seeing the same items. I didn't know that there was a difference. I don't know if it is in brand name or quality. All I am hoping is that one product is not an inferior product in comparison to the other and that my people would eventually end up eating the inferior product. That is my concern.

I am not into the optics of ignorance. I am looking at how we relate to our own people - not middle class people.

in St. James. You are here to represent that interest, not me. I represent the Ivy. Right. I'm saying that we probably need to clarify this so at least most of us would be able to think. The other point before I get into, sir, is that

the Honourable Member for St. Philip South - the point that you made earlier, and I'm hearing that you made none. But you said that as a result of the increase in the population, we can no longer respond to the demands of the social services. Do you know what you said? Are you aware of what the Honourable Member said to us? That a population that has not gone beyond 280 000 persons, we are unable to sustain or resuscitate the social gains which we have made over the years because the population is too small. I don't even know if I should call that facetious, a fallacy, or what.

The reality is we have an agenda. And we must continue to reach the optimum point until we reach the optimum point of that agenda today. We have not taken control of the economic command of this society yet. You know from your own experiences of observation and people coming to you every day, we cannot jettison the interest of the individual. If it is the same budget, it's the same estimate, and you are just as foolish now as you were then. We cannot ignore the demands of people on a daily basis. Sometimes, sir, we have to think before we talk. Because we came here with a mandate to carry out a specific task. And it goes back not from the last 49 years. It goes back from the time we were given the responsibility. The social agenda was always critical to the work that we do. And if we move off of that agenda, then we're going to make mistakes after mistakes.

The reason why you look at the goods or the items that we had to place back on is because a philosophical principle - apart from getting just \$20 million out of the \$200 million - you have to take into consideration the basic things in life that people need in order to survive. It is not about any discipline. I understand the point made by the Minister of Finance; it is not about any discipline, it is that we are still facing poverty. This Government itself carried out a recent study which was done by the Caribbean Development Bank Country Assessment of Living Conditions in 2010. And if the information here tells you that in 2010, with a declining economic situation, the figures in here tell you that 19.3 per cent of individuals in this society was living below the poverty line. That's the first item on the agenda for us in here. You have to be able to save the most vulnerable.

And if that is the same speech you're going to hear, as I said to you before, how you like the Lord's Prayer - you have to hear it because you got a hard head and we got to find a way of getting it inside. It might take you probably six months to understand what somebody will learn in two hours. In 2010 we had 19.3 per cent of unemployment and we are now - I just want to tell you that your retention is poor. Please address the Chair. I'm just saying there's a problem with retention because I am the one who said those words. Even in 2010 we had close to 20 per cent of all people. And the most recent official social investigation or assessment between 2010 and today,

obviously we have to be at a level that is way beyond the 19.3 per cent that this document - which is an official document, not by any assessment by two or three persons - as indicated to me by a cadre of reputable agencies. And they tell you that the poverty line at that time, they gauge it at \$7 860.65, meaning that in 2010 the average person below approximately \$8 000 a year was below the poverty line.

And the study went on to classify another group as a vulnerable group as well, and that is also included in this study. So although we have people that are below the poverty line, there is a definition that speaks to persons who are marginal as well and that can easily fall into the poverty line within a short space of time. It is very difficult in these circumstances, especially if you're not bringing in the required revenue, to be able to respond to the demands in the social services. But you don't rationalise this failure by saying that the population is too large and we are now going to abandon our duties to these people. That's all I'm saying. I would like people to take that into consideration because if we fail as parliamentarians - I'm on the opposition side - but if we fail in that regard, it means that many of our families will suffer as a result of ill-conceived policy badly rationalised in the circumstances.

So that's all that I want to say. It is not a criticism at a personal level, but it is my view that we have to keep these guidelines intact if we are all democratic socialists in the exercise. I am not today talking about the tragedy of what was exposed in what could be described as a modern-day Sodom and Gomorrah - not the sexual aspect of it, but all the other social ills. It is a reflection and a replica of what was. All the social ills are being repeated and I'm not going to be critical of that. The public will judge those things. Other people will put their counter-arguments on the table. But I have a view that it would not be a very useful exercise because the general public already believe that what was said is worthy of public consideration. So the job is now yours to determine - or you wait till the election and you will be able to determine if it had any negative impact on the attributes of the individuals who have been charged for the offence. I can't tell you that; I have not even had enough time to spend an hour on the ground since then. I'll be able to tell you what the public feedback is.

But if we are going to address this thing called poverty - and I want to be there in this discussion - the other aspects of the discussions I believe belong to other people who hold an interest in those areas, even if the interest is there because they are agents of the corporate sector. I have an interest in the concerns of people. I am concerned about the amount of people in Barbados who are still in need. This is my personal experience every day. Public housing and how we are being pushed away from the social agenda. Again, we are pushed away from the agenda. They're not interested in purchasing houses. They

can't purchase houses. The demand is still very much there for rental units in the system. There was a time when the welfare department used to respond to these things and the state took full responsibility for giving access to a small welfare unit. But that is no more. But at least we have to find a way of producing low-income houses for rent. We have to do that. There are too many people at present not sleeping in homes, earning the title sometimes of squatters, loiterers, all kinds of pejoratives, vagrants. We have to address that. And if we are being driven by investors into producing houses for exorbitant prices, then the state must step back and ask itself if they are not going off track in relation to the agenda that was set by us as a result of the dynamics and the experiences of our own people.

I don't know where any minister is in relation to the people from Everton Lane that was supposed to go to Barbary's Hill. What I know is in the Ivy housing area people still holding letters of intent, not having in their possession any title deed for the government housing units. We heard that the problem was that you had communal wells that you had to resolve - wells where two or three different houses had pipes attached to one common well. We heard that. We heard that the Town and Country Planning would not allow the transfers because they said there were extensions that were there illegally and they were not going to allow the transfer. I don't know where we are with that, but I am curious because I want to see the people, the ordinary people, owning a house as well. They can use it as capital even to get a little \$500 or \$600 from the bank.

What is the position in relation to the partition walls which were supposed to come up through the roof - firewalls in the roof? Is the minister addressing these issues to allow for the free transfer of these houses? You are not receiving rent anymore for the houses because people say they want them and they are willing to buy. Even when people cannot buy food on a daily basis, they are putting money aside for any kind of legal transaction that is a prerequisite for the transfer of the house. And the NHC is not responding favourably to these people.

In Second Avenue Haggett Hall - the Honourable Member has five minutes, sir - in Second Avenue Haggett Hall, there is a parcel of land between Haggett Hall and Barker's Road. And I want to know where you are with that because I had to face the charge - well, not the charge so much - but you were offering these things to people in my constituency in 2013 with the expectation that if you were going to build 16 units you told about 116 people in the community that they would get one of the units up there. And up to now nobody - nobody created that kind of social disharmony, that kind of social dis cohesion in my community, with the hope that it would have brought you votes. I really would like the Minister for Housing and

Lands at least to inform me of where we are with some of these developments across St. Michael East.

I just don't want to get into all these things. I want to talk as well on some matters related to transport and works. But my concern, sir, is Coverley - started 2008, 1 000 units and I think about 26 units so far. It is said that 415 of the units were completed. Approximately 280 or so people in Coverley are occupied. What is happening with this project? The Government must be somewhere that the Government can step in. These three-bedroom houses up there are \$342 000. Nobody's going to buy those things for \$342 000. That private sector did that in Coverley as well. But you have a businessman up there - when the workers sell a unit, he is giving them a stipend of a hundred dollars. After selling the unit for \$342 000 he gives a stipend of \$100 to the people who work in the company. An entire staff at present that is extremely angry with the management at Coverley. And every day somebody is packing up and moving out. Because a lot of the people who live in the units are leasing the units - even leasing the units to staff so that you can deduct money from the wages of the staff in order to get some money to carry to the bank - and people are leaving every day.

A supermarket was opened up there. The supermarket closed. A gym. The gym closed. They're supposed to be opening a preschool this week. A Chinese restaurant was there. It closed. The vegetarian restaurant closed as well. I think we have some projects on our hands and all it really calls for is courage. You have so many legal minds on that side. The Prime Minister is a prudent and a very competent legal mind. I don't know the others but at least she should be able to give some guidance to the Minister of Housing and Lands. It does not make sense that we're turning all across the landscape and we are seeing dots of houses across the landscape and human beings don't live in them. Rats and frogs and lizards occupying these places. And state funds involved - if not in the construction of the units, the actual lands belong to the state.

I strongly believe that you are finding yourself in a situation where many Barbadians who live here - because I remember there was a pilot who got into some difficulty here in Barbados and the newspaper reported that he purchased one of the units up there. I don't know if that's the example of what is happening, that many non-Barbadians are purchasing these units. Yet we have a demand at the National Housing Corporation that is backing up over 20 000. I am very, very concerned about this, sir.

The other issues - I wish we had enough time to touch on them because I have some problems as well in my Zone One pocket and I would really like the minister who is responsible for environment and water, the two

ministers, at least to go on a tour with me. I'll see if we can find a reasonable approach that we can at least resolve some of the challenges. I don't want these people to be harassed by any Town and Country Planning Department or by any of the departments, the Ministry of Health, anybody charging the people out there who, you know, built on the land space of the Belle Plantation because they were forced to construct a house on the lands. So I'm just asking whether, while waiting to do something like that, an arrangement can be made so we can go on a visit to the area and at least let me point out one or two of these things to you. You are always in the area, but I don't know if you would take the information back to the Cabinet itself and get the changes done. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much at least for indulging me for this period of time.

Mr. SPEAKER: It's my pleasure. My pleasure. Next. Yes. You are the Member for - okay, no problem. Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support the resolution before the House. And this resolution, Mr. Speaker, speaks to the work being done by the Minister of Finance, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, and by extension, the Government of Barbados, as they all look to grow the economy of Barbados, as they look to control the fiscal deficit and to engender a quality of life for all Barbadians which would make it possible for them from cradle to grave to enjoy those things which most likely the good Lord wanted them to enjoy.

And this resolution says that. The overall objective is to reduce the fiscal deficit to below 2 per cent by 2020-2021 - a mere five to six years from now - through a selected set of policies to be implemented over what can be considered a reasonable time frame, still remains to be realised. You find, Sir, that two years ago, or just about a year and a half ago, we were in great pains having realised that our fiscal deficit was somewhere in the region of 11.5 per cent and was causing substantial strain on the resources of Barbados, including its foreign exchange. Therefore, through the Ministry of Finance, the Minister of Finance, and agreed to by the Cabinet, a set of policies were developed to help bring this deficit down from 11.5 or 11.6 per cent to what we currently have of about 6.7 or 6.6 per cent. And therefore, from the outset, one can say that those policies seem to have worked.

We have to remain extremely focused, we have to remain extremely tight as we manage this fiscal deficit down even further, or we are going to be - fiscal, not physical - unable to garner or realise the benefits which were set out in our various policies. And therefore this budget is but a continuation of that particular strategy. I know that many of us would prefer the magic wand to

wave so that we would not have had to make adjustments to the labour force in the public sector, so that we would not have had to place on Barbadians a consolidated tax, so that we would not have had to put on Barbadians the municipal tax, albeit for the period that it was on, so that we would not have had to increase back several years ago from 15 per cent to 17.5 per cent. But that magic wand does not exist. We might all be dreamers, but we are not dreaming correctly in this instance. We have to do the hard work now so that in the future we can see even greater benefits accruing to this economy and this society.

Barbados is an interesting paradise. We have called it so over time because of what policies we have engendered, what programmes have been put in place by and large by policies of governments of Barbados, by the legislative agenda, by the private sector doing what was necessary in this country. And therefore, together - and don't let me leave out, Mr. Speaker, the trade unions as well. We cannot leave the trade unions out. That all of these entities working together on behalf of the people brought about a set of living conditions, a set of standards which made Barbados the envy of many.

Now, Barbados' journey in what I have just described was not achieved over a very long period of time. Because even though the riots and Revolution of 1937 was the watershed period for so many things happening in Barbados, including the development of trade unions, the establishment of political parties like the Barbados Labour Party, you would realise that by 1950 we were still in several or in severe difficult circumstances. And as far back as 1955, 1957, all of this still remained. And that is why you saw a departure from the ranks of the Barbados Labour Party of persons - as he was called then, Mr. Earl Barrow. Persons like, a little later on, L. B. Brathwaite, the father of Lloyd Brathwaite, who operates an establishment at Kendall Hill in Christ Church. I want to praise that young man, albeit not as young now as he was when we were at school. He was about three years my junior at a school then opposite to a place owned by the now departed Lionel Cragg, at Pilgrim Place - a school called Saint Bartholomew Boys. And if you know and follow the journey of this entrepreneur, you will realise that he is a genuine entrepreneur.

Yes, Representative of St. Andrew. That is true. An interesting entrepreneur. An individual who started out as a mechanic - that is how he started out. And therefore I feel a sense of pain - P-A-I-N - and I would include you in this. That yesterday certain comments were made against him. A young man who struggled, and today has an establishment built off of blood, sweat and tears, but a mental acuity in his area of endeavour that is second to none in this country.

Again, what hurts me, Mr. Speaker, is that somehow the complexion or the tone of his skin is not fair-skinned from the Mediterranean climes or the European climes. He was not necessarily born in Malaheim. Even though when you look at his father's house just below the gas station at the corner of Wilcox and Pilgrim Road, you said he had a reasonable living standard. But he struggled. If you understood the family dynamics - remember for St. Michael, your friend from St. Michael North East that you praise this afternoon - it seems as though we have severe self-hatred, either of ourselves or of our kind. And I keep wondering where has this come from? Anytime in this country that a black man or woman rises up out of their conditions, they have to have gone through some criminal endeavour. That is what I see. Anytime they move up and develop, they are a criminal. And it is not Caucasians in this country that refer to them as criminals or corrupt or sleazy. It is persons of their same taint and tone. And something is wrong with that. Something is just wrong with that. They cannot be bright. They cannot have deep intellect. They do not have to have the ability and know-how to be creative. And I wonder if any member on that side has ever had a conversation with that individual to understand the power of his mind, how he sees Barbados. I would encourage you to have a conversation with him. And it is not with the fellow that you got in court - I respect you for that. And this must stop. This must stop. We cannot be killing off each other.

There was a time when you looked across to the east or you looked downward to the west - none of us, not one of us, would have been in here. Not one of us would have been in here. That is right - landowners. We were out there with dray carts not being pulled by horses or mules; they were pulled by our foreparents. We were not in here. We were pulling the drays. We were rolling the sugar in their containers - in the barrels - to the barges to carry them out to ship to Europe, the sugar and the molasses. To Europe. That is where we were. And therefore it pains me that after the work, the hard work of persons who have gone now or maybe some who still remain, that we can find time rather than be on a developmental agenda for Barbados and the Caribbean, that we could be spouting such putridity at each other. That pains me. There is a time for a little joke as colleagues and comrades. But the nastiness that I saw visited on this House over the last two days should be abhorred, and I am serious about it. Should be abhorred.

I mean, somebody can call me whatever they like - I have no quarrel with that - because one thing I know is I know myself. I know myself. I know myself. And I can assure you, approaching 9 000 constituents - voting constituents, because more than that - that this representative they have elected on three occasions, I will do it on the fourth if I run. No man, woman, KGB, CIA, FBI, the Criminal Investigations Department of the Royal Barbados Police Force will have me in chains. So I fear

none of them. The person I fear is only God - not one other. And I think it is gross disrespect, gross. It is akin to the same kind of mentality that I am talking about. I hope you get good money - I sincerely hope you get good money out of the Member for St. James North. But let me continue on this budget and speaking these truths. We have to stop it.

Barbados did not inflict these wounds on itself. Barbados is a society on the periphery of global development. What you think - these countries from Jamaica in the north are on the periphery of global development. Trinidad and Tobago with its oil and its gas is also on the periphery of global development. Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent - the only countries in CARICOM - there are about three of them: Guyana, Suriname and Belize that have problems over issues of land and territorial waters. And so-called friends of the Caribbean are seen in the midst of their own despair because somehow oil has been found or is soon to have been found off the coast of Guyana, Grenada, so somebody else wants it. Nobody says, well, not understanding the colonial impacts of division of land and property, that we can share or participate in that resource because that would be the better notion. That said, I want all - you cannot have none. Those are the kind of realities that we face.

We live on the periphery of the global economy. The IMF, the World Bank and all of them that we are part of their arrangement have come over and over. And they do not see themselves as failures even though they have gone into Jamaica eight times. You could understand eight times going in with some arrangement, inflicting pain on the people, and within two years after they leave, all kinds of things happen in the world to push Jamaica back into difficulty. I am old enough to know when Jamaica's currency was even better than that of the US - 3 to 1 - to find out that the Jamaican dollar vis-à-vis the Barbados dollar is almost 53 or 54 to 1. I go to Jamaica from time to time and I feel the pain of the people, the exploitation which can be engendered as a result of what exists within that particular dynamic.

And therefore in Barbados, where we have fought stoutly over time to protect our currency - because the value of currency is not magic. The IMF tells you if you devalue or adjust the parity of your dollar that you are going to export more. But you have to have it in the first place to export it. You have to have all kinds of programmes and policies and licences to get it into their marketplace. But it is these barriers that are constructed to keep us out that make a mockery of the same policy prescription that they have advocated in the first instance. That is what is happening. So for the last seven years we have had difficult circumstances, and if anybody on this side says no, they are not my friend and comrades. We have had difficult circumstances and we have put in place

all kinds of strategies. Those that did not work, you change, because we live in a dynamic reality.

Sometimes I get vexed with the Minister of Finance. I do. Look, I do, I do. And I will tell you why. We have assessed on oil that paid down that massive debt - \$180 million that was built up, paid it down. We have other debts; we have issues at the hospital where private sector suppliers are owed. And that is a creative idea that you have paid down the debt for the oil people owed by the government. We have to pay down that. So I would not have put a year on it; I would have kept it open-ended. We have got to stop putting a year on this and a year on that and then come back and change it, until we can clean up all of these things. The people have to - just like all of us - carry a sacrifice, because this rock is our rock. So when we clean up, this must be the debt and owing of the people at the QEH. And even though I know that we are working on dealing with the debt at the University of the West Indies, what we are doing is not going to cover all. So I want some of that cessation to pay down that debt too.

Are you serious? Why should we just play fast? The people are not complaining - they are driving motor cars, they still drive around every day right around this 166 square miles. They know how to manage, and we do not give them the kind of praise for their own management because somehow we feel that we are lords over all of them. They make decisions too about how they want to live and survive. And I compliment in many instances their ingenuity beyond the capacity of some members in this place. Their ingenuity allowed them to survive and to live and to contribute with their families and their communities and their villages. We do not hold everything in our grasp.

You try, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East. Sometimes your language is buried in a bygone era, but your heart is pretty good. I know what you want to achieve, but it just cannot be achieved by saying, okay, we have 28 000 people on a list at NHC, so we are going to build 28 000 lower-income houses and tell the people go and rent those, without knowing where the resource is coming from. We can build them but we have to go on board with money all over the place and carry out the debt. All of us know that the largest slice of our expenditure year to year is our interest payments on debt, amortisation, and putting money in the sinking fund to look after future debt. This year I believe it is about \$1.7 billion. That is a tremendous amount of money. So that is why the emergence of notions of rescheduling or restructuring - I am for anything that protects the integrity of Barbados and Barbadians. But something has to be done to give us some space to breathe a little better. A lot of the debt that we have was to keep Barbados afloat, to build out sectors of the economy - debt that was started way back in about 1971, and constantly being added to because we do not generate enough within our economy to pay for everything.

Neither does the United States - their debt is maybe 11 trillion now. 11 trillion. I do not even know what a trillion looks like.

I do not know why we are going to spend time in here destroying and discrediting and lambasting and talking about corruption and this and that. If there is corruption, you deal with corruption - I do not care where it is. The point is that our reality is a pained reality - P-A-I-N-E-D. It is a pained reality because no matter how hard we try, either in our international business arena where we gain some success, somebody comes round the back and changes the rules. So we have to try all over again. When sugar was king and we were supplying Europe, the fellow said, well, let us keep the horseshoe on their backs. Let us go and find all kinds of artificial sweeteners. Let us deny them good prices for the product, the primary product of their lands. So Jamaica abandoned sugar - I believe the Chinese are bringing that back now. Trinidad abandoned. St. Kitts abandoned. Everybody said Barbados should abandon. But one of the things we have said is we need this to protect the coverage of the land surface of Barbados, also to generate molasses to help our rum industry stabilise it.

So we have all to work together. That is what we are. We cannot walk around and say that we are Labour parties and not put in the labour, not put in any hard work, not discuss with each other the developmental agenda. Rather than spend time trashing each other - it is unproductive, unwarranted behaviour that needs to cease.

I have not said much on education because we spent in March two days - two days on education. I want to speak one thing. The Government of Barbados in its wisdom - and I am talking about historical government - beyond the university here at Cave Hill or in the Caribbean, said, look, there are still priority areas needed for national development, and we will institute a scheme called the National Development Scholarship, which will go out to those persons who show the particular bent in the area of priorities. So between 2008 and 2014 - the current set is now being advertised - we developed a whole series. Most of the times you have 10. I saw under the Barbados Labour Party of that time they had 16, as I looked through the historical data. And I am not going to make any claims about who got those, because I do not know them, I do not interview them. The law says that the minister carries the responsibility. So they come to me as a recommendation and I just said, look, this area at this time - because that is the prerogative of the minister - needed that push now rather than this area, once or twice, not many times, as you take your recommendations from your people.

So we had 10 in 2008, 10 in 2009, 10 in 2010, about 10 in 2011. Yes, we had 23 in 2012. And you know why? Not because there was no election coming. Because in fact,

the Democratic Labour Party should have won that election with even greater numbers - with even greater numbers - because they were walking about saying, log it off, big, we already won. Lack of ability to plan properly for execution of even an election. And you know where the resources came from? Five people who did not previously take up their scholarships, particularly in the medical area - urology that we had sponsored, plastic surgery and those areas. So we took the resources and supported cultural development because the Minister with responsibility for Youth, Sports and Culture had brought the cultural bill, and we said, look, we had a BA in Finance Dance, BA Creative Writing, Film and Cinema Technologies, MA Creative Cultural Entrepreneurship. That is where the focus was put. That is what caused the expansion, and most of these have already completed. You might have one or two who are doing bachelor's degrees; those with the master's quality completed since 2013 and are in this country making a contribution.

So all of this foolishness - the language and the particular assertions, negative as they are, from the Honourable Member for St. James North - must cease. It is not hanky-panky. There is no form which says do you support B, D, C, E, F or G. Nobody looks at that, because by and large these are young people of Barbados. If you look at what is happening this year - orthotics and prosthetics. You know why? We have only one person in Barbados who trained about two years ago in that field. We need two or three more because we are cutting off people's feet because of diabetes all over this place. So we need more than one. This government supported one before who is finishing up work and practice with a colleague from Canada in Trinidad as I speak. So hopefully somebody will get orthotics and prosthetics in this year's round. Something in orchestral music - we have had persons going home from the police band who were serious. So you need somebody with ability, and there are young people in there. I hope one of these applies so that they can continue. That is how strategically we are thinking.

I know that we have had some difficulties at Cave Hill. We all know. Yes, I would want more than \$2.5 million. There are more persons out there, but you have got to eat little and live long. I am appreciative of the comments of the new principal at Cave Hill. I do not walk and hand-pick them and say, well, you have got to come here with a DLP passport or BLP passport. I do not know what yours looks like, but if you had to come in and say to me I am a member of the DLP, I would get offended, because that should not be the case. It should be on your merit, on your case, and on the priorities established. That is how it should be. It cannot be any other way. We can have our battles, but we must not put our battles on the backs of the young people of this country. Honourable Member, please. So this foolishness must stop.

I know on the other side you carry a burden, and the burden is the Member for St. James North. But you cannot get rid of him. I know the Member for St. Andrew would more than likely get rid of him. But when he collects his money from the court, then you can get rid of him. You can do whatever you want with him. But spoilage and its behaviour must cease.

This budget is but just another step in trying to help clean up a whole set of issues. We cannot keep fooling the people. This country, just like a motor car, needs oil and gas and water. You cannot, otherwise, run it. There are people who are saying, okay, give Barbados everything - this is how you are going to run it. You cannot run it on an empty engine. You can only push it. And if it gets ahead of you, it is going to crash, especially if you are behind it. And therefore, this government must be complimented for its effort to stop the collapse and the tragedy that would have ensued if you did not say, put the brakes on, ease it gently forward, all of you gather around and help it and move it forward till we get it on level ground and we can properly refuel it. It has to be a total national contribution - not only by a few, but by all, regardless of colour, class, creed, where you live or do not live. If you live in Sandy Lane or you live in Mosaic Street or you live in Chapman Lane - regardless, this is what we have to do. So let us stop this thing about this body corrupting that body. And you have persons who do not discern what is political propaganda. A lot of things said would not be said on the streets of Barbados.

Barbados because you know then other laws kick in. But in this House, because all right, you can get up and you can tell all kinds of nonsense to people who believe it because the Member for St. Philip North can't drive. I don't know the name of them cars. I drive a little buggy, thank God. You must stop hitting people. But the point is, yeah, buggy. I don't drive a Range Rover. I don't have \$300 000, even if you ask me. That is to save my life. But there's not a wrong effort. Eventually I get it through Enterprise, the health, family and those who are in need, or the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. I know I have to shut up, Mr. Speaker. I will speak in some other place at another time. All I'm trying to say, the endeavour, the effort must be one that must be encouraged and as we do that and encourage and develop and close the fiscal gap, cause our GDP to grow, that more and more of our people will become engaged in meaningful work and meaningful labour and truly self-actualised to get the things that they truly want. My support for this resolution, Mr. Speaker, is 100 per cent. Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Member for St. Michael South Central - St. Michael South East.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to lend my voice to this year's financial

statement and budgetary proposals which have been laid in this Parliament by the Honourable Minister of Finance, the Member for St. Michael North West. Mr. Speaker, I don't share the last speaker's comments in relation to this not being a place where we speak about corruption. And I want to start there because I do believe that in any debate in this chamber where we are addressing any matter of critical importance regarding how this country moves forward, if there are allegations, if there are trumped-up allegations, as the Honourable Member would want to allude to, that we have a responsibility to the people of this country to discuss these issues in this particular place. If it is that we cannot discuss the issues here, where are we to discuss them? If it is that we cannot hold our leaders in this country to certain standards, then how are we to expect that in statutory corporations, in the other public bodies in this country, in the private sector, in our schools, that we are to ask other persons to be held up to a particular standard in this country? It has to start here.

So in discussing the budget that is before this chamber, I do believe that there is a place, if it arises, for us to discuss allegations of corruption. Because if there are charges that are laid against the members of the government side which in the long term we find to be true, then it affects what is in this wonderful blue-page document. Because it will mean that there may have been those on the government side who may have been dipping into the public purse, who may have been giving out concessions to persons who should not have been getting them. It may mean that people in this country have not been getting their fair share of the pie. And therefore, when we come to present a budget to this country, I do believe that we have to talk about these issues.

It is not, Mr. Speaker, in this debate for us to be talking about who has certificates and who has qualifications to be able to practise in this country; there is a time and a place for that. And if it is that the learned Attorney General or others on that side believe that there are people in the Barbados Labour Party or even amongst their own cadre of Members of Parliament who don't have the requisite qualifications to practise in this country, then they need to take the appropriate steps to deal with those persons.

But I want to say to Honourable Members and to this country and to those who are listening that the reality is that when allegations are made against the leader of the Barbados Labour Party about whether she has a practising certificate, I want to say to Honourable Members, particularly the lawyers, you need to come better than that. Because many of you, if you did the research, would realise that there was a period during which there was a transition in this country, with respect of persons, attorneys at law, who coming from the United Kingdom, coming back to Barbados, could not practise law unless they went to

Trinidad for a six-month period. Now, in the transitional period, there were three individuals in this country who would have been allowed in that transitional period to be allowed to practise law in this country. And the leader of the Barbados Labour Party was one of them. In addition to that, there is a judge of the High Court who is also one of the persons who was in transition. And there was also another prominent attorney in this country who continues to practise year after year. So if it is that we are going to reduce a debate on serious issues in this country to one on whether somebody has a legal certificate to practise, I have to wonder what we have now been reduced to.

Because the 11 workers - and hear me good - the 11 workers at BDC that at 3.00 this afternoon received letters of termination do not care whether the leader of the Barbados Labour Party had a practising certificate for the last couple of years. That is the reality. And that is what the members on the other side need to be aware of.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, please permit the Member to make her contribution.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Madam Deputy Speaker, I understand how this works in here. Anytime that attention is drawn to the deficiencies of the Democratic Labour Party in dealing with the issues of the people of this country, they become rattled. So I am not allowed to speak. But I want, Madam Deputy Speaker, through you, to let the people of this country know that so long as I have breath in my body and so long as the members on this side have breath in their body, we will continue to fight for the people of this country and we will not be railroaded by practising certificates. We are not going to be railroaded by the smoke and mirrors of the Democratic Labour Party administration because we have one focus and one agenda only. And it is to improve the lives of all Barbadians - not Barbados Labour Party people or Democratic Labour Party people - but of all Barbadians.

So if the Attorney General wants to speak in this debate, he should speak about the Cahill agreement. Because that is the question that the entire country wants to know about. That is the reality. They want to know if it is the case that the Attorney General and the Solicitor General did not sign off on an agreement for the plasma gasification for waste energy in this country. That is what the people of this country want to know. That is what the people, according to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas that we heard last night, want to know in what they call the little town of St. Thomas. That is the reality. They are not interested in that.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, there are issues of governance that arise even in relation to this budget. If it is

that we are now in a Barbados where a Democratic Labour Party administration that came to government -

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Members, can we get some order in here? Thank you, ma'am. Thank you.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: If it is that we are now in a Barbados where in 2008, a Democratic Labour Party administration came to government, speaking about good government governance, speaking about accountability in high office, speaking about a prevention of corruption legislation, speaking about a free Freedom of Information act that would be passed. And let me remind members on the other side that the late Prime Minister also asked each of you to sign off on a ministerial code of conduct. And the reality of that is, the reality of that is that for those who want to put that aside, the people of this country voted. The ones who voted for you believed what you put out there, that the Barbados Labour Party was the most corrupt government ever. So if it is that y'all came into power to clean up the mess of the Barbados Labour Party, it is only prudent that the Democratic Labour Party members, in justifying this budget proposal, address the issue of corruption in high and low places. That is what we have to talk about in this debate.

Because, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would have expected honourable members in this chamber because we call ourselves honourable. But sometimes the public even questions the terminology that we use of ourselves and of others. But at the end of the day when we say honourable, we expect that if allegations are made that we would hear members defending. And I am hoping that the Honourable Minister of Finance, I know he is waiting for the opportunity in his wrap up to curse all of the members on the Barbados Labour Party, but it will not stop us.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I know he is concerned, as he did, he said in his presentation that I went with the tippers in protest against the measures of the Democratic Labour Party. He is afraid of that. And he is afraid of that because he knows that the policy that was implemented was unfair to the very people that we have to protect. But I want, through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, to reassure the Honourable Member and Minister of Finance that whether it is the tippers, whether it is the people in Transport Board, whether it is the 11 people that have been sent home from the BDC today, of whom I am told one person has been hospitalised when they received the letter, one person is at the hospital, one person collapsed as well. This is what we are dealing with. And we are here to discuss a budget where we are talking about everything being fine, where a Minister of Labour could tell people on Labour Day that as far as she is aware, there is no more layoffs that is going to happen in the public sector. She couched it in terms that unless something drastic happened, that there may be

layoffs, but she said she did not expect any layoffs. So what are the 11 persons from BIDC who have gone home today to think?

Because what happens to this country now is you have 11 more households, Madam Deputy Speaker, that are now affected because these persons have had to be made redundant. That is the reality. They are affected not just by what is happening in this budget, but they are affected by the last seven years of a Democratic Labour Party administration that has failed to address the issue of growth in this country, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is what they have failed to address. Because when a Minister of Finance can come to a country in a 2013 budget and say to a country that his fiscal adjustment programme has gone off track, his fiscal adjustment programme, not ours, not the Barbados Labour Party, but his fiscal adjustment programme has gone off track. That \$300 million in reserves, foreign reserves, are gone. And now he must inflict, inflict on the people of this country even more drastic measures to be able to reduce the fiscal deficit. I say to the people of this country, if you have not had enough, I have had enough of them. That is what I say to this country.

Madam Deputy Speaker, when you look at the very people whom this government speaks of are the persons and the businesses who are supposed to take us out of this financial mess, the very people have been inflicted with some of the harshest punishments by this administration. And if you look very carefully at the people who you want to drive the economy, you are talking about the private sector. We always hear in the private sector has to do more. The private sector too lazy. That is what we hear coming from the other side. But if we take a few minutes, Madam Deputy Speaker, to ask ourselves what is happening in the private sector, you will realise that this budget does not address persons in the private sector who have been holding strain for the last seven years. That is the reality.

The small businesses in this country, Ma'am, will be affected by the mobile tax. The householders in this country will be affected by the mobile tax. Ma'am, I took the opportunity because I do not know if people fully appreciate the implications that this tax will have. When the Honourable Minister announced it, he spoke of three cents. Now, I do not know since when we speak in three cents, but let us take the three cents as being the rate that is going to be applied. Because you know this administration has a way of coming with three cents today and then telling you next week it is five cents. But I will wait for further announcement from the Minister.

Now, Ma'am, when the late Prime Minister said that there were in 2008, that there were 290 cell phones on the island at the time and that he was proposing to introduce a four dollar tax on post and prepaid mobile phones, that

measure was supposed to raise \$13.9 million per annum. Now, Ma'am, what is interesting is that in this budget proposal, the Honourable Minister of Finance says he does not know why that tax was never implemented, making it seem as though he has not been the Minister of Finance since the departure of the late Prime Minister. As if he was not aware of all the previous budgetary statements that were laid in this chamber. But what is even more interesting, Ma'am, is that he speaks to the fact that in 2015 that this tax, at least some of it, is to be applied to education. When in truth and in fact, Ma'am, when the late Prime Minister spoke about this tax, he was very specific about what this tax was actually to be used for. And I am not surprised that we have deviated on that side, rather, in relation to the legacy left by the late Prime Minister or even the Right Excellent Sir Errol Barrow. Because the Democratic Labour Party today does not resemble the Democratic Labour Party of long ago. So it does not surprise me that sometimes they distance themselves from policies which have been set by their own people.

But Ma'am, what is interesting is that it brings the mobile tax on airtime. And the impression given is that it is the same as what the former Prime Minister intended. But that is not the case. He says that only some of the resources are to be used to provide the Ministry of Education with a special fund for a new national tuition scholarship programme. So some of the resources will be used. We do not know how much of the resources will be used, Ma'am, but some of them he has indicated now will be used, not the full amount as intended initially by the late Prime Minister Thompson.

How does this affect business in this country? Ma'am, there are many businesses, particularly small businesses, that use their phone. People in the entertainment sector, people who are artisans, people who do not have fixed places of business, but they are on the road on several occasions trying to make a living, trying to sell their services. If you look at the effect that this will have on householders, we can average that at least an hour daily is used by persons in households utilising the phone service. If you use your phone for one hour at the three cents, you are looking at \$1.80. If you multiply that, Ma'am, by 30 days, you are looking at \$54 additional a month. That is the reality. \$54 just for talking an hour a day, for 30 days of any given month. If you are a small business, if you are a medium sized business, if you are a large business and you have several employees and you utilise a phone, particularly a cell phone, to be able to engage in the practice of business, you are looking, say, at a minimum of four hours per day for sales five or six days a week, you are looking at \$7.20 per day; over the course of a month, Ma'am, that is \$165.60 a month.

The reality, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that in these trying times for small businesses in particular, this is an

additional burden. In addition to all of the other taxes that this administration has had to impose on the people of this country and in particular the businesses. And Ma'am, it does not stop there. The reality is that when you look at the assistance that has been given to small businesses in this country, this administration has slashed and cut the assistance that was given to the Small Business Association, the very association that this administration knows has been in almost every single meeting giving advice to the Minister on areas related to small business and micro enterprises in this country. Now, when you cut the subsidy, Ma'am, from \$1.3 million back in 2007 and you reduce the subsidy to \$250 000 in 2015, and you have had gradual decreases over the last seven years, how do you expect small and medium sized enterprises in this country to grow? How do you expect it to happen? The promises that were made by this Democratic Labour Party administration to the small business sector two years ago was that they would allow funding to be going to the association to be able to provide small businesses with assistance in the technological area for the implementation of websites. But what are they supposed to do on \$250 000? Ma'am, that is the reality.

Ma'am, the other issue that the small business sector is facing is the fact that this administration promised in 2008 that 40 per cent of government's procurement would be reserved for small and medium sized enterprises. Now, when this administration set up the procurement unit or the Procurement Committee, which we all thought that there would be action happening in the ministry, we have come to realise that this committee has not met since March of 2013. Now this is the same administration that is talking about encouraging small business, talking about the private sector, and the private sector must stimulate growth in this country. But they set up a committee, call it the Procurement Committee, make it seem to the country that something is happening, and then it does not meet since 2013. Now, government has indicated in this budget that it will be bringing a procurement bill. But you know what, Madam Deputy Speaker, the bill was promised to come since the end of last year and it has not come. So I ask the question, is this administration really serious about small businesses and micro enterprises in this country? The fact of the matter, Ma'am, is that the IDB has insisted on the implementation of a procurement bill. This is something the Democratic Labour Party promised since 2008.

But I can hear in this debate about large businesses benefiting from projects of the Democratic Labour Party administration. But the very people that this administration has told that they are the ones they support, that the Barbados Labour Party was all about big business, that when the Barbados Labour Party is in, the small man does not get anything - now the reverse is happening. The words that they have spoken so glowingly about, that they are the party of the poor, now the very same people cannot get the

work that has been promised by this Democratic Labour Party administration.

Now, Ma'am, there is also the other issue of the factoring programme that we have heard so much about. You had a situation where again, the late Prime Minister Thompson acknowledged that there was a situation developing in this country where a number of businesses often go to work waiting on money from government. I can tell you, even in the entertainment sector, we have reached a point now where sometimes we do not even take the work from government when it comes so scarcely because we have to wait six months, sometimes two years to be able to be paid by a government ministry. When an artist goes to perform for a show, that is the reality. And I speak from experience. I am not making up stories. That is the reality. So you have a situation where a recognition took place by the Democratic Labour Party administration that this was a problem. But what has since happened? Absolutely nothing has happened in relation to the factoring programme. In fact, what is now happening, Ma'am, is that the businesses have had difficulty trying to improve their cash flow. If it is that the policy had been implemented in a timely manner for the businesses, we would not be having this discussion about the state of the small business sector.

Ma'am, when in the 2010 budget, the Minister of Finance again spoke about the factoring programme, he said it was going to be launched the first day of 2010. Again it was reiterated this was to help the small businesses of this country. But what then happened? Absolutely nothing. He came again in August of 2011 and it was the Prime Minister who then launched what is called the Trade Receivables Liquidity Facility, which we now come to know as the factoring programme. Now, what is interesting, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that in creating this programme, the Democratic Labour Party administration has now created even more bureaucracy. Because in 2015, in order to qualify for VAT factoring, a business has to go to the small development unit in the ministry and has to prove that it is indeed a small business. So it is not enough that the business is approved by the Small Business Association, they have to go to the ministry to be able to prove that they really are owed these monies by government. And when they prove that they are owed these monies by government, that they are an existing business, imagine that they are then told that the Barbados Revenue Authority must now investigate and do their own due diligence to determine whether any monies are in fact owed to the Government of Barbados.

Now, Ma'am, the Small Business Association has objected to this. The reality is that yes, the businesses owe money in some cases, but the reality is that businesses owe money sometimes not because they do not want to pay the Government of Barbados, but because over a course of time, sometimes to hold employees in the respective

positions, they have no choice but to take some money and put it to one side and to do other things to keep people employed so people can eat a food, as people on the street will say. And that is the reality, Madam Deputy Speaker, in this country.

The other issue, Ma'am, that we have in the sector is still the issue of loan financing. And this has been a problem, I believe, for a long time. This is not something created only by the Democratic Labour Party, but it is something that continues to plague small enterprises, startup businesses, even new sectors in the economy as well. Now there are a number of funds that are available. Some were set up under the Barbados Labour Party, some were set up under the Democratic Labour Party. The reality is that when the Minister of Finance pronounces in this budget that a credit bureau is now going to be set up by this administration for small businesses to be able to access finance, once again I believe the sector will have concerns about the efficiency of this bureau because we have seen time and time again that the process from application to approval is often so delayed that the opportunities are often lost by a number of the persons.

In the small business sector you have schemes within the Central Bank, a number of those schemes. Sometimes when you have the commercial banks approving the loans, you then have the Central Bank refusing the loan. So the people are in the same situation that they would have been in before. This is something, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we need to address as a country and this government has to make as a priority the issue of access to finance. Not everybody wants the freeness, not everybody is going to be able to get the big contracts. But at the end of the day, what we are asking for is that even if we look at what has been stated in the Global Competitiveness Report, the issue of finance is number three on the list in relation to the difficulties of doing business in Barbados. And what is interesting, Ma'am, is that at the very top is government bureaucracy. So number one is government bureaucracy and number three is the access to finance. Ma'am, the things speak for themselves. Businesses need access to finance to be able to assist this country, to be able to come out of the situation that it finds itself in.

If, Madam Deputy Speaker, that was not enough, you have even a reallocation of funds that for the last two years found themselves not with the SBA. Because as I said earlier, the SBA's budget was cut. But you have a situation where funds were cut and placed within the ministry through the National Micro Enterprise Programme. So persons could access \$3 000 to be able to assist their business. But remember, there was no formal process. The Minister would say, or somebody would send them to the ministry and then they would be able to access the funds. Now, there is a difference between having a transparent process and one which then becomes

questionable because who gets the assistance now becomes a question for the very people who operate in the sector. And therefore I am pleased to know that the funds have now been redirected to fund access where hopefully there will be a more legitimate process for persons to be able to access these funds. Because it is not good enough that this administration would put funds in a ministry

that you just have to call the minister or you have to call the government department and say somebody send you the

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Speaker, her stride but she's really misleading the House in respect to the micro fund that was previously in the Ministry of Commerce and Small Business. The decision to transfer to Fund Access did not rely on - had nothing to do at all - with any questions of transparency. And for the record, there was a process very much in place for those who sought to apply to access funds and it had absolutely nothing to do with the minister or even the peers in the ministry. It's a very clear process. The reason it was transferred to Fund Access was to ensure they got more than money - that they got sound business advice. Something the Small Business Association is currently distinct and cannot do. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: I'm glad for that clarification. But again, if it took two years for the government to figure out that was what needed to happen, it is unfortunate and I will say no more on that. 18 months, two years, same thing.

Madam Speaker, I also believe that there has to be clarity with this budget. People have to know not only in respect of their households but in respect of carrying out business what it is - what are the policies that are going to affect them. Now the Hon. Member for St. Michael East raised a very valid point in relation to the basket of goods. Now the clarity - or the explanation - that came from the Hon. Minister of Finance would suggest once again that in relation to certain things in the basket of goods in this document, there are some goods that are listed twice, some goods need further clarification, and it is not good enough. It is not acceptable in this Parliament of Barbados as we approach 50 years of independence that we can't get it right. It is just not acceptable. And I keep making the point that if we get it wrong here, we cannot go there as leaders and say to people you must get it right.

But if it is that every time pronouncements are made in this country they have to then be reversed, they then have to be amended, they have to be edited - or you have a situation as happened with the municipal solid waste tax where the Minister of Finance pronounces on one day it was 0.7 per cent, and then a week later the Minister of Industry pronounces that it was a mistake, forcing the

Minister of Finance to review his position - I come back and tell the country the rate was now 0.3 per cent. And I want to say publicly, ma'am, that it is to the credit of the Barbados Labour Party and to the people of this country that the municipal solid waste tax is no more. Because the thousands of people who worked with the Barbados Labour Party demonstrated that we will speak truth.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time is up. Please wrap up.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you. I would have appreciated notice of that. But quickly, ma'am, I will wrap up. These are the things that I believe as a country and in respect of certain standards that we have to set in this Parliament. We cannot ask people to set the standards over there and we don't do it in here.

This budget, ma'am, affects the people in St. Michael South East. It affects the people all across this country. I was horrified to hear of the moneys transferred - deferred - in relation to the housing projects from the Housing Credit Fund, because the people who live in the terrace units in St. Michael South East in the Pinelands area are still to get their conveyances. I would have loved to hear from the Minister for Housing and for members on the other side that even if you took some of that money to be able to assist the persons who have not gotten their conveyances to get their conveyances. Finally, since 2008 this administration has promised people that they own their own home, but they cannot get a titled deed to their property. People ask me every day, ma'am, what is the situation? And then I can see that it is going to cost this government over \$3 million to rectify this problem. But contractors in this country who, as far as they're concerned, their pockets are deep, could get \$25 million transferred to them from a Housing Credit Fund that shows that it had a dividend when it really shouldn't.

I have concerns. My people are asking because unless they own their home, they can't take a little bail for somebody that get locked up. That is the reality that I have to deal with. If they don't get their papers, they can't go to improve their home. If they don't get their papers, they can't make improvements to their house. And if they can't make improvements to their house, the money doesn't trickle through the economy, ma'am.

And I appreciate the extension of time. But, ma'am, this budget - I cannot support it. It impacts on too many people in this country. And I will hope that the Minister of Finance does not find himself yet again in a situation where in the next couple of weeks we come to find that there are certain things that either cannot be implemented or that are too difficult to implement and they have to be repealed. Thank you, ma'am.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, Christ Church East, thank

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Thank you very much. Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues in endorsing this budget presented by the Honourable Minister of Finance and to indicate that first of all, I'm grateful to God for the opportunity to be here and for giving me the health and strength to be part of this debate. A year ago I would have participated in this effort and I'm glad that I'm able to do so again this year. I want to also thank my constituents for the vested trust in me, giving me the opportunity to serve them. And Madam Deputy Speaker, I try my best every day to give them my best effort. I want to thank my staff at my constituency office, branch office, and my friends and supporters in the wonderful constituency of Christ Church East.

I wish to congratulate the Minister of Finance for an outstanding budget. And I want to say from my observations, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the budget was comprehensive in its scope, it was fundamental in its focus and compelling in its message. The message to Barbadians of all walks of life is that this government, under the most difficult circumstances, has been able to ride this storm, this economic storm, and have been able to help the country to realise a new kind of hope and to be able to show in his figures that the turnaround has started.

But I take on this task this evening realising that there are still some perceptions in this country that believe that if you are born in a certain place and born of certain people, that you do not deserve anything good unless it is stolen or unless for some strange reason you have gotten it by ill-gotten gain. I am proud to be the son of four parents raised in the hills of St. Andrew, familiar mostly in terms of representation by two MPs.

Familiar most by the representation of two MPs, one by the name of Joy da Costa Edwards, a noted stalwart of the Democratic Labour Party, and one by the name of Lloyd Beresford Brathwaite - now deceased, as is the late Mr. Edwards - but one who fought valiantly in St. Andrew.

What strikes me, Mr. Speaker, sir, as strange but yet familiar, is that there seems to be a tendency on the part of the Leader of the Opposition to cannibalise persons - persons who have given much to the Barbados Labour Party. Like the same late Lloyd Beresford Brathwaite. Cannibalised. Like Mr. Rawle Eastman, who used to be a member of this House. Cannibalised. They now distaste Lionel Craig. And I recall, I record very, very carefully, that when Mr. Craig - after he had been deceased - and there was a book downstairs for people to sign, that there was what could only be described as a shabby photograph attached to that symbolism. And the Member for St.

Thomas, as I recall, for all her care and concern, indicated with haste that that situation should be fixed.

But if that were the end, perhaps it would be tolerable. But the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, who still sits in this House, who rescued the Barbados Labour Party from certain annihilation - that Honourable Member was recently completely crossed out of a document that paraded the history of the leadership of the Barbados Labour Party. And the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, could not find his face in that document. And I do not shower any special love on that Honourable Member. But what I would like to say is this: that for all it is worth, this Honourable Member deserves much more than he has been given.

And I say all of that to say this: that there seems to be an attitude, there seems to be a disposition, there seems to be a fixation by the Member for St. Michael North East to try to cannibalise people, man or woman. So I was attacked yesterday. I wasn't on my feet. And the country was reminded that the Honourable Member from St. Michael North East, in the year 1999, launched a shameless attack on me on a television programme. She raised it as a badge. She said, I recall, I don't know if to address you as Mr., Brother, Doctor, or what. I didn't retort then. But what I should have said then was: I don't know if to address you as Mister or Miss. But I didn't. Because the moment for me was a moment that was offered me by my political party, that I sought to represent.

And ever since then - now, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter explained to me recently the position he took on this issue and why he took the position. There was an error in the brochure that gave rise to a misunderstanding. So, Mr. Speaker, so that this matter might rest and rest eternally, I have brought with me today the authentic copy of my doctoral certificate. And I am making it a document of this House and ask that the relevant persons make copies for those who would wish to have it. And I hope the camera can see it now.

The journey - and Honourable Minister of Finance, please forgive me if I do not spend a lot of time on the budget, but let me deal with this. The journey, Mr. Speaker. The journey. The journey to this achievement, Mr. Speaker, sir, started on the August 15, 1984, when I left Barbados to go to Cincinnati, Ohio, with a valise, a few pants and shirts and US\$750. And the last thing my late mother said to me before I left was: Son, I can't send you money, I can't send you clothes, but I will send you prayers. And off I went on a work scholarship to a place called God's Bible School and College to complete a Bachelor of Arts degree in theology.

I must tell my story because there are many young people out there who are starting where I started. And if they must be led by someone so careless who believes that they have a right in this country to do whatever they choose to do, I send out a warning to Barbadians: beware, because you may not be able to get your chance in life. So I went on a work scholarship. I worked as a security guard at the Bible school during the winter on the graveyard shift. I walked by myself on the beat, in the back of my mind saying to myself: I have finally gotten my chance. Finally gotten my chance. Because when I grew up in kindergarten, nobody ever thought that I would ever stand a chance to be anybody in life. The only person who did, apart from my mother - my dad lived in England - apart from my mother, was myself.

I will never sit idly by and allow anybody to denigrate who I am. I will never sit idly by and allow anybody to destroy my character. They can choose to paint all they want to paint. But I'll say this: when you live by the sword, you must die by the sword. I have presented my certificate. And right now at this hour in this House, I am calling on the Leader of the Opposition to present her legal certificate to this House. Challenge me on mine. I have got mine. I am challenging her on hers. And she must bring it. She must. Because if she has the legal education certificate, then there is no issue. I will fall on my knees and I will apologise for having raised the issue and ask her for forgiveness. But if she cannot bring it, if she cannot bring that document, I want to remind Barbados that there is a law - a consequence of \$5 000 or 12 months in prison.

So let us get it clear. I have never picked a fight with anyone out of reason, and if anyone troubles me, Mr. Speaker, I ask my constituents to forgive me for having to do this, but I will defend myself in this House. Because I did not come in here by a margin of 20 votes, or 10 after two recounts. I didn't come in on that. I came in here on a solid majority by the people of Christ Church East. And I am proud to be their representative and I am proud to be involved in this debate. So I have put that matter to rest.

And again, because I have been called out, I have responded. I am now calling out and we shall wait for the response. Now, I remember saying yesterday in this House that when this day came, the Leader of the Opposition would stay away from here. And the public must know she has not stepped foot in this House for the entire day. But there is a reason why that is so.

But there were other allegations made. And I want to make the point that the Minister has laid a path, and probably for the first time, Mr. Speaker, sir, since I have been sitting in this House, has such a comprehensive platform been laid on the economics of this country that involves economic planning and economic budgeting. Because the truth is that what the Minister was able to do

was to create a document that takes all of the pillars of sustainable development and puts the budget within the context of those pillars.

Look, Mr. Speaker, we are not where we need to be. And yes, our public has held faith with us through the worst of these storms, at times perhaps thinking that we didn't care. Which reminds me, Mr. Speaker, sir, of the time with Christ on the ship when the storm arose and the disciples said, Master, carest thou not about us? And he rose from the hold of the ship and spoke to the storms and said, Peace, be still. Seven years we have endured a famine. Seven years we have endured hardship. Seven years we have been going through a turbulent storm. But I'll tell you this: if you understand anything about the Bible and God, these things come in sevens. Now, our national anthem says, in plenty and in time of need - because they understand that there are times of plenty and there are times of need.

We didn't bring this on our country. We didn't invite this to happen in Barbados. This happened as a consequence of global conditions. We all know that. And we are here today now, just where this country was in 1994 when it was handed over to the Barbados Labour Party. The incline - we are going upwards. We are beginning to grow, we are beginning to correct. But what we have done that was not done then, Mr. Speaker, sir, is that we are restructuring and refashioning the economy. That is why we are now linking economics to health. That is why we are saying that if you make certain economic adjustments, they should benefit the health of the country. If they benefit the health of the country, what that means is that we will then be able to drive down the impact of non-communicable diseases, which is a drag on our health care bill. That is understood. The Honourable Member for St. James South made a brilliant explanation of that. What we are doing now is linking the economics of the country to education and we are saying that if we create special funding, then we are able to assist those students who would otherwise not be able to have a university education.

I know that we will one day be past this road and that all of the naysayers who said that the Democratic Labour Party couldn't do it - as if history has not taught them some lessons. Almost every time this country goes through an economic crisis, the Democratic Labour Party is right here to bring it back out. It is a fact. We know that. We know that.

I know the Honourable Member for St. Peter had a wonderful wicket to bat on. At one point the Honourable Member said he was batting like Sobers and he was scoring runs. But I also remember that on the first night that we sat in this House, the first debate we had, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Right Honourable Member, got up and said, I am confessing for all the sins of my political

party - not all of them, but for many of them. I remember that, Mr. Speaker. I remember that.

But I also remember this, Mr. Speaker. The same Right Honourable Member said - not on that occasion - that the Member for St. Michael North East is not fit to lead Barbados and should never become the leader of this country. Said she is possessed of demons and not charity. I have the affidavit here. And not charity - charity is the Honourable Member, my friend who sits on our side. So I know, Mr. Speaker, sir, that we stand together on this side, including the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, that the Member for St. Michael North East is not fit. As a matter of fact, he went on to say, Mr. Speaker, sir, that he advised mothers not to allow their girl children to grow up and want to become the Right Honourable Member.

So that is not our fight. That is not our circumstance. What we know is that the public of Barbados has given us a challenge to run this country during difficult times. And we have accepted that.

Keep talking about Cahill. Let us talk about Cahill. Let us talk about Cahill. Listen. A company called Cahill has agreed in principle to offer the government a public-private partnership for the construction of a waste-to-energy plant. The facts are that all of the relevant authorities had sight of the agreement. And though there may have been a diversity of views about the bringing of that plant to Barbados, we finally settled on the plant. So we set about on a journey. Now, we did not know that the investors who signed on initially would have backed out of the financing of the project. But they did. And the truth is that since then the Cahill Directorate have regrouped, regathered and now have their investors on board. The government has not had to pay out money - money as in the case I heard yesterday. And here the - the - the absolute [Inaudible.]

I would say hypocrisy. Help me with another word. Misrepresentation. Hypocritical. Misrepresentation. The fact is. The fact is that they say that our children and our children's children will be saddled with this huge debt. Billion dollars in debt. Now I want to ask you a question because they like talking about corruption. But when you start to talk about corruption, start with yourselves. Start with Crab Hill, St. Leonard's - the prison that we don't know yet why it was decommissioned. Vico. The criminals that built it. All of whom are locked up now. All of them. All of them. All of them. The prison that was in U.S. dollars. Yes. Where you all want to talk about transparency. Yes. There is a common link. I will give you the denominating factor. Because it is there. It is there.

And listen. And the race haulers. The race haulers bring that in too. Because you remember that the Leader of the Opposition rushed up to warrants and Lord Haw from

the other place. From the other place who keeps humbugging Christ Church East. Lord Hoho is his name. Man up. Rushed up there and tried to. And only to discover that the Leader of the Opposition was not really representing the country's interests. She was representing her own. Because by confession of Mr. Sherry, she has interest in Jose E. Jose, are you with me? No. Jose E. Jose is the same company involved with the Crab Hill police station. Why we leave that for you. I will leave that for you. So you had a building built out of concrete blocks, toilet paper, coats, no cold cup. And the light. You see. Look, look, all I'm saying. If your hands are not clean, don't come as though you've been washed in the blood of the lamb and try to humiliate the government. That's all I'm saying. None of us are perfect. All of us are subject to human frailties and failures. But please, do not ever find yourself in the seat of judgment when the very seat you're sitting on, you stole it. Is it possible for the devil to frown on sin? No. But the princess of evil, candle princess of evil.

So I am saying, Mr. Speaker, sir. Look, I saw in here. I saw in this House the Leader of the Opposition look the Speaker of the House in his face and called him a thief. I saw that. I am not a member of the league of fraternity. It happened. Perhaps you weren't here, but it happened in here. I saw it. And assaulted - verbally assaulted the Honourable Speaker of this House. And I'm saying, look, please, for God's sake, if not mine or anybody else's, if you know that you have skeletons in your closet, don't whisper at an innocent person and tell them, open the door, because all of them can tumble out and start running. That's all that happened. And I have nothing against the Leader of the Opposition, but I abhor, absolutely abhor the perspective that she takes and seeking to suggest that she is the all in all and the be in all for the leadership of this country. Look at the nation's front page. Can you imagine that the last person who was hot and sweaty for leadership in the world killed millions of Jews? You hear Barbadians with the cameras. Barbadians. The last person who was hot and sweaty, who believed that they were destined to lead Germany, ended up slaughtering millions of people.

So I heard about EIA on the discourse, Mr. Speaker. The fact that a meeting was held. The fact that a town hall meeting was held gave - right - should have given rise to the fact that in order to move your EIA, there's a terms of reference, a TOR agreed to by the Town Planning Department that instructs what needs to be done. Precisely. Precisely. So you don't just go and do a town hall meeting. You have to have an EA. You don't do it.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, sir. So I heard - so that the EIA is on its way. It's on its way. I knew today, as a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, they said the cost

based on an article in the paper recently - the City - the cost of the - I heard somebody yesterday say it moved from 300 million to 320 million. And every month you're adding on 50 million. There is nowhere in this article, nowhere where Cahill said that the plant would cost \$700 million. Nowhere in here. And when a person speaks, you quote them, there have to be quotes, you understand? Nowhere in here at all.

They talk about our water. The government is building a leachate treatment plant that will produce thousands of gallons of water per day up to the level where you can irrigate. That water is going to be used to cool the plant. The Town Planning Department did the investigations. There is nowhere in the world where there is any evidence to show that this plant would cause a catastrophic event in Barbados. In the town, you know. But talking about the town - Vacluse town, or the town they call it - the truth of the matter is that the Labour Party set out a roadmap for the national development programme and Vacluse has been designated as a solid waste management area. Now I remember years ago, back in 2001, a certain MP for St. Thomas went and paid people thousands of dollars promising that he would move Mangrove Quarry. And he ended up running from up in there and going and doing something else. Now, Mangrove Quarry has been managed down since this party has been in office and this government has been in place. And we will - the plant - the plant - the gasification plant is what will spell the end. Because I intend to put forth to the Cabinet that by 2025 there will not be a single landfill in Barbados.

And then they talk about Transte. Let me touch that quickly, please. They talk about Transte. Look, cannibalization again. Because Mr. Buffett, a person who believes in Barbados and who has done so much - there are members on that side who are good friends with him. And I know it pains them to sit down here and have that good man's name dragged through the mud. But listen to me carefully. A compactor truck costs \$450 000 to \$455 000. Do you consider it far-fetched to have a transmission for a truck like that costing \$35 000? It's amazing. It's totally amazing. And in truth, in fact, according to the numbers, the cost of an Allison unit in U.S. dollars is \$6 451.17. That's the cost of the transmission. And Transte has only repaid \$456 017.52. That's \$456 000. And do you know, Mr. Speaker, sir, that the same members on that side were parading around this country talking about how dirty it is and had it not been for the intervention of Transte, we would have been in serious trouble at the last crisis. Correct? Correct.

It is just, Mr. Speaker, sir - it's just that callous and careless approach to dealing with the country's interests. No, he's a black man. But more than that, he's a member of the heritage of the Barbados Labour Party. He is Mr. [Inaudible.] son. He will be cannibalized like the rest of

them. Including the Honourable Member for St. Peter. You see.

And I'm going to tell you something, Mr. Speaker. We are heading down a dangerous road. We wonder why the population think that all of us should be put in a barrel and rolled down hill and burned. I'll tell you why. Because there are some of you in here who know - because you were so hot and sweaty for power. I heard the Leader of the Opposition - well, you know, the people of Barbados put you in power. They put me in power. They put us in office. God is in power. All right. Yes, Your Honour.

So I want to rest my case for now. Pause it for now. Because I'll be back. I will be back because there is a lot to say. And I am committed. Look. The Honourable Right Honourable Prime Minister has given me the honour of serving in his Cabinet along with my colleagues. And I am proud that a boy from King Garden, fatherless for most of his life and raised by a wonderful mother who is now deceased, could have the opportunity to have my name written on this roll. And I, Mr. Speaker, sir, will be eternally grateful for the honour that the people of Barbados have given me. Thank you so much.

SUSPENSION

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, Leader of the House.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that the sitting be suspended for dinner until 8.15 this evening.

AN HON. MEMBER: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House be suspended until 8.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, we were on Order Number 16. And with that we shall continue. Yes, the Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, sir, I am obliged to you. And I want to begin on the note, sir, of saying that it is my respectful judgment that over the course of Monday evening and this afternoon your House, sir, was by the Minister of Finance, the learned Attorney General of Barbados and the Minister of Energy who spoke immediately preceding the break - in preceding me, sir, than before the break - your whole, sir, was transformed into a theatre of the absurd.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I say so for two reasons. First of all, there is before the country a substantive and fundamental issue that has to be addressed and has to be spoken to in the most direct manner by the parties who I just indicated have already spoken on behalf of the Government. The second reason I say so, sir, is because there is before the House a budgetary presentation which when dissected as I propose to do, will reflect, sir, the extent of the absurdity attached to it.

But, sir, I want to begin with the pressing matter of public importance before the House. And that, sir, is the question of the so-called Cahill matter. Now, Mr. Speaker, sir, what is striking about this issue and why I start on this note is because the Leader of the Opposition has made a document of the House that which is essentially a memorandum of understanding. In fact, the document itself describes its purpose as being a memorandum of understanding. And sir, it describes itself as a confidential memorandum of understanding dealing with the creation of a waste-to-energy plant at Vaucluse in St. Thomas.

Now, sir, the Attorney General of Barbados spoke this afternoon and he did not condescend to make contact with the substance of this document. He didn't collide with it, not even a glancing blow. Then, sir, the Minister of Energy - no less the substantive Minister of the Crown charged with responsibility for energy in Barbados - did not speak to the substance. Environment. Sorry, environment. Did not speak to the substance of the memorandum of understanding.

Now, sir, I don't want to get sidetracked into the minutiae about who born where and that kind of thing. I heard all of that. And for what it is worth, sir, the country can digest and reflect upon it. But, sir, there are substantial issues of governance that I wish to speak about. Because it isn't a personal matter, nor is it the personal plaything of any minister of the Government. This is a memorandum of understanding, sir, that purports to bind the Government of Barbados in the first instance for 30 years and to a tune financially of untold millions of dollars. But more important, and I'm going to come to that, there are environmental repercussions and consequences which this country as a whole, but my constituency in particular, the constituency of the Member for St. Thomas in particular and indeed the constituency for the Member for St. James North must reflect upon now.

Mr. Speaker, a long-term contract signed with the Government of Barbados purports to ensure operations profits for Cahill. There has been no denial about that. A 30-year waste supply agreement which guarantees the project all of the island's waste and the importation into Barbados of any additional waste that is necessary is part of this memorandum of understanding - a fundamental and complete break with the tradition and culture of this

country. We have never known the importation of anybody's waste. We have never sunk so low. And Mr. Speaker, sir, there is no denial about that.

There is a 30-year power purchase agreement attached to the contract binding not the light and power but the Government of Barbados - which has no historical relationship with the distribution of electricity - to take off the power load supply produced at the waste-to-energy plant and to do with it God knows what if the lighting and power does not come on board. But you have a contract locking in the Government to buy all the energy produced. For 30 years the Minister of the Environment and the learned Attorney General of Barbados have offered no denial.

Now, Mr. Speaker, sir, these are issues of fundamental importance. Governance. There is an implementation agreement which sees as part of its content the exemption from all forms of taxation whatsoever associated with the project. The Minister of the Environment and the Attorney General have offered no denial on these matters.

Now so these things can't just come before the House and not be addressed by the Government. Because they did not, sir, with great respect, create themselves. This, sir, is a situation created by the Government visited upon the people of Barbados. And the people of Barbados have a duty not only to be listening to it but to be asking questions about it. And the Government equally, sir, is under a moral duty. We need to know who signed the agreement. We need to know, sir, under what authorisation was it done and in what capacity. No member over there is authorised to go and stand up in his own personal name and commit the Government of Barbados. There is a formal process that must be gone through. And in the absence of the formal, an allegation, sir, was made which has also not been denied - that the Attorney General of Barbados refused to sign off on this. So how then does it come into existence? These are the questions, sir, that would have to be asked by any right-thinking Barbadian.

I served in a Cabinet, Mr. Speaker, sir, and it could not have happened in the Cabinet of which I was a part. And indeed, Mr. Speaker, the additional issue is that which raises its ugly head at Cahill - is an issue, sir, that I, and perhaps I might be the only person in this House who can speak to. The issues at Cahill, sir, are identical to the ones that caused me to have to take this Government of Barbados to court with respect to the protection of the environment and protection of the residents in St. James Central. When, sir, when, sir, there was an effort to take the land at Bagatelle and do an uncouth land swap without reference to this House of Assembly. To swap land, Mr. Speaker, sir, and then to have an incinerator inside St. James Central.

No, sir, I never believed that the day would come that when you intervened and got the court to put on pause - in fact, to bring an end to the effort to do those things to the people that I represent, sir - in circumstances where there was no environmental impact assessment, in circumstances where there was no town and country planning approval, in circumstances where there was no respect, sir, for the property rights. It pained me when I had to be part of the drafting and filing, sir, to have to name as one of the defendants in the matter the Honourable Member for St. Philip North in his capacity then as Minister of Housing. And Mr. Speaker, sir, I did not think that a year or two later this country would be at the same sorry place dealing with another incinerator. Because plasma gasification is only a fancy title for that which we understand to be incineration.

And Mr. Speaker, sir, I did not think it would be possible, sir, for us to be here seeing another memorandum of understanding yet again without, sir, any evidence of environmental impact assessment having been done. And the actual document itself says, sir, that it commits to investors - and I can come to the investment part - that the agreement does not provide for the project to comply with any specific environmental standards. So that it raises yet another concern, Mr. Speaker, that once again we have in Barbados to deal with the issue of environmental protection legislation not being brought to the Parliament of Barbados.

No protection being given in the case of the potential fallout - negative fallout - from the incineration project that they want to bring. Air quality control: a non-issue for this Government. The so-called solid residue or slag: not an issue for this Government. Potential toxins and particulates in the air compromising people's health: not an issue for this Government. Mr. Speaker, sir, emission standards, preferably to international levels: not an issue for this Government. But all of which are in place in other parts of the world where you have chosen to go the route of incineration. But we do it back to front. We go and commit the Government and the people to a contract. And, sir, none of the legislative protection that should be there is in Barbados today. But the people in St. Thomas and the people in St. James North and the people in St. James Central can be compromised. In particular, on a small island like Barbados, a small coral island, the whole island can be compromised, quite frankly. But nobody cares. Because this, sir, is a bankable project.

And I say that, sir, because in the same memorandum of understanding that is before this country today - about which the key members of the Government remain stonily silent - in the same memorandum of understanding, Mr. Speaker, sir, is evidence that Cahill has said that they want nothing more to do with it. The project is up for sale. Whosoever will may come.

No, Mr. Speaker, we have also to look at some other issues that are arising. The water supply in St. Thomas. Chronic stages of shortage of water. That is the reality on the ground for the people in Redmond Village and all through the parish of St. Thomas. Mr. Speaker, sir, between 8 o'clock at night, 9 o'clock at night, this kind of time, sir, and tomorrow morning, 5 o'clock - that might be when you get a little water and then it is off. But we have now a project that is coming into St. Thomas and we have a contract which is giving these people the right to dig and get wells and create lagoons.

Mr. Speaker, sir, we do all of this in the context of a legal environment in which there is a Barbados Water Authority Act - for the Member for Christ Church West who will not stop talking and cannot therefore learn Chapter 27 of the Laws of Barbados - where the Barbados Water Authority and the Water Authority alone is empowered in law, Mr. Speaker, sir, to have stores and to control and to collect water. The Water Authority alone. But without reference to Parliament, we have an MOU which purports to give to these people, whoever they may be that buy it out from Cahill, the right to do whatever they will with the water that is scarce in the constituency I represent now.

Mr. Speaker, sir, it goes further. The light and power of Barbados has been guaranteed a rate of return by the Fair Trading Commission. And in fact, it is a privately owned company and its shareholders expect that they will have a rate of return. This is basic stuff, man. Mr. Speaker, sir, nothing can make the lighting and power buy energy, I respectfully submit, from Cahill or from the Government of Barbados at a price that is more expensive than they can produce it themselves. So it is incoherent and perhaps, sir, idiotic to try to lock people in to a contractual arrangement where you cannot expect that the light and power could continue to be a partner with you. No, sir. Obviously somebody got very greedy along the way. I have deep concerns about it.

And I end on this note where I began. Because the other things I want to talk about - the Attorney General of Barbados owes this country not only an apology for treating this with contempt, but he owes this country a full and candid explanation. As does, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy. No, sir. Environment? No, sir. But the Minister of Energy too. Let us not leave him out. He is in the other place. He is in the other place. But his name got called too. No, sir.

There are other things which caused me to be concerned about the level of absurdity that is being inflicted upon your House. On Monday night, sir, we heard the Minister of Finance engage in lavish self-praise with respect to the foreign exchange reserves of Barbados. And even more lavish self-praise with respect to the deficit

reaching 6.6 per cent. I say this, sir - we had an Estimates exercise in Barbados two months ago at the end of March. Nothing that we did not hear about the reserves in March transpired in April or in May. Nothing new. So that, sir, in June, the reserve situation that he is so self-indulgent about is exactly what it was at the end of March. To bring us here to hear that, sir, is to waste our time. With respect to the 6.6 per cent deficit, we knew that at the end of March. To lavish himself with praise, sir, he may have had to repeat it for the benefit of the Member for Christ Church. Because he - the only thing useful beyond his shoulders, sir, is his voice. Outside of that, north of his shoulders, everything is a waste of time.

But, sir, the reality is that we knew in March. We knew in March the extent, sir, of the deficit being brought under control. What the Minister may have chosen to tell us is how it got up to 12 per cent in the first place. Because the record of good governance of the Labour Party, sir, shows that we kept the deficit between 2.5 per cent and 2 per cent for 14 years. But Monday night, sir, was about a song of praise - a pointless waste of time. Intellectually self-indulgent praise exercised by the Minister of Finance.

But, sir, what I had hoped to hear from him and what I still have not heard from any Member of the Government who has spoken is the issue that is front burner on everybody's mind in Barbados. The Leader of the Opposition spoke extremely well on the point of this country's debt and the need for us to become very serious about where we are going with respect to the debt. The debt in Barbados, as the Leader of the Opposition said, is growing faster, sir, than the revenue. And not only did she speak about it, she has put a solution on the table. Not only did she put it on the table, sir, but it has been echoed by the Member for St. Philip West, who is part of the Government - incoherent Government that it is - because you have a member of the Cabinet who is supporting it and another member of Cabinet who says that it is a frolic. And, sir, beyond that, it has been echoed by the Honourable Member for St. Peter that we restructure the debt. This evening, sir, the extent of the policy incoherence of the Government was made even more clear when the Minister of Education admitted that he had room for debt restructuring in Barbados. So where then does the Cabinet stand when two of them have come out and said that they would go the route of debt restructuring? And you have a Minister of Finance who is saying that it is a frolic and he ain't taking you on with that.

But, Mr. Speaker, sir, I have to ask the question because, you know, when I look at my son's friends - he is eight years old and they are eight years old - we can't just treat this as though it is not important. This is the future of Barbados. We can't just look at them and say, blessed are the youth, for they will inherit the national debt. We gotta bring it down. We gotta bring it down.

Mr. Speaker, sir, there is a document that I want to share with the Minister of Finance. He is not in his seat, but there is a book, sir, called *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. And it is, sir, a Pulitzer Prize Award winner. And it basically talks, sir, about the burden of debt financing and how you can come to a point where an economy and a society actually collapse. And I say society because this Government has threatened the country that it wants to build society. But the society you want to build - and such that you have now - will actually cripple and collapse under the weight of debt service obligation. You cannot finance your health care. You cannot finance your education. Your sanitation services grind to a halt. Your judicial system collapses. Your welfare system disappears. That has been the fate of countries, some of whom are right next door to us. Haiti has had the experience, sir, of being a failed society. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, sir, it is a fundamentally important issue.

Now, Minister of Finance - and she will be one day. What the Leader of the Opposition did not say, but should have said, is that it wasn't only the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for St. Philip West and the Honourable Member for St. Peter who have spoken to this issue in this Parliament, sir, but it is the Minister of Finance as well. Because don't mind us talking in the budget about how that is a frolic. The Minister of Finance came here in 2010, Mr. Speaker, sir, and he told this House that he was creating a National Debt Advisory Committee to advise on debt policy. And he told the House that he was creating a technical debt management committee which was going to help to implement a debt strategy. Out of that, sir, was to have come a debt unit. You know, sir, we have heard no report from this Minister about any of these things or how far they have gotten. But even four painful years later, we can't hear anything from the Minister of Finance about where these things are at.

But then, Mr. Speaker, sir, he went further and he threatened that he was going to have a unified public debt legislation put in place. For the first time, he beat up on the Member for St. Peter - how this should have been done a long time ago. That was the Minister of Finance in 2011. Today, sir, there is no unified public debt legislation in Barbados. But the debt, sir, continues to gallop at unmanageable proportions. Now, Mr. Speaker, sir, we need to know about the status of the legislation that he was threatening to bring. We have to have an update, sir, on issues of staffing because this is not what we will talk now - these are fundamentals. You have to staff such a unit, sir, in order for it to perform public debt management functions.

And I think, sir, that you have to go beyond that. You want to accept that there is a debt problem across the public service. You know, it was only a couple of days ago that I discovered that the National Housing Corporation is

carrying a debt note of \$200 million. Yes, \$200 million. And we have now to do more work in the Public Accounts Committee to find out how many others are in similar state of disarray. Mr. Speaker, sir, and it therefore means that you have to have training programmes so that staff that are in the statutory boards, sir, are able to do the kind of risk analysis that is necessary and evaluate loans as necessary all around.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have five minutes in which to conclude, I beg, sir. Five minutes, Mr. [Inaudible.]

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Thank you, sir. Well, Mr. Speaker, sir, I wish to hustle on to some of the critical things that this Government has not been doing. Because we have, sir, a manufacturing sector that is near and dear to the hearts of Barbadians. But it is a sector, sir, that is struggling.

In 2013, sir, the Minister of Finance announced to this country that the rum industry, sir, had earned 60 million United States dollars. In that budget, sir, he drew to our attention a few things, and I am going to repeat them for the benefit of the House, because they have continued. Even though this budget is silent on the issue, it has gotten worse. The United States of America, sir, has been giving a prohibited and illegal subsidy to the rum producers competing with us who are coming out of the United States Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. And Mr. Speaker, sir, those subsidies are for increasing production. They are getting money for that. They are getting money, sir, for marketing. They are getting money, sir, for their research. They are getting money, sir, to prop up the payment of the molasses - to the extent, sir, that half of what it takes to produce rum coming out of the United States, US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico is covered by way of subsidy. Therefore, it is making it so that all rum that competes either as bulk rum or the bottled blended type cannot compete.

We have, sir, lost market share in the United States of America to the extent, sir, of 5 million litres for bulk rum between 2010 and 2014, while the US Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, sir, have gained market share by 40 per cent. And the same thing is happening with the bottled rum, sir, the branded. Now, sir, the issue that we have is that this Minister of Finance proffered three solutions that in my mind were eminently workable. But he has offered us no update. And when you check, sir, nothing has happened.

He said, sir, that he would create a mechanism to subsidise local rum producers as the Americans were doing. But that has not been done. He told us, sir, that he was going to have the introduction, sir, of the use of the excess inventory - the unsold inventory from the bulk rum - being blended into ethanol and put into local gasoline so that at least we can have productive use of that excess. Nothing has been done. And he said, sir, that he would go

to the World Trade Organization. Mr. Speaker, sir, the very first step of going to the World Trade Organization is a request for consultation so that the US Government would take it seriously. Nothing has been done.

But, sir, they did have a meeting with the United States Trade Representative who is the equivalent of the Minister of Trade for the United States. And it has been made clear the American Government is not taking us on. So therefore, sir, CARICOM needs to be pulled together to defend an industry that is fundamental to us. I think that what is missing in this debate is that we have to start to talk about how we can earn our way out. You can't have an industry like rum that brings in so much money potentially in foreign exchange and let it dither.

The same thing, sir, happens, unfortunately, in the agriculture sector where through no fault of the Minister of Agriculture, we cannot export proteins or any goods of protein origin into the European Union. Don't mind that we have a treaty with them. A lot of long talk treaty. There is no law of Barbados, sir, but if you have milk which is produced here, butter produced here, cheese produced here, fish caught here, chicken grown here - we cannot sell into the European Union because we have an Attorney General who can't get a legislative provision establishing final and decisive authority on the testing of proteins for export. Simple thing. Instead of having it as the Chief Veterinary Officer, as it now is, you want it to be the Chief Medical Officer. And for seven painful years of Democratic Labour Party rule, you are stopping fishermen from selling the fish that they catch all about here into the biggest market that they could have in the world. For seven painful years of Democratic Labour Party rule, yet you can't sell chicken into Europe, even though we have a European trade agreement with them.

Mr. Speaker, sir, the milk - the same milk that the Minister came and put a cess on - if you had the excess capacity, one day you would be able to sell it. But, sir, we cannot continue to see opportunities for people to build out their businesses, employ more people, earn foreign exchange, and then the Government itself is the major impediment to these people putting themselves in a position where they can lift Barbados out of the mess. We cannot tax our way out of this problem. We have to speak the language of growing our way out. And that is why the corporation tax reserves, Mr. Speaker, sir, have fallen so precipitously. There are today \$355 million lower than what they were before. But if you don't have the corporation taxes there, Mr. Speaker, sir, you can't get the Minister of Transport to build roads. My constituency was glad for the roads. I have been begging him to go and help me in Redmond Village and Welch's for six months.

Mr. Speaker, sir, you can't get the constituencies that don't have any community resource centre to help train

young people like mine does. To get the constituency the resource centre, sir. Because you don't have the cash. Gran used to tell me, son, sometimes it takes cash to care. That's what Gran told me. And I've come to understand that Gran knows what she talking about. And this government is in that position, always talking about what they would do for this small black man. But the government is now too poor and too penniless to help this small black man. And every one of us have the constituencies where we have to sit down and have consultations with the people. And the people tell us the different needs that they have. And you can only tell the people, the government ain't got no money. But the government does not have money, sir, because that which was bringing in the revenue, there never was taxes on the ordinary man. In 2005, sir, for the first time in history, I was part of the cabinet. Then we reached the stage where we had so built out commerce in Barbados that we had a corporate tax base of over 520 million dollars. We then took the taxes off of the ordinary man. Direct taxation, personal income tax ceased to become the leading form of taxation in Barbados. And it was commercial taxes. But those companies, sir, have haemorrhaged.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please. Your time has expired.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Thank you, sir. The tax base has dwindled. And with it, sir, has dwindled the revenues of the government to help ordinary people in Barbados. You can't get it back by taxing \$200 million out of a shrinking economic base, sir. It will never work. You're getting blood from stone. What you have to do, sir, is to do things that will grow the economy. And that means removing the impediments, much of which are created by this government, so that the people of Barbados can earn a living and look after themselves and their families. I'm obliged to you.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, sir, I rise to make my contribution to this debate. And firstly, I want to thank the people of St. Philip North for giving me this opportunity once again to make my contribution to this annual exercise. I also want, Mr. Speaker, sir, to extend my condolences to the Franklin family, originated from St. Philip North. And I want to extend my condolences to the former representative, Sir Walt Franklin, and also his relatives. And I wish them well in this period of time.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I want to first congratulate the Minister of Finance on a job well done. I want to congratulate him, and certainly, Mr. Speaker, again, for his - you know, he was vilified over this in this country, up and down. He was told that he's incompetent. This government

was characterised as incompetent, lazy, we cannot get out of this economic mess. And on the day he delivered his report he surely stated that there were successes, and he went through them one by one. So, Mr. Speaker, sir, I will say to the Member for St. Michael North West: push on. And you have the solid support of Barbadians and by extension your Cabinet colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I just want to address a matter that came up. The Member for St. Michael South East, when she was delivering her speech, she sought to give an explanation relative to the issue that was raised by - I believe it was a member over here, I can't recall the member. She said that there was a transition period. My information, in fact, when I look at the law - and the law still exists - there was no transition period. That is the Legal Profession Act. In fact, the Legal Profession Act was passed because it was created to bring about a fusion of the profession, i.e. barristers and solicitors. As a requirement of that legislation, particularly in relation to the Council of Legal Education, it particularly stated - mandatory - that if you qualify after 1985, if you got admitted to the bar in 1986 or thereabout, then you had mandatory to do six months at either Norman Manley or Hugh Wooding Law School. So I just want to state that to you. There was no transition period. There was no transition period in that. There was no transition period during that time.

Further, Mr. Speaker, sir. The Member for St. Michael North East, the Leader of the Opposition - again, I am like the Member for Christ Church East. I come from a strong family in St. Philip and they are well-known Masons that have made contributions in every sphere of this country's life, from musicians, cricketers, lawyers, politicians, even the judiciary. And we have a tradition. And Mr. Speaker, sir, I am concerned when statements are made seeking to cast aspersions on people's character. And Mr. Speaker, sir, you know that we sat in here time over time in relation to the Barbados Labour Party. I do recall that it was raised in this Chamber that a member of the Barbados Labour Party - a contract was given to remove asbestos roofing to a company owned by the minister's husband. It's a fact. And the facts further reveal, Mr. Speaker, that the same company was not even authorised with the Ministry of Environment to remove asbestos roofing. It was not on the recommended list.

And the Member for St. James Central also spoke earlier - that there is some issue relative to not coming back to Parliament with some matter. Mr. Speaker, sir, in relation to - if you go to the National Housing Special Audit Report - land at Kent was sold contrary to the intention of Parliament. A resolution was brought in here for acquisition and it specifically stated that it was to be sold and completed in relation to housing for low-income housing, and the land was sold at their price without coming back to Parliament. Without coming back to

Parliament. The land was sold contrary to what Parliament intended in that particular debate.

Mr. Speaker, sir, again the Member for St. Michael North East spoke yesterday about transmissions and that the Transport Board is paying some \$30 000 for transmissions. Mr. Speaker, sir, I can report to this Honourable Chamber that the Transport Board had engaged Mr. Rohr, who journeyed to the United States, and we were able with technical advice to purchase transmissions for those buses at \$10 000, and those transmissions are being put in the buses by the Quality Assurance Department at the Transport Board. That is being done. That is being done. And the company is ATS Transmissions. ATS Transmissions. So it has gone abroad - all abroad - that the Transport Board is paying \$30 000 for transmissions, when we have engaged a company and purchased transmissions that are now being placed in the buses by quality assurance at a price far from what the Member for St. Michael North East got up in here and said. So I just wanted to state that fact.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, I have responsibility for transport. It was also stated here that UCAL in some way is being unfairly treated by the Transport Board and the Ministry of Transportation - as if you know that UCAL existed only last week. But you know, Mr. Speaker, sir, when I really look at the facts and the origins of UCAL, the Member for St. Peter received correspondence relative to UCAL, but it was no form and it was a big hullabaloo about the empowerment of a black company. And imagine - a letter from UCAL, in fact sent by the chairman - and this is what he stated: Over the 15 years of our existence as a worker-owned, worker-managed company, United Auto Works Co. Ltd. has had to suffer immeasurable economic and financial loss in circumstances where it was never the offending party. But then he goes on to say: from as early as 1998, UCAL has been paid late, forcing us to incur NIS penalties, VAT surcharges and crippling interest rates on overdraft provisions. As a result, our company - which should be engaging more than 200 persons in a success picture of worker ownership - has had to struggle to maintain 140 employees in a less than efficient manner. But then he goes on and says - this is what he said - the Transport Board's late payments and sometimes non-payments have almost strangled UCAL. Have almost strangled UCAL. And that is the state of affairs that existed for a Barbados Labour Party that was up and down, up and down.

AN HON. MEMBER: Yes, I remember - our Member has just read from a letter and we are asking that he make it a document of the House. So, Mr. Speaker, sir, is there a ruling?

Mr. SPEAKER: I don't remember the rule on that - it is that where it is really in the province of the Minister or

government to lay documents in the House, where it is perfectly okay for him to summarise a document or refer to a document without having to lay it in the House. There's a difference. Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, sir. Sometimes against her, you know, so. But we were informed in here and, you know, as Minister of Transport, the event out that this worker-owned company that they were up and down talking about - that we came in and all of a sudden we were unkind to them. Extremely unkind to them. You know. I came across information, Mr. Speaker, sir, around 2000 that the Prime Minister - then the Member for St. Peter - had to be called in, had to be called in, in an effort to save what was happening with UCAL, and issues were raised about the late payments, but the penalty payments imposed by the VAT office, and instances where there were occasions when the Transport Board, instead of giving UCAL work, it went otherwise. So these things existed at that time in this trying economic situation. We are trying our best. Only up to last week there was a meeting with the UCAL and we had a very excellent meeting, and moving forward in relation to even a contract, because there was no written contract. The contract expired and during a period of time - a period of time - I don't know if it was the Member for St. George North - they asked for a contract to be formalised and it was never done. You know.

You know, Mr. Speaker, sir, you know, again, Mr. Speaker, I want to go again. Because this information, Mr. Speaker, sir, that UCAL is being deprived of work and that the work is going to [Inaudible.] - the work is going to this place - I can report to this chamber, Mr. Speaker, sir, that UCAL Quality Care Vehicle Maintenance and workshop [Inaudible.] and some [Inaudible.] out of those service providers, UCAL is getting the majority of the work. I wanted to state that position. Clearing here tonight. Clearing here tonight, Mr. Speaker, sir, you know, so I wanted to put those matters to rest.

You know, as the Member for St. James Central will know, that of course you bring your evidence - of course you have your legal education. You will know at law school to do these things because you do a lot of evidence. You were in law school. You do law of evidence. You were in law school. You do law of evidence. You were in the law school. But Mr. Speaker, sir. Mr. Speaker, sir.

And we were informed, and then a big splash over the nation, that this Government is not fit - that there is an issue of fitness - that this Government is not fit to govern. And the same Members over there, three days - or the day after the 2013 election - had a meeting. Had a meeting. And as a result of that meeting there is no court case. But Mr. Speaker, I am not going to touch that court case. But Mr. Speaker, sir, Members over there accuse the Leader of the Opposition, sir, of not being fit to govern. Yes. Not

being fit to govern. Not being fit to govern. It is alleged that the Member for St. Andrew stated that the Opposition cannot lead the party because there is an issue in relation to embezzlement of party funds and that these funds were moved from the party into a foundation account. That is the allegation that was stated. That was stated. So if he is speaking about fitness to govern and a party of itself is confessing and is stating within itself that their leader is not fit to govern, then Mr. Speaker, sir, what else can I say? What else can I say?

Mr. Speaker, sir. Mr. Speaker, sir. But Mr. Speaker, sir, I will also say that they will vilify the Minister of Finance, you know. But there is light at the end of the tunnel because there is success. I must say, Mr. Speaker, sir, that the stark reality is that investor confidence is returning and the test for rebounding the economy is the inflow of domestic and foreign investors into the country. And there is a trend towards this. I want to congratulate the Minister of Tourism, I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance for ensuring and also making sure that St. Lawrence Castle is returned - is returned - to the tourism landscape of this country. And I am proud because it is in St. Philip North and there will be job creation. There will be job creation. But this is not negative. This is positive news. This is positive news. But the Members opposite, they probably will not get up and speak about St. Lawrence Castle reopening because this is something positive. This is positive news.

I remember the impact that St. Lawrence Castle had on my constituency and outside of it. Many a man or woman, many families survived, got jobs out of the existence of St. Lawrence Castle. And the closure of St. Lawrence Castle left a tremendous void in the tourism landscape of this country. It is a fact. It is a fact. 450 rooms. How can you say to this Government, how can you say to this Government, that we are not doing anything? This is stimulating. This is stimulating the economy. And this is a Government with a plan. There is a capital works programme and the Minister of Finance only last week finalised the agreement with CAF, which will then give us some funds to start a major capital works programme in relation to road works in this country. So there will be a robust capital works programme. And I am saying, Mr. Speaker, sir, that together with St. Lawrence Castle, together with the other projects, there will be hope. And of course Barbadians - Barbadians must be told - this story must be told to Barbadians - that St. Lawrence Castle, which was closed for a number of years.

I do recall that those persons who were left in the wilderness as a result of the closure of St. Lawrence Castle - that many weekends going over to Long Bay under a tambourine tree offering my services pro bono. I believe that the Prime Minister and other Members were involved in providing legal services because they were entitled.

Remember St. James Central. Remember St. James Central. If you are in service, his service will not be too long. But Mr. Speaker, sir, workers were out there crying out for assistance. And I do recall that not one Member at that time - the Member for St. Philip North who in 2003 after the election I remember him crying at St. Philip School. But I have no beef with the former Member for St. Philip North, but not a finger was left to assist those workers who got left in the wilderness as a result of the closure of St. Lawrence Castle. But no, I am proud. You know, there will be persons who got laid off - labourers, general workers - who now have an opportunity out there to work during the construction process. And thereafter, when the hotel is completed, there will also be more opportunities for them to get work at that hotel.

Mr. Speaker, as the Member responsible for transport and public transport in this country - the Member for St. George South this morning got up and I understand the confusion, because he was saying that he was using Hansard. He was saying that Hansard is really the law of Barbados. He was confused between Hansard and the laws of Barbados. But he is an expert in industrial relations. He is an expert in industrial relations because he had to grapple with it. So he was on the frolic about industrial relations. You know, if the Member for St. George South - I remember - if he really had to be given a discourse on what took place in relation to industrial relations in this country, I can single out one day - one day - that a number of public servants went on strike. Teachers, police officers, the Minister of Labour was on strike. All of them. And you know, I would like to recount the thing but I do not have the time. But I will say to the Member for St. George South that you were shallow.

As Minister of Transport and Public Transport - yes, we had discussions about how we can move the Transport Board forward in relation to public transport. What we are doing at the Transport Board is seeking to ensure that we provide that social service and at the same time make sure that we create a revenue-generating arm of the Transport Board. And that is why we are into charters and we are putting things in place to ensure that we bring maintenance costs down at the Transport Board. If you read the Shorey Report - if you read the Shorey Report - the Shorey Report speaks about high maintenance costs. It mentioned in terms of no accountability in terms of financing at the Transport Board. It spoke about in relation to the maintenance and it also talked about one day integrating the public sector

with the private sector and making sure that we put the conditions in place. And that is what we are looking to do in terms of integrating the private sector - some private sector players - in relation to public transport. Mr. Speaker, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that it is also our plan, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that the private sector is involved in public transportation. Because you see, the Member for St. George South said today that we only react. But we have - in fact it is in the Estimates - for the building of a new River Terminal. A new River Terminal. We have submitted plans to the Town Planning Department. We have had approval to utilise the Ministry of Education building over there at the River Terminal. And if you go to the River Terminal - for years, 14 years - the worst conditions that the travelling public, even workers, the bad conditions in relation to the shops over there. And we are seeking to improve conditions out there because that is where poor people travel to get their errands done and catch the minibuses. That is where they go. I am here trying to ensure that no longer - no longer - would they have to wait in the sun and rain, sun and rain, all the flooding out there. All those things we are putting in place to ensure that we construct a new terminal - a new terminal building for the minibuses and others who are moving a lot of people daily, of course, at the River Terminal.

Mr. Speaker, sir. Speaker, sir. I want to say to the Minister of Finance - yes - that he has my full support and that these measures, sir, go a long way. Go a long way not only in bringing stability, but there is also hope that there will be growth in relation to the capital projects that we are bringing to this country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. Your Honour. St. Joseph.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, it seems to be, members of the opposition, that Barbados would have been better served if the Minister of Finance had done what he did last year and not bothered to trouble this country with a budget, having not delivered one last year. Arguably, we were made no worse off by his actions. We were made worse off through the legacy of his policies over the last few years. But at least last year he could claim that he did not inflict any harm on the people of this country through a budget. We have heard all kinds of criticisms, all kinds of argumenta phenomenon, as we say, the CASAs asides. But the truth is, Mr. Speaker, we have a document of near 80 pages which, when you read it - and everybody over here has read it, I can assure you of that, sir - it is rambling in parts, it is inconclusive, it is illogical in its approach, and it represents nothing more, sir, or little more than a set of words strung together.

It fails. Yes. That document, that blue document, sir, it fails as a roadmap. It fails as a roadmap for Barbados for the rest of this financial year. It fails as a roadmap for Barbados in the short term and it fails as a roadmap for Barbados in the long term. But we have been treated, Mr. Speaker, to speech after speech. The only time any member on that side showed any enthusiasm for what was going on is if they felt that they were personally attacked. But other

than that, sir, they had absolutely no enthusiasm for any of the measures that have been implemented by the Minister of Finance. But in the same way that people in this country are not free to speak their mind, under the strong arm of this administration, they have not been free to speak theirs either. And so to a man, Mr. Speaker, they have each stood up and proclaimed how great the Minister of Finance is. What a fabulous budget. They have not been true, Mr. Speaker, to the needs and the dreams of their constituents. They have been true only to the mantra of the Democratic Labour Party - survival at all costs.

But the people of Barbados are not echoing those praises. They are not saying, great budget, sir. In fact, they must by now be considering this administration to be delusional if they really want people to believe that it was a great budget in any respect. The tourism sector has complained that they continue to be unable to access the promised concessions. The private sector has said, we are not impressed. One Barbadian businessman of some significant reputation has said that the budget was backward. And to a man and woman, everyone on the streets of Barbados is preparing for a worse time to come than they have before.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is no celebration possible for us tonight. There is no celebration possible for the members of my constituency or St. George North or South, or any of the constituents that we represent. But equally, sir, the Government must agree that there is no celebration possible for their constituents either. I am reminded, sir, of Tacitus who said, and where they make a wasteland, they call it peace. Others have paraphrased it in this way: and when they had created a wasteland, they called it civilisation. As much as it hurts, I believe that the landscape of Barbados today appears more to be a wasteland than at any time in the last 30 or 40 years. Industrial unrest at an unprecedented level. Layoffs, closures. BIDC sent home 13 people yesterday, today, summarily. I remember well, Mr. Speaker, that early in the first term of this Government, they sent home 30-something people from the UDC. But like robots, we are expected to fall in line behind this Government, follow it blindly, turn a blind eye to its wrongdoings and lie supine, Mr. Speaker, without a single word.

And in between the speeches, with aggression and angst and all kinds of stuff, sir, we were even tonight treated to a speech with some tears. In fact, that is the only thing, sir, that broke the near boredom in listening to the speeches of the Democratic Labour Party, sir. And perhaps that would be a good place for me to start, because I really hope to focus on what is before us and not really to deal with certain matters that make the Government feel very uncomfortable. But, Mr. Speaker, there is that saying - what is good for the goose is good for the gander. The members of the Democratic Labour Party find it distinctly

uncomfortable for anybody on this side to raise the specter of conflict of interest in respect of two of the front bench's dealings with a company called Transtec.

Mr. Speaker, I am not here to say that anybody thief. Nothing of the sort. But I do know what a conflict of interest is. It is easily defined. But to put it in simple terms, Mr. Speaker, it is where a relationship exists between individuals such that the relationship is likely to prejudice the arrangements with a third party. We know what a conflict of interest is. I fail, Mr. Speaker, to understand how it is possible for one minister who is a lawyer by profession and another who has a doctorate in theology to come in here and not appreciate that this is no trivial matter, but that it is a matter of urgent concern. Now, they can stand on that side of this chamber and fire pot shots - fire over on this side, who did what, who did what then. But there is only one cabinet in Barbados today and it is made up of people on the front bench on their side, and whatever failings might otherwise exist or might have existed in history, it is their duty, Mr. Speaker, to stand up and accept when they are wrong. Plain and simple.

Mr. Speaker, an explanation came from the Attorney General. In fact, I do not even know that he offered it as an explanation. I think he used it more as an example. I do not think the Attorney General could really justify any of this. He talked about Simpson Motors. Well, sir, I had a little time in some early boredom today and I checked the register and I saw a long list of companies that are financiers for motor vehicles. I saw a long list of companies that sell motor vehicles. I did not see the name Transtec appearing in any of them. So I have to ask myself, and perhaps the two ministers involved can tell the chamber, whether that company is engaged in the ordinary business of leasing vehicles. Can any member of the public pick up the telephone and call the number and say, sir, I would like to lease a vehicle? How many have you got? Or is this some private arrangement entered into between these two cabinet ministers and that company? What are the terms?

The reason this is important, Mr. Speaker, is because it has come to our knowledge that the SSA has just approved a payment to that company of \$900 000 in circumstances where its other suppliers have not been paid for six months. But the very company that the minister leases his vehicle from gets \$900 000 in one fell swoop. Not in instalments, it was not spread across so everybody gets a little drizzle. The conflict of interest, Mr. Speaker, is obvious. It should not be tolerated. And to put it in simple terms, it is not right. It does not look right, it does not smell right. And for the administration that came to power in 2008 and devoted four or five pages of its budget to good governance, talking about transparency and accountability and all those kinds of things, sir, they have fallen far short of it. There is no properly governed country, none, that

would tolerate that. And if it is to happen, the circumstances ought to be made public. But what is perhaps worse is that the minister did not even seek to defend himself or his ministry or his government or any of the Cahill allegations. Nothing at all. The minister had nothing of substance to say. Now, perhaps that alone tells a story. But the members on that side do not want us to talk about those things. They want us to talk about the budget.

The budget. Let us talk about the budget, sir. This administration pretends to be interested in employment. But one member on the front bench earlier said that government cannot maintain employment at those levels. So they had to cut. They had to cut. They had to cut. But what is bizarre, sir, is that this Government is now forcing the small businesses who are being expected to shore up the employment numbers - forcing them, sir - into a position where they cannot sustain themselves. But the Government wants to talk about the budget. So let us talk first, sir, about the tax certificates that people now have to produce in order to work.

I would begin, sir, by pointing out to this administration - because I honestly do not think they are aware - that Barbados is a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. We signed it in 1973. And one of those articles, Article 6, clearly states that individuals have a right to work and imposes on state parties a fundamental obligation not to put things in the way of people exercising that right to work. Now, I heard the Minister of Finance - well, he was not on his feet, but I heard him make an aside - that we would not stop people from working, that the certificate is not intended to do that. But you know, sir, it is apparent that the Minister of Finance either does not seek the advice of his Attorney General or that the Attorney General does not offer it. But that is their business, not ours.

I want to let the Minister of Finance know firstly that I consider it reprehensible that in his statement he used the word "professional." It is not that all self-employed people are not professionals - they all are professionals in one way or another. But I believe that the Minister used that term in his sentence to try to focus the spotlight on the lawyers and the doctors and so on, so that the hairdressers and the mechanics would not feel that this has anything to do with them. But it does. And I am not going to repeat the list because the Leader of the Opposition went through it yesterday when she spoke. But the fact of the matter is that when you examine the legislation, Mr. Speaker, in each instance where you are required to register, you can only get a certificate permitting you to register after you have paid your fees to the registry.

So in the Legal Professions Act, sir, it is covered in section 5(1)(d) and section 12. Mr. Speaker, in the Electrical Wireman Licensing Act, section 8A(6) requires

that you must pay the fee before you can get your wireman's licence. The Engineers Registration Act, section 8 - you must pay your fee and present the receipt to the registrar before you can get your licence renewed. The Land Surveyors Act, sir, section 9(2) - pay your fee and then you can work. Section 9 of the Medical Registration Act, sir - pay your fee and only then can you work. Section 7 of the Pharmacy Act, section 3 of the Pharmacy Act - same thing. Travel Services, section 24 - pay your fee or else you cannot sell a plane ticket. Veterinary Surgeons, section 9. The Nurses Registration Act. So every single one of them, you are required to pay your fee before you are able to practise your profession under law.

And I have no doubt, sir, I have no doubt that any higher tribunal will find that the imposition of this requirement - that you prove to Government that you have paid your taxes or else you cannot work - will be found, sir, to be unlawful and a contravention of your fundamental human rights. Now we are forced to assume, because the Minister has not said otherwise, that it even includes land taxes. And we say this, sir, because we know that individuals who have tried to register for other professions under this have already been told that they had to prove that they paid VAT and they paid their land tax, so long before the Minister has come in and made this announcement. In fact, they had turned a blind eye to its implementation by the BRA.

So, sir, your land tax for your house, where you live, that has nothing at all to do with your practice as a lawyer. You must now prove to the BRA that you have paid your land tax before you can appear in a court. An engineer must have paid his or her land tax before they can go and opine on the soundness of a building. I honestly do not think, sir, that the Minister of Finance has taken into account what this means. But, you know, the situation with nurses proves a point. It is my understanding that the majority of nurses in Barbados are employed by the Government, but they too are required to produce a tax certificate before the Government can register them. So the nurses at the QEH - now I do not know how they can work it out. Maybe the Director of the QEH is going to sign a memorandum: bring all the land tax bills in by Monday morning so that we can see if you paid your land tax or not. Because if you have not paid it, we cannot register you as a nurse and you cannot practise nursing in my hospital. Have they thought about that, sir? And that does not even take into account the tremendous strain that it will obviously put on the BRA, that can barely handle its existing workload, but must now find tax clearance certificates for all these people, sir.

Mr. Speaker, I do not buy the Minister's explanation that people are not paying their taxes and you want to capture everybody. The Income Tax Act provides adequate mechanisms for policing the income tax regime. It provides for audit of individuals who the BRA does not feel are

paying their taxes. It provides for the taking up of judgments by deposit of certificates of non-payment of taxes. A whole set of mechanisms - it provides for garnishment as well, sir. So what really needs to happen is that the Minister needs to get the individuals in the BRA to take a look at the individuals that he is thinking of and police them on a one-by-one basis. But to require every man jack now - every man jack - to produce the tax certificate, sir, is really to put the burden on the individual. That is where we are.

But you know what worries me, sir? I am concerned about what next. I cannot see any logic behind asking hauliers to produce a tax certificate from the BRA in order to be able to dump garbage at the SBRC. What is the relationship? What is the connection? And then we noticed there was a news story recently which said that the BRA had to give you a tax certificate now in order for you to send out foreign exchange. You know, the BRA is now the replacement for the cat-o'-nine-tails. When this Government wants you to act in a particular way or to do a particular thing, the BRA - the BRA is now the Barbadian boogeyman who will haunt you until you do what they want. But they have to ask the Government, what next, sir?

Is it far-fetched, Mr. Speaker, that the Government will now say you need a tax certificate to go into port? Well, why, if you need a tax certificate to dump garbage, is it so far-fetched to think they will immediately want to go into port? Or maybe you need a tax certificate to travel - they did that in Trinidad. Or maybe, sir, we are going to be asked very shortly to produce a tax clearance certificate in order to renew your driver's licence, or to get a liquor licence, or to open a canteen at a secondary school, or to incorporate a company, or to go to the hospital. And if they do this for tax, what is to stop them from saying, you know what, you also need to get an NIS clearance certificate in order to be able to do any of these things?

You know, sir, this kind of regime is reminiscent of an unenlightened society which operates on the basis that people must be compelled to act. I think it is Kazakhstan that requires every single adult in its population to pick cotton for two months of the year free of cost. And if you do not go and pick it, you get longer. Kazakhstan, you know, sir. But the relevance of that is that when a society operates on the basis of compulsion, what happens then, sir, is that the opportunity for secondary markets and those things begins to flourish, sir. And I cannot imagine that is where we want to take Barbados today.

But let us talk about the budget, sir. That is wrong. That is misconceived and needs to be done away with. It should not even be allowed to get off the ground. But the budget, Mr. Speaker - this wonderful budget has just carried up the land tax on Barbadians. Now, I do not know how else to put it. Why would you carry up the land tax?

The Minister says, well, I carried it up because we agreed to abolish the solid waste tax. But we cannot really afford to abolish it. So we tack it on now to the land tax. Now, sir, I do not know - that is absurd. If you thought about a tax and you put it on, be man enough to keep it. But they decided to remove it. For heaven's sake, do not come and give a little - move it from here. But I put it down, I tell you, because you would have figured it out anyway. That is where we are, Mr. Speaker. That is where we are.

But how can you send up the land tax in an environment, Mr. Speaker, when property values have not been increasing - in fact they have been declining? How can you send up the land tax, Mr. Speaker, when you remove the very allowances that encourage Barbadians to own homes? How can you send up the land tax, Mr. Speaker, when Barbadians are not encouraged to do renovations and refurbishments to increase their value and to maintain their value? I said it is illogical. And that is a clear example of the illogic, Mr. Speaker. So the land tax has gone up.

It burns me that the Minister can come in here and cavalierly say to the people of Barbados that the income tax - your personal income tax - has been brought down. Yes, the rates in the two tax bands have gone down. But we have now realised, or we immediately realised, that the effect of the removal of the allowances has been to make sure that you actually pay more taxes than you were paying when the rates were higher. So in a report by KPMG, they have said that for an individual earning a certain amount of dollars a year, the amount of tax you will pay, even though the bands have come down, is almost double.

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

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: And in this great budget, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has also said I am increasing user fees. And his rationale, Mr. Speaker, is we have done a comparison to see what user fees people will pay in the private sector. Now, I do not know who raised that point. I think he had more sense than to write that. When the Government says I am going to increase user fees having done a comparison with fees in the private sector, I want to ask the Minister - who in the private sector puts out fires? Who in the private sector issues passports? Tell me where he can go to find a companies registry or a High Court registry in the private sector. But who on earth would the Minister have used as his benchmark to determine that in the private sector higher fees are charged? Well, only in relation, Mr. Speaker, to daycare. Daycare. But I cannot understand that a Government that is prepared to spend 20-something million dollars on lower-cost housing here and another \$30 million there and all that kind of stuff could balk at permitting poor Barbadians affordable access to daycare. Where is the logic in that?

What is the thread that we see coming through this Government?

Mr. Speaker, I hope in a minute to get to Cahill. But here is the thing, sir. This Minister of Finance and his wonderful budget has come and - you know, he is like Santa Claus. Every year it is almost the same thing. Things get wrapped up nicely and you get a shirt and a tie that you do not want and you are too ashamed to tell them that you did not ask for it. Because the Minister has set out a long list of projects that we are going to see this year. You know, the only good thing is that he finally was too ashamed to put back in Pickering and Four Seasons. He left those out for the first time. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that he is a little embarrassed about the sugar factory, Andrews, and the [Inaudible.] because he has not mentioned either of those as well. So we have been treated to comic relief once more, because for the umpteenth time we could hear that this project is starting this year, the next project is starting this year, this project starting in September. Project, project, project, project. But get with it -

Mr. Speaker, we have heard this time and time again over the last eight years - you fooled us once, twice, three times. And in year number six or seven or eight, you come back with the same game.

Mr. Speaker, in my few minutes left, Cahill is not to be swept under the mat. This Government has entered into a contractual arrangement with a company called Cahill Energy. We spoke about it last year. But I want every Barbadian who has a computer to go and google Cahill Energy. And you will see a single web page. Sir, any company, even one that is selling snow cones, will have ten pages if they could. But you know what Cahill Energy's page says? It does not recite a single instance of a gasification project or of any other waste-to-energy project that they have ever done anywhere in the world.

Sir, a company that is bidding for a \$700 million project will be boasting - I did one here, I did one there, I did one next. Everything on Cahill's webpage is: we will, we will. We have hired engineers, we have done this. But nowhere could Cahill say that they have ever done it before. Where was the feasibility study? Where is the financing? Where is the financial backing for this? But the Minister says money is coming. Well, we know that the Teachers' Union in England was invited to fund it and fled. Fled. Would not touch the project because they realised that Cahill was an empty shell - nothing to it - and could not deliver the project. Could not deliver the project, sir.

But Barbadians are expected to sign on to a pipe dream of a \$700 million gasification plan - with a contract, sir, signed by Ministers of Government. But you know what, sir? The Attorney General ceded any responsibility he had for those documents. We, as an administration for

14 years, know that any major project done by central government, the documents go to the Solicitor General's office for vetting and for approval. But in this contract - \$700 million, arguably the largest project that we have ever undertaken in our history - the Attorney General cedes responsibility for this project and paid almost \$2 million to a well-known DLP lawyer. Nowhere, Mr. Speaker, did the Attorney General say: we have looked at this. The responsibility is outside. Because the Attorney General no longer appears to be the chief legal officer for Government. Either that, or he knew better than to touch this project. I believe it is the latter.

But somebody has to speak up. Because we are being saddled with a project that the owners now want to sell. Because the truth is they got what they wanted. They got a binding contract with the Government of Barbados that they can now flog on the international market. And you know what, sir? It has not even cost them a penny. A few plane fares to Barbados and they can now flog it for millions and millions of dollars. A millstone around the neck of this country. This is the great budget that we have been offered, sir.

But we will have the last word, I think. On Sunday night I want to invite the public to attend a public meeting - Tyrrell's Car Park at 7 o'clock Sunday night. Because we know that from here on out it is a cuss-fest. We know it. So on Sunday night, come out and hear us. And the Dems - they will come too, I am sure. I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, after more than 30 years of experience in parliamentary life, I rise to speak in this Parliament in a debate. In a public debate. As an independent member, I must begin by saying that there is a refreshing feeling that I feel when I rise every day without having necessarily to have something to be opposed to out of necessity or something to agree with out of necessity only by reason of partisan relationships. And that therefore, sir, the perspective in this brief contribution that I intend to bring is that of a person who does not feel an obligation that he just have to oppose for opposition's sake, nor to agree with for gain's sake.

I must also say from the outset that this Parliament, of which I am still proud to be a member, will, over the course of the next three years, have to preside over transformations, not just of the economy, but of the society that go far beyond that which has been ever expected of a Parliament in Barbados. And that I would like to assure members on both sides that we are no less equal to the task than any Parliamentarians of the past, and that I would expect that this Parliament will not fail in the great transformations that are expected of it.

So in this presentation, we want really to try to capture what is the essence of the economic strategy that the government is asking the country and the Parliament to accept and ask if it meets the simple test which is expected of us in public life. Not the test of perfection, but the test of reasonableness and implementability. And my remarks will be addressed largely to that particular matter. But it is said that this Parliament will have to preside over some of the greatest transformations - not economic - of any Parliament in the history of this country. And I hope that we can leave this particular period of crisis that forces us to contemplate extraordinary accomplishments, having learned from the experience.

So if there is one lesson that I want the country and Parliament to learn from the experience, it is that deficits do matter and the financing of deficits matter. And you know, sir, I used to serve in a party where when I had to come and make presentations as a leader of the opposition, I was sometimes told that the public do not want to hear about any deficits and financing of the deficit. The small man does not want to hear about those things. And on the call-in programme, sometimes you do hear this mantra that deficits do not matter. I say to this Parliament, having served as the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance for 14 years, that getting the deficit right and having it financed right is an essential responsibility, not just of the Ministry of Finance, but it is the only thing that falls to the jurisdiction and the discretion of the Minister of Finance. If the revenue is not performing in accordance with expectations, it is within the jurisdiction of the Minister of Finance to make the necessary adjustments to make the deficit sustainable and the deficit capable of being financed.

And as we leave this dismal period in our history, sir, I would just like to echo what I said in my last presentation to this House as a Minister of Finance. I said that prudence in the management of public finances has been a crucial aspect of the stable and sustainable growth and development environment Barbados has enjoyed since 1991. Except for three occasions, the deficit has been contained to less than 2.5 per cent of GDP. Indeed, it has averaged 2.1 per cent. All that kept Barbados stable over 16 years was because we did not allow the deficit to run over 2.1 per cent of GDP. And I gave the House the pledge in 2007, my last presentation, that to make things better for the future, I was going to preside - if allowed by the country - over a deficit of no more than 1 per cent of GDP. I therefore cannot join the chorus of congratulation of a Minister of Finance who allows the deficit, which is the only thing that falls to him to control, to rise to 12 per cent of GDP, and then ask us to congratulate him because he has brought it down to six, when in point of fact, at this time it should have been no more than one.

Yesterday, the people of Barbados and the Minister of Finance were speaking, sir. And since it was not a confidential discussion, I was telling him that in 1994 he faced the same situation as he did now. A country was coming back out of recession. And when a country is coming back out of recession, the one thing that is expected of a Minister of Finance is that one confidence-boosting measure that points the way to a brighter future. It fell to me in 1994 to do that. I inherited an economy coming out of recession. And even before I came to a budget, I expressed confidence in the future of the country by asking for the one thing that I thought the country needed. I removed the taxes on the import - taxes on all the inputs of agriculture and manufacturing. I did that in 1994. The then Minister of Finance, in his budget, said he could not do it, but it was necessary, coming out of recession, to have that one measure of confidence that characterised the spirit - the new spirit - that you are intending to ask the country to be guided by. And I told the Minister that they would have a difficulty supporting his budget if only because I could not discern with clarity that one measure of confidence that I needed to see at this time.

And so why do I say that I am going to treat this budget not by my own logic, but by reference to its own, because it is a basic economic logic representing the government's economic policies that lay at the centre of these estimates. The government is seeking through these new policies to address two sets of contending forces. At one and the same time, the government of Barbados has an overwhelming deficit that it wants to reduce. And it wants to reduce that deficit by taxation. At the same time, it wants to put the economy on a growth path. The essential issue - and if you look at the simple macroeconomics of these estimates - is therefore this: have the measures that the Minister of Finance introduced to the House the capacity to both bring the deficit under control and put the country back on a strong path of growth?

Also in economics, macroeconomics has a simple notion called injections and withdrawals. An economic system is like a circular system, but there are always injections being made into it. New income, new spending - injections into the economy will expand it. If you withdraw, it will contract. And therefore if these two things are taking place simultaneously, on balance, you will only get growth if the injections are greater than the withdrawals. That is basic macroeconomics.

Now, sir, the things that are withdrawals from economic systems are taxes. If the government raises taxes, it withdraws. And yesterday the Minister of Finance, in pursuit of one part of the objective, sought to withdraw \$200 million from the economy in the form of taxes in a year. So we are going to have that contractionary force on the economy. By contrast, he says he wants to stimulate the economy. And the principal means by which he will

stimulate the economy is by seeking to inject \$1.2 billion in capital projects over an indeterminate period.

Now, sir, and here is the issue. We know for sure that the withdrawal of \$200 million from the economy is going to cause it to contract. Will he succeed - while contracting the economy by taking \$200 million from it - in injecting the \$1.1 billion that he calls the stimulus? The facts are, sir, as you know, that in every act of spending in Barbados there is an import content, and you have to reduce it by 60 per cent to begin with, so that the impact on the economy is not going to be \$1.1 billion, but 60 per cent of that. And this is not going to take place in one year - some of these projects are to take place beginning in 2016. Some of them are going to be spread, Mr. Speaker, over three and four years. So \$1.1 billion injected into the Barbados economy over a four-year period with an import content of 60 per cent is not going to be the same thing as \$1.1 billion spent now with no import content.

And the point I am making to you is simply this, Mr. Speaker: if you take out \$200 million from the economy, it will take you at least \$500 million in sure injections immediately - after the 60 per cent import content - for the economy just to remain stable and not grow at all. So the Minister must really go through this series of measures and at least make sure that as he takes out \$200 million by taxation, he injects at least \$500 million. Because \$500 million in new capital activity in a year, before import content, will be equivalent to \$200 million net. And that will just keep it stable. To get it to grow, Mr. Speaker, sir, I do not think that what is here will be sufficient. And especially if you want to spread these projects, some started in September 2016 - so you are withdrawing now, you may inject later. And seeing this budget as an economist, from a purely macroeconomic point of view, the net effect will not likely be as great as the Minister is seeking to believe.

And I urge the government, because that is the strategy: if the intention is to have these two contending forces play in your economy, somebody has to pay great attention to make sure that this suite of capital projects turns out to be exactly as the government hopes. Otherwise, Mr. Speaker, you will have the contraction. The contraction is going to be sure. All that will happen is that we would have an additional bout of contraction following these macroeconomic policies. An economy is a system, and if you have contending forces, you have to so balance them that the positives outweigh the negatives.

Now, sir, there are a number of issues that were raised in this budget that I would like to touch on quickly. I recently gave a lecture to the Chartered Accountants of Barbados where I said, quite frankly, what I have been saying before, that a precondition for growth is for the government to address the debt, because the debt now accounts for 60 per cent of government's revenues. And the

reputable studies, Mr. Speaker, that have been done by reputable economists speak of the debt overhang. There is a group of Barbadian economists that have done a study indicating that the debt overhang for Barbados is lower than for the rest of the world. The debt overhang means there is a point at which the payment of debt becomes a drag on the economy and stops the government from being able to do things. And as is happening in Barbados and the rest of the Caribbean, if it leads to downgrades of your debt, then companies leave and things of that nature. The debt overhang has arrived in Barbados long ago.

And sir, I was sincere and I said simply that I would strongly support the government of Barbados if it does what Jamaica has done, what St. Kitts has done, what all other small countries in our circumstances have done. There is no shame in it - that the government should do what people do when your debt becomes too large a proportion of your monthly revenues: you go to the bank and ask to refinance the debt. In the United States of America they have bankruptcy laws that allow companies to go into bankruptcy and reorganise their debt as a way of putting themselves back on a stable footing. Obama allowed Detroit to recover by dealing with its debt. There is no disgrace, Mr. Speaker, in dealing with the debt. And I may say to you that Guyana is now the fastest growing economy in the Caribbean precisely because the Paris Club helped Guyana to refinance its debt. Jamaica now has recently had an upgrade of its credit rating precisely because it has dealt with the debt.

And there is a shame in it, Mr. Speaker, but in our instance, sir, we are becoming the victim of foolishness. The Governor of the Central Bank has been allowed a relatively free rein in doing things in this country. He published a paper on the reason why the government is not dealing seriously with the debt - a paper on how we keep the economy stable. And in that paper, sir, he said we do not have a debt problem. Our debt ratio is even better than Germany's. If the Governor believes that we do not have a debt problem, then, sir, he is not going to recommend to the government that we should deal with it. And when I read this - that Barbados has a better debt situation than Germany - I said, something is very wrong here. And then when I read the rest of the paper, which said that Barbados is stable because new investments and strategies under development are going to create an ethanol plant expected to yield exports of \$264 million - that we are stable because we are ready to export \$264 million - I said, I have to make these documents available to the House, but this is rubbish. And I trust that in making these documents available to the House, I do not commit an offence. But this is nonsense, sir. Barbados has to deal with the debt, sir.

I also am glad that the Minister has not put the energy projects in the mix as the projects to cause stimulus. I will urge the government to even go as far as to let us

have a select committee of the House to look at these things. Because what do we have? You have a light and power plant that operates under law and it has been encouraged by law to install peak capacity - capacity to meet peak demand. In Barbados we also have a plan to invest \$500 million in generating electricity at a sugar factory. We also hear of plans to invest \$700 million to generate electricity from waste energy. And there are also plans for us all to go into photovoltaic. The problem is that if you see these one by one but you do not see them as one, then you may not understand what may be the implications of running after each of these projects as a single entity rather than as part of a package. What will be the implications, for example, of government financing if we had to back projects that are raising \$1.2 billion to pay for electricity to generate energy, when the light and power company has a statutory responsibility to recover capital on capacity that has been installed? And I urge the government, sir - I understand how exciting it may sound, but you still have to get the economics of it correct.

There is a move now to encourage people to hold government savings bonds in principle. So I cannot complain with that, because when you read the prevailing business conditions, Barbados's savings rates are now among the lowest in the world. But sir, may I urge that the Minister of Finance, if he is going to ask people to take up savings bonds, try to do as much as can be done to restore Barbados's credit rating. And I say that for a specific reason. This year the government has to borrow \$1.7 billion to finance the difference between its expenditure and its revenues. The credit rating says that Barbados is not at investment grade. Institutional investors are debarred from investing in bonds that are not at an investment grade. The banks of Barbados have reached their prudential limits in the amounts that they can lend. The government has virtually exhausted the National Insurance as a source for its financing. The government has recently been using a lot of central bank printing of money to finance its deficits. It has virtually run out of financing options. And if it is going to tell the ordinary man and woman that I represent in St. Peter to stop putting their money in the banks - because you are dropping the interest rates at the banks - and put them in savings bonds, then it has a duty, I think, also to tell them that the bonds that we are inviting you to buy have been regarded as not being of an investment grade. And whenever the Central Bank comes on and tells people to come and buy these bonds, I think it has a duty - like how the Surgeon General puts a warning out - that these things can be dangerous to your health. I only ask that it is a good idea, but it makes sense, if you are inviting ordinary people to take up these bonds, to be transparent about their status. I am not calling them junk - I do not like that word - but they are not without risk.

Now, sir, this is an extraordinary period, I said. And I want to come back to the main central theme in this

debate. Sir, this is an extraordinary period in the history of Barbados and it will require of this Parliament extraordinary things. The difficulties the Barbados economy is facing will for the future require that virtually a new economy is going to be invented. The Minister of Tourism is doing a yeoman job, but may I suggest to you, sir, that a 4 per cent growth in tourism cannot carry the Barbados economy if all of the other sectors are not performing. And the other sectors are not performing, sir, for strong, objective reasons.

There was a time when Intel would have a factory in Barbados. That will never happen again. There was a time when Barbados used to produce televisions, sir, and that will never happen again either. Because there was a time when under international trade law, a country like Barbados could ban imports and through import substitution produce at home the manufactured goods that they were banning. That will never happen again. And it is no coincidence that manufacturing has fallen by over 30 per cent since we have started to implement WTO rules that say you cannot use licences and quotas. The same thing in agriculture. There was a time, Mr. Speaker, when our international business sector was one of the fastest growing in the world, and Barbados became the third largest location for Canadian investment across the world. That is vanishing. Why? Because the concessions that Canada used to give us are now given to every other country. Businesses are leaving. There was a time when, Mr. Speaker, we looked to be a place for informatics, and there was the hope that the informatics industry could generate a lot of jobs. China is the place where they are going now. There was a company that came to Barbados to write software for China - they have gone back to India.

I may also make the point, and the country has to hear it, that Africa is on the move. Africa is now among the fastest growing economies in the world. And a lot of the capital that would have come to Barbados when Barbados was one of the few places open for business, or come to the Caribbean, is now going to China, India and elsewhere. And a lot of the things that were open to us in the past because of international trade law, we will not be able to do in the future. We, however, sir, cannot just have an economy based upon tourism, because no matter how strong the tourism is, the Barbados economy needs at least four strong sectors if we are going to be able to afford our people their standard of living.

Now, sir, I hope that it never has to come to a stage where government has to preside over the decline of the standard of living of the people of Barbados as our most important policy. But a new economy has to be allowed to evolve - a new economy where the transformations come from enabling innovation, entrepreneurship and technology to be the driving force, and a concerted effort. And I keep making this point: we simply have to remove the barriers to

doing business, to put ourselves in the same conditions as the other small economies in the world that face the same conditions but are growing their economies. We have to make the transformation. One of the things I want to support is the precept that the Prime Minister should now deal -

with competitive. But I think it's a bigger challenge because this Parliament will have perhaps to begin to dismantle things that were done and put in place by Errol Barrow and Grantley Adams. We must not feel we're doing it for a bad reason. But we are doing it because this country must never be frozen in a moment of history. Why do we say that, sir? I will criticise the government because you are approaching the issue of social policy realm. For 40 years after independence, we've had a social policy that has entitled everybody to virtually access the government services. If there is to be a new social policy, the government should spell it out through full consultations rather than allow it to be the result of the revealing of the Minister of Finance.

Barbados needs a new social policy. It needs an articulated social policy, but it does not need a social policy derived from cuts in the budget. And that we can find new ways of doing old things and new ways of doing new things. And that part of the exercise that has to be engaged is for us now to sit down as a country and think through what must be a new social policy for this country, rather than let it be a derivative of a cutting budget.

Secondly, sir, there were things that were done by Barrow and Adams that we have to revisit. Errol Barrow decided that local government had to be abolished. That was not all that happened. A series of statutory institutions were created in this country to carry out the responsibilities that the local government used to. Now, sir, it might well be that we have found the most expensive way through statutory boards of carrying out the responsibilities of the local government system. But surely it is something that a responsible Parliament has to sit down and discuss as a serious matter. What is going to be the role of statutory institutions not just in delivering services at a central point of view, but at the local level? And can there be an empowerment of communities to enable us to carry the delivery of social services at the NGOs without having to spend \$1.2 billion in doing what the local government system used to do?

And the Labour Party has a headache as well, too. Some of the things that this Parliament may have to do are things that will get Grantley Adams upset. It was the Barbados Labour Party that created a Transport Board by nationalising existing private transport operators. That is why we have the Transport Board we have today. It was an act of nationalisation by a government that felt that it had to follow the British government in socialism. Now can we

open up our minds to the matter? Grantley is dead. Barrow is dead. We cannot allow this country to be frozen in a moment of history.

And therefore, now what needs to be done is for us to put the economics together. We need a new sociology of development. We need to look again at our political institutions and come up with a programme for transformation of Barbados that is equal to the times. Understanding that we must also build a new economy - an economy that depends not only upon tourism. And Mr. [Inaudible.] has recently told the Central Bank so we must put it together as one single undertaking. Unless we are prepared to open our minds to these things, but especially so finding new ways of doing old things and finding new ways of doing new things.

I am pleased to be able to make this brief contribution to this debate. I will be going to Jamaica on the 15th of July to meet with the Jamaican cabinet to help them to begin better to craft a social partnership to help to carry Jamaica forward and to learn also from how Jamaica has used its relationships with international financial institutions.

But there is one matter that I am not going to go into detail on because I do not have the time, sir. This budget is a budget that has been prepared to show the international community that Barbados is prepared to follow the advice in Article IV consultations. The IMF has been for many years telling the government to remove the allowances. Now, I just want to say that the government cannot leave the country in this no man's land. The IMF no longer - the IMF has gone into something called flexible credit lines, that I made the subject of a lecture recently. I am not urging a programme with the IMF, but they know that the country cannot get out of this problem without support from the international financial community, because many of the institutions that the government will want to approach to get resources for the very capital projects that you are seeking to implement will tell you: bring programmes for funding, but bring policies that follow the advice of your Article IV consultations.

The government has to have a relationship with the International Monetary Fund. Not necessarily a borrowing relationship. The IMF need not tell you to devalue your currency. I sat with the government of Grenada recently. I helped them to prepare something called a growth and poverty reduction programme that is the basis from which they have approached the International Monetary Fund. But the government of Barbados is effectively following IMF policies and if it is doing so because it wants to get the financial support of the West, say so. But let us deal with it because we have the capacity to deal with it.

And perhaps I may conclude by just telling the government that I would have loved to have this intellectual challenge - it is an intellectual challenge - but it has to be engaged as an intellectual challenge. Bring new thinking aboard, sir. But it has to be brought. It has to be engaged in with a new spirit, in the belief, sir, that great causes are not won by doubtful men. And I told the Minister of Finance that I could not support his budget because it was prepared as if by a doubtful man. I am obliged to you.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to make a contribution in regards to this resolution before the House. Additionally, let me also take this opportunity as is customary to say to the people of St. Philip West and to extend to them my gratitude for their confidence that they have reposed in me to manage their affairs politically.

Mr. Speaker, I listened with great attention to the right Honourable Member for St. Peter and I want to engage one or two areas that were raised that I consider to be very relevant in this debate and given the portfolio, sir, that I have the honour to now manage, creates the opportunities for the development of those new strategies and synergies that he spoke to in regards to evolving a new Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, there is an old adage that those who do not understand history and learn from it are doomed to make the same mistakes. I am thankful that I have had the opportunity, sir, to be trained as a student of philosophy, sir. And I have gone back, sir, as far as 1940 and post the 1948 period when the Marshall Plan and the Bretton Woods institutions were established - World Bank, IMF, etc. And I have had the opportunity, sir, to read in regard to agricultural development and processes that the prescriptions that were then levelled or advised in the 1948-1950 period, which was that, sir, of countries establishing state trade enterprises to drive domestic economic activity and to ensure that food security was the mantra.

And I have seen, sir, the same World Bank and IMF, as soon as those systems start to evolve and domestic food security within many countries improved, change the goalposts; and by 1994 when you had the treaty signed to establish the WTO, sir, this multilateral trading system, Mr. Speaker, would have evolved directly in relation as being an antithesis, sir, to the state trading systems that were necessary to provide food security to small and developing countries in the world.

The evidence of what I say, Mr. Speaker, goes back to 1994 with some clarity. And Haiti is a perfect example, Mr. Speaker, because the impoverished country that so many people make laughing sport of was self-sufficient in rice and many other products in the 1980s.

But sir, similarly, Mr. Speaker, St. Croix had a well-established sugarcane industry. They listened to the pundits, shut it down, sold the lands to Hess Oil and decided, like the pundits of that time, sir, to build the largest conglomerate of molasses storage tanks in the world and decided to import all the molasses and become the largest exporter, sir, in regards to Diageo and Captain Morgan rum.

Yes, that is right, Mr. Speaker - the Attorney General has given me a correction. It is actually St. Croix I refer to, not Turks and Caicos. And I say that, Mr. Speaker, because after that has been completed, a few months ago, Mr. Speaker, a team came to Barbados asking this little rock to consider providing technical capacity to them to rebuild the sugar industry. Because now, after we look in the crystal ball at the future that mimics exactly what some of the pundits are saying about this - that we should shut down the wicking industry, import all the molasses - St. Croix, sir, is now recognising that it has left 85 per cent of its agricultural land fallow and they import 27 million gallons of molasses per year.

Well, Barbados ain't going down that road. As long as I am the minister. Prime Minister, you have to put somebody else here.

In 1994, as a result of the IMF structural adjustment programme, sir, Haiti was forced to change the entire system. Under the multilateral system, sir, it reduced the external tariff from 53 per cent to 33 per cent and then down to 3 per cent. What is the net result, sir? Flooding of Haiti with Miami rice.

Mr. Speaker, I say that to say this. That has now infected the CARICOM result. We are now importing, sir, \$10 billion in food. While we are importing \$10 billion in food, they are telling us that we should not engage state trading enterprises that were used by the same institutions post-1948 to execute food security. We are now importing \$250 million a week. And you heard: Guyana rice - \$245 million; chicken, US - \$220 million; corn, US - \$145 million; refined sugar, sir - \$130 million; raw sugar - \$125 million, sir. And you have Suriname, Belize and Guyana. Because we bought into certain approaches.

Now I say that, Mr. Speaker, to link it back here. Because the suffering of the rum industry and the sugar industry in Barbados came into that same type of approach. Mr. Speaker, what is the evidence? In 1975 the ACP was formed in Georgetown, Guyana - the African, Caribbean

and Pacific States group. The African, Caribbean and Pacific states negotiated four Lomé Agreements. The first agreement, Mr. Speaker, was in 1976. The last agreement ended in 1999. Why is that important, Mr. Speaker? Because those agreements that we signed onto locked us into a set of preferential arrangements for exports, a pricing regime and a quota system. And we felt good. It happened to us in the region for bananas, for rice, for sugar and for rum, Mr. Speaker.

However, by the year 2000, when the Cotonou Agreement replaced the last Lomé IV in 1999, the Cotonou Agreement was established to execute the preferential arrangements to the EU up until 2008, when all the Caribbean countries would have to face the brunt of open trade liberalisation. But Mr. Speaker, when the Honourable Member for St. Peter was Prime Minister, he would have had to face by 2005 the EU attempting to undermine the same agreements and to introduce faster liberalisation. So the EU went in 2005 and established the Everything But Arms agreement, which allowed the 48 poorest countries in the world to have duty-free access and quota-free access to the European Union. But there would have to be, in any Caribbean context, the LDCs - the lesser developed countries, the OECS. That left out Barbados and several other countries.

So, Mr. Speaker, what happened then was that by 2008, sir, CARIFORUM was formed. You then had, sir, an open free trade arrangement where little Barbados is supposed to go into graduated adjustments to its tariff systems, moving to total elimination of tariffs by 2025. In addition, Mr. Speaker, a reduction in quotas. And that happened for sugar, rum and bananas and also spices from Grenada.

Now I say all that to say, Mr. Speaker, where we are therefore in relation to the transition - the change has come about because of those circumstances that we did not create. We were part of that process. But going forward, Mr. Speaker, what is it that we need to do?

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that the strategy that is required is one where we have to understand that we must put greater investment in food production systems in Barbados and the other countries must follow suit. That is what we must do. The reason why, Mr. Speaker, is to think of it logically. If you are a small developing country with economies of scale issues, pricing issues with respect to cost inputs, technological input issues, trade logistics issues, you cannot compete with large countries that are a thousand times larger than you producing the same product. It is basic economic common sense.

Mr. Speaker, sir, the fact of the matter is this. However, the system has got you locked in to say that by 2025 you will become a point of dumping of their goods in

your country. So therefore all Barbadians who are now farmers should not be packing supermarket shelves - they will have to be in town putting shirts on racks or packing perfumes. Because what else are they going to do, sir? They cannot compete with the import side. And then, Mr. Speaker, as part of the plan, you are now removing all the fiscal incentive regimes from small developing countries by 2015.

Mr. Speaker, sir, this is what the Honourable Member for St. Peter is talking about. But I have brought it into the micro element. And the only way, Mr. Speaker, sir, for us is to take this matter very seriously and understand the value of a CARICOM regime.

Look, we can approach this, Mr. Speaker, under this summit. I would ask the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and Prime Minister to take up with the Heads at the next meeting the important element, Mr. Speaker - that the loophole established within any revised treaty, Prime Minister, that necessitates an opportunity for persons to disregard domestic or regional supply side to go overseas and import those products and use non-tariff barriers to undermine intra-regional trade, has to be looked at. The treaty has to be revised. And then we should move to establish a centre for food and manufacturing production within the Caribbean. There is no reason that we should be importing - with all the land that Guyana has, land that Suriname has, land that Belize has - rice and wheat and corn and sugar, sir. No, the system has foisted that on us. And if we continue - whether they be in power, whether they be in power, I do not care who the other Prime Ministers are across the region - not to understand what I am trying to say tonight, we are dead.

Mr. Speaker, sir, in terms of the way forward, sir, I am confident that we are not going to reverse the multilateral trading system that exists. But I am confident that the sort of approach that I am suggesting can assist greatly in regards to helping us to mitigate the dark side of the multilateral trading system.

What I would also want to consider, Mr. Speaker, is that Barbados, in regards to its economics, the Minister of Finance and the Government and the Central Bank, sir, have taken on a particular approach in regards to how we perceive the management of fiscal consolidation should be. You cannot implement two approaches at the same time, sir. And we have taken a decision as to how we attempt to deal with this matter of fiscal consolidation.

However, I would want to give a piece of advice. And that piece of advice is this, sir - that I have read every single piece of literature I could find on financial crises from the 1970s in Africa, the 1980s in Latin America, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador and Uruguay. And I read all of them in regards to the Asian crisis in 1989 and

1997, Mr. Speaker. And all in relation to this one. Fiscal consolidation positives are only sustained when you have comprehensive debt restructuring and refinancing. That is what the literature says, sir - not David Estwick. And it becomes even more significant, Mr. Speaker, when you are coming from a position of extremely large debt stock and debt service as well as fiscal deficit.

Mr. Speaker, that is the advice I felt compelled to give - it is no different from what the Honourable Member for St. Peter has been saying. And I felt compelled, sir, to repeat it in my own way. Because when it is all finished, I am not sitting down as an independent. I am not sitting down on the backbench. I am here as a Minister of the Government. But I also have constituents that I represent. And I also have children in Barbados. And as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, there are going to be times when I will say to the Prime Minister: Prime Minister, I do not agree - that is my duty to myself and to my intellect. I will not be a hypocrite or a fraud to my own intellect. I am not going to do it. And the day that I feel that I am coming to that, I will ask the Prime Minister to relieve me of my responsibility. And I will therefore sit on the backbench or join the man down there at the end.

Mr. SPEAKER: You mean the Honourable Member

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Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: The Honourable Member for St. Peter.

I feel very strongly, sir, as I said, that we are at a very precarious time in our history. And I am having to deal with the impact of trade liberalisation and financial liberalisation and then to deal with those elements compounded by an international financial crisis of the magnitude that we have had to deal with, sir, has created tremendous challenges for this little country. And I think that there is a strong attempt, Mr. Speaker, to challenge it and to manage it in the best way that we can, given the circumstances.

But I think, sir, that I would want to thank the Minister of Finance for his

support for the dairy industry. And I would want also - I think that is going to be an important step forward. I think having to establish a dairy board and to eliminate the only country in the world where the processor dictates prices without having a formal structure, and to engage in discussions and come up with a holistic approach, is going to be a very positive way forward. And I think from the fact that the action as described by the Minister of Finance will redound to cheaper milk prices in the supermarkets and also savings at the foreign exchange level and helping the farmers to have greater output, I would want to

certainly thank him - with, I think, all the other members of the agricultural fraternity - for that support.

So, Mr. Speaker, sir, with those words I would want to give my support.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Prime Minister.

Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I rose to make an intervention in this debate - the debate on the financial statement and budgetary proposals for the year 2015. As is generally known, debates of this kind are on the resolution before the House, which calls on the House to note the financial statement and budgetary proposals for 2015 as delivered by the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, and to resolve that the House approved the measures and policies outlined in that financial statement and in those budgetary proposals.

I should like to begin by congratulating the Minister of Finance on the effort he has made once again this year in bringing to this House a set of budgetary proposals designed to effect the continued restoration of the health of the economy of Barbados. He has been Minister of Finance since the month of September 2010. And it has not been the easiest period to be Minister of Finance of any country anywhere in the world. Ministers of Finance across the western world over the last upwards of seven years have had the roughest of times. And it is a tribute to the distinguished honourable member for St. Michael North West that he has stuck to the task and has committed himself so steadfastly to the restoration of the economic health of Barbados. He has been the butt of some very harsh criticism during the period of his incumbency. But his faith has never faltered nor has his determination flagged.

The truth is that if all the economic problems of Barbados had been solved between the year 1994 and the year 2008, no incoming government of Barbados would have had to deal with any problems. You know, the Constitution of the United States of America in its preamble has the people of the United States saying: We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility and so on, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America. I quote that because I am interested in the words "in order to form a more perfect union." Two hundred and thirty-nine years have passed since these words were penned and a perfect union has not yet been formed in the United States of America. And as long as human life lasts, a perfect union will not be formed in the United States of America. Yet the citizens of that great country dare not relax their efforts to form a perfect union.

I make that point because I want to make a point about Barbados. We are never going to have a perfect situation - a perfect economic situation - in Barbados. We have never had it before, we do not have it now, and we are not going to have it at any time in the future. But at the same time, as governments and as citizens, we cannot ever cease to pursue the goal of creating a perfect society in Barbados. The Government has committed itself to the creation of a Barbados that is socially balanced, that is economically viable, that is environmentally sound, and that is characterised by good and transparent governance. That is the ideal which we pursue. And even though we may never be able to attain unto perfection in the pursuit of that ideal, it is an ideal that we cannot stop pursuing.

This debate, of course, has had its highs and its lows. I want to congratulate all honourable members on this side of the House for the excellent speeches which they have made, the excellent interventions which they have made in this debate, and I have to confess that a few of the contributions on the other side of the House merit commendation. I do not, of course, include amongst those speeches on the other side of the House the speech of the honourable member for St. Michael North East. Because once again, that honourable member decided to take the low road and to proceed from the premise that in politics - and it is a classical Barbados Labour Party premise - the best way to bring a government down is not to defeat it in argument over policy, but to try to stain as many people as possible, stain their reputations as badly as possible so that public confidence in them can be undermined.

This is an old tactic. It happened in the 1960s and early 1970s with the late Arlington Da Costa Edwards in St. Andrew. He was held up as the biggest thief in Barbados by the Barbados Labour Party. No-confidence motions were brought in here. He was supposed to be a thief. I have seen it happen very recently with the late honourable member Sir Michael West - the late Branford Tate. He too was supposed to be a thief. And every effort was made to stain his reputation and to lower him in the estimation of all right-thinking persons in the society and to hold him up to odium, to ridicule, and to contempt. Of course, not even Errol Barrow was spared of that. And honourable members of this House would do well to go back to the speech of the then Prime Minister of Barbados, Mr. Tom Adams, when he was announcing the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry - the Duffus Commission of Inquiry. That was the climax, of course, of his effort and the efforts of others around him to portray Errol Barrow as a man who was steeped in a politics of deals, a man who had forsaken the high standards to which his political vocation had summoned him and had therefore forfeited any entitlement to the respect, the trust, or the support of the people of Barbados.

And you yourself, Mr. Speaker, have recently been a target of that kind of vilification. You yourself were called dishonest and a thief. And before your honour's turn came, the honourable member for St. Philip North - he was called the ten per cent man in this House. And the impression was sought to be given that he was involved in deals as well, and that all the business of the Ministry of Housing and Lands revolved around his getting ten per cent out of every deal, every transaction in which the Ministry of Housing and Lands was involved. The honourable member for Christ Church East is now a target. He is now a target. And of course, as I said, your honour is no stranger to any of this. Your honour has had your share of it. Of course, fortunately for the Prime Minister of Barbados so far, it cannot be credibly said that I am in anybody's pocket, or that any drug lord has access to me, or that I am on the take in any other way in the discharge of my public responsibilities. The most that could be said of me is that I do not talk.

The honourable member for St. Michael North East went up to Foundation School and gave as her reason for going up there that she wanted to see what it is that you eat at Foundation School that makes you so insensitive and so callous and so indifferent. Unfortunately - or fortunately - the honourable member's mother went to Foundation School too. And I would not want to even begin to believe that any of those adjectives fit that very distinguished and highly respectable lady, a very good friend of mine. And I could go on and on, but I am not going to be distracted by any of that. That politics has never held any attraction for me. I am not going to walk around Barbados trying to distinguish myself by picking up litter from the political sidewalks. Politics is about much more than that.

And therefore in this debate I think that a few facts have to be faced. I heard the name of Errol Barrow used much in this debate. He warned Barbadians against having champagne tastes with mauby pockets. Before him, the Prime Minister - then later President - of Guyana, the late Lyndon Forbes Sampson Burnham, had cautioned Guyanese against having a Cadillac mentality in a bicycle economy. You can make your pick - champagne tastes with mauby pockets, or a Cadillac mentality in a bicycle economy. Whichever of those formulations you choose, this region was being warned against living beyond its means. And those warnings were being given at a time when the world was very differently configured from how it is configured in the year 2015.

The great iconic liberal economist John Maynard Keynes is quoted as saying: "When the facts change, I change my mind. What do you do, sir?" And listening to the speech of the right honourable member for St. Peter - and it is not the first time that his speech took on that character and proceeded along that trajectory - and listening too to the speech of the honourable member for

St. Philip West, utilising to the full all the knowledge at her disposal, it cannot be doubted, it cannot be contested, that the facts have changed. The facts globally have changed. Whether you are talking economics or sociology or politics, the facts have changed. And if the facts have changed, the question is: do we proceed as though the facts had not changed, with doctrinaire inflexibility or doctrinaire rigidity? Or do we accept that the facts have changed and that we have to make some adjustments to the way in which we conduct our affairs?

Some years ago there was a man called Bernard Crick who wrote a book entitled *In Defence of Politics*. In Defence of Politics. And the thesis of that book was that, as its title says, politics has to be defended. And politics can only be defended sensibly if one understands when changes have to be made and when people have to be called upon to make adjustments in their lives.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party Government came to office in the middle of January 2008. But the worst crisis to hit the western world since the Second World War cascaded in the last quarter of 2007. So in the last quarter of 2007, a global financial crisis hit the world, and in the first quarter of 2008 the Democratic Labour Party came to office. I have listened to all the speeches made in this debate coming from the other side and I hear all the talk about over the last seven years this and over the last seven years that, as though the last seven years were very ordinary years. The western world has not seen a seven-year period since the Second World War like unto the last seven years through which we have had to live in this part of the world. And every single country in the western world, rich or poor, has been affected directly or indirectly by that global financial crisis.

The economy that we inherited in January 2008 was being led by tourism. It is still being led by tourism. International business and financial services ranked second, and that is still the case. Manufacturing and agriculture were performing modestly, not contributing nearly as much to the gross domestic product as had been known in former years. And that has continued to be the case. The structure of the economy of Barbados has not really changed since the Democratic Labour Party came into office. We are trying to change it now, but the structure has remained intact. But as a result of what happened in the last quarter of 2007 and what has continued from then until now, our sectors have been affected and we have had to make some adjustments to the way we do business.

I hear all this talk about growth, and growth is a necessary and a desirable economic objective. Nothing wrong with that. We have to grow. But the British economy is struggling up to now to register one per cent growth and has been struggling for some years now to register one per cent growth in any financial year. This is

one of the G8 countries - a great manufacturing country, a great financial centre, London. And that economy has found one per cent growth elusive. The United States of America, the most powerful country in the world, has found its accustomed rate of growth elusive. In fact, forecasts of growth have had to be revised in the United States of America from time to time. And recently, since the kind of winter they have had, added to all the other challenges that country has experienced as a result of the crisis, growth forecasts have had to be revised - and so has it been generally across the western world.

In this House last year, the distinguished right honourable member for St. Peter made the point - a sensible point, I thought then and I still think - that we cannot talk growth and talk stabilisation at the same time. We have to decide which one we are going to focus on. And he opined, and I agreed with him, that the imperative as of now is to keep the economy of Barbados stable. This is not to say that if we can get some growth, we do not pursue it, but we have to keep the economy of Barbados stable. That advice coincides with advice I got some years before from a former Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados who said to me: all this talk about economic growth - try and keep Barbados stable. Growth is the most elusive ideal being pursued anywhere in the western world. Now the name of the game is stability, because of the fickleness of the economic variables, the economic indicators by which we are guided.

So we came to the House for this debate with the Government facing some clear challenges. Last year, the fiscal deficit reached as high as upwards of eleven per cent of GDP - by no means a comfortable fiscal deficit; in fact, a menacing fiscal deficit. The Government committed itself last year to reducing that fiscal deficit by at least five percentage points. We were able, by the end of the financial year March 31, 2015, to bring that deficit down to 6.6 per cent of GDP. So we have made progress, and the Minister of Finance has to be congratulated for the effort he has made in that regard. The overall Government has to be congratulated, because this called for some doing.

I am not one of those people who get swept away by what happens in ministries of finance simply because they are called ministries of finance. When all is said and done, a Minister of Finance's success depends on the performance of individual sectors, and therefore what happens in agriculture, what happens in industry and international business, in health and education - all of these things determine how successful a Minister of Finance is going to be. A Minister of Finance in any country is not minister of everything. The success of any minister of finance depends on the effort made by ministers in individual sectors. But the Minister of Finance must be able to command the confidence and respect of those who manage individual sectors. And this Minister of Finance

has been able to do that and is entitled to our congratulations.

How did we get to a deficit as large as the one we ran by the end of the financial year last year? We got there, Mr. Speaker, because the Government took the position from the time this crisis set in that we would strive as far as possible and for as long as possible to keep people employed. Since nobody had any sense of the real depth of the crisis or its likely duration, we took the position that we would stay with persons who were employed for as long as possible. And therefore our expenditure was kept at a certain level. But even as that happened, our revenues were being challenged by all of the other things that were happening around us. The time came when we had to cry halt - when our foreign exchange, sometime around May 2013, began to show signs of pronounced nervousness. And that is when I convened a consultation on the economy at the Hilton. And we decided to take certain corrective action. We did not get here by any miracle. We got here by a conscious decision to invest in people.

hear all this talk. I heard one commentator say on Budget Night one, the omniscient commentator, that the government treated the public service as an employee of or as an employer of first resort. That is not true. It is not true. As long ago as the year 2001, there was a confidential report made available to the previous administration that the public service of Barbados was too large and should be downsized by 10 000 by the year 2010. That did not happen. So we were running the public service. We came and found. And of course, we had started a neat programme for people at the lower end of the employment ladder to keep Barbados clean. National Environmental Enhancement Programme, the NEIEP programme. And we employed a few people - about 170 - to take care of that. And as soon as we had to take corrective action, we asked those people to go home. But it was not as though the government went on some recruitment binge and was employing people all over the place. Just not true. And as a result, of course, we heard about how many people we had to get rid of and so on. The government had to retrench some people. And the truth is, I stand as Prime Minister of Barbados tonight. And I look the nation in the face and I say, while the Government regretted that we had to do it, it was absolutely necessary. If the structure of a house is unsound, if the structure of any building is unsound, there is no safe room in that building. As long as the structure is unsound, no room is safe. And we had therefore to look at the overall picture in the country and try to get things brought under control. And we are in the process of doing that.

We have a debt service challenge which we are trying to meet. And I make common cause with all those persons whose view it is that this debt service challenge cannot be ignored. We have to take it seriously and we

have to wrestle that challenge to the ground. But the government is working on that now. Amongst the measures which the government had to take, we had to introduce a measure at the University of the West Indies by which students were asked to be responsible for their tuition fees. I had, in the year 2011, at the graduation of the Barbados Community College at the gymnasium, expressed myself very strongly on this. At a time when Barbados' foreign reserves were not being threatened, at a time when the storm clouds had not taken any definite shape on the horizon. And I said that asking students to pay tuition fees would be a retrograde step. I said so. I said so at the gymnasium. And I do not retreat from that position. I am the Prime Minister of a developing country, a post-colonial society not yet 50 years independent. A society which still has many deep social and economic contradictions which, as not even the such material advantages as we have secured have been able to eradicate. And therefore we need all of the education we can get. Education is the means by which we can help. We can continue the emancipation of Barbados. So I do not retreat from that position. But what is necessary cannot yield ground to what we like or do not like. And therefore we had to take some decisions.

The University of the West Indies at Cave Hill. We have a University of the West Indies at Cave Hill because of the Democratic Labour Party 1963. We had a campus brought here, started at the harbour and then was transferred eventually to Cave Hill, which is now its permanent home. And we have a suite of tertiary education institutions - the Barbados Community College, Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, Barbados Hospitality Institute, and of course, Erdiston Teachers' Training College. And all of these constitute our tertiary education outfit. When this discussion is taking place, the impression is given that we only have one tertiary institution in Barbados for education, and that is the University of the West Indies. And that myth has to be dispelled. But the government had to take some decisions in relation to the payment of tuition fees by students. The government is still responsible for 80 per cent - 80 cents out of every dollar that it takes to educate any student at Cave Hill. And all the government has done is to ask the student to pay the remaining 20 cents out of that dollar. That is what we have done.

And we have not done it whimsically because, Mr. Speaker, and I know the night is far spent, so I am not going to be terribly long. But let the fact be faced that between 2001 and 2010, in 2001, Mr. Speaker, the government was given by way of transfer to the University of the West Indies \$55 million. \$55 million in 2001. By 2010, that figure had gone to \$148 million. The transfer required from the government to the university in the short space of nine years - according to research done by two researchers at the Central Bank - government transfer to the university moved from \$55 million to \$148 million. And in

one year, 2007–2008, the government transfer was up by \$31 million. \$31 million in one year, while government transfers were at 6 per cent per year and operating costs at the university were going up by 12 per cent per year. So we were in a difficult position. And that is why there was all the talk about government owing the university and so on. No Democratic Labour Party government can be at war with the University of the West Indies, because the flagship of all Democratic Labour Party policy has been education, whether primary, secondary or tertiary. But necessary action had to be taken to correct a situation that was unsustainable in the context of the economic realities of Barbados at the time.

There were some casualties in terms of students dropping out of the university. I have heard many figures thrown around. I have asked for precise figures. I have never really got them. How many Barbadian students dropped out and how many students from other parts of the Caribbean dropped out? That information has not come to me with any degree of precision, but that was one of the issues with which the government had to deal. We are on the way, Mr. Speaker, to correcting that. In this budget, the Minister of Finance has indicated the government has taken the position that a mobile airtime tax should be imposed and that some of the proceeds of that tax should go towards assistance of students who would not otherwise be able to pay for their university education at Cave Hill.

Now, I want to say this though, as Prime Minister of Barbados: if the only reason any student is interested in university education is because you do not have to pay for it, we have a problem in Barbados. You are interested in university education because you are interested in the creative power of learning, and because long before we had a university here, there were Barbadians who were registering externally with London University and doing external degrees because they believed fervently in the creative power of learning. If the only reason anybody goes to university is because it is free, something is fundamentally wrong and we have to confront that as a value. But I am confident that the government is getting this matter brought under some kind of control and that students, our young people, are better understanding the importance - not of whether you have to pay 20 cents in every dollar for your education - but that learning is important, education is important in and of itself, and that you should try to access it through any of the channels available to you.

So as the government, therefore, Mr. Speaker, we have had to deal with the education issue. Primary education has not been touched and will not be touched. Secondary education has not been touched and will not be touched. We have had to deal with education at the tertiary level, at the university level in particular, but with protective mechanisms now being put in place to ensure

that all of those students who are interested in pursuing university education can do so without any obstacles being placed in their way. And this budget tackles that problem, confronts that problem, because it is a matter of concern and of importance to the government.

The other point I want to make very briefly has to do with the tax on soft drinks. And I zero in on this because of the importance of Barbados being a healthy nation. I sat at my official residence in a consultation with the professional responsible for chronic non-communicable diseases in Barbados, and he said to me, Prime Minister, let me tell you how serious this problem is. Any 10 people you see standing or sitting anywhere in Barbados, at least seven of them are suffering from one or other of the chronic non-communicable diseases - either hypertension or obesity or cancer. One of the CNCDS. Any 10 people you see, at least seven of them suffering with one and will die from one. And that is where a lot of our healthcare costs are being expended. He said it is no longer just an issue of illnesses; it is approaching a national crisis. And the Honourable Member for St. James South, when he was Minister of Health, crusaded on this issue. And in fact, we all went up to the United Nations and spoke on it. Because in addition to being a health issue, it is also a development issue. Because if you do not have a healthy nation, if people are leaving home in the mornings to go to work and they are afflicted with diabetes and obesity and hypertension or cancer or cardiovascular disease, productivity is bound to be affected with all the consequences that flow from that for the country. But in addition, their family lives are going to be affected, their relationship with the remainder of the society is going to be affected. And overall, we have a weaker society.

And the government decided we had to do something about it. We did not do something about it in this budget whimsically either. We were specifically advised by people who are monitoring this problem that since these are all lifestyle diseases, lifestyle illnesses, we have to target people's lifestyle. We therefore must not only talk about it, but we have to nudge people in the direction of changing some of their habits. And we nudge them by imposing taxes on their consumption patterns. Because even if you do not succeed in changing the habit, at least you are making money to help you to pay for curing it. So I hear the talk on the other side about taxes on soft drinks and so on. We do not apologise for that. We want a healthier Barbados. We want a Barbados in which the issue of NCDs or CNCDS is brought under more effective control. So if we are talking education, we have tackled it in this budget. If you are talking health, we have tackled it in this budget.

And of course, then there is the issue of betting and gaming. For many people, this is a moral issue. Some people do not recognise the existence of moral issues.

There is nothing new about that. The positivist school of philosophy took that position long ago - the logical positivists - that there is nothing called a moral issue, that moral issues are just issues of what they call hooray and boo. That if you believe something is right, hooray. And if you believe it is wrong, boo. But that these things have no objective reality because they are not subject to a principle of verification. You cannot verify that something is right or verify scientifically that something is wrong. But Christian society as we are, we accept a framework in which certain things are right and certain things are wrong, certain things are good, certain things are bad, certain things are just, certain things are unjust, certain things are fair, certain things are unfair and so on.

There have been some challenges in the betting and gaming sector with which the government has been trying to deal. Although we have to do a comprehensive study of the sector, because understanding in the sector, knowledge in the sector, wisdom in the sector has raced ahead of the understanding of state officialdom. The kind of technology that is now used in the sector baffles those public officials who have to deal with them. And unless you are somebody involved in that area, you are outstripped by what is happening in that sector. The imposition of VAT on the entire sector, in my view and in the government's view, meets the demands of what is fair and just. We have had complaints about certain people being treated as not eligible to pay taxes or imposts and others who were treated as being in the category where they had to pay. And some people complained the playing field was not level, that even though they were facing competition from the non-payers, they were still being made to pay taxes. And so on. This VAT on the sector levels the playing field and the treasury will be the beneficiary. And in the meantime, the government will be doing a comprehensive study of the sector to put mechanisms in place to ensure that the sector pays its due to the treasury, while at the same time continuing to employ as large a number of people as possible and of course yielding respectable profit for those involved.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I do not want to be very long tonight. I think that we have had a long debate. I think we have to revisit how this debate is done anyhow, because it really cannot continue to make sense that we are in Parliament at this time every year doing the budget. It was not always so. And we have to have a look at what it is we are doing and how we are doing it so that we can really get out of the House a little earlier than we do now. But it was important for me to make the few points I have made as leader of the government. And I just want to repeat: the facts have changed, have changed dramatically since the last quarter of 2007. And when the facts have changed, you have to change your mind.

I was very heartened to hear the Hon. the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter make the point - a point which I myself am tired of making - that what Errol Barrow had to do in his time, he did, responding to the exigencies of the context in which he had to operate. What Grantley Adams had to do in his time, he did, responding too to the exigencies of the context within which he operated. So too Tom Adams, so too all of his predecessors. None of them - none of those distinguished predecessors, none of the six - had to manage Barbados in as sustained a recessionary period globally as the present administration has had to do. So we have had to respond to the exigencies of the context within which we are operating and therefore cannot, with doctrinaire blindness, treat as sacred everything that has been passed on to us. We have to look at what is happening around us and adjust to the situation with which we are faced. And that is what this government is doing.

We continue to recognise our obligation to the most vulnerable people in the society. We do not believe that anyone should be left behind. But we accept that - no matter how, in fact it has always been a fact - no matter how much water you have around, there are still going to be people who are thirsty. Let us face that reality. When things were going well, during that period of unprecedented prosperity in the United States of America on which we in Barbados fed between 1992 and 2006-2007, even though things were going well, there were still people who were falling through the cracks. When things are not going well, you will have a little more of that. But no government with a democratic socialist perspective, no government committed to those ideals, can afford to take its eyes off the most vulnerable people in the society. And this government is committed to ensuring that no one is left behind and that the most vulnerable are shielded from the worst effects of any crises which the country may face from time to time.

So I hope, Mr. Speaker - there is so much in the budget that one could talk about, but time is not on our side, as I said. I have no time with the smaller and lower issues of just walking around trying to find mud to throw at people and picking up litter from the political sidewalks. I am not into that. We have much higher aims to pursue as a government. And I want to thank all members of the Cabinet and all members of the backbench for their steadfastness and their commitment to the best interests of Barbados. I want to thank them all for the very high standards which they continue to pursue. I want to thank them for being the best exemplars of the values of the Democratic Labour Party. And it is against that background, Mr. Speaker, that I give my full support to the resolution before the House and once again congratulate the Minister of Finance for the commendable effort which he has made. I am obliged to you.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. And I just want to take a few moments to wind up the debate and begin by, first of all, thanking the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, the Honourable Prime Minister, for his very erudite presentation and really wrapping up the full context of not only the budget, as it was, but the debate itself generally as Leader of Government and purposefully putting forward and contextualising in a very neat way the mission of the Government in relation to what we are doing with the economy. I also want to thank all of my colleagues who spoke in the debate with such clarity and, of course, with such purpose as to the objectives set by the Government in trying to lay the groundwork for the continued stability of the Barbados economy and the growth going forward.

I think that it is important because, as the Prime Minister has quite correctly said, even though everybody believes that the Ministry of Finance is responsible for every ministry in the country, that is not necessarily true. In fact, it is not true at all. And each individual ministry, each individual sector, economic and social, is responsible for assisting in building out the economy of Barbados and the society. What we get at the end of the day is analysis of the numbers, a collation of the data, an analysis of the numbers, and then we work from there to see what we have and then project what we should be doing for the future, all the while developing policies to ensure that we achieve our objectives.

I want to thank, as a matter of courtesy, Members of the Opposition. Of course, we know they do not necessarily agree with what we are doing. There is nothing that we can do that they ever agree with. Since I have been here, there are very few times I have ever heard them say that they agree with anything that the Government has done, is doing, or intends to do. But that is opposition politics for you. And it varies from member to member. Some people can deliver speeches that, even though critical, could be useful. Others just try to be totally irrelevant to what is going on. And others still just do not connect with the House themselves or anything else that goes on in Barbados.

I was particularly interested in the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. George North, because I thought it was a good contribution, quite unlike many of the contributions he has made in the past. But this year he was interestingly constructive. Of course, he first proclaimed that he did not know anything about what the Leader of the Opposition was saying in her presentation in relation to all the issues about Cahill, and we will get to some of those too. But he made some reasonably good points and at least he was able to concede that what we

were trying to do in relation to agriculture for the dairy industry and what we are trying to do for the sugar industry are important interventions by the Government.

I want to say that is true. And it is true not only from the perspective that the dairy industry in Barbados has come under a tremendous amount of pressure. I think the Member for St. Philip West has been making this point. I know the Member for St. Michael West Central, in a different capacity as head of the Barbados Agricultural Society, has also been making this point. But I think the most apposite juncture would have been the speech delivered by the Member for St. Philip West this evening when he spoke about the international trading system and the fact that it has changed things so fundamentally in relation to agriculture and food crop production and different aspects of agriculture that we now have to take a different stance. We really do have to take a different stance.

Because the truth is that if you look at the issue of the dairy, many of our countries have had to be competing against countries that are able to give extensive and deep levels of subsidies. In an era of trade liberalisation, they are still allowed because the countries recognise the importance of food security and take care of their populations. And they are technologically advanced, but they can still give heavy subsidies. Now they say to us, well, you could give subsidies too. But they know, of course, we do not have the resources to be able to subsidise at the level that they do, even at a de minimis level. And in relation to a measure such as the one that we have introduced, we know in the WTO it is what you would call an allowable subsidy. We have green subsidies, we have amber, and we have red. This will be considered to be a green light subsidy. And the fact that we have found a creative way to do it and a way that has worked in other Caribbean territories, particularly in Jamaica, and has been proven to bring down the price of milk eventually to the consumer over time because the farmers are able to increase their production, because the processors can take more milk at a reduced price, because the input cost is cheaper - then it is a win, win, win for everybody.

And therefore it is something that should be commended. Not because the Ministry of Finance proposed it to the Ministry of Agriculture - because it really was not the Ministry of Finance in particular, it was really the Ministry of Agriculture, it was the processors, the farmers; they have all sat down and determined that this is something that ought to be done. And the Ministry decided to run with it this year and get it implemented. And I think that is an important policy. So it just shows how things work out, that in an era of trade liberalisation and the removal of barriers and the liberalisation of all types of things, including subsidisation, a policy of subsidisation

could be allowed and could give you the opportunity to be able to grow and solidify your dairy sector.

I have a fairly close affiliation to dairy farming because I pretty much grew up on a dairy farm myself. So I know a little bit about cows. Yes, I really do know a little bit about cows. And milking them more importantly, both manually and mechanically too. Yes, yes. So I do have a soft spot for the dairy industry, I confess. And when it came to me, I accepted it with open arms.

I want to make the point, Mr. Speaker, sir, in terms of the general tenor of what we were able to do on Monday. I think that the Ministry - and I want to say this up front because I do not get a chance sometimes and I probably should, because in the heat of the wrap-up or trying to close, because it is always so late, I forget. But I want to say at the beginning of my wrap-up presentation that I thank and express my appreciation and congratulate the members of my staff at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and all of the attendant agencies attached - the Barbados Revenue Authority and all of the others that would have contributed to the preparation of this financial statement and budgetary proposals. They went beyond the call of duty day and night for weeks working through these things.

Something as simple - if you call it simple - as the VAT basket: we were working on that and the ministries met for long hours. Agriculture, Health, Finance, Industry, Social Care. Looking at all the angles - from the angle of nutrition, from the angle of finance, taxation policy, from the angle of commerce, from the angle of health. There were debates about which products should stay in and what products should come out from many different angles. And I want to thank them for the really outstanding work they did on this document. And you know, when Members of the Opposition and others get the spaces and savage the document - of course, savage the Minister of Finance - but ultimately, at the end of the day, it is the conscientious public servants who think out these policies. All of the economists in the Division of Economic Affairs who sat down for hours crafting these policies and working with the other ministries as well to come up with the package that we eventually come up with. I want to thank them publicly for their contribution.

And I do so as well against the backdrop of the fact that we have been able to demonstrate by way of these statistics that have been delivered. There are some people - I heard one commentator, Doug Skeet, say he does not believe anything that comes out of the Ministry of Finance or the Central Bank of Barbados. He is waiting to hear the IMF's view on the turnaround of the Barbados economy. Well, ever since the IMF came here for the Article IV consultations and issued a statement saying that the turnaround in the Barbados economy is real, we have not

heard from him since. But there are some people like that because they suffer from a degree of intellectual weakness in that they feel that the only time they can accept anything is if it is given to them by a set of people who travel in on a plane who, for one reason or the other, may not necessarily look like us - but once it is not from a Barbadian, then it is something that is to be believed.

And that is why I always make this point. That is why we are so proud of what we have done in terms of our homegrown economic stabilisation and revitalisation programme. That is why we are so proud about it, because it is the officials here - and these are officials, Madam Deputy Speaker, who not only served this administration; the same people who served the last administration. And if they were great then, they cannot be out of it now. It is the same people. One or two faces may have changed, but it is basically the same individuals. And that is why we are proud of it, because they have dedicated themselves to continuing to fight in the most difficult of circumstances to get Barbados out of the problems that it is in and put us on to a brighter future.

That is why I do not necessarily support - and frankly, in this House, I am not going to be sitting down being entertained, if I can even call that entertainment, because it is not entertainment - the insidious, nasty and decrepit attacks on the Governor of the Central Bank repeatedly. It is, you know - I was about to say stupid, but I am not going to say it because it is unparliamentary. But every Estimates, every budget, almost every time we come in here, you get the same speech. Once it used to come from over there; now it comes from two angles. One on this end and one on that end. The two Leaders of the Opposition. But this childishness - that every time they deliver a speech they must attack the Governor of the Central Bank - okay, we all know you do not like him. We know that. We know you did not want him to be appointed. We know that. We know that you are not going to rest until you see the back of him. We know that.

But must we be put through it every year - the Honourable Member for St. Peter who comes to deliver a speech every year and his speeches are now becoming the same thing over and over again, not saying anything new. So one year he called the Governor something, next year he called him something else and a whole set of - it is just a lot of, you know, it is like a tape. It is like a Spanish station, you know.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not going to be sidetracked. I am not going to allow the Honourable Member for St. Thomas to sidetrack me. I really think the Honourable Member for Christ Church South should not allow himself to sidetrack me either. We understand what value the Honourable Member provides for the House of Assembly and we accept it as it is. There must be levity in

something that you are doing and the Honourable Member provides that levity. So we are not going to be sidetracked by that.

And the point I am making, Madam Deputy Speaker, is we cannot have the same speech every time. This is what we are going to do - Government should do debt restructuring. I never said, Madam Deputy Speaker, that the Government should not do debt restructuring. I said we are not going to do the type that they are propagating. I said we are not going to do the type that they are propagating. And I made the point to the Leader of the Opposition - the Leader of the Opposition for the time being - I said we are not going to do it. And the reason why I am saying so is because I know that the Leader of the Opposition for St. Michael North East does not understand what she is talking about, because these people seem to make people believe - and I know the optics of the thing because they are trying to tie in the Honourable Member for St. Philip West - but the Honourable Member for St. Philip West is propagating an entirely different thing from what they are propagating. They are trying to make it seem as though they are one and the same thing.

But I always make the point - the Honourable Member for St. Peter said it - even people in their own personal lives do debt restructuring. That is true. But you do not do debt restructuring alone. It takes two to tango. And you have to have willing participants. If you go to the bank and you want to restructure your debt and the bank says no, who are you going to restructure it with? You have to understand the financial industry you are dealing with. If you are saying let us refinance the debt, first, you have to have a willing participant, because the person who owns the debt has to be prepared to sell it back to you at a cheaper rate or at least to participate in some type of restructuring. Second point: if you are refinancing, you have to be able to find the money to buy back the debt, because you are going to be buying it back cheaper than you are currently paying on it at the moment. So you have to have the resources to do that. That is the second point that you have to consider. So when you are saying these things, you have to consider those points.

But the most important point of all, Madam Deputy Speaker, is this. Nobody is dismissing debt restructuring or debt refinancing or whatever the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has now been told by the former person who held the seat that I now occupy. The third point is that in all of the historic examples of debt restructuring, each of the countries has had to do either IMF programmes or homegrown fiscal consolidation and restructuring programmes. All of them - every one of them. Jamaica has been doing an IMF programme since 1972. They have been on an IMF programme longer than any other country in the world. Grenada did restructuring - IMF programme. St. Kitts did restructuring - IMF programme. Go through Latin

America. All of them have had to do either IMF programmes or IMF-type programmes of which fiscal consolidation is a major element of the debt restructuring. Because nobody is going to give you a free break. They are going to say to you: all right, you want me to take a haircut on my debt? Or you want me to go through the inconvenience of selling you my debt? All right, this is what I want you to do, because I do not want you to come back here again. I want you to do X, Y and Z. I want you to bring your deficit down. I want you to reduce the size of government. Send home some people, do this, do that. So there is no excuse or escape.

So when the Leader of the Opposition gets up in here and gives the impression that she has some plan that she can do debt restructuring - and then when you look at the profile of Barbados' debt, the vast majority of Barbados' debt is domestic. And I want them to say this. I want the Leader of the Opposition and the Honourable Member for St. Peter to say it, but they do not want to say it. If the largest portion of our debt is domestic, and if the two largest holders of domestic debt for the Government of Barbados are the Central Bank and the NIS, and you want to do debt restructuring - what part do you start with first? So when you get up here and say you are giving orders to the members of the board of the NIS, as though you can give orders to somebody - warnings to the members of the board of the NIS that they have a fiduciary responsibility to do this and that - are you telling me that when you become what it is you are hoping to become, the first order of business is that you are going to go over there to the NIS and tell them they must take a haircut on all the government debt that they hold? Well, if that is the case, then say so. Tell me as Minister of Finance - do not just tell me to restructure the debt. Tell me how to restructure it. Where to start first. Just do not tell me to restructure it.

So that is why I said the proposals which the Honourable Member for St. Philip West proffered are entirely different business from what you all are talking about - entirely different business altogether - because he is not as reckless and not trying to impress the people that you are trying to impress. And that is the difference. That is the difference.

Now, the other point, Mr. Speaker, sir - let me get through these because I think the Prime Minister went through most of them - is that people feel a budget is just a budget. The real budget of the Government is the Estimates. I heard a businessman on television - I called him, he is a friend of mine - after this presentation say the Government cut \$200 million, taken \$200 million out of the economy but did not cut any expenditure, only about \$30 million. I had to explain to him that the expenditure that is cut in the Government's budget is cut when you do the Estimates. It is not cut when you do a financial statement and budgetary proposals. He said, oh, I did not

realise that. I did not realise that last year we cut over \$200 million in expenditure cuts that are locked in for this current financial year already. And what we proposed - what I did in the budget - is that on top of that we will do an additional \$30 million by looking at some areas where we can make some savings. So that is where the expenditure is being cut.

But then we talk about revenue. Now I heard the Honourable Member for St. Peter - I forgive him - repeating the same thing as the Leader of the Opposition and some of these other people in Barbados: the Government is taking \$200 million out of the economy in taxation. There is no arithmetic in that. So I know that it has to be politically disingenuous for people to say this when they know in fact that more than \$100 million of those revenue-raising measures are not new. So they know it is not an additional \$200 million coming out of any economy.

Let me go to them precisely, Mr. Speaker, sir. The \$35 million from the fuel tax is money that has already been levied on it. Nothing new. That is \$35 million. The \$44 million for the land tax is a straight swap from the Municipal Solid Waste Tax. Nothing new. The tipping fee was supposed to be \$8 million and is now \$4 million in a full financial year. Nothing new about that either. The \$20 million on gambling - nothing new, because as the Leader of the Opposition said, the Government has been foregoing \$16 million. Of course the Leader of the Opposition sidestepped and skipped around it because she knows exactly why it is in the condition that it is in. The Honourable Member knows exactly why the betting and gaming industry has been practically destroyed in Barbados - because of the actions of the last Government.

Oh yes. Oh indeed that is the case. When they agreed to allow slot machines to come into Barbados under some fancy name called video lottery terminals - allowed them to take out the apertures to pretend that they were not slot machines - and then had them spread all around Barbados in every little shop in Barbados without any governance and regulations on them at all.

Honourable Member for St. Michael East, every little shop. Normally if you have a slot machine, you have to have it in certain conditions. It cannot be up front in the shop; it has got to be done at the back. Children cannot play, and so on and so forth. Nothing like that. And not a cent were they paying in tax. So the legitimate slot machine people said: well, if they have one rule for those people, well, there has to be a level playing field. We cannot be here forever. We are not barbarians; we are following the law, we are playing by the rules, we are doing everything - and the Government allowed these people to come into Barbados and do as they like and flood the place with these machines and not a cent and not a regulation to them. So

they are pretending that they do not know what we are talking about. So that \$20 million is nothing new either.

So when you really look at it, Mr. Speaker, sir, probably less than \$100 million is truly new. And then the other taxes - as the Prime Minister said - are targeted. The sweet drink tax: we know what that is for. The airtime mobile tax: we said what that is for, and that was announced previously in terms of a cell phone tax. We have just found a better way to do it, because we are taxing the airtime that the companies purchase and buy from the telecommunications division in terms of the blocks that they get, so that you get it right as they buy. How they pass it on to the consumer - well, that is their business. If they pass it on to the consumer, that is their business. But that is how it is going to be done.

So the budget goes through each of these issues. We set a course on the QEH. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West always complains in here. We had the House adjourned on a case of urgent public importance to discuss the QEH. The Honourable Member got up and delivered a resolution that was written for her - forgot two paragraphs in it and put two punctuation marks in the wrong place. Well, we forgave her because it was written for her the morning before she came in and she read it - and we had a debate and we all agreed that QEH should be taken out of the public discourse in the way that it is. We have now moved to do so. And not a word from the Opposition to say thank you very much.

Protect me, Madam Deputy Speaker, man. Protect me, Madam Speaker. Protect me from the army of St. Thomas. Ignore Tom, you know, I, Madam Deputy Speaker, you know, I tried my best to not think because I have a lot of respect for the Member for St. Thomas and I try not to think because I'm not going to allow her to make me say anything bad about her because I know that she takes it very hard and she does not speak to you for months after you said it. Yes. Ghost of Tom Adams. But not a word of congratulations to the Government for trying to solve the problems at QEH.

Now, I said we gave QEH \$10 million. And I said that we are going to give them an additional \$10 million. They got it, I think, two weeks ago. They are going to get an additional \$10 million. And I am going to say now before the Leader of the Opposition runs with it and gives it as though it is some crime that I am committing as Minister of Finance. The Government has certain funds that are managed by different entities, certain trust funds. You have the Industrial Credit Fund, you have the ETF, you have the Housing Credit Fund. You have all types of funds. And some of these funds have been sitting there, some of them have not been performing for one reason - they are not performing in terms of not earning money.

They are earning money. And a lot of them have a lot of money in them.

And my position is, and I took the Leader of the Opposition's advice - the Leader of the Opposition said in here, in the Estimates and elsewhere and in debates in this House, that the Government has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the critical things, or things that are critical to the functioning of Barbadian society, should be dealt with. And therefore it is the job of the Minister of Finance to find ways to deal with them. Well, I am finding ways to deal with them. I have taken your advice. And therefore if one or two of these funds have to pay a dividend, declare a dividend and pay to the Government of Barbados - in breach of no laws, because the Government is the principal shareholder if not the sole shareholder of them - and we have to utilise those funds to deal with urgent issues like QEH and health care, we will do it. So I have done it from the ICF and when those resources come, I am going to redirect them to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to help with their problems over there. I make no apologies as Minister of Finance for doing it because it is the right thing to do.

And that brings me to the HCF. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East who has been on a witch hunt, Madam Deputy Speaker. A witch hunt, I am suitably advised, is not allowed by the rules of this House governing the Public Accounts Committee because the Public Accounts Committee is only supposed to reflect on matters for which the Auditor General has produced reports. But the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East who has now taken to going around all types of laws. I never said that the Honourable Member does not have a degree. The Honourable Member has a degree in law from - is it the London School of Economics? London School of Economics. The Honourable Member may not have a legal certificate that she can bring and make a document of the House like the Cahill deal. But the Honourable Member has a degree in law and that is simply a fact. I am not debating how the Honourable Member came to be practising law in Barbados. That is not my concern. That is not for me to be concerned with. The Honourable Member is a practising attorney-at-law and I accept that for what it is. Former Attorney General, youngest QC I think she was. Yeah, all of those things. So it is not my job to prove or disprove whether the Honourable Member is properly articulated with a legal certificate from one of the law schools to practise. And if the Honourable Member does not have it, how she managed to get to be practising law in Barbados - that is not my job and I am not participating in that. I am not participating in that because that is the Honourable Member's profession. That is how she earns money.

It is by the practice of law that the Honourable Member was paid \$10 million. Well, not paid, but certainly invoiced for \$10 million in legal fees from Four Seasons.

The Honourable Member, as is her wont, is misleading this House and she is in possession of all of the files. And she therefore should bring them to this House to prove that which she asserts to be a truth which is an absolute falsehood. But if I am wrong, if it is not \$10 million and it is in fact \$9 300 000 -

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is yet again misleading the House. And in misleading the House he is failing to assert that any fees that I have been paid have not come from the taxpayers of Barbados but from the shareholders of Paradise. So that since he is in the business of getting into the details of private practitioners' fees in a public debate, then I would invite him - I would invite him, Madam Deputy Speaker - to be able to say on what principle he is seeking to do so.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not getting into what fees the Honourable Members - look, my position has always been: I do not put a value on people's work. If you do a job, you are a professional and you charge for that job, you would have to know what your work is worth and value it and charge accordingly. Nothing wrong with that. So whether it is 10, 15 or 20, whether it comes in the form of land, cash or whatever that is, that is a matter entirely for you. That is nothing for me and I am not getting involved in that.

But what I am saying - and I am saying this because I am paying the Honourable Member a compliment - the Honourable Member is a practising lawyer in Barbados. Recognised Q.C. Youngest ever appointed Q.C. Former Attorney General. Leader of the Opposition. Well known in Barbados. Former Cabinet member. Deputy Prime Minister. And I am saying that I have heard these rumours. I don't believe them. And like the Member for Christ Church East, I am asking - I agree with the Honourable Member for Christ Church East - if the rumours are not true, the Honourable Member brought his PhD certificate here. Bring yours too and take it to tell. Put it up on the big screen and say: there is my legal certificate for Huanley Law School. Let the matter rest in Barbados if that is the case. So I am not getting involved in that.

I know the late Honourable Member for St. John used to always question the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East's understanding of West Indian law. He used to always say, you know, you learned your law in England. That is what he used to say. And I never really got the import of why he was saying it. But I think I understand a little bit better now.

But the point of the matter is that we have something called the Housing Credit Fund. And the Housing Credit Fund was created, as Honourable Members say, by a loan from the Government of Barbados for \$20 million many

years ago in the early 1980s. A loan which was supposed to be paid back. It was a loan. And you know, up until this year, that loan has not been paid back. The loan was never paid back. But the fund has been doing well. The fund has been doing well. In fact, the fund has in excess of \$200 million of resources in it. And it was operating in a way - I want to get to the transparent part of it - because the Honourable Member gave the impression that I, as Minister of Finance, and that is the point I am making, got into the Public Accounts Committee, dragged the staff of the NHC up there and made them answer questions that they had no way of answering in the first place. Because the issues that the Honourable Member was discussing were not issues properly before that committee because they were not reflected on by the Auditor General of Barbados as per the rules of this House and the laws of Barbados. So it is an illegal action to be conducting that kind of witch hunt out there. Kangaroo court, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am saying that it is a breach of the rules of this House.

But the Honourable Member wants to build this dossier of misinformation and pieces of information to then come in here and elsewhere to give the impression that members of this Government - and that I as Minister of Finance - can't. You can't put that one on me. The first thing I always ask my officials: get a legal opinion. The Prime Minister can tell you that very clearly. The first thing I always said: get a legal opinion. Let me know where the law is and let me know where I stand on the law. Because once I am properly advised and I know what the law is, I will take a decision and I will defend it to the death. That is my position on all of these matters.

And I asked - we had a situation where the fund had a whole set of money, retained earnings up to 2014. Just the retained earnings of \$113.52 million at the end of 2014, and it had \$153 million of investments. Okay, next question: how did it manage to have all this money in it and what was it doing with this money? Well, the response that came back is that financial institutions, by way of the trust deed - financial intermediaries - apply to the fund for loans to execute mortgages and other loans to persons who want to do low-income housing projects based on a certain income group. That is the basis of what the fund is. However, for the past two years, because of the excess liquidity in the banking system and the appetite for credit, none of the financial institutions have been calling on the fund. So the fund has been building up, building up, building up all of this money.

And the advice from my officials, when reviewing the annual accounts of the fund and the financial report of the fund, was that something had to be done because you cannot have a fund with money sitting down in a bank doing nothing when there are housing projects in the country that need finance. So I said, well, okay, but this is what we will do. Let us bring all the parties together and

see what we can do about this situation. We know the Government has a housing project at Grotto for which it has not been able to identify the resources to pay. Let us see if we can find a way to utilise some of these resources so we can pay for those units and get the poor people in the houses rather than keeping the houses shut up all the time. The next thing you know, they started to knock it down.

So the officials came. We decided we would look at one particular approach. And that approach was that we would get the NHC to borrow a loan from the HCF. The Government would provide a guarantee and the Government would basically pay - well, basically pay because the NHC has not got any money. The officials said to me: that can be done, Minister, but you are going to have to amend the trust deed. You will have to go to Cabinet. You are going to have to do this, Solicitor General. We started the process for that. In between there, the fund manager came back after seeking further legal advice and said: but you know, the fund has \$113 million of retained earnings. We can declare a dividend, which is legal, and pay it to the Government. And the Government is free to do whatever they want with the resources. So we said, okay, if that seems like a cleaner, faster way to do it, do it.

But why did we do it? We did it because the contract - the financing contract to build the houses at Grotto - was a three-way deal. It is the contractor, Pre-Concord, the NHC as executing agency, and the Government of Barbados. The loan is from one of the local banking institutions - not going to call the name, one of the banks in Broad Street - and the Government is the entity on the hook for the loan. So when the houses are finished and handed over by the contractor, he or she has finished their work. The loan now has to be paid in order for the deal to be executed. So what am I to do as Minister of Finance? You have a loan that is callable because the houses are finished. It is the Government's job to pay the loan. The certificate of practical completion is issued. Houses shut up, people cannot get in them. The contractor is there, the houses are there and the bank wants the money. So what am I to do as Minister of Finance - allow the Government of Barbados to default on the loan? We have never defaulted. So I said: pay the bank. So the money that was sent was not paid to Pre-Concord. It was paid to the bank.

So to give the impression that I took up \$25 million when all these people were owed money and I paid this money to Pre-Concord, and that this was some secret deal, some sweetheart deal as the Nation put it - oh dear, oh dear. I mean, really, man. Trying to cast aspersions on my character, trying to cast aspersions on the character of the contractor and everybody else involved. Because the people that the Honourable Member dragged before her debate - no, no, it is not those people. The people who leaked the information to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East - and I know who they are - they only

leaked half the information because they only knew half. They did not know the other half of the information.

So the Leader of the Opposition, of course, in her excitement - all wet behind the ears or elsewhere - rushes in here to give the impression that the Minister of Finance committed some heinous, unethical behaviour and that I should be vilified in the public because I gave Mark Maloney something, and then gives the impression, Mr. Speaker, sir, that these were the most expensive units ever built, with a whole set of figures that cannot be believed. And I will tell you what the real figures are per square foot.

The square footage for Valerie is \$350 a square foot. And you know how these figures get here? These figures get here because the regulatory authority - Town Planning and EPB - asked for certain things to be done there, like sewage treatment facilities. And that is what has pushed up the cost. Because when you take out those things and you get the basic costs that the contractor would have put in - and the cranes - right, listen: Valerie, \$350; Grotto, \$375 per square foot. And look and listen - you were Minister of Housing, I think. No, not you. Who was Minister of Housing when Country Park Towers was built? He was there too. Country Park Towers - ten years ago - at a cost of \$395 per square foot. So we built Grotto and Valerie ten years after you built Country Park Towers at a cheaper square footage.

That is not even true. But we know what happened. We know what happened with Country Park Towers Part 2. It was left in ruin to rust to the ground. And it is not true that the same company you are bashing now - Pre-Concord - and of course we know you don't panic. There is a lot more you are going to have to answer for.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, address the Chair please.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Yes, sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker. I have a lot to answer for because the same company - three of the directors of whom are Mark Maloney, Carl Williams and [Inaudible.] - is the same company that they gave Sapphire, the Dover. They gave the Dover. The Barbados Labour Party gave the Dover, the lands at Dover, to the same company that we are accusing here of giving special treatment - gave them to the same company on a 99-year lease at a monthly cost of \$416 a month.

Yes, Honourable Member. I have the file here. Let me hear. The Honourable Member must know he is misleading. The Honourable Member must know that the BTI dealt with that project and its chief negotiator is none other than his colleague in Cabinet, Senator Darcy Boyce, who sits in the other place. But it was under the Barbados Labour Party and it is a 99-year lease.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe this is a document of the House. And even if it is not, I will make it a document of the House. It says here, and I quote: in consideration of the rent and the lessee's covenants hereinafter reserved, the lessor hereby demises unto the lessee all that certain piece or parcel of land described in the schedule - demises, yes - hereby says to hold the same unto the lessee for a term of 99 years from the 2nd day of January 2008. Hear that? January 2, 2008. You remember when the election was - okay, 12 days after. And the lessee paying thereof in the terms of the lease shall be for 99 years and the rent shall be \$5 000 per annum. \$5 000 for Dover - for prime beachfront land at Dover. Signed, sealed and delivered by the said Honourable Reginald Ricardo Farley, Minister.

So this is - I am not saying Darcy Boyce's name about here - but at least the company did a good thing up there. They built a - I am going no further than that. The point I am making: I am not trying to reflect on the company negatively. But what I am saying here tonight is that you do not come here and try to impute improper motives on false information, or incomplete information, or unsatisfactory information, or to give the public the impression that we are giving favour to people that you yourself entered into arrangements with just before the election in terms of sweetheart deals. Wrong body. Wrong body. Same party, same set of people.

So many Honourable - oh, all Speakers here. Yes, Mr. Speaker. You should not miss this. Yes, sir. Please continue. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, sir. So do not come here and try to give this impression, and do not say - the Member for St. Michael East - with this thing about poor people and black people, and when I see people not of my colour and all of that - that cold, swooping, warm-over speech that Don Blackman was giving about here in the 80s. Do not come in here with that. Try to give the impression that somebody came here giving somebody some special sweetheart deal when we know that the same money went to finance his campaign and he collected the money at the top of the Ivy. Are we serious? In Barbados. And I always say, because it is important that we understand: he who seeks equity - he who comes to act must come with clean hands. You must come with clean hands.

So when we talk about Cat Hill - now that is the other side of things. We went - these four foolish ministers went and sold out Barbados. This is going to be the basis of a public meeting at Terrell Cot. You know, this is the basis: four ministers of the Crown went and signed a memorandum on [Inaudible.] to sell out Barbados - for what? I don't know. I don't know what we would be selling out Barbados for. Right. Never before - this was the Honourable Member for St. James Central saying: never before in the history of Barbados have I seen this kind of

thing happen. When he sat in the Cabinet in which the [Inaudible.] was signed with 3S - what? To build a highway without a properly designated contract and without any legal advice, and the Solicitor General nor the Attorney General signed off. And could you imagine that we are here, that the leading opposition is going to have a town hall meeting? Man, do not hold it in a town hall. Hold it at Kensington Oval. Hold it at Kensington Oval. Bring the big screens and put it on.

Because it is simple. It is simple. It is simple. A set of investors come to Barbados. They want to do a waste-to-energy plant. They say we are doing plasma gasification. I don't know the technology - I am not a technology person. They adopt this fancy thing called plasma gasification. Long before the people from Cahill turned up, a Barbadian professor working at a university overseas - I am going to get the name - submitted a proposal, as far as I recall, or a discussion paper at least. It might not have been a full proposal but a discussion paper about the use of plasma gasification and the possibility of setting up such a plant in Barbados. So it was not new to a lot of the officials in the Ministry of the Environment. They knew about it both from their studies and also from that proposal.

But up come these investors, like any other type of investors. Investors come to Barbados every day as they go to other countries. We want to do a waste-to-energy plant. We looked at it, we asked the officials, they said okay, this looks like something you can work with. And we proposed to enter into a negotiation. Could you imagine that in this so-called sellout deal, the Government of Barbados has not got to put in a cent? Not a cent of the taxpayers' money going into the sellout deal. You know, the Government is not putting money into building a factory - the Cahill factory. Not a cent of the Government's money going to build the Cahill factory.

This is one of the criticisms of Cahill - that it is a shell company. But the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, as an attorney at law - I don't mind, you can have any meeting. As an attorney at law, the Honourable Member knows full well - the Honourable Member never gets rattled. Never get rattled over what? Why committing a crime? So what can you get rattled about? The Honourable Member knows full well that special purpose vehicles are established every day of every year of every millennium to do projects. When the last Government entered into a negotiation with a company called Sustainable Barbados Recycling Centre - where did they ever do a waste treatment facility? Tell me one other waste treatment facility that SBRC did before the one they did in Barbados. That was a company specifically set up for that purpose. Just like Kirkhan Energy is set up specifically for the purpose of doing the waste-to-energy plant.

The Ionics company. Correct. The Ionics company which desal plant them ever set up and do. What was their track record in water desalination? Salt water desalination. Tell me. That was scary. Tell me. And they set up a plant and successfully running it, even though they're doing it under a negotiation for a contract that pays them 100 per cent for the water that they desal even though the water authority is only using 60 per cent of the water principle. And I don't blame them. But SPVs are set up all the time for purposes of projects. That is nothing new. So when you get here and talk about, oh, it's a shell company and nobody knows who the company is and when you go on their website, you don't see them doing nothing. But the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, as an attorney at law, a real one, he sets up SPVs all the time in his practice. So it's nothing new. It is nothing new.

So the company comes, they say we are going to spend \$300 million, \$350 million setting up a waste-to-energy plant. This is what they say they want from us. We want to know that if we set up this plant that we can have enough waste to fire the plant. That's right. And it is going to take what, a thousand tons of waste? Do you have a thousand tons on the island? So we have to do research and study and we have to do waste characterisation because it's not just any old waste that goes. You have to have waste of a particular calorific value. So we do that. We try to establish the properties or whether we have it on island.

Secondly, the company says the plant is a fairly big structure. We need to have it in a place that would not bother ordinary residents and a place appropriate for that purpose. Do you have a place in Barbados appropriate for that purpose? We said that at Vaux, that's where it is. That has been designated by the town planner for waste treatment under their government. So we have identified a place.

If you are setting up a plant - you see, I don't want people to explain. Y'all don't want people to explain. I am explaining. You said explain. I am explaining. The company says if I - and this is reasonable - if I'm going to put US\$350 million in a plant, I can't put it on a piece of land that I ain't sure what can happen with it. With a sapphire thing and building condominiums on this land. All that is again a 99-year lease from legal. So the company says I want to have the assurance that I am going to be able to have this land so that I can conduct this business with peace and quiet and without disturbance. So if you're doing an MOU, you have to guarantee the people something. You either give them a lease or you sell the land to them. One of the two.

Then let all other foreign investors say we want concessions. What's new? What's new about concessions? We give concessions every day. Even though the last government pretends that they never gave concessions. We

are the only people who give concessions and they gave concessions to everything about the place. That's true. So they said they want concessions. So we said okay, and this is where the Ministry of Finance comes in. We said, look, this is what we normally offer. Go to 67B and go to the various acts - this is what we offer. You can have that. This is a company investing US\$350 million in Barbados.

Then both the company and the government agree that under the laws of Barbados all of the regulatory permissions have to be obtained. And you can't expect to come in Barbados and set up a plasma gasification plant, a waste-to-energy plant, and not do an environmental impact assessment. Madness. If you are going to build a school, Minister of Education, they ask you for an EIA. So how are you going to set up a big plant and not do an EIA? So to give the impression - you don't get it. Bagatelle existed before us. People were dumping up in Bagatelle for years. That is not true. That is not true.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I ain't getting sidetracked by the Honourable Member for St. James Central. I am not getting sidetracked. Yes, Mr. Speaker, sir, your member is looking for a fight and I am not fighting with him. I am fighting for him. He's now been appropriately pistol-whipped and he's in the paper grinning like the cat walking up trying to get the impression that he did something. But you know, the Honourable Member for St. Peter called the whole lot just in case - politicians. I don't really like the lady in the opposition. I don't like what she's doing. But I am sticking close just in case she forms the government so I could get a ministry - just in case. That's what's going on. So I'm fighting for him because I'm going to liberate him from his own weakness as a politician.

But the point, Mr. Speaker, sir, is this. The people say they can set up this plant. And we say we have to do it here. But you know what we said - because if you listen to the opposition, when she presented her case, she said that Jacob Securities told the investors that they got this thing in Barbados and they got to do no environmental impact study. And then five minutes after, she comes and says that the government is going to pay for the EIA. So either we are doing an EIA or we are not doing one. But we are doing one. And we said to the company we will do the EIA ourselves. And it was started. You can read the parts of the document that suit your purpose and I can read the parts that suit mine and that tell the truth of what has gone on. We said we would do the EIA because we want to satisfy ourselves that the technology was safe enough to be in Barbados.

Then the other point is that we agreed - we agreed on the MOU - that the Government of Barbados is subject to all types of penalties if it does not do this and if it does not do that. But what the Honourable Member did not tell you is that the company is subject to the same penalties and

costs if they do not deliver on the investment. The Honourable Member did not tell the public that because I remember she wanted to give the impression it was a one-sided affair that four foolish ministers in this government sat down and signed.

And then the other thing is that the Cabinet, Mr. Speaker - she said the Cabinet did not know about the deal and that the Attorney General did not sign off on it and that it never went to the Solicitor General. Not true. Absolutely not true. And not only that, I sat in meetings where the Solicitor General came to the meetings and advised and participated and expressed her views on what was in the contract - said what she liked and what she did not like. The Solicitor General expressed her views, what she liked, what she thought ought to be changed, and we appropriately executed the agreement. I am saying that so you can say what you want to say. But I know.

You see, that's the point. You make these allegations, you call for the government to respond. And when the government responds, they don't want to hear the response because that's not in the playbook. Because somebody wants to come here and lecture this government, create the impression that we are a bunch of corrupt criminals. And the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East is the worst of all when it comes to this. Because the Honourable Member comes in here with this sanctimonious attitude - I've got to maintain high standards in government. I refuse to be lectured to.

But you know, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East worked for a client on a housing project in Lower Bay that was being done by a close member of her family when she was working for the company that the person was supposed to be suing. She worked for both the company and the client. No, I am back with it because you can't come and lecture me and try to make me feel as though I am some kind of common criminal and I ain't got no standards.

Subsidiary legislation on the code of professional conduct for lawyers makes it abundantly clear that all attorneys - an attorney at law should scrupulously preserve their independence in the discharge of their professional duties. Don't come in here lecturing me and telling me and making it seem as though I am some kind of common criminal entering into some deed with some people to - what do you say? - denude the people of Barbados of a billion dollars and crush the future of Barbados.

And I'm concerned about the molasses tanks - that when they burst they can drown the people. You talking about molasses tanks. You know we have had a molasses tank burst. The only place the molasses going is in the water harbour. And all of a sudden we are so concerned that a molasses tank burst in Milwaukee or somewhere and

drowned somebody. And then the Leader of the Opposition - that's why I tell you - these little innuendos and these things hold up an agreement.

How could the Minister of Finance sign an agreement that is undated? That's the Honourable Member's allegation. I am saying the Honourable Member knows that when agreements are executed - as an attorney the Honourable Member knows - that when an agreement is being executed between different parties, it is the persons who are legally responsible, the lawyers who get all the signatures, that have the responsibility to put the date on it. When it came to me, it had to have the date - I signed and I dated the bottom. It has to be signed and dated by the lawyers for the parties who are executing the deal in the end. But that's a fact. So it's a try to give the impression that I signed a deal that was not dated and therefore it was not a properly executed agreement - when it's not my fault.

We know what is going on in Barbados - that there is an attempt, as the Prime Minister has said, an insidious attempt, because you cannot beat us on policy. You could not respond to the budget cogently. You could not refute the policies in the budget. You could not gainsay the fact that the economy is turning around. So you had to find some smut to bring here to try to give the people the impression - and all the Labour Party disciples on the blogs to write foolishness about people in Barbados - and give the impression that this government is corrupt and that we are into some underhanded deal. That is the game plan. And therefore you are going to go to Terrell Court or wherever you're going to do another political meeting. Worried about that? Worried about a political meeting? No. Why would I be worried about a political meeting?

Mr. SPEAKER: I don't remember. Please address the Chair. Let's move on.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Why would I be afraid of a political meeting? At least the vendors who go around there will get little money because they sell a hot dog or two. A little hamburger here. Somebody might sell a snow corn in the night. Why would I be afraid of a political meeting? I tell you already, I have committed no crimes. So I don't have anything to be worried about. I don't have a thing to be worried about. It is not me that said in a sworn affidavit that the leader of the opposition is a crook. That is not me. That is the members of her party. It's not me who said that. It is not me who said that. Not one of my members over here or anywhere in the Democratic Labour Party ever accused me of embezzling Democratic Labour Party funds and putting them in my private foundation. Not me. They certainly never swore in an affidavit that I put members of the family, the ex-wives, on boards in companies and then financed them to undermine me. They never said that. They never said I took up vehicles and paid people to cause people to lose their seats in the last election. They never

said I was unfit to hold an office in any part of the Democratic Labour Party. So don't come to me and say that. Don't try to impute improper motives on my part.

This smut - it's not Cahill. It's Crab Hill. It's not Cahill. It is Jose E. Jose, a card-carrying member for Christ Church East. Jose E. Jose, who said in Barbados Today that he didn't want anybody to believe that the US Haulers protest was political because of the close association of the leader of the opposition with his company. You are his Member of Parliament. You are more than his MP. You are the person who, when the project manager at Crab Hill Police Station asked - the gentleman Jose E. Jose, who was selected to build the police station. Imagine we selected the number one in the number two business to build a police station. A man who is the best at collecting sewage was given a contract to build a police station. And the first thing - there is nothing illegal about it - but the man could not read a plan. The man laid the foundation wrong. And he didn't only lay the foundation wrong. The man tendered on the plumbing works and later on asked the project manager where the plumbing was coming to start. And after all of that confusion, Mr. Speaker, sir, could you believe that the man, after it was clearly established he could not get these things done, decided to put in money on bills of quantities that were not even approved by the architect? And the quantity surveyor asked for money. And the Ministry project manager said he was not paying him. And he determined the contract. He wrote a letter saying he was finished with the job, demobilised, took up all the equipment and the workers and left the job.

And would you believe that the leader of the opposition, who was then Minister of Economic Affairs and Economic Development - she had left the Attorney General's ministry, so it was no longer under her - she ordered the man back to work. And the Honourable Member for St. Joseph's Ministry - I don't know where he was; he might have been at George Walton Payne and Company - ordered the man back to work. And ordered, in this report - that is a document of this Honourable Chamber - from the project manager, the Honourable Member ordered him back and ordered that he be paid for the work. A project where the man put snow cone cups, Remy bottles, hair shavings, all kinds of things in the block. Holes, no reinforced concrete, the ground starting to crack, the stairs starting to move. All these things happened with the building. And the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East dictated, and the Honourable Member for St. Joseph's Ministry called a meeting with no capacity to do so, and ordered the man back to work over the objections of the people who were in the Ministry - and then comes into this House trying to give the impression that they have criminals over here. Really? Is this what we have come to?

I had finished with the retail politics, you know. I had finished with it. But if we want to open up the trough, I

am prepared to jump in. But this - he says Barbadian. But the person who built - listen to me. He is a black man. In truth, he is a black man. He is not the object of what is going on here. The object of what is going on here is the leader of the opposition. And that is why I said earlier this evening: it is not possible for the devil to frown on sin. It is not possible.

Look - the 2003 report of the Auditor General in relation to the St. Leonard School. It is a pattern of behaviour. Yes, it is a pattern of behaviour - from Edutech to St. Leonard's to the prison to Crab Hill Police Station to Kingsdon over to the World Cup to CBC. There is a pattern of behaviour by the leader of the opposition, and she wants to take that entire pattern of behaviour right up to Bay Street. Well, God help us all. Four Seasons - you can plot her coordinates. Mr. Speaker, sir, I am saying to the Member for St. Michael East: hitch your wagon from Kerry. Don't mind. Hurry.

St. Leonard's, Mr. Speaker, sir. Contract awarded to a company that was not given any authority under the law, under the financial rules, to award contracts - and the contractor and the Minister still did it. That is what the Auditor General said. Rule 1292 of the Financial Administration and Audit Rules - Financial Rules 1971 - requires that funds to be expended by Government which are borrowed from an international financial institution should have constituted a special tenders committee. It was observed that a special tenders committee was not constituted as required by the financial rules. This is what your Member presided over - awarding contracts in Government using international financial institutions' money without constituting the tenders committee. Big contracts.

An agreement was entered into to provide construction work on the hard court of the school for an amount of \$261 834.75. From the correspondence, it would appear that the Ministry was unaware of this liability until it was drawn to its attention three years after. Under her watch at the Ministry, it got so bad that the Caribbean Development Bank suspended the project for the breaches of the rules and regulations under the leadership of this Minister, when she was Minister of Education. One of the first times in the history of Barbados that a financial institution has suspended a project because a Ministry headed by that Honourable Leader of the Opposition, when she was a Minister, committed such grievous breaches of the financial rules - not only all financial rules, but the CDB rules as well.

And then we came to Glendairy Prison. Oh dear. Everybody knows about Glendairy. Everybody knows about the Godfather. Everybody knows about the Pegasus deal. But they don't know really about the Pegasus deal yet - they can hear about that later. But they know what

transpired. They know the Honourable Member left a note that said the prison was costing 350 000 Barbados dollars. The Member for St. Joseph read it in public and then, when he really found out how much it was - that it was really 250 million US dollars, not 350 million Barbados dollars - so we are now paying \$30 million a year for a prison for the next 30 years. Thirty years. So you are blaming the Honourable Member for St. Joseph? The Honourable Member for St. Joseph came in as Attorney General and had to clean up a lot of mess that was left. That is the truth.

So when you come here to tell me that I signed off and sold out Barbados - as if you ever had him sell out. Not me. No project has started yet. Town planning rules have got to be approved and applied. EPD rules have got to be approved and applied. I don't care who said they are starting - they cannot start until the Town Planner says it is time to start. And the Minister of Town Planning is the Prime Minister. And until he signs, not a fellow is building anything in Barbados. Because those are the rules. So therefore, do not go down that road. And there is more to come. I am not going to deal with Four Seasons tonight. It is too late. And I want the public to be here when I read all of the conveyances and do all the things I need to do in relation to Four Seasons and how property was moved around without appropriate sanction from the Government and the shareholders. No. I am not getting into anything personal with the leader of the opposition. I do not need to.

But I reiterate: Cahill came to Barbados. They said they wanted to build a plant. Our officials analysed it. They said it is something that we can do. It will save the country close to US\$50 million a year in relation to not having to deal with the garbage and all this confusion about various haulers and landfills and so forth. I am finally closing the one up in Mangrove - Mount Stinkeroo - which you said you were going to close and never did. You have to have a traffic management study too. All of those things.

\$100 million spent in Greenland. And you all remember St. Peter. Your Member disappoints me sometimes, you know, because your Member knows what was going on. And he knows of the arrangement to privatise the entire waste management system in Barbados. He knows the companies that were set up. And when he challenged that Cabinet, two of them walked out of the Cabinet, including the current leader of the opposition, saying that they were going to resign. And then the former Member for the City ran behind them to catch them. The three Powerpuff Girls ran out of the Cabinet - all on the business of the privatisation of the SSA and the waste management system. And your Member, St. Peter, said no, I am not doing it. And we know that. That is what happened.

So I am not going down that road. I am not interested in who beat who and who broke whose hand.

Not called to me. Not me. I am not going there. Who will pay the road tax? I want to know who got letters at the house for not paying the road tax. I am not interested in that. I said pay. If you have not paid, go and pay. There is a reason why you have not paid - you may have forgotten. If you forget to pay your road tax - you agree with me, Member for St. James Central - if you forget to pay your road tax, go and pay when you remember. So I am not getting down in that. Not me. I am not going on that gutter.

But what I can say is this: if you all

want to fight fire with fire, if you all want to open up the barn and have a battle, we can battle over Cahill molasses tanks. Because that is the other thing that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West did not say, Mr. Speaker, sir - that we gave the private sector the opportunity to build those tanks and they messed around for a whole year and almost put in jeopardy a 64 million US dollar a year industry. They came back to us and said they could not do it. And both he and I had to scramble around and get something in place to save that rum export industry. I am telling you - not even the customs officers were prepared to go up on top of the tank to measure the molasses in there because it was too unsafe. And both he and I at the last minute had to scramble around to find an arrangement to get some tanks built down there. Nobody committed a crime. We saved a 64 million dollar industry in Barbados that contributed to the GDP of Barbados and the foreign exchange earnings of Barbados. And you are supposed to come in here now and abuse me because that is what you did to help Barbados? Am I accepting that? Criticise me on the policy - say the budget is bad, say you don't like this tax or you don't like that tax - but don't come to give the impression that I am some kind of common criminal. And they are both here signing deals and signing away the patrimony of Barbados. Not me. I am not accepting that. Not accepting that from anybody.

So Mr. Speaker, sir, as I close on this early Thursday morning, having not taken up too much time speaking this morning, I want to commend to the House and to commend to the country the financial statement and budgetary proposals 2015. And I hope that we can work together as a country to achieve all of our objectives in that regard and do even better going forward. And with those few words, I beg that this resolution do now pass.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Yes, Mr. Speaker, sir. With that, we have come to the end of Government Business for the day. It is very early in the morning, of course - of Thursday. We are back out to work again tomorrow

morning. Mr. Speaker, sir, as we are speaking on the adjournment, let me just say very briefly, thank you very much to the Clerk and the team at the Table of the House of Assembly. I moved the adjournment of the House. But speaking on the adjournment, I want to say thanks, as I said, to the Clerk and the members of his team at the Table. I want to say thank you, of course, to those who provide security in all forms here at this Chamber - very important duties that they carry out to make sure that the business is carried on in safety and the strong traditions of this great nation of ours, Barbados. I want to thank all Members of the Force who participated, the staff of the Parliament of Barbados, those of course who cater for us while we are here for these very long hours. And I want to wish everyone safe journeys at this hour. Be careful, get home safely and we will, as I said, meet again on Tuesday morning at 10 o'clock. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, the 23rd of June, at 10.00 in the morning.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Member.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too, Mr. Speaker, would like to register my sentiments. It is late in the morning - my apologies - but I would like to register my sentiments as well. To Members of this Honourable Chamber, to the Speaker of this House, to the staff of Parliament who have assisted us over the past few days, to the Royal Barbados Police Force who have been guarding us, to the members of the public who have taken the opportunity to come here today and over the past few days to be able to listen to the debates, and also to the persons who have been listening attentively to both sides - as the Honourable Minister of Finance would have said, sometimes Members on either side do not agree with each other, but we have also found that on some of their sides, they do not agree either. But that is the nature of debate. And I hope that everyone too gets to their respective homes safely and I look forward to joining further debate next week. Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let me associate myself with those comments, but particularly express my gratitude to the members of staff here who always work so hard to ensure that all is well.

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, June 23, 2015 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

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AGARD, Dr. M. M. (Christ Church West)
ARTHUR, Rt. Hon. O. S. (St. Peter)
BOYCE, Hon. J. D. E. (Christ Church South)
BRADSHAW, Miss S. J. O. (St. Michael South East)
BRATHWAITE, Hon. A. D. (St. Philip South)
ESTWICK, Dr. the Hon. D. C. (St. Philip West)
INNISS, Hon. D. O’N. (St. James South)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
LASHLEY, Hon. M. A. (St. Philip North)
LOWE, Dr. the Hon. D. S. (Christ Church East)
MARSHALL, Mr. D. D. (St. Joseph)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
PAYNE, Mr. G. W. (St. Andrew)
PRESCOD, Mr. T. A. (St. Michael East)
SINCKLER, Hon. C. P. (St. Michael North West)
STUART, Rt. 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. The source does not record the PRESENT list; the Members listed are those identified from the record. The Sitting of Tuesday, June 16, 2015 had been suspended until 9.00 a.m. today, and Mr. SPEAKER opens Part 1 by resuming it; the source's convening sentence ('Pursuant to the adjournment ... met at 10.00 a.m.') is therefore replaced by a resumption line at 9.00 a.m. Please confirm the time from the Votes and Proceedings.

Q2. Throughout. The bracketed time-checks in the source have been omitted. They are out of sequence: Part 1 runs from '[12.30 a.m.]' to '[05.00 a.m.]' with one '[2.30 p.m.]', although that session ended with the dinner suspension at 8.15 p.m.; Part 2 runs into the early morning of Thursday, June 18.

Q3. Suspension. The words 'I beg to second that, sir' stand at the end of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce's motion in the source. They are printed as a separate seconding under AN HON. MEMBER; the seconder is not identified. Please confirm.

Q4. Order No. 16, after Mr. G. W. Payne. Headed 'HON. MS. C. SANDRA V. HUSBANDS, M.P.' in the source; she was not a Member of the 2013–2018 House. Mr. SPEAKER called the Member for St. James South, and the speaker thanks the people of St. James South, speaks 'as Minister of Commerce' and says 'my father was a fisherman'. Printed under Hon. D. O'N. INNIS. Please confirm.

Q5. Order No. 16, Hon. C. P. Sinckler (reply). The source reads 'the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central – Hon. Ms. Marsha K. A. Caddle – worked for a client'. That person was not a Member of the 2013–2018 House, and St. Michael South Central was then held by Hon. R. L. Sealy. The Minister had just named the Member for St. Michael South East and goes on to speak of a female attorney who had 'lectured' him; printed as 'the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East'. Please confirm the Member meant against the recording; the Leader of the Opposition is the other possibility.

Q6. Order No. 16, Mr. G. W. Payne; Hon. A. D. Brathwaite; Hon. C. P. Sinckler (reply). The source reads 'St. Michael North' in three places where the context shows another seat: Mr. Payne's 'the Minister, the member

for St. Michael North, he spoke about' the CLICO matter (the Minister of Finance, St. Michael North West), and the references by Hon. A. D. Brathwaite and Hon. C. P. Sinckler to the Member who studied at the London School of Economics and 'learned your law in England' (the Leader of the Opposition, St. Michael North East). In 2015 St. Michael North was held by Mr. R. St.C. Toppin, who did not speak. Corrected; please confirm.

Q7. Order No. 16, Mr. T. A. Prescod. The source reads 'the Honourable representative of St. Philip North, the Attorney General South'. The Attorney General, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, who had just spoken and described himself as a democratic socialist, is the Member for St. Philip South. Corrected.

Q8. Order No. 16, Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw and Hon. D. O'N. Inniss. Miss Bradshaw's sentence breaks off ('say somebody send you the') and Hon. D. O'N. Inniss's point of order begins mid-sentence ('Speaker, her stride but she's really misleading the House'). Part of the record may be missing at this point. Please check against the recording.

Q9. Order No. 16, Hon. M. A. Lashley. An unidentified Member asked during the Minister's speech that a letter he had read be made a document of the House. Printed under AN HON. MEMBER. Please identify the Member.

Q10. Order No. 16, Hon. D. O'N. Inniss and Hon. C. P. Sinckler. Interjections appear to be run into the speeches in the source, for example 'I never misled the House. I never said anything about any affidavit... I was reading from my notes' within Hon. D. O'N. Inniss's speech (apparently Mr. G. W. Payne), and 'The Honourable Member must know he is misleading' within the Minister of Finance's reply. They are left as in the source; please check against the recording.

Q11. Order No. 16, Hon. M. A. Lashley. The source reads 'St. Lawrence Castle' where the Minister speaks of the 450-room hotel at Long Bay, St. Philip, whose closure affected his constituency, which appears to be Sam Lord's Castle. Left as in the source; please check.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

On Wednesday, June 17, 2015 the House resumed the debate on Order No. 16, the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals for the Year 2015, with Mr. SPEAKER and at times Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER in the Chair. The Minister of Health, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce,

spoke on non-communicable diseases and a national healthcare financing discussion. Mr. G. W. Payne said the budget mimicked the 2008 budget and that a \$52 million injection could not treat a \$400 million problem at CLICO; on points of order Hon. C. P. Sinckler said the chairman of the new company was not paid. Hon. D. O'N. Inniss said the additional revenue was \$204 million, including \$20 million from items removed from the VAT basket and \$20 million from VAT on gambling, that income tax rates were cut from 17 to 16 per cent and from 35 to 33 per cent, and that the \$35 million fuel cess was not new.

Dr. M. M. Agard said the budget would extract \$204.7 million and called the tax clearance certificate for professionals unconstitutional. The Attorney General, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, described himself as a democratic socialist defended the record of his Office and withdrew two remarks during his speech. Mr. T. A. Prescod questioned the Government's socialism and raised housing at Coverley and Haggett Hall. Hon. R. D. Jones cited the aim of reducing the deficit below 2 per cent by 2020-2021. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw said allegations of corruption were proper to the debate and criticised the tax on mobile airtime; Hon. D. O'N. Inniss, on a point of order, explained the transfer of the micro fund to Fund Access. Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe defended the Cahill waste-to-energy proposal. The House was suspended until 8.15 p.m.

After the suspension Mr. K. D. Symmonds criticised the Cahill memorandum of understanding, including its 30-

year waste supply and power purchase agreements and tax exemptions, and said Barbados had lost 5 million litres of the United States bulk rum market between 2010 and 2014. Hon. M. A. Lashley defended the Transport Board's dealings with UCAL; Mr. SPEAKER ruled that a Minister may refer to a document without laying it. Mr. D. D. Marshall said the budget failed as a roadmap and challenged the tax clearance requirement under the Legal Profession Act. Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, speaking as an independent Member, said the withdrawal of \$200 million in taxes would need at least \$500 million in injections. Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick spoke on trade liberalisation and food security, citing Haiti.

The Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart, said the deficit had been reduced from upwards of eleven per cent of GDP to 6.6 per cent by March 31, 2015. Replying, Hon. C. P. Sinckler said less than \$100 million of the revenue measures was truly new, described a loan from the Housing Credit Fund, with retained earnings of \$113.52 million, to finance housing at Grotto, compared costs of \$350 a square foot at Valerie and \$375 at Grotto with \$395 at Country Park Towers, and said the Cahill plant would save close to US\$50 million a year. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, on a point of order, said her fees had not come from taxpayers.

The Resolution was passed. On the motion of the Leader of the House, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, who thanked the staff of Parliament, the House adjourned until Tuesday, June 23, 2015 at 10.00 a.m.