
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, March 18, 2015

The House of Assembly resumed at 9.00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 18, 2015, the Sitting of Tuesday, March 17, 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)

Hon. R. L. SEALY (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)

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)

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

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

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

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. G. A. CLARKE, J.P.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND

Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON

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

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN (Minister of Housing and Lands)

Mr. SPEAKER: When the suspension was taken last evening, we were in Committee of Supply, Order Number 17, and to that we shall return.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee. Honourable Member for St. John.

Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON: Good morning, Mr. Chairman. Good morning to the good people of St. John who are listening to my voice right now. Mr. Chairman, I wish to speak on this Head, and I choose to do so largely because it is education and because this subject is of much importance to any developing nation. It is through education that our people will reach their true potential.

Now, education in this country has long been strong, if I could put it that way. And successive governments have always endeavoured to see that this continues and that education will assist in developing proud, industrious, creative, disciplined individuals who could contribute positively to the growth and development of Barbados. So education is provided from nursery to tertiary, and with special needs included as well. But my purpose this morning is not necessarily to get into the merits and demerits of education, but really to concentrate on the schools in St. John.

Mr. Chairman, there were four primary schools in St. John: Mount Tabor Primary, St. Margaret's Primary, St. John's Primary and Society Primary. Last year, after much examination of the facility that housed Society Primary School, a decision was finally made to shut the doors of that school. With good reason. I can't say that I really objected to that happening. I was saddened by it. It's unfortunate that the school that was the first primary school in Barbados, with the wonderful history that it had, that it would have to be shut down. But we had to be realistic. Yes, this school may have been around for 100 years, but this is 100 years later and we need to make changes. And the facility that was there was simply not fit for human habitation. And I really didn't see why the children of St. John should be going to school in such a building. So it was closed.

And the children were then sent to various schools within St. John and outside of St. John too. So that today you have children who went to Society School at, namely, St. Margaret's and St. Mark's, but also at St. Philip Primary. Even some have come down into St. Michael to go to school. And that too is fine. I suspect that gone are the days where you went to the village school. Transportation is so much better, so much easier, and in fact it is actually convenient for some parents to have the children go to school closer to where they work. So it is not necessary for the child to actually go to school next door to where it lives. But that's all well and good. Society was closed and the children are accommodated elsewhere.

But I stand here this morning because when I look at the other three schools in St. John - three primary schools - the one that stands out, that is almost close to the condition that Society was in, is St. John's Primary. Because of the location of that school, there is really little or no room for expansion. And so I have determined that the best thing to do is to create a new school in which you can house the students of St. John's Primary and the children of the catchment area that Society Primary served. So it is really my plea this morning to the Minister of Education. We have discussed it before, though I can't say that he is hearing this for the first time. I have mentioned this to him before - that we should amalgamate the two schools and house them under a new roof.

I have gone and looked at the land - in fact, two different spots in St. John. And it is merely a matter of determining which one is better, which one is more suitable. And I understand that money is a problem, but money is always the problem. And it is simply a matter of planning and deciding when and how this can be done. There are spanking new primary schools all over this island. Blackman Gollop, my goodness, is just lovely. And I think that the children of St. John are certainly deserving of a school that looks like that.

So, Mr. Chairman, that really is the long and short of what I wanted to say this morning. And I put it to the Minister of Education that we really must pursue this project and that I would like to see this new facility in the near future. I am obliged.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. George South.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Chairman, I rise to make my contribution to this very important Head 77 - Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. And I sat yesterday afternoon listening to the Democratic Labour Party members of government trying to convince themselves that they did the right thing in abolishing free tertiary education.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Honourable Member, Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please. I have to hear the motion. Honourable Members, please. Do not presume the judgment of the Chair. You could at least anticipate the judgment of the Chair. Thank you. No, hold on. I ask you to sit. Please sit. Honourable Member for St. Lucy, please give me the chance to deal with the matter.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On the point of order, the Honourable Member is misleading the House by telling the whole world that Barbados has abolished tertiary education and that you have to pay 100 per cent for tertiary education in Barbados, when everybody knows that after 53 years of free secondary education, all the government has done is ask people to contribute 20 per cent.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Proceed, please.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I will repeat for the Honourable House and for the public that the Democratic Labour Party - the government - spent yesterday trying to convince themselves that they did the right thing in abolishing free tertiary education. And I don't think that there is anything wrong with my statement, because there came February 2013, in the last general election, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, and they told the Barbadian public that they were not going to interfere with free tertiary education. And months after the general election, they did what they said they were not going to do.

And I say to the public and to this Honourable House, Mr. Chairman, that the campaign that was run by the Democratic Labour Party at the last general election was fraudulent. It was a sham, it was deceitful and it was dishonest - a betrayal of the people of this country, the trust of the people of this country, by telling the people that you

would not abolish free tertiary education. And months after, you did that. Now tell me, in Barbadian vernacular, you preach fowl and you practise turkey. Your morning words and your evening words do not add up. I say to you the only philosophical approach you should be using now is to tell the people why your campaign was a sham and it was full of lies and deceit.

They said that they would not lie to the people, they would not cheat, not steal. But we know a lot of stealing there, Mr. Chairman, and a lot of lies in that campaign, Mr. Chairman. But, Mr. Chairman, there is something called a scorched-earth policy, where the Democratic Labour Party - that is their policy and it is a military strategy. And the Honourable Member for the City, he understands what I am talking about. That you will do anything, anything that is useful to destroy your enemy. The ends justify the means for the Democratic Labour Party, for this government. So they came to the people in their last campaign and they ran a campaign - politics of lies and deceit. I am not saying you all are liars. The campaign that you ran was a campaign of lies and deceit. But, Mr. Chairman, this is what is creating the level of political apathy and deep cynicism in this country. Because when you play with people's lives - education - when you play with people's lives.

And I have to go back and I have to recall that statement made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West when he spoke about maintaining a solid safety net to assist the most vulnerable. Now tell me - when you abolish free tertiary education, you are certainly removing and destroying that safety net for the most vulnerable people in this society. Because let us be real, Mr. Chairman, 80 per cent or close to 80 per cent of the people in this country fall in this bracket because they cannot afford to pay for tertiary education. They cannot afford to pay tuition fees. And you are playing with the people.

And I see the Honourable Member for St. John looking at me and I know she falls into this same bracket of free education because she has children at university.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, when you are making a reference to an Honourable Member, I think we have to tighten up things. The reference is to an Honourable Member, not "she". Please correct it.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: I withdraw, Mr. Chairman. The Honourable Member for St. John - and I don't mean to disrespect the Honourable Member. That is not in my - thank you.

But I know this morning there is no more spin bowling like yesterday, because I told the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central: come prepared. Put on your helmet. This is the innermost pinballing because you have to answer to the people of this country.

You have to answer to the people of this country for what you did. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has been the longest-serving Minister of Education. I would like you to tell the members of this House what transformational change you have done in this country since you became the Minister of Education. He has done nothing.

Let us take a journey down the road. Alexandra School, Alma Parris, Parkinson - all of these are issues that are still on the table that have not been resolved by the Minister of Education. They were referred - just like all the other issues under the Minister of Labour - they were referred to the Prime Minister to be resolved. I consider that poor leadership. Up to this day, Mr. Chairman, the issue with Parkinson and the issue with Alexandra probably remain unresolved. They remain unresolved. Alma Parris as well.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. The referral of a matter from a Minister to a Prime Minister for consideration is not a reflection on the leadership of anyone. Your member will learn these things as he continues his sojourn in the House of Assembly and as he seeks to represent people. The referral of the matter for consideration because it is referred to a higher authority does not reflect on his competence, sir. So your Honourable Member has to be guided by this kind of organisational efficiency, sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Proceed.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: I would like the Honourable Minister of Education to tell the Honourable House what recommendations were put forward as it relates to the issue at Alexandra School. What recommendations were put forward by the Minister? If they claim they have been resolved - if they claim they have been resolved - you can call me anything. Mr. Chairman, to you: you have betrayed your own legacy. And you have placed the legacy of Earl Barrow as having no enduring value. That legacy of free education that you boasted about years and years. But come February 2013, you found yourself in a position whereby - and I am thankful that the Democratic Labour Party ceded to the Barbados Labour Party - because we are the party of free education and we make no excuse for that. We will, when we return to office.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member has five minutes.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Chairman, to ensure that the university receive free tertiary education. Because I cannot understand how the Democratic Labour Party can

find money to deal with the David Thompson football, can find money to deal with summer camps, can find money to deal with constituency councils and catering at meetings for the constituency councils. I attend meetings, you know, I attend some meetings, Mr. Chairman. And I am saying to you, when you can find money to do these things, but you cannot find money to deal with tuition fees and to ensure that our greatest asset, the human capital, is looked after - and that is the safety net for the most vulnerable people that you boast about in your estimates presentation - you have eroded that. You have kicked down the ladder as well, that you climbed on to be here as parliamentarians and to function in this country as ministers; you have kicked down that ladder. So you are saying to me that the average lady with two children in St. George South, earning \$400 per week, child bright, aspiring to be a doctor, aspiring to be an engineer, cannot fulfil their dreams and their aspirations as a result of the Democratic Labour Party conceiving an ad hoc policy as it relates to education.

But Mr. Chairman, we have a more fundamental issue in this country. We are heading down a dangerous path in this country towards a human capital crisis in the public service and also in the private sector. We are heading down a dangerous path in this country, Mr. Chairman, because soon from now we will be losing decades of talent as civil servants retire. And I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central; he spoke about generating foreign exchange from human capital. I would like him to tell us how he will do that because that is all talk. Because what you are doing, Mr. Chairman, with this policy, we are not going to develop enough and nurture the next generation of public servants with this strategy. Because when you refuse to educate the average person from St. George and from Christ Church East Central, you are depriving, Mr. Chairman, the average person in those areas - their children - from achieving a decent education as a result of the Democratic Labour Party policy.

And I travel the length and breadth and I know of many persons. I know of a lady who works in a law office right now with two children. She had to quit university because she was unable to pay the fees. She has to be earning around \$300, \$400 a week. And I am saying to you, Mr. Chairman, your time has expired. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will return in this debate because I have other things to say.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, your time has expired. The Honourable Member for St. Philip South. Thank you.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, last night we heard from the Member for St. Philip West, who did what I thought was an excellent job - an excellent contribution - tracing the history of education and in

particular why Barbados took the developmental path that it did by ensuring that free education from cradle to grave, as it were, was available. I believe that when the Honourable Member speaks later he will continue that conversation.

But if I can give my two cents' worth, as it were, we heard a couple of days ago from the Member for St. Peter who, as a member of the Barbados Labour Party, as Prime Minister of this country and as Leader of the Barbados Labour Party, said in this Chamber that he had contemplated that there would have come a time when Barbados could no longer afford to make free tertiary education available to all individuals. And indeed, I believe what the Honourable Member said is that he was then encouraging Barbadians to have savings plans in place and gave the tax incentive so that they would be able to contribute to their children's education.

We heard from the Member for St. Michael South, who in tracing the history of education said that our late revered and founding father, the Right Honourable Errol Walton Barrow, actually in contemplating and conceptualising the University of the West Indies, even at that time contemplated that there will come a point in time in the history of this country when free tertiary education would no longer be affordable and available to everyone. And simply put, on a numeric basis, the decision made in 1965 or 1967 to make tertiary education available to 3 000 Barbadians for free is no longer sustainable for 16 or 17 000 Barbadians. That is a reality that we had as a country to face at some point in time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please. Let me hear the Honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. There are not 16 or 17 000 Barbadians who wanted to get into the University of the West Indies. There are only at the most half of that sum. And the Honourable Member, as a leading Cabinet Minister, ought to be truthful to this Parliament.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please withdraw that remark. Please withdraw the remark. Anyhow, it is struck from the record. Let us proceed. Continue.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: I am obliged to the Member for St. James North - sorry, St. James North - because we all know that his contributions are worthy of consideration. So I am obliged to him. I did not hear what he said, so I assume that someone else listened to him. I try not to listen to him myself.

But as I was saying, what was contemplated in 1967 - even at that point in time - it was considered that there will come a point in time in our history when we will no longer be able to afford to make free tertiary education available. Now, let me say this, and I have said this before: there is no doubt that a small developing nation like ours cannot afford to provide all the free social services that we are providing. We cannot afford it. We cannot afford the life that we have been given. And letting Barbadians believe that it is their right to receive a free house for \$90 000 - how many houses can we give at this point in time of our history? And we do not have to apologise for it. And in fact, it is sheer hypocrisy on the other side not to admit publicly that the time for us to provide the level of free social services that we have been providing has passed. That in fact this generation, who received the level of education we have, has a responsibility to provide for our own children.

The Member for St. James North, I believe, has a son in Florida at university. He does not believe, or did not believe, that Barbados should pay for his child. None of them believes it. We, the beneficiaries of free tertiary education, owe it to our own children and owe it to Barbados. We owe it to our children. I owe it to this country to lay the path for our own children so that the scarce resources that are available are then available for the less privileged, for those who cannot afford it - like the Member for St. George South has been speaking about. There is no doubt that there will always be individuals in our country for whom the society, for whom the country, will have to provide - in terms of housing, in terms of education, et cetera. There is no doubt about that. But those of us who can afford to need to provide for ourselves and for our children. And that is why the Member for St. Peter said what he did in terms of placing tax incentives in place so that individuals can save towards their children's education. We do not have to apologise for that.

Now, yes, there has been a reduction in the number of individuals attending university. And we have looked at that and we have looked at the experience in other countries. We look at the experience in Jamaica, for example, which showed that during the first year, as was expected, the numbers would decline. But by year two or year three, if people have bought in and understand that they need to provide their own resources, the numbers will go back up. That is expected.

You know, sir, I was travelling with a chap from the State Department -

- I believe, last year in Miami. We were discussing education and he laughed. He said to me, but my children cost me a quarter of a million dollars to send to college. A quarter of a million dollars. That is 500 000 Barbados dollars. His children. And he saw nothing wrong with that

because they have come along in a culture where they recognise that they had to save and provide for the education of their children. But little Barbados, with its scarce resources - little Barbados that we heard and will hear all day does not have enough money to do this or that - but when it suits the members of the Barbados Labour Party, we should find the money to do everything else.

[Interruption.]

Sorry, sir. Sorry, sir. I withdraw the remark. Sorry, sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. The remark is withdrawn. The Honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: I am sorry, sir. One of the rules of this Parliament is that an Honourable Member should not -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you rising on a breach of the Standing Orders, sir? Honourable Member, what are you rising on?

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: I am arising on a point of order. The point of order is that the Honourable Member has breached a Standing Order by being offensive, sir. The remark is struck. And he should be warned against it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, as I said before, this is not a rum shop. Honourable Member, just a moment, please. I have already indicated to Members that I do not need anyone to instruct the Chairman as to how to perform his functions. The point is that a remark has been struck from the record. I do not understand what the issue is. Please proceed, sir.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I apologize. I actually - if the Member for St. James North believes I meant him - I actually did not mean the Member for St. James North. I don't associate the Member for St. James North with that type of behaviour. So I don't understand why he, of all people, was offended.

But, sir, if I may continue. If I may say, sir, I really wanted to discuss education as it relates to certain parts of my ministry and indeed to my own constituency. In my own constituency, I know that in fact there are already plans to have a nursery school at Oldbury. And I believe, from what I saw in the brief from the Minister of Education, that should start within the next three to four months. And I'm very happy to note that.

I also note with some pleasure that indeed St. Martin's Mangrove will be knocked to the ground and a new facility will be established there. With respect to St.

Martin's Mangrove, sir, whilst I believe that we need to look to see how we can improve the academic performance of the institution as a whole, there are many, many other things that speak volumes of the work and dedication of the teachers there at that institution - indeed, their performance, NIFCA, the choir, the whole atmosphere, the whole character of that institution is one that I believe is worthy of replication across Barbados. The teachers there, the headmistress and the teachers there do a tremendous job at that institution. And that's important at a time when we tend to hear only negative things about institutions.

Also at Renault, I know from my notes that in fact we're going to have a cover of the walkway between the prefab buildings and the main building - that's been called for by the management of the school for quite some time. The school is still in need of some additional repairs because I was there a couple of weeks ago and, as life would have it, it rained and I could see water coming through the roof - onto which I have already relayed to the Minister of Education - onto where the students were having their prayers. And even though much work was done within the last two years or so, it seems as if there are still some additional issues with respect to those works. So that needs to be addressed.

Also, sir, from time to time I have discussions with the Minister of Education and I say to him that in this country we have a very elitist approach to education - that we speak volumes about the ones and twos and the scholarships and exhibitions, et cetera, and that we need to spend an equal amount of time speaking to and discussing how do we deal with the lower percentile, how do we deal with the many young people who are coming out of secondary school without qualifications. It is something that we have been looking at as a country for many, many years. And the Minister of Education, during the course of today, will, I am sure, discuss with Barbados and with us all the initiatives, including the CVQ, et cetera, that are presently obtaining.

Because I am sure that it concerns many of us when we go into a constituency and come across many young men and women - in particular, many young men - who seem to have come through school without any qualifications. And we need to examine how it is possible that a young man can come through primary school, into secondary school, and cannot basically read or write, but yet he has graduated from primary school. And I see this in particular when I engage, unfortunately, individuals within the criminal justice system. And you recognise that in fact it is the failure at the bottom that has no doubt contributed to why they have ended up in the criminal justice system.

So we need to have programmes in place because, you know, there are some of us - and including you, Mr. Chairman, I know that you are a man of deep faith and

fundamentally believe that we are all equal and everyone can be a pilot and so forth. I actually do not believe that. I actually believe that there are some among us who, no matter how they try, will never be an Einstein, et cetera. We need to provide for them.

And one programme - and I want to spend some time on this, so maybe I had better not start on it now - is the AGAANR initiatives. I want to spend some time on that. But to signal, sir, in closing, because I will come back, that I want to have a discussion on what initiatives are in place to ensure that the students who, for whatever reason, will not come out of school with nine CXC's - and who in many cases are not coming out of school with any CXC's - what programmes are in place or will be put in place to ensure that they can still reach and still maximise their potential. I will come back, sir.

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

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Chairman, sir, I want to begin on the note of trying to bring a measure of clarity to what I believe is becoming a fundamental issue in Barbados. Now, sir, there is a peculiar thing about countries that call themselves democracies. They tend to have election exercises. And the peculiar thing about elections, Mr. Chairman, is that elections tend to have consequences. When in the middle of or immediately prior to an election exercise, not just candidates, but the political leader of a political party stands squarely before a country and holds himself out to be less than a sanctimonious hypocrite and says to the country that X, Y or Z is the course of action that I believe should be pursued in the land that I want to lead. And then that person, Mr. Chairman, sir, enjoys the confidence of the people who, whom he asked to repose confidence in him and is then returned to office. There is an automatic belief that there has to be some credibility associated with those things that were pledged.

Now, the point that was made by my friend for St. George South is a critical point of departure in this matter. It isn't so much what we are hearing now as part of the afterbirth of it all about what was affordable or what is not affordable today. Because, Mr. Chairman, the last entity in Barbados that needs to be schooled or lectured on what is affordable or not affordable in terms of education was the Barbados Labour Party. But the Barbados Labour Party put a position squarely before this country in the election and the Democratic Labour Party campaigned and campaigned successfully on the entire opposite position.

Now, Mr. Chairman, let me just say to you - and you know, the benefit of modern technology is that you can, with the press of a button, find the exact quotations. It was on 14 November 2011, recorded or reported in the Nation

newspaper under the rubric - I am not quoting the newspaper, sir. Mr. Chairman, sir, I am giving you the benefit of my memory and I am saying to you that if members were more interested in having a sensible approach to this matter, they too would have the opportunity of refreshing their memories. And Mr. Chairman, the point is that if you went to that newspaper, you would find under the rubric "PM's word - tertiary education will remain free" a number of things being said, and among them, sir, was a commitment to a belief that it would be, quote unquote, a retrograde step if we were to dismantle equal access to education by the reimposition of tuition fees in Barbados. And you would also find, Mr. Chairman, sir, that it was said that the waiver of tuition fees will remain the only fair way in order to ensure equal access to tertiary education to those who meet standards of eligibility or the criteria for eligibility. That was said.

Therefore, sir, I am not coming here to engage in any mealy-mouthed exercise because the people of Barbados have an opportunity to pass judgment. But do not let us begin by asking us to accept historical revisionism on matters that have impacted on the lives of thousands of young people in this country. Let us not go into the historical revisionism on matters that have taken hope and invited frustration upon the lives of thousands of young people in Barbados. It is too important an issue.

Now, having said that, Mr. Chairman, I come to the real meat of the matter - what is happening today - and I am going to come back because there are lengthy contributions I want to make on this issue of education. We cannot, sir, and I start from the premise that I began in my second reading speech. If we are serious about Barbados and Barbados' development, if we are serious about leading this country out of the morass that it finds itself in financially, Mr. Chairman, there has to be a willingness on the part of those who lead the country to have strategic interventions and initiatives which will give Barbados a level of competitiveness, restore us, sir, to a level of competitiveness where we can stand shoulder to shoulder with those myriad countries in Latin America and the Caribbean who are doing successfully, going along successfully and doing far better than we are doing.

Yesterday the Minister of Education took us on a voyage, a voyage back to the 1950s and 1960s. He was remembering when Mr. Barra did this and the approach to elitist education. All those things are nice historical treatises, Mr. Chairman. You know, it sounds good, all well and nice to say, take us down the anecdotal path of what used to happen in the 50s and 60s. But we live, sir, in 2015. And what struck me about the Minister is that he premised a lot of his praise on the late Mr. Barra, to Mr. Barra's keen interest in penetrating - his words, not mine - penetrating the society with education. Well, how is the society being penetrated today, sir?

We have, and I take this point very seriously, we have a Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic which in Barbados today is sought after in terms of access to educational opportunity by thousands and thousands of young people - the same young people that the learned Attorney General of Barbados just spoke about - who want the opportunity, sir, to access as mature students an alternative secondary or refreshed post-secondary opportunity for training. This is what the people want. If you go into any constituency, you will find the phenomena that we have now come to casually refer to as boys and girls on the block. They are not merely boys on the block. They are human capital, social capital in Barbados that is being subjected to squander mania by a government that is too purblind and persistently short-sighted to intervene on the same blocks and make sure that training opportunities are made manifest and accessible to poor working-class sons and daughters of the soil who want an opportunity.

I do not buy into the view, Mr. Chairman, sir, that there is anybody out there sitting on a block who is deliberately saying, I do not care anything about the system, I do not want to be employed, I do not want a job. They too have families to feed. They too want to be able to enjoy the benefits of success in life. They have not been consigned to the rubbish heap of history. But we hear, Mr. Chairman, we hear of an estimates exercise 2015-16 in which the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic is given \$2.5 million by way of operational costs. At a time, sir, at a time when thousands of people have been laid off, thousands of people want the opportunity to benefit from training and retraining.

I talk about the strategic need for strategically refocusing what we are doing. Adult education, sir - especially at this time. The Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic was under a mandate, sir, of not only providing secondary and alternative post-secondary training but also expanding access to mature students - expanding access to mature students who do not have the formal certification that members of this House, for example, might enjoy.

Now, sir, if you are going to speak about a national development approach and service your national development objectives, then Mr. Chairman, it would seem to me that you have got to begin on the premise of understanding that we are a services-based economy. There is no gainsaying that. And if you are a services-based economy, sir, then you need to be expanding training not only in your traditional technical and vocational options, but also increasing opportunity to build capital, build out your social capital and your social capacity by way of training. Mr. Chairman, in non-traditional technical options, you have now to put Barbadians in a position where they have enhanced and increased opportunity to work for themselves.

What bothers me is that the Minister of Education, for example, is going to use Christ Church where he parades himself as being a political overlord. He knows that in Christ Church there is a fellow who comes from ordinary background, ordinary social circumstances, who put himself through the same polytechnic and became a qualified plumber, a certified plumber, who today, sir, has his own plumbing business and is doing, sir, business 24 hours a day in this country, employing tens and twenties of people, making more money than some of these glorified professionals in Barbados. Those are the opportunities that we need to be inculcating and creating in the young people of Barbados, sir.

And it is true as well in the same parish of Christ Church - and I have one in St. James - where air conditioning and refrigeration are still taught and benefited from at the same polytechnic. Men who are today getting on a LIAT with their employees and going to work in St. Vincent and going to work in Dominica. And those, sir - the first thing that we have to do as a Parliament is to take a little time to stop the crossfire and the smoke and mirrors. I called it yesterday, Mr. Chairman, sir, the politics of appearance versus reality. We all know the reality is that this free tertiary environment was savaged by the Democratic Labour Party contrary to a promise that it would not do so. Do not humbug the member for St. George South on that point. He is right. Accept it and move on.

But what do you do now to lead the land successfully? I submit respectfully, Mr. Chairman, you have to be prepared to now destigmatise, destigmatise the technical and vocational options that are before Barbadians. That is the first point that you have to do.

If you have destigmatised the technical options, we would not have any national vocational qualifications and the community vocational qualifications in such a failing state on the part of Barbados. I have asked this Minister on the floor of the House only a few months ago, when we had a debate on the Economic Partnership Agreement - and that was a few months ago, October last year - what was the position with respect to national vocational qualifications in Barbados up to last year? Mr. Chairman, we were at a stage where people were still experimenting with the first one or two or three schools. That is a fact. So do not tell me we have destigmatised it. If it were at the forefront, every school in Barbados and all of the blocks so called in my constituency would have opportunities for young men and women to go and say, I am here, I want to be trained so that I can have a skill, I can be accredited, so that I can go out there and hold up that accreditation paper - whether I am a plumber, a welder, a carpenter, a mason, a butcher, baker or candlestick maker - hold up the paper so that I can have an equality of opportunity with the lawyer and the doctor and the engineer, so that I can move my services not only

around Barbados but into the wider Caribbean and live out the dream that is a Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

Do not tell me that we have destigmatised it. We are where we were in 2007 when it was a novel notion. We have gone no further. The only benefit, sir, is that there is a Minister of Education who has been loitering on the doorstep of opportunity for seven years with nothing to show for it. Loitering. And the fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, the fact of the matter is, sir, that we continue, therefore, to fail. That is the problem. There are too many people in this country caught up with position. What we need to be caught up with is leading the people out of darkness into light. That is what God talks about. And I can talk about it here today.

I have only a few seconds left, sir, so I will come back because there is another instalment on this. There is more that has to be talked about. In education, we will continue to fail the economy, the economic recovery, and we will continue to fail the people who sent us here if we do not get the education of Barbadians right. I am obliged.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Honourable Member for Christ Church [Inaudible.]

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am very happy to enter this debate and particularly after the honourable member for St. James Central. He has touched, Mr. Chairman, on a number of matters, but in particular, as we are on a journey in the cultural industries sector, particularly in the area of film and movies, I really believe that after his performance, there is definitely a role for the member in any theatrical piece, any theatrical piece that is produced in Barbados, because he has all of the attributes of an actor. He has demonstrated all his skills in this debate.

But, Mr. Chairman, he made a point. He made a very valid point because he is talking about where we are going in terms of the education strategy, the human resources development strategy of Barbados. He correctly said that we have persons on the block who are demonstrating an aptitude for their own improvement and development. And he said that there are several persons who are in the technical area - repairs of equipment, air conditioning technicians - who are leaving Barbados on a regular basis and finding employment in various islands of the Caribbean. He is correct. But, Mr. Chairman, he is only correct to the point of admitting that the only reason those young men and women can leave Barbados with those technical skills is because of the same training and programmes available to them under this Government. So that is an admission which I really welcome.

Because within the context, Mr. Chairman, of the programmes within the Division of Youth Affairs, in

particular, the Youth Mainstreaming Programme, on a regular basis has provided training to many of the young men and women on the block. And they talk about - they cry a lot of tears, Mr. Chairman - about the demise of Project OASIS and what Project OASIS did and did not do. The reason why we had to dismantle Project OASIS was because of all the chaos in that programme, all of the disorder that went on. And we had to reintroduce a programme called the Youth Mainstreaming Programme. That programme, Mr. Chairman, has been able to train a number of persons within the target population of 9 to 29.

And I want to address the point because if we are talking about how we can enhance training and education for the same young Barbadians that you are talking about, then you must be able to admit that the Youth Mainstreaming Programme and the Barbados Youth Service and, of course, Endless Possibilities has demonstrated collectively over the past seven years that they are doing exactly that. And therefore, I cannot allow the honourable member to escape in his theatrical piece this morning.

I want to refer to some specifics because I need to give the public the benefit of what these programmes have been doing. I refer to the success in the Youth Mainstreaming Programme where over the past financial year we have been training persons in the area of small engine repairs. And that tells the story of why there are young people now who are trained in technical areas through the same Youth Mainstreaming Programme and who are able to diversify their talent offerings and go into the Caribbean. That is what we have to tell our young people - that we build their capacity not only for work in Barbados, but for any part of the world.

We also would have looked at cabinet and furniture making, computer maintenance, landscaping and horticulture, motor vehicle repairing and engineering, masonry. All of those programmes were looked at. We had 26 trainees from the October 2013 intake. And of course we had a number of persons sitting the examinations and gaining certification in a number of areas, Mr. Chairman. And we focused too on English language, office administration, information technology and social studies and so on. We also had, Mr. Chairman, a number of persons coming through the Barbados Youth Service programme who were trained in a number of areas and were able to go and get a number of jobs as well.

And I want to mention the favourite topic of the member for St. Thomas because she talks a lot about Endless Possibilities and the fact that it is a fly-by-night programme. I want to say that this programme is one of the examples of how we are training our young people. But before that I want to refer, because she asked for statistics in terms of the Youth Mainstreaming Programme, to some

statistics so that the member can have something to hold onto. We had about 150 young people trained in culinary, food and beverage services, skills for chefs, basic trade, cookery, bar operations. We had 186 trained in homemaking programme, event management, basic bar operations, bobcat operations and makeup artistry - about 28 in that area alone. We had 52 trained in digital media.

And this is only in relation to the last financial year. We had 194 trained in nail care, electrical installation, basic computer repairs, geriatric studies, childcare maintenance. We had another 12 based in advanced digital media. We had 336, Mr. Chairman, trained in a number of areas including event management, basic event management and hotel reception services. We had 256 through the Errol Barrow Centre for Creative Imagination - [Inaudible.] - programme where we partner with them in terms of providing training in a number of areas with young people. So add up the figures and you will get the numbers that you should use in relation to only the last financial year.

You have accused the Democratic Labour Party of not having any programmes for young people, not having any programmes for boys and girls on the block. And that is totally untrue. Endless Possibilities, Mr. Chairman - you could talk as much as you want. When the truth hits, then you get a lot of talk from the Opposition. Because, Mr. Chairman, in their manifesto, they are talking about tertiary education. In their 2013 manifesto, they recognised the issues facing the country in relation to tertiary education. And the only thing that they were able to say is that they will create a special task force to develop an optimal financing plan for tertiary education within three years. They couched their language. On page 54 of their 2013 manifesto, they never had a plan. They recognised that tertiary education was having some technical and financial problems. They never had a plan, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please. Just a moment, please. The honourable member for St. George South.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: The honourable member for Christ Church West Central is misleading the House. If he is going to refer to the Barbados Labour Party manifesto, he has to refer to page 52, where we have articulated a sound policy for tertiary education. Deal with it in its totality, Mr. Chairman. Deal with it in its totality, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: That is not a point of order. Proceed, please, Mr. Chairman. I am dealing with what the Barbados Labour Party said to the public. They admitted that tertiary education in Barbados had issues in relation to financing. They did not articulate a strategy that says we will not impose any fees. They carefully avoided that. And all they said, Mr. Chairman, on page 54, was that they

would create a special task force - a special task force - to develop an optimal financing plan for tertiary education. You know what they do - the Barbados Labour Party is very good at words, very good at couching words and hiding information from the public of Barbados. So the question is, what would have been their optimal financing plan? The optimal financing plan that they had was not in any way designed to protect students at the University of the West Indies. In my submission, Mr. Chairman, it was designed to hide the facts from the public of Barbados.

And I come back to that because we have a long time to talk about education in Barbados and the proud record of the Democratic Labour Party in that regard. But I want to speak to Endless Possibilities because I know that the member for St. Thomas - the Endless Possibilities programme, Mr. Chairman, has been extremely successful and this programme is designed for young people between the ages of 16 and 24 years and exposes them to pertinent life and work skills as well as giving them work experience. The programme, Mr. Chairman, includes a four-week orientation, a three-month job attachment and mentorship, and a four-week review and separation from the programme. The programme, Mr. Chairman, has been ongoing for the past four years under the Ministry.

One of the main objectives, Mr. Chairman, of the programme is to provide long-term employment for young persons, especially those coming from homes with high unemployment and patterns of intergenerational poverty. Over the last financial year, Mr. Chairman - I am only dealing with the last financial year because we have had this programme for over the past four years and we have continued to have a record number of persons registered. The programme is a long-term programme designed to provide work for young people. This particular year, the first cohort of the programme, we had 21 participants completing the programme and 17 were offered full-time employment. In the second cohort of the programme, we had 30 participants receiving placements through the private and public sectors and we had 100 per cent job placements achieved - 100 per cent job placement received. And of course in the third cohort, which is currently under way, Mr. Chairman, we have 30 young people in the programme and 25 have already completed the one-month training programme and orientation and they are currently awaiting job placements.

I want to say, Mr. Chairman, for the new financial year, it is anticipated that we will reach out to 80 young persons on Endless Possibilities alone. And given the record, given the experience of this programme, we will most likely have retained in full-time employment about 90 to 95 per cent of those persons in that programme. Now this is only one element of the programme in the youth development part of the Ministry, because what we have had, Mr. Chairman, is a programme over the past few

months in which over almost 200 young people have had full-time employment. And that is only in relation to a couple of months of the programme and the experience over the former years. We have had a very good response from the public sector. Many public and private sector employers have actually indicated that they are now preferring to retain persons out of this programme because of the nature of the programme itself.

So when you come in here and you accuse the Government of doing nothing for youth employment, I have actually indicated in a very brief address - and there is more to come - a practical and real programme that is designing and preparing and providing jobs for young people. The honourable member for St. James Central talked about boys on the block. All of these programmes are real programmes that are ministering to the employment needs of the boys and girls on the block. And therefore I believe one thing I can say is that the honourable member for St. James Central stood up in this House and complained that these programmes are not available. And I have indicated a number of opportunities - the Barbados Youth Service, Youth Mainstreaming, Endless Possibilities - all of these programmes that are available to young people. So his theatrics will not exonerate him from not only being in his constituency and learning of those young people who are getting employment through Endless Possibilities, getting opportunities and training through the Youth Mainstreaming Programme. And I hope that he goes back to his constituency and does the work necessary to ensure that these young people who are in St. James Central can be registered and incorporated into these programmes.

Now, Mr. Chairman, in my last minute I want to say that we have not been coming up with laissez-faire and ad hoc programmes. We recognised when we came to office that there was a need for a Barbados human resources development strategy. And I am sure that the honourable Minister will go into details on this strategy. Barbados needed a human resources development strategy. For years the Barbados Labour Party refused to bring one. And we have brought one which passed Cabinet - 2011 to 2016 - which clearly articulates how we are going to develop our human resources within Barbados. It cannot be based on a laissez-faire, ad hoc, partisan approach which is known to the Barbados Labour Party. They go to the public every election year trying to entice young people with false claims that they can give them jobs. These are practical jobs. And I hope to come back to some of this as I enter into this debate on another occasion. I am obliged, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for St. Michael South Central.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: speak to this head, Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. Of course, Mr. Chairman, I am well aware that this exercise that we are engaging in is important at several levels. It has generally been recognised that part of the reason, or a large part of the reason that we enjoy the relatively high standard of living in Barbados is because of the investment that governments have made historically in education. And this government, of course, is not any different. Yes, we have had to confront a few realities, maybe that others have not had to confront. But we continue to be determined to see that our education system is on a firm footing and that we can have quality education delivered at every level - the primary, secondary and tertiary level.

Of course, when we look at the history of Barbados education - and I thought it was interesting listening to the members, well, the Minister try to emphasise this point for the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central and the Member for St. Philip West in terms of how we have come to this stage. Because the truth is it has not only been these stages; the entrepreneurs within the education sector were talked about. I think that is important. And of course the church - in fact, as a matter of fact, even pre-colonial days, the church has a very strong legacy of contributing to education. And I say the church generally, the traditional church, of course, the Catholic, Moravian, Anglican especially, and so on. More recently, of course, the Pentecostals have got into the act as well. So in essence, we have always had a system where our education has been not necessarily only funded by the state, but it has been recognised as a genuine national effort. And I think we need to continue to push that.

And I think the model that the Ministry is leading on behalf of the Government - of even going in the direction of the philanthropists as well, these trust groups and so on that are also helping out - the Sandy Lane Trust, the Holder, Muriel Holder and so on. Maria Holder, sorry. We have the Derek Smith Centre and so that has been established and that is another group. In other words, it cannot just be simply about the state; it never was. Historically, we have always had other people who have been involved in the effort.

And I think that I should use that maybe as a platform to address what is the hot button issue of tertiary education and the decision that the Government has taken. Now, I understand the Opposition wants to milk this issue and I suppose any opposition would, particularly one where you probably think that your backs are against the wall and you have to whip up an issue and try to find something to say. But the truth is, as I said, we have to come to a few realities here.

First of all, I am hearing free tertiary education has been abolished. I do not know where in Barbados there has

been free tertiary education - and certainly not at the University of the West Indies - for every single year that I have been a parliamentary representative. And that goes back to 2003. I have constituents coming to see me needing help who are at UWI. Textbooks and other things are quite expensive. The medical programme, for example, having to buy your little supply - I mean, a stethoscope, for example, is twelve or thirteen hundred dollars. So we have never really had free in the total sense of the word. We have had, of course, Government making a substantial contribution, and Government continues to make the lion's share of the contribution. What we are doing is simply saying we have to do it differently.

I want to thank the Member for Christ Church West Central for quoting the Barbados Labour Party manifesto, because what is in the BLP manifesto makes absolute sense and is exactly what this Government is doing. We are finding an optimal model of financing. And I think the members of the Opposition would do well to listen to the most successful political leader they ever had - being the Honourable Member for St. Peter. He made the point that simply - what? I will still do that. I told you, listen to him. I did not say anything about him. The point is, I will still say what I have to say. But he made sense. In terms of what we are doing, we have to find the right model. The whole issue of the Barrow Revolution - it was not about freeness, it was about opportunity. And we are simply saying that we are not going to deprive any person who wants to have a tertiary education and genuinely cannot afford to contribute to it. There will be avenues. There will be options, there will be bursaries, there will be facilities in order that they can enjoy a tertiary education. And there is nothing wrong with that.

I did some of my tertiary training in the United States of America. I did some here, I did some there. And the average student - and this is the most powerful economy in the world - leaves university with sometimes tens of thousands and even over one hundred thousand dollars over their head in student loans, usually given at a concessionary rate. But before you work a day in your life, you have loans to pay back. We do not. And what we are saying is that we are not going down that road necessarily, where people will have huge loans. Those that truly need it, the avenues will be open and they can still pursue them. And there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. I could not put it better than it was put in the Barbados Labour Party manifesto - the optimal type of financing. And that is what we are searching for. And the effort of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is to do just that. It is not about depriving opportunity for those who deserve it and who genuinely need it. It is about simply putting our education system on a sound footing.

I am hearing, for example, the Member for St. George South spoke about constituents of his that cannot

afford to pay the tuition. What is the point of going overboard and in essence putting your fiscal situation in peril? Right now we have our deficit to GDP ratio just over five per cent and we need to continue to be fiscally responsible. It is no point wrecking the economy, making it unattractive to investors. And you have graduates coming out of the University of the West Indies - we want those same graduates to be part of this massive modern services economy that the Member for St. James Central spoke so eloquently about. And if we are going to have that economy, we have to manage our fiscal affairs responsibly. We owe it to those same graduates from the University of the West Indies. We also owe it as well to those in the education system at the primary and secondary level.

Because I was heartened to hear the Member for St. James Central actually shift off of UWI and go to the Polytechnic. Because I would hope that this debate does not totally just focus on the University of the West Indies. Because in my opinion we really need to get our situation correct at the primary and secondary level. When you talk about a services economy and skills - skills for life - that happens at the primary school stage and the secondary school stage. The Member for St. Philip South and his challenges that he is having with the criminal justice system - that is nothing that is going on at UWI or any tertiary education. Even the white collar criminal - those character traits come from what was inculcated during the formative years. And therefore I think that the determination by this Government to focus on primary and, for that matter, even pre-primary - with public nursery schools coming on stream - is indeed the correct model.

We are a services-based economy. We do need to have a skilled population and we want to see that our quality of life continues to remain at the very high standard. But education helps to assure the quality of life in Barbados not only by giving us skills to go and earn a dollar - the non-monetary aspects of quality of life that come from a quality education system as well. And I will reiterate the point: it comes from what occurs in the school system at the primary and secondary level. It is not only about getting that degree that will allow you to earn top dollar, or for that matter getting that tertiary certificate at skills training or the Polytechnic, but also acquiring those skills for life - the ability to judge, the ability to resolve conflict, the ability to deal with fear - and all of those non-monetary aspects of the quality of life that our education system must also focus on. And I think we are on that track as well.

We have to be careful with this issue of simply talking about the tuition issue at UWI and not understanding the bigger picture. We are spending just under five hundred million dollars in our education system and I do not think in these straitened fiscal circumstances we can honestly expect more than that. And therefore we

have to deploy these resources in the appropriate manner - that we understand what is really important. And we cannot look at education in our schools as we did in the sixties and seventies where it is all about numeracy and literacy. We all know - and I always remember hearing, coming along from as far back as the early seventies - Barbados has a ninety-eight or ninety-nine per cent literacy rate, and this was officially recorded and something we used to be very proud of. And that is good. It is important. We have got to start to see education at that level as a little more important.

And that is why, Mr. Chairman, I will also come back in this debate and I want to spend some time on another tertiary institution in Barbados that is often forgotten. I am talking about Erdiston Teachers' Training College - a very, very, very important institution in the context of national development and what we are hoping to achieve. It probably is just as important or more important than UWI. Now UWI is a regional institution, but as far as Barbados is concerned and quality of life, how we train our teachers is an extremely important issue. I want to talk about that a little more.

And once again, to just finish this contribution by making the point - it is not beneficial to our national development, or to those graduates of the Polytechnic, or even those people that cannot get into the Polytechnic, or those graduates of UWI, if we in essence have the wrong model of financing for education and imperil the overall economic situation. Because there will be nothing for them to do when they come out of school in two years' time, and even less in ten years' time, if we wreck the economy. As I said, Mr. Chairman, I will come back. Thank you.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak on this important debate and I must say that the Member for St. Michael South Central has put a number of positions on the table which we need to take at this time. He made the point that education was never free, that students had to pay for their education and that education for many years was not necessarily free as the Democratic Labour Party would want people to believe for the last fifty years. And therefore, if you want to cleanse the thought of the Democratic Labour Party, they should come and say so. And if we as an Opposition party recognise in the manifesto that we had to do something for education, clearly the Democratic Labour Party that was in office before the last election should have recognised the same thing too. And we were bold enough to put in our manifesto the problems that the education system was encountering.

But we have not said in this manifesto - there is no way in this manifesto that anyone has said that we were

going to abolish the economic cost. It is the economic cost that is killing the students. Students have to pay the economic cost - twenty per cent, thirty per cent - which is killing the students. And you have over five thousand students who have dropped out of university.

Mr. Chairman, we recognise that education has been a potent force of transformation for countless Barbadians. We said that on page 52 and we said that in order for us to rise above the UNDP index and to keep within that first category, we had to do something. We recognise on page 54 - and this is where the Member did not speak fully to the manifesto - the Democratic Labour Party, for the first time, is saying they buy into the Barbados Labour Party's manifesto. That is what you are saying. We support your manifesto. But why did he not say so at the last election?

This is what it says. There is a very strong correlation between the levels of social and economic development and the availability and quality of tertiary education. Tertiary education is important. We must keep tertiary education. And we said further that the Democratic Labour Party has failed to provide funding for the university. They have failed to provide funding. And it said that within three years we will provide full funding for tertiary education. We did not say anywhere at all that we will abolish tertiary education. We never said that. The Honourable Members are misleading the House by saying that the Barbados Labour Party manifesto is saying on its face that within three years they were going to provide funding for the university. That is not in this document at all. And the Members should read what is in the document.

Mr. Chairman, we said, and we have always maintained, that we have to provide funding for tertiary education. Funding has to be provided. Children do not go on their own. It has to be provided by the state and the state must find the funds. We are saying to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central - quote the page of the 2013 manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party and show that in that document they are making a statement that within three years they will provide funding for the University of the West Indies. That is not in here. And I would like the Member to quote the page. It is not in this document, Mr. Chairman.

We have said before that we would create a task force and within three years funding will be provided by the state - as it has always been provided. The question is how do you provide funding for tertiary education in Barbados? The Democratic Labour Party has cut back on fifty per cent of the funding in tertiary education. Fifty per cent.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Up to fifty per cent. Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. D. JONES: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. And if you would allow, maybe statistics will help clarify his mind relative to that matter. He is a nice young man, but badly misled. And I am just going to take as my departure. In 2006-2007, the Government of Barbados was providing just short of \$98 million to the University of the West Indies, both in its economic cost component and the tuition fees. By 2007-2008 it was providing \$134 million to the University of the West Indies for economic costs and the tuition fees. A tremendous movement of nearly \$40 million in that area. And you will find by 2011-2012, it was in the region of \$160 million to the University of the West Indies. You have had since then, because of the decision in relation to tuition fees, that being eliminated. But you can make that point. You are really not making that point sufficiently. There was this continuing provision and there is an upward trajectory in that provision.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Honourable Member. Please proceed.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: We recognise. We recognise and this debate has to be sensible. The debate has to be sensible. We said, we recognised early a task force was set up within the party. We recognised early that tertiary education was costly. And we said from day one that we will set up a task force to look at how we could fund tertiary education. We never said in the Barbados Labour Party that Barbadians had to pay. And that is what is causing the problem. Barbadians, especially at a lower level, have to pay too much money for tertiary education. We are seeing that it has to come to an end. The Barbados Labour Party has put on record

that whenever we return to office we will fund tertiary education - especially economic cost in its entirety. That is what we are saying. Tertiary education has to be funded because we recognise that aspect of tertiary education is causing problems in our society. What is causing problems? Deviancy. It has caused people who are at university now to go on the block. It is causing men to do a number of things that they were not even thinking about doing. In my constituency we have problems. You have persons who for the very first time are just staying home and watching Days of Our Lives and watching all these movies. They are not doing anything. I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that is the whole myth of education. We must put a task force together. The Government has at this stage, if they are binding to the Barbados Labour Party manifesto, to do exactly what it says. Set up a task force to fund education in its entirety. This is all we are saying. Second, the task force brings a special committee of Parliament - both Houses, both parties - the Democratic Labour Party as well as here, and set up a committee to fund tertiary education in its entirety. This is all we are saying. And if you buy into that suggestion, let us see and

let us put our heads together to see how we can fund tertiary education.

I want to say that last evening we heard the Member for St. Philip West talking about what happened before 1960, what happened in that ten-year period. And we found for the very first time that economic cost that we were referred to before 1960 - the first element of free education was established in this society. The first element of tertiary education. And it was established to ensure that there are possibilities and, as the Member said, endless possibilities. Endless possibilities were created by the Barbados Labour Party in the period before 1960 in order to give those masses of people, those downtrodden persons, the opportunity to get into school. Skills were set up for the first time at the five schools. You have Princess Margaret, you have St. Leonard's Boys and Girls. Those were set up when the Democratic Labour Party established and freed the private schools or the grammar schools. What have you done? You never established the skills because it was not noted for skills. And today we have a deficit as far as skills are concerned. When we came back to office we established the Vocational Training Board in order to provide skills. Today we have a problem because there is a large deficit. Many students cannot get into the Vocational Training Board.

And I want the Minister to let us know what is happening to the Vocational Training Board. Why is it that so many children want to get in? You leave school at 15, you leave school at 16 years old, some, but do not have a skill. There are many children who come to my office in St. George asking to get into the Samuel Jackman Prescott Polytechnic as well. We need to open opportunities for those persons to acquire skills. It is certainly not acceptable in 2015 that you have more than 2 000 students out there who want those skills but cannot do any skills training because of placement. So you need to look at those persons who leave school without certification. We have said before - the Minister said it is about 40 per cent. He said that some time ago that 40 per cent of the children leaving schools every year will receive a certification. What about the 60 per cent that do not? Where do they go? I am saying that they need to be skilled. You said to me, to this House, that it was between 20 and 30 per cent. You said 40 per cent get four CXC's and above. What about the 60 per cent of those persons that do not get any certification at all? What about those students that do not get the four CXC's and must go into the Samuel Jackman Prescott Polytechnic? And what is the qualification to get into Samuel Jackman Prescott? Too many students, too many children have to sit down waiting for the following year's exams. You advertise in January that you can get into Samuel Jackman Prescott. Many students go to sit the exam but more than half of the students who do the exams cannot get into Samuel Jackman Prescott. I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that if the Government is serious, they must

spend more money. If you look at the Estimates, Samuel Jackman Prescott today is spending less money in this Estimate than they spent last year. They are spending less money. What signals are you sending to the majority of people out there? I am saying it is less. On a -

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Member continues to mislead the chamber with statistics that he creates on his own. Because the figures that I have, and that are being circulated in the Estimates that we are considering, is some \$12 million projected to be spent - \$12.5 million projected to be spent at the Samuel Jackman Prescott Polytechnic - which is the same figures as last year and the last couple of years. As a matter of fact, you all remember, we want to play with a few cents here and there to make it sound as if, because it is \$10 less or \$20 less - the point is that as you continue to manage your resources, you change your own systems. But the macro amount of funds being made available to the SJPP are the same. Okay, continue please.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the House. Mr. Chairman, the Leader of the House should know better. You are spending - he said, less cents. You are spending less money in this year's Estimate than last year. Whether it is cents, dollars or not, you are spending less money. And I am saying to you, Mr. Chairman, that the SJPP will now be able to buy less toilet paper, less chalk, less material and so on. You are spending less money. And if you could get up and say to me that you are spending more money this year than last year - why do you not understand? Something is wrong with your eyes. Something is wrong with the Member's eyes. You are spending less money.

And I am saying to you, at this juncture, Mr. Chairman, you have problems within the education system. And I come back and talk about it because there are many things that are happening in the school system. Teachers are suffering, cannot get the material. All the computers are now out of order. Students go to school and cannot go to the lab because they do not have the material. You have problems within the school system. Rather than address these problems, Mr. Chairman, the Government is sitting idly by doing very little within the school system. You have problems out there that have to be addressed by the Minister. The Ministry of Education is a large ministry and it has to say to the people of this country what you are doing in terms of setting up a system to help train persons - especially to train the staff on what it is that you are doing to deal with problems within the school system. We have seen it happen at the Alexandra School. We have seen it at Parkinson. We have seen it across Barbados. You have to look at a system to contain the problems that you are having within the school system today.

We need to see what the Ministry is doing. I understand that all roads now lead to the Minister. We need to look at a dispute resolution mechanism. The Minister, when he gets up, must say to us and tell this House what is happening in the Ministry to solve all these disputes that are currently before the Ministry. I have never in all my life - for the last 50 years - heard of the problems never before experienced: all these problems with head teachers, deviancy within the school children, the Teachers' Registration Council. You have serious problems. And the Minister must tell us today what is really happening. I will be back.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, Senior Member of the House, please.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, sir, I wanted to just add a little contribution to this debate because I think that some contextualisation has to be given, particularly when we are speaking about this matter of the tuition fees that students have been asked to contribute to in relation to their education at the University of the West Indies, and maybe one or two other matters.

Time does not allow - if time allows. I recall, Mr. Chairman, when I became Minister of Finance and I delivered my first financial statement and budgetary proposals - and we can go check it in the records of the House - I had reason on that occasion, because we were on projection estimating that we would have had a deficit even at that early stage, and that was basically midway through the financial year, of in excess of 10 per cent. And it put us on pause in the Ministry - I was only a few weeks in the Ministry - about how we would finance that deficit if it went above 10 per cent and into 11 per cent. And some of the figures that we had - that is when we started to examine the issue of putting in place a very strong medium-term fiscal consolidation strategy. And of course, at that point in time, we had just concluded the medium-term growth and development strategy and the medium-term fiscal strategy for the country. And I indicated at the time that there were a number of issues that we had to address and one of the major issues was the issue of the cost associated with providing what we call free social services. And I addressed three: transport, public transport, as in particularly the contribution to the Transport Board; public health, and particularly the contribution to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital; and tertiary education, particularly our contribution to the University of the West Indies. And I said at that time that based on what we had seen - the staggering jump in the cost associated with financing these particular programmes - that it would be essential for the Government, nay, for the entire population of Barbados, to engage in a discourse on the sustainability of providing for those things, particularly in a period when the Government's budget was the way it was. That was before the election. This is 2010. And you know, you listen to the

point - it is 2010, I am speaking - go and get my budget and you will see, Honourable -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. George. The Member is being interrupted on this point.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: This point never came out. When he went through the figures, he recognised that they could not sustain the economic cost. This point was never put before the last election. It was put after the last election. After the election was over, then the Government came - the Minister of Finance - with the fiscal strategy and said so. But the Democratic Labour Party never said before the last election that there was a problem of a deficit within the system.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, sir, look - I came here this morning to speak seriously on matters. If the frivolity and jocularness of the Honourable Member for St. George has invaded him, then perhaps the Honourable Member should find somewhere else to relieve himself. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, the budget speech of 2010 - and I gave the figures to show how the cost had increased exponentially in the increase in services being provided. And I have sent for it this morning. I will find a copy of it eventually and I will read the relevant sections in this chamber. I recall specifically speaking about the University of the West Indies and the increased cost of tertiary education, particularly to that institution, that part of the tertiary system. And I mentioned then, Mr. Chairman, sir, that if we did not make some substantial change in the way in which we dealt with those issues, that over time and sooner rather than later, we would have a situation where it would become unsustainable. It was not that way at the time, but it certainly was approaching that stage. And I said that in this House. I particularly made the point, Mr. Chairman, and people can go and research it, because it is a matter of fact in history, that we needed to take some basic measures in relation to that issue.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: We are going to stick here. The Member said - and he can call it frivolous or whatever, because whatever he says does not make sense to me anyway. The Member is saying that in 2010 he said that he had to do something with the cost of tertiary education. Fine. The Prime Minister, who is the leader of this country, said in November 2011 - a year after that - that tertiary education would be totally free. So you are saying that the Prime Minister never communicated with you, the Minister of Finance? They had a problem there. So you are hearing that the Cabinet of Barbados - one Cabinet member saying he does not understand, it cannot be totally free - but the Prime Minister, who is the leader of the country, says in 2011 that tertiary education will be totally free. So we need to explain that point first.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please proceed.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: You know, 2010, 2011 - Chairman, when they cannot deal with facts, they go to fiction. And that is precisely the problem. He has not addressed anything that I have said. I hope I get back my time with all the snarling.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: They can't deal with this, you know. Listen, please ignore the interruptions and continue.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: They are not going to stop me from making my point today. I came here to make a point. They are not going to stop me from making my point. I will ignore it. I will ignore it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, Sir. I say then that some early measures had to be taken to address the issue. And I proposed at the time - in fact, I suggested at the time - that we were having an issue with the explosion of students going into the University of the West Indies and that the numbers of students who normally would get in at what we will call the lower level matriculation - I don't like that term, but less than the standard rate - that number was increasing. We were finding a situation where, because of the expansion of the numbers, the cost was increasing, and that people were spending sometimes a little longer in the university system than we wanted, and therefore that also contributed to the increase in cost.

I then said that we should have a situation where students - because when I was there, that is how it was. When the Honourable Member for St. James South was there, that is how it was.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Proceed, proceed, proceed.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: That if you go in to a three-year degree, as it was full time, you should spend your three years in university and come out. If you are going in for part time, as it was when we were there, you should spend your four years and come out. I was advised that the situation had changed and that full time now really was almost four years because of the system that they are running and the amount of credits you have to get, and that full time might actually stretch into five years. I was savaged in Barbados, Mr. Chairman, if you recall.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please proceed. Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, it is unfortunate that many of the members who have thus spoken on this issue of tertiary education have not in fact looked at the

relevant statistics and seen what has happened at the University of the West Indies - and I am using that in a holistic federal framework - but more particularly what has happened at the University of the West Indies here at Cave Hill.

I don't think it is fair to say that the Government of today has sought to hinder persons from accessing tertiary education in Barbados. There came a point in time where, because of the escalating cost of university education, you had to seek measures or find ways to cause Barbadian young people and other Barbadians to continue to access tertiary education in Barbados.

In 1995, the Government of that day and more particularly the Ministry of Education, under the leadership of the now Leader of the Opposition, set up a task force under Dr. Leonard Shorey, noted educator, to look at how they would fund the tuition fee for the students of that period. At that time, I believe the student population was just shy of 3 000 - it was about 3 300 students in Barbados at that time.

A decision was taken by the Council of the University of the West Indies - and I believe the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East sat in the Council, as all ministers sit in the Council, on the University Grants Committee and on the Financial and General Purposes Committee of the University of the West Indies, along with one or two other nominees of the Government. They sat there and set up that committee to look at how they were going to fund, at the time, \$6 million in tuition fees for those students. \$6 million - 20 per cent of the cost, what is called the economic fee component. The committee recommended that students should pay 50 per cent of that cost, which would have been \$3 million. And broken down by the number of students, the decision was taken that the Government would pay that tuition fee of \$6 million.

Since that period, the tuition fee grew astronomically because the University of the West Indies was able to accept more and more students arising out of the strategic initiatives of the university as a whole. The strategic plan also included the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies located here in Barbados. So the student numbers grew from just shy of 3 000 up to a figure of Barbadian students -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, for just a moment, please.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He should also go on to say that the then Government of Barbados -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you cannot anticipate what a member is going to say. So you do not have a point of order. Please proceed.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I made the point that the Government of that day took a decision to pay the \$6 million - the component of that cost - to the University of the West Indies. I don't know what the member was thinking; I can't get into the member's brain. I made that point: from 1995 right up until 2014, with escalating numbers and escalating costs, the Government of Barbados met the tuition fee component.

There was a time when that fee grew - in 2011, 2012 - to \$30 million: five times the cost that was being met in 1995 and 1996. Five times. You can call that 500 per cent. That is what we were paying - \$30 323 000 - because the student population grew from around 3 000 to just shy of 8 700 students at the University of the West Indies. That was the tuition fee: 500 per cent. But you also had the economic cost growing from around \$38 million in 1998 to about \$127 million in 2011 and 2012.

Government was providing \$97 million at the end of 2006-07 - and that is the total cost, economic and tuition fee - of \$97 million. There was a leap to \$134 million the year after, reaching a high of \$162 million around 2012 and 2013. Those are the figures that we are talking about. This is the accuracy we all know.

And I don't want to be a politician that gets up and screams loudly into the wind - parading politics without sense, trying to fool the people that there is all of this gravy around and that everybody can drink of this gravy. Barbados has always practised a dual system. A whole lot of Barbadians are not educated at the University of the West Indies. There are Barbadians who are educated at institutions abroad who pay their full fee. There are Barbadians who are educated in England who pay the full cost. There are Barbadian students who are educated in Canada, the United States, Australia, India, and other parts of the world who pay the full cost with minimal assistance from the Government of Barbados. If they do get that assistance it comes through what we call the Financial Assistance Programme, which would provide maybe \$2 000 or \$3 000 or something like that. But by and large they carry that full expenditure themselves.

I am sure that the Government of Barbados anticipated - and I made the point when we were doing the supplementary for the Skills for the Future recently - that we anticipated, as Minister, that we had to look at a new funding model for the University of the West Indies. And the report was handed over. I said I was going to set up what we call the Beckles Commission on Higher Education - Creating Knowledge Households - and these are learned men and women participating -

directly in the provision and leading of higher education and tertiary education Barbados. And that committee was established and they submitted the report in 2012, started in 2011 and submitted in 2012. And that report stated that there had to be a model which recognized one that government must still be a major partner in the provision of higher education. Let's recognize that students had to carry some percentage of the cost - 5 per cent - along with the amenities fee provision which they were currently paying at the University of the West Indies; that the private sector, who by and large is the major beneficiary of many of the students coming out of university bringing their skills and their knowledge and their talents, they had to provide some portion thereof and all of that is in here. What we have not as yet achieved is that many persons who have gone to the University of the West Indies have come back and said, well, you know something, I benefited. I will therefore provide a provision out of my annual income or my monthly income to the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Chairman, I wear a pin. A pin. It's called the Alumni Circle and it is given to those who make a financial contribution to the University of the West Indies. I wear that pin. I am calling now today for all of those persons who have benefited from the University of the West Indies. What you call true state provision - a shout and raising of a voice is different. Capture your attention, really capture your attention - who have benefited - to now come to the plate and give back. Make a provision. It's all well and good for persons to be up and down like yo-yos on a string, but make a contribution to the University of the West Indies as I do. That's why we wear the pin. I make this document a document of the House so that those members who don't understand what is happening - the dynamic reality of tertiary education - will now understand the world over. The world over. There are only a few countries in the world who provide fully funded state or state-provided education. Many of them are in the northern European countries - Germany now. But they take taxes at 40, 50, 60 per cent to help pay for that. We have to make a contribution. We have to look and to see. Is the model previously practised the right model?

Last week I got up in this House - and this is where the member for St. George North is correct. It's correct. Your manifesto points to the establishment of a task force. So there is a recognition. There is a recognition. We have got to stop this hypocrisy, you know. Hold on, let me finish. Let me finish. There is a recognition that costs keep expanding, cannot be infinite, that we have to look at it. Therefore, last Tuesday - I am not reflecting - I got up in this House and asked that a bipartisan committee of Parliament be established. I have had a conversation with the Clerk of this Parliament as to what that is done to further look, so that we can stop this partisan divide on the most important facet of development that we have built this

country out on, so that we can take this off of the partisan discussion table, so that we can hear the unresearched presentation of the member for St. James North. That is why I recognise that it's your manifesto. It was in our thoughts. Work has already been done, but we need to broaden it to see how we can provide. At the end of the day, there might be a recognition that you said, you know, we can introduce a 1 per cent across all of the resources of this country to fund tertiary education, or that we might step back a bit and say, look, we still want a little provision from the students. All of these things are to be considered. Let us consider those things and take education out of the political trash heap that some members would want to place tertiary education in.

Research the facts. This government maintained over \$162 million only to the University of the West Indies. When you add the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. When you add the Barbados Community College. When you add Erdiston Teachers' College. When you add the Hospitality Institute. When you add as well the Barbados Vocational Training Board. When you add the TVET Council. When you add training being provided by the Training Division of the Ministry of the Civil Service. When you add all of that and you look at the provision, it is astronomical. Stop the pretence. Stop the drama. Stop the theatre. Let us get down to the true reality of providing for the people of this country as we are doing in difficult circumstances.

I believe the problem with many of the members on the other side is that the people of Barbados have spoken and the majority which they currently have will continue even beyond this current period. Forgive the people for electing the government. Forgive the people. Just stop it. Realities. Man is dynamic. Man is dynamic. And there are circumstances which will always present themselves. And it is only the bird which will bury its head in the sand and not deal with reality. We will come back on this whole issue. There is tremendous research across the world. There is tremendous research done here in Barbados - just go and read the research of Professor Downs on tertiary education. Just go and read the research and the presentations of persons in Jamaica, of persons in Trinidad. There is even noise now in Trinidad and Tobago in relation to the provision of education. The society is saying we cannot carry it anymore. And Barbados has been carrying it for an exceptionally long time - longer than any other country in the Caribbean.

Let's get real, let's get sensible. There are still students - there are 6 125 students at the University of the West Indies. There are still students who, as has always been the case, are accessing funds from the Student Revolving Loan Fund. 4 per cent interest. That's what it is. And we have taken off guarantors and sureties. So you can go to the Student Revolving Loan Fund for up to \$50 000

and you don't have to walk around and beg any politician to stand as a guarantor. You don't have to walk around and knock at somebody's door and say, well, you know me from yesterday, I was a good boy or good girl, come and sign a guarantee. All of that has been removed. The interest rate at one time in the Student Revolving Loan Fund used to be 5, 6, 7 per cent compound interest. Today it is basic, simple interest. Do the calculations. If you don't know how, get some mortgage calculator - they are dime a dozen on your iPad or your cell phone. It makes sense. Stop the pretence. Let us get away from all of this pretence and the illogical argument being espoused by some members on the other side, particularly the member for St. James North. Come into reality. Learn from the educator who rose to the level of Deputy Chief - who I know as your mom. Put some sense in your head. Stop it now. The reality is this is where we are at. We have to deal with it, we have to confront it. Because all the pretence is not going to get us to heaven. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable member for St. Michael South East. [Interruption.] Honourable member, please. Thank you.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I was on my way to this Chamber this morning, I heard a radio announcer - and I won't call the particular station - question the behaviour of honourable members in this Chamber and the reflection which it certainly gives to young people in this country. They questioned the behaviour of members in this Chamber and at times the inability of either the Speaker or the honourable Chairman to silence members on the other side from speaking when others are taking the floor. And clearly, by the demonstration of my speaking on the floor this morning, the radio announcer is more than accurate in the way in which he has indicated that the behaviour of members in this Chamber reflects on this society at large.

And I start there, Mr. Chairman, because the honourable member for Christ Church West Central - the honourable Minister of Education - not only on this occasion, and it is unfortunate that he responds in this way as I am speaking about something which I believe is a valid concern of people in this country, because he has obviously spoken in this manner on other occasions. And as the Minister of Education, you would like to think that the person who is placed in a position that represents the future of this country would certainly behave in a manner in this Chamber that would be reflective of the behaviour that we would want in our society and particularly for our young people.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable members. Honourable members. Please, please. I need to hear the member.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now, I heard the honourable Minister of Finance take the floor earlier and I am sure he will come back later in the debate. But he declined to continue along the position that he was taking. What concerns me, Mr. Chairman, is that I heard from the honourable Minister of Finance a reference to concerns which were expressed by him - as he put it - in his 2010 budget. Just a moment.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable members. Honourable members. Honourable member for St. George North, please. Honourable member, I am trying to get your attention. We have a member on the floor who is trying to speak. I cannot hear the member and there is considerable cross-talking across the floor. I will please ask that all members cooperate. A member should be heard in silence. I would really like to hear the member in silence and I will ask that all members please observe the rules of the House. We cannot have a breakdown of order within the Chamber. As far as I am aware, the Chairman at least speaks and all members should pay attention. So I would ask that all members cooperate in respect of the contributions of individual members. Honourable member for St. Michael South East, please continue.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman. Now, as I was saying, I heard the Honourable Minister of Finance make reference to his budget presentation of 2010 in which he would have alluded to the fact that they were experiencing difficulties within the Ministry of Education in relation to the funding of education and in relation to the ongoing cost of how we as a country would fund education. He made two references to difficulties or challenges which the Ministry at the time was experiencing. One of them was in relation to persons who were doing sometimes two degrees, sometimes three degrees, who remained in the system for what would be considered longer than the requisite period to remain in the system. And the consequence of that was obviously the ongoing cost to the Ministry of Education. The second issue obviously was the affordability of education as an ongoing cost for the Government of Barbados. And as such, he indicated that at some time in the future the government would have to obviously revisit the position as it related to the cost of education.

Now, I believe that education reform is something that has to be ongoing. So I would agree at this stage that no doubt what the Minister of Finance would have alluded to would not have been accurate, that you would constantly have to review the position. But it begs the question, Mr. Chairman, as to if in 2010 the Minister of Finance recognised that these challenges were on the horizon, and if in 2010 the Minister of Finance felt so strongly that such drastic changes would come, even if not in 2010, but in the

foreseeable future, I am concerned that it would have taken the Minister of Finance until his last year to be able to make the decisions that he in fact made in relation to the financing of the Ministry of Education in relation to tertiary education. Because it seems as though, too often with this government, instead of addressing the root cause of the problem, which simply could have been to address the issues in relation to persons doing two and three degrees at the University of the West Indies and saving those costs, it seems as though instead we have taken a broad-brush approach to the whole thing and basically denied persons who would not otherwise be able to access education from accessing education.

And I say, Mr. Chairman, that this certainly cannot be the course on which the society would want this government to tread. If there is a problem, let us deal with the root cause of the problem. The other thing, Mr. Chairman, is that how is it that a year later the Prime Minister of this country could be heard to say, as he addressed, I believe it was the Barbados Community College, that tertiary education was to remain free in Barbados, again giving hope to the people of this country that despite what the Minister of Finance had said the year before, they were not going to tamper with free education at the tertiary level in this country? And then the Prime Minister went on in September 2012 to address, I believe it was the Democratic Labour Party branch in Canada, giving a lengthy speech about his humble beginnings, reflecting on what free education - which was introduced by the Right Excellent, the late Right Excellent Sir Errol Barrow - what that meant to not only him, but also to the people in this country who benefited from free education, and giving again the impression to the people in the diaspora that we would not, as a country, tamper with free education because we had the interests of the people in the social development of this country at the core of the existence of the Democratic Labour Party.

Now, that is what concerns me, that we have then a situation going into the elections where we hear nothing in the 2013 election about tampering with free education at the tertiary level. We hear nothing from the Democratic Labour Party. We hear nothing from the Democratic Labour Party that they agreed with anything in the Barbados Labour Party manifesto, that we were on all fours with anything. It was in the Barbados Labour Party manifesto - not a word. But then you have, in August of 2013, after the budget presentation is made by the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister of this country comes back to the people again, speaking about the late Errol Barrow's position on free education and indicating to this country that education was never free, education was never intended to last forever.

Now, when you educate people and you give them the information upon which, over the years, you have been

led to believe that the Democratic Labour Party stood for certainly free education in this country, giving them the impression that not that education was to last forever, but certainly never mentioning that it was not to last forever, giving them the impression that persons like the Honourable Prime Minister, who benefited from the same provisions of free education, would continue by the Government of Barbados to be made provision for in order to be able to access education in this country. And I say, Mr. Chairman, that if anything that this government has done thus far strikes at the very core of what I believe the Democratic Labour Party has stood for over the years, it is the position that this government has taken in terms of taking away tertiary education for free at that level. And members on the other side - I know you all are not comfortable with the position that has had to be taken.

And it is not to say that at some point in the future we may not have to look at reforming an education system or reforming any system. But I believe the difficulty that the people of this country have, and certainly members on this side have, is the way in which members on the Democratic Labour Party side now behave as though it was always the intention on their side to be able to charge for tertiary education. And it begs the question how a government who has stood by such a pillar can now move so far away from the pillar that you bear no resemblance to what it is that you initially stood for. If it is that when you came to office you gave the school children free transportation on the buses, what is to say that in the next two years you will not take it away from them? That is the difficulty that I have. That your believability no longer exists in this society. And if it is that we cannot take what the people at the very top have to say and believe that it is so, how do you expect the younger generation to take and lead by your examples at the end of the day? And that is the difficulty that I have.

Mr. Chairman, we talk a lot about this issue of tertiary education, but sometimes we forget that before we get to the issue of tertiary education, we have to deal with the issues relating to why it is that some people may enter the university, or that there may be difficulties rather with persons entering the university without the proper matriculation requirements. Because if it is that, as the Minister of Finance expressed, that was one of the problems in terms of the pass marks for persons entering the university, does it not mean that we should step back a bit and try to figure out why it is that persons are not passing at either the primary level or the secondary level in order to obtain the necessary pass marks to get into the University of the West Indies? If it is that we are lowering our entry level requirements to accommodate our people in this country, something is wrong. At least it tells me that something is wrong within the deeper system of the educational system. And perhaps that is where we need to

start, instead of simply taking a broad-brush approach and saying we are ending tertiary education for free.

And I take that point, Mr. Chairman, because daily I am seeing the difficulties being experienced by persons, for instance, at the nursery level, who cannot access places for their children to be placed in daycare centres. I have the Golden Rock Day Care Centre in St. Michael South East, and we have more persons wanting access to daycare in St. Michael South East than the Minister of Education can provide for at this present time. I am pleased to hear that arrangements are being made to facilitate more nursery education. But at the end of the day, I still need to be able to tell my constituents and people across Barbados who need to access daycare what is going to happen in the meantime. Because we accept that in terms of providing for the future, it is important that we deal with the initial stages of nursery education. If we do not deal with the formative years, then we will have difficulties later on down the line. And the learned Attorney General will have difficulties dealing with the penal system and the issues that we face when the persons have to come. I remember -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: – has three minutes. Sorry, Mr. Chairman. Two minutes.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I believe as well that we have to look at the fact that several of our young people are coming out of school without the basic maths and English. Many of them that I encounter on a daily basis simply cannot read. They cannot write; some of them cannot even add. And if it is that we hear so much touted by the Minister of Culture about all these various programmes, I say to this chamber, whether or not we have these programmes or not, we have to do more. Because there is a generation right now that may not be academic, but needs to be able to be focused in the direction of technical and vocational training. And there are simply not enough places in the existing curriculum to facilitate these young people.

So when you see them on the blocks, it is not because they want to be on the blocks, but it is because this administration has also not expanded the community centres in various communities to enable these young people to be able to go to these centres to recreate and to also be able to find other provision of educational training. And ministers on the other side may shake their heads, but they cannot stand on this floor and tell me that in St. Michael South East, apart from the recently renovated centre in Regent Hill, that there are facilities in the constituency allowing for the young people in our areas to be able to engage in positive personal development programmes. They cannot tell me. But Mr. Chairman, I will come back in this debate because there are other issues that I would wish to address.

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

Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART: – an intervention in this debate on education. Because I think that any debate on education in Barbados is bound to be an important debate. And any debate on education in which the Democratic Labour Party is involved has to be a very important debate. Because the reputation of the Democratic Labour Party in Barbados rests solidly and unshakably on its achievements in education in Barbados.

The very careful campus of which we speak today - 1963. The Democratic Labour Party had put here the Barbados Community College. The Democratic Labour Party ensured it was put here. The Barbados Hospitality Institute - the Democratic Labour Party ensured it was put here. The Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic - the Democratic Labour Party ensured it was put here. The entire tertiary outfit in education in Barbados can be traced to the hindsight, the insight and the foresight of the Democratic Labour Party. So any debate on education has to be a matter of importance to us.

Now, let me make it very clear that tertiary education in Barbados is not limited to university education. So it is not true to say that the Democratic Labour Party in government has abolished free tertiary education. Not true. It is not even true to say that we have abolished free university education.

Now, I heard the Honourable Member for St. James Central when I was on my way to this House - to say, in his usual manner, with all the rage of an Old Testament prophet, as usual, the speech came no further than from his throat. All the rage you could expect to hear from the Honourable Member for St. James Central. And of course, the harangue. Nothing by way of explanation, nothing by way of enlightenment.

I went to the Barbados Community College graduation in November 2011. And I spoke. I said then, and I have no reason to unsay what I said then, that in my view having to pay for university education would be a retrograde step. I said so, and I still believe so, because in any developing country like Barbados, or any of the other developing countries in the Caribbean, or any developing country in Africa or any other part of the world, because of colonialism and in the case of the Caribbean because of slavery, we have been playing catch-up in the area of education especially - especially tertiary education. The late Dr. Eric Williams actually wrote that in colonial society - and he was speaking about the Caribbean - colonisers were more interested in building prisons, building jails, than in building schools. And therefore we all have to think that any impediment put in the way of persons accessing tertiary education, university education,

would have to be a step that we would prefer not to have to make - therefore a retrograde step. Then I spoke at the Barbados Community College in November 2011.

The foreign reserves of Barbados were holding as they were holding from the time we had got into office. I think there were around 19 weeks of import cover. They held through 2012 as well, and they held up to May 2013, until in May 2013, the Barbados National Oil Company, we went to the commercial banks and couldn't get foreign exchange and had to go to the central bank. And the central bank had to call on its reserves in order to get foreign reserves to give the Barbados National Oil Company and there was a precipitous drop in our foreign reserves from May 2013 onward. Result was I had to convene a meeting at the Hilton to alert the country that something was happening and we had to take certain steps.

No matter how doctrinaire you are about any particular issue, no matter how enthusiastic you are. And enthusiastic - I use the word enthusiastic for good reason because its etymological roots link it with "en", which means "in", and "theos", which means "God". No matter how enthusiastic you are about any particular programme, as long as a programme requires the payment of money, you have to have the money to pay. If you don't have the money to pay, no matter how lofty your ideals are, those ideals count for nothing because harsh reality confronts you. You have to pay.

Now, so far as the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill is concerned, it has made a great contribution to Barbados and continues to do so. And will continue to do so. The costs up there have spiralled over the years. In the financial year 2007–2008 alone - one year - costs at the university on wages and salaries only went up by \$35 million in one year. One year, \$35 million. The state had to look for ways to deal with some of those issues. One year, \$35 million. 2007. I have tried to get an explanation for that very sudden increase. I haven't got it yet. I don't believe that there is any arcane explanation for it. Cost went up by that amount in one year.

Faced with some of these realities and faced with the fact that the government had begun to feel the effects of all that was going on across the Western world - where over 30 million people in the United States of America were on food stamps and where unemployment was spiralling in the richest and most powerful country on earth - Barbados had to take defensive action. I tell the members of this Cabinet every week, they will attest to the veracity of what I'm saying: you cannot lead people if you are afraid of them. You cannot lead people if you are afraid of them. There are times when you have to take decisions that are not always pleasant, that you would wish you didn't have to take, but you have to take them because you have to keep seeing the

big picture and you have to have the best interest of the totality at heart at all times.

So we took the decisions we had to take. The government decided that it would continue to carry the economic costs - which is the largest chunk of the expense, about 80 per cent of the cost of educating any one student - and ask students to pay 20 per cent towards their tuition. In other words, if the whole thing costs a dollar, the state says it will pay 80 cents of that dollar and ask the student to pay just 20 cents out of that dollar. The decision was made against this background.

Mr. Chairman, first of all, in 1979, Tom Adams delivered a speech at the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill. And at that time, the government was giving the university \$5 million. \$5 million the state was giving the University of the West Indies. And Tom Adams raised questions about how much university education was costing against the background of the quality you were getting out. You have to ask yourself the question whether putting \$5 million into this thing, we are getting value for money.

In 1980, the Academy of Politics of the Democratic Labour Party sponsored a series of lectures. And we invited Dr. Leonard Shorey to come and speak to us on education. He came. And some of the same issues that were raised by Tom Adams in 1979 were raised at the Academy of Politics of the DLP in 1980. The lecture is in documented form. It is published in a booklet. I can make it available to the House. And he said that people were going to the university and studying all sorts of things, the state had to pay for it, and there was no link between what people were studying and the developmental needs of Barbados. And that at some stage, the government would have to come to the position where it linked what it paid for at the university with the developmental needs of Barbados. And he said that the government would sooner or later have to choose - and should sooner or later choose - how many places in each faculty it was going to support based on manpower needs.

That same recommendation can be found - it is documented in the series of lectures which we published - but it can also be found in the 30th anniversary booklet, a booklet with which the Honourable Member for St. James Central is familiar. Because at that time he was one of the loudest voices on the platforms and in the public spaces of the Democratic Labour Party, speaking as a young Democrat on platforms all across the country and telling everybody in Barbados how vile and how vicious the Barbados Labour Party was. So he knew. He knows the document I'm talking about. And that document lifted Dr. Shorey's recommendation word for word and said that a new Democratic Labour Party government would establish a kind of new relationship with the university where it

would determine how many places in each faculty it would support based on the manpower needs of the country.

So that was DLP policy from 1985, when we put out that 30th anniversary booklet - a public document, nothing that we kept secret. We were celebrating 30 years and it was made public. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East had not yet joined us, but he was to join us sometime soon after that, the following year, and to proclaim the gospel according to the Democratic Labour Party as a senator between 1986 and 1991. Very good man, very thoughtful man, the Member for St. Michael East. He still is. Still is. I understand the conscience battles he has to fight where he is, but he is a good man. Very, very good man.

So when we sat down in the very difficult situation a few years ago when we had to deal with this issue of university costs, the Member for St. Michael North West was only continuing a debate that the Democratic Labour Party started in 1980 when it talked about the cost of university education and the fact that we would have to look at it sometime. And it was only continuing a concern raised by Tom Adams in 1979. So on a bipartisan basis, this has been an issue. I sat on the opposite side of the House in 1994 as Shadow Minister of Education, when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was Minister of Education. And we debated a white paper in here. And issues of that kind surfaced as well.

When we sat down to discuss how we were going to deal with this issue in the light of the harsh economic times we were in, we looked back at what the Democratic Labour Party had said in 1985, what Dr. Shorey had said, and we said: if you decide that you are going to fund only a certain number of places in particular faculties based on manpower needs, you are going to find yourself in a position where you are going to be leaving some students on their own altogether - they will have to pay both economic costs and tuition fees. And that is not the contemplation of the government. So we decided to ensure that everybody could benefit by the government paying all the economic costs and asking students to contribute just the tuition fees.

We did not do that oblivious to the fact that in 1976 in this House, the Democratic Labour Party passed a Student Revolving Loan Fund Act to make sure that students who wanted to borrow money could have access to it. We knew that a mechanism was in place to facilitate students who wanted to borrow money. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, as the Prime Minister has unlimited time - yes, you will learn that later on - came to this House and raised the Student Revolving Loan Fund limit to what? A hundred thousand dollars from the fifty it was at. And we changed the conditions so that you don't have to shop around for any surety - students can be their own sureties. But we are going to make sure,

because as I told you, the operative word in that legislation is “revolving”. And when people borrow money, they should pay it back so that other people can have an opportunity.

So let us be very clear on where we are. I am not going to unsay what I said in November 2011 because I am not ashamed of it. I am not ashamed of it. Let us be very clear on that. The objective conditions at the time justified my saying it and it still continues to be an ideal because I believe that developing countries have too much catching up to do - in housing, in education, in healthcare, everything. We are playing catch-up. But we have to face the stubborn reality that in a neoliberal world, the rules of the game have changed and we have to be able to meet our obligations as they arise. And no matter how much talking you do, if you don't have the money to pay, your talk counts for nothing.

In all of this, Mr. Chairman, you would have heard the university complaining even before this measure was introduced about how much money the government owed it because the rules of the game had changed. In one year, costs at the university went up by \$35 million. So let us get our feet back on solid ground. Anybody who thinks that I said something in 2011 and I am ashamed of it - I said it, yes, I said it, and I believed I was right when I said it. And I still believe in that. Countries like ours have too much catching up to do. I said it yesterday in relation to information and communications technology, that we don't produce either the hardware or the software. As Red Plastic Bag so well put it, we are not just on the net now, but we are in the net. We don't produce the hardware or the software. But whenever there are these changes and you have to do all this migration and so on, we are fixed with the cost. That is the world in which we live. And we have to face some stubborn realities.

I want to assure all the people of Barbados and I want to assure the university students of Barbados - I say university students, but as I said, tertiary education is not limited to university. We have a whole raft of other tertiary institutions. I personally believe that as many people as possible, based on their aptitudes and their talents, should try to access a university education. That has been an ideal in Barbados going back years when there was no Cave Hill campus here. Our school teachers at Harrison College, at Foundation, at Queen's College, wherever else they were, used to register externally with London University, pay London University to get a degree in English or history or Latin or whatever they wanted. And some of them still do it. The former Honourable Member for St. James North in this House, Mr. Rawle Eastman, did his law degree by registering externally with London University while he was teaching at the Garrison Secondary School, as it was then called. There are still Barbadians who take money from

Barbados, register with institutions abroad and pay those institutions to get the qualifications they want.

Let us be very clear. You heard the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter yesterday say that his daughter wanted to do something that is not offered by the University of the West Indies. He had to send her elsewhere and pay for it. That is the reality of our situation. So I just want to assure Honourable Members on the other side that I said what I said in November 2011 at the gymnasium in the presence of the Minister of Education and all of the graduating students of the Community College. I said it. I do not regret having said it. I believe in it. But economic realities do not always coincide with the fervency of one's beliefs. And you have to deal with reality. You can't keep your gaze fixed in cloud-cuckoo-land while realities are confronting you on the ground. And that is where I stand. And that is where this government stands. Because no political party in Barbados can look the Democratic Labour Party in the face in terms of its record on education. I am obliged to you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the honourable member for St. Michael South and the Prime Minister that we in Barbados have a lot of catching up to do. And I want to say this afternoon now that I am extremely pleased that the Barbados Labour Party pursued the Edutech programme that has put us in good stead over the years and shall continue to do so as long as the Ministry of Education continues. I would have spoken in another time about the young children and their adaptability to the technology. And perhaps this might be a good time for the honourable Minister to indicate to us the status of the Edutech project, and if all schools are engaged and what are the next steps so that we can know what is in it for us and our children.

And I was pleased to hear the Honourable Prime Minister speak about the changes we had to make in order to ensure that the budgets and so meet the requirements or the needs of the people. And of course, when the Honourable Prime Minister had to make the comment after people were making their negative comments about the university students having to pay for their tuition fees, the Honourable Prime Minister was right. He said, my daughter wants to do her master's degree and I shall pay. But we expect a person in the standing of the Prime Minister to pay for his daughter. But when we have poor people out there in the agriculture sector, we have persons that are shop assistants, persons who are janitors, general workers, even some teachers who committed themselves in the time of plenty, according to them, to have a mortgage or a loan for car or to pursue further studies with their children. They just cannot pay. They do not have the

resources. And to compound it all, this Democratic Labour Party has sent home - we hear 3 500, but I believe there are more. And when that number is added to what has happened in the public sector, the redundancies, we have more than 6 000 people who have been sent home who would have been pursuing their own studies, helping to promote their children in the studies and having other children to educate that could not and cannot meet that high demand.

Mr. Chairman, perhaps the Honourable Prime Minister, since he says to his cabinet about leadership, would wish to tell us how many persons on the Democratic Labour Party side would have done three degrees at the University of the West Indies for free, and some changed their studies mid-course. Who on the Democratic Labour Party would have studied at the university doing a first degree for 10 years and all of that squander - how many are there - would have added to the high cost at the University. But the Honourable Minister of Education, to tell us about the policy that was in place when he came into that position: where the upper second class degree individuals who wanted to pursue further studies to do a second degree or master's, whatever that they all - unless they had met the criteria, those persons were not allowed to study - were given the opportunity between 2008 and now to do a second degree, having not met that bar of upper second class or higher? The Honourable Minister could tell us that.

But I want to get into something more substantial, Mr. Chairman. This Democratic Labour Party has done so many failed projects during 2008 and now - when they found foreign reserves at \$2.8 billion - that a Minister of Education could build 72 guard huts for nearly a million dollars, and not a single security problem at the school. Some of them have not been touched. The one at Sharon has never been opened since it was built. The one at Holy Innocents has never been touched. I will speak of the ones I know of. The one at Welches. Because we never in rural Barbados had challenges with security at the schools. So it was perhaps to give a friend or family of the Democratic Labour Party a job to be able to build guard huts when there was absolutely no need. And to compound that, Mr. Chairman, not a single paper was sent to the department that would have been able to assign the 72 security guards to fill the positions. So why were they built? That was wasted funds. And I am glad that the plan for this Government is to look at Barbados going forward.

The developmental approach that Barbados must take so that when scholarships are being offered for the National Development Scholarship, we look at the various areas and new aspects of development that will help Barbadians to be able to be on the cutting edge. Are we sending persons overseas to do gerontology? Because that is an area that is necessary now that so many of our people are down with Alzheimer's and early dementia and because

we are living longer. But the Minister of Education gave out 24 national development scholarships. And they are happy for the young people who would have gotten the opportunities. And I am not satisfied, from what I have learned, that those scholarships would have met the desire for a country that is advancing going forward. Knowing that we are doing a lot of catch-up now, I think it is integral that we look at a forward proper plan for Barbados so that we are looking at energy - persons who are studying in that area as well - to be able to go forward with our plan.

But I also want, Mr. Chairman, to indicate that I think that after almost 20 years, Barbados needs to have a national conversation - talking to the people of Barbados, hearing from them, what are the issues, what are the challenges, what are they finding about their children. I am referring particularly now to primary and secondary education, to be able to start looking at a new reform package. The last one was in 1996 when we had the curriculum reform. And I heard the Honourable Minister speak of the advancement in schools where students who were perhaps averaging two CXC subjects in a year, some of them are now earning four, and going forward. And that is what the curriculum development plan of 1996 was planned for. But now we are having so many challenges in our system. There are so many burdens. Are we getting value for the millions of taxpayers' dollars we are putting in? I say no. There must be new policies and programmes, Mr. Chairman, devised to help our children who are falling between the cracks. And a national conversation, meeting various stakeholders and others, is integral at this time if we are to make a change with what is happening in our schools.

I am tired of hearing that schools are war zones. I do not think they are. But because of the challenges and the new issues that confront teachers and others within the school system and indeed parents, there is need for that national conversation. I want to find out, sir, from the Honourable Minister, what plans are there for school leavers. Every year we have students - 3 500 going in at Common Entrance stage. So I believe almost 3 500 may be coming out at the end of the five or six year period. There are too many of them on the streets, in their houses. They are frustrated. Many of them had the dream of going to the university - a dream that has now been dashed. But also many of them had the dream of going to the Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. And unfortunately they go through the same examination every year and nothing is happening to ease their plight. I believe that there is time now for attention to be paid to that, because we know what is happening in the employment sector because of what has taken place in the economy and of course the kind of squander mania that this Government engaged in. Over the last seven years, the employment opportunities for young people have been dashed.

There was a section of the Youth Affairs Department where tracer forms used to be sent to all the secondary schools to determine what these young people need to do after they pass through fifth or sixth form. I hope that is going as well, because we are lacking in this society when it comes to data to do with the statistics of what is happening in our various departments. And unless we know and we can pattern or follow where these young people are going, we are going to keep saying there is lawlessness in this society. There are guys on the block - and guys meaning girls and boys on the block. There is lawlessness all over the place. And we know not only in the Lenten season, but the devil always finds things for idle hands to do. And therefore I think that we need to start looking at what we can do to help these frustrated young people who feel that they are alienated.

And so I support the comments made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South when the Honourable Member spoke about late developers and youth who seem to be underachieving, who sometimes pass by a school that they would have attended. They probably did not have the criteria set up to meet their needs. But the young people look at the school and say, I hate the principal, I do not like that teacher, she insulted me or he insulted me, I would like to throw a bomb in there. But they are frustrated that the system has not met their needs because they may have been late developers. And let no one fool you, Mr. Chairman, sir - I know late developers who have come to reach a level in Barbados where they are at the top of the institutions that they manage. So we must not dismiss it because we do not know the reason why they have become late developers. Sometimes there are issues in the home. There is violence that impacts on them emotionally. Their parents do not have the wherewithal to send them to school. Some of them fall ill and have to

go to hospital with some childhood disease or the other. So as a result of absenteeism, many of them do not meet the level at Common Entrance time. But what do we do with those children after Common Entrance? And I am saddened because I knew that there were opportunities where the students who met the 11th birthday and did not meet the criteria - if they had not been scored 30 per cent or more in the classroom - that those children were given an extra year for deferral. And I know that there were special programmes in the summer to treat with the issues of those individuals and help to bring them up to a level that at least when they take back the reports to the schools that they are attending, teachers would know for sure where they are at and what areas to place emphasis on. All of us have issues with little areas of delinquency. We do not pick up the ability and the skills in the same way as others because we are individuals. But I think that it is critical that that kind of training continues in the summer for those students who defer writing the Common Entrance because they have

certain deficiencies that would not have been met during the school year.

I would like the Honourable Minister to indicate to us about the continuous assessment project that was going on. Is it still? That was left in place - is it still going on? Because I have a tremendous challenge, Mr. Chairman, having children of primary school age in my household where school reports are still coming home to parents and the school reports are based not at midterm but at the end of the term on the examination. Very few marks are included in the children's school reports at the end of the school year. And then there are positions - nobody would like his or her child in a class of 25 or 30 children, every term, to be seen: 30th position, 25 per cent in English, 15 per cent in Mathematics and those kinds of low grades. It hurts. And all the parent can see for a comment is: disappointing, lazy, does not pay attention, must concentrate, can do better, does not do homework. Mr. Chairman, do they understand what is happening? In some homes, some children have keys around their neck. They let themselves into the household. There is nobody to supervise them. Parents are out struggling. Some have two jobs. So why must I, as a parent - let me say with a report that says lazy, can do better - what are you as a teacher doing? What is the school doing to help me, for my children to improve? And I believe that it is about time that we change that whole approach to how we grade children and make them feel alienated.

If the only thing you can do is come last - what about the child's drama performance? Is it a dancer in the school? Is it a singer? Is it good at poetry? Is it good at using the hands to do skills? Those were the programmes I did in primary school. I learned to knit with two coconut bones - the principal's wife taught us. I learned to do gardening. I learned to do handicraft of all levels. When I had my infants, my children - including the boys - did little huckaback and fancy stitches, chain stitch and so on in little pieces of cloth, because that helps with the preparation of the fine muscles and developing them. But I do not think that our children are as properly engaged in some schools as they should be and that their potential is not harnessed in the way it should be, because we are focusing on the academics all the time.

And the unfortunate thing is the Ministry is not providing the necessary training for some teachers, because we heard the cry of the President of the Barbados Union of Teachers about these 600 teachers who want to be appointed. The Ministry is again taking in teachers straight off the road - meaning straight from college - to go into the classroom for our children to become little guinea pigs again. When there was a programme in place before, and the Honourable Minister would have had that, where Erdiston College was opened up for any individual interested in teaching to come in and access the training -

the two-year training programme - and be able then, the Ministry would then have a sheet or list of individuals who could be drawn into the teaching profession, that they can develop the skills. And so for children now the Ministry is going to end up again with a big bill where there are teachers in the classroom who never did the course. But there are still a few people on the list who would have been trained in the two-year programme that are waiting to be assigned. The Ministry now will have to pay funds for those persons who are in the classroom and never had any training before to go to Erdiston. And then the persons who are the substitutes will also have to be paid. For me, that is a retrograde step and it is not the best as we go forward. But I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity and I will be able to develop my points a little further down. Thank you very much.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, let me start off by saying that I think we have to disengage ourselves from this view that grammar school students are somehow most intellectual and that those persons and students who are technically vocationally oriented are somehow substandard. It is but a vestige, Mr. Chairman, of the history that we have experienced where the British model glorified the period of academia driven by Latin classics, etc., and that model continues today in a lot of how we approach education. And I would want to think as to what would have faced the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow when he was managing the build-out of the educational system through primary and secondary schools. And also in regards to the Barbados Labour Party, when the establishment of comprehensive schools to introduce academic as well as technical and vocational training. It was a transformation, Mr. Chairman.

But I thought, sir, that in my first intervention I attempted to confront and explain the social inequalities in the educational system that were deep-rooted in the history, culture and economic structure of the time. Mr. Chairman, tax-funded tertiary education that some people call free, when established, sir, in the 1960s and so on, was a necessity at the time. It was critical to help build out a knowledge-based society from its infancy. Because the evidence in regards to all of the international literature suggests that those tertiary trained persons are at a significant advantage over those that are not tertiary trained. And that is the reason why first world countries have concentrated very heavily, sir, on the development of tertiary education and on tertiary education that defines quality education and research.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we must ask ourselves some questions. Do we continue to produce graduates in Barbados with degrees that are not useful in Barbados? We

need to ask the following question, Mr. Chairman: what is the national capacity of the Barbados economy regarding tertiary graduates? We need to answer, Mr. Chairman, the other question: do we continue to produce graduates for the global economy - a brain drain - when we don't have the fiscal wherewithal to carry it?

Mr. Chairman, the answer to these questions rests in the size of the Barbados economy and on the size of the budget and on the fiscal space that you have. So cost remains a barrier to access. But it is an ideal, Mr. Chairman, to believe that because you have this nostalgic reality that every single person must necessarily have a tertiary education because it now globalises them in terms of their marketability. It is an ideal. But you cannot achieve every ideal, Mr. Chairman, based on what your realities are on the ground. The reality on the ground is that we are in a fiscal challenge.

And we have had, Mr. Chairman - when I look at the numbers - that between 1996 participation rates of 3 000 persons at the university, but by 2013, sir, it was 9 000. The Minister of Education would outline the rapid increase in terms of cost from that same period, sir - from \$75.4 million to \$147 million. Even the grand United States could not carry that sort of explosion of exponential growth in the fiscal reality. It just could not be done. What about little Barbados that is suffering the fiscal challenge? So we have to understand this reality.

What this is going to necessarily require is this: that even though we understand the role of education - and that role, Mr. Chairman, is not limited to fostering economic development of a nation, it also includes individual growth and development - what is important is that it establishes social and political stability. And you would find that wherever you don't have evolved and modern democracy, there's always an issue with education, with primary and secondary school and discrimination in regards to gender. So therefore what we're really talking about here, Mr. Chairman, is the importance of being able to maintain, to the best of your fiscal capability, the opportunity for access to tertiary education.

Look, Mr. Chairman, in 1980 the World Bank started to evaluate investment in education and they coined the term rate of return to education from investment. All it really means is an evaluation of the public and private cost of education versus the private and public benefits of education. Now, to describe that a little bit more simply, there's an extremely high rate of return to the society - social rate of return to society - for primary and secondary education. But when it comes to tertiary education, there is a significantly increased rate of return to the individual. And that is defined in regards to their commercial worth, their marketability and the salary that they earn.

So if there will come a time, sir, in a society where the fiscal reality based on the size of the economy cannot carry, sir, 15 000 students at the university in regards to tuition and economic costs, what is the government supposed to do? You have to start to rationalise numbers in relation to your fiscal reality, Mr. Chairman. There's no other way to do it. Because all of the other interventions that every other country has put in place, we have put in place - that is loans, grants, bursaries. And the last straw in every university has always been sharing of costs. We have now come to sharing of costs.

But it also means, Mr. Chairman, that there are some other factors that can be introduced. What are those factors? Some countries have introduced insurance policy frameworks with respect to tax concessions that allow the individual to build up the cost of education over a period of years. Some countries have done that. That is something we can look at. In addition to that, Mr. Chairman, you have another capability which is related to loans, which relates over time to a percentage of your future earnings set in regards to the loans that you have. In other words, you're taking the student loan now and giving it a certain substratum - so there isn't a fixed repayment. The repayment is a percentage of where your earning moves and it takes the pressure off.

The third factor, Mr. Chairman, is this. You can introduce equity in regards to the cost-sharing variable. How you do this, Mr. Chairman - the loans, whether it is a contingent loan or not, the interest charges can be set to a level where the cost to the individual becomes the same as the cost to the government. So therefore, I hope you understand what I'm saying: the cost to the individual, by tying the interest charge to the loan, would be equivalent to the cost to the government.

Now, I hold the view - and my colleagues know this, I've said it before - the people's money should be used on the people. And I've said that I strongly believe that where there are national savings, those national savings should be utilised to create the structures that the people can access to use for themselves. What that entails, Mr. Chairman, is that at some point in time, we may very well have to look at the relationship between the national insurance funding, when we are out of a fiscal position, and its relationship with the student revolving loan fund. Because every actuarial report has defined a particular rate of return for solvency over a 25-year period. But in relation to providing short-term funding and medium-term funding to the commercial banks, those get soft rates, but the people get high rates. And I'm saying that I will shift that in relation to the student revolving loan fund and rationalise it in relation to education. It is something I think we need to look at. I don't know what the details are or the mechanisms, but I know that the people's money is best spent on the people

where the economic rate of return on the investment to the individual is highest - in tertiary education.

Mr. Chairman, let me also say that we cannot bury our heads in the sand in regards to a massive paradigm shift that is occurring in relation to tertiary education. And that massive paradigm shift, sir, includes tertiary education moving from national to global. It is done now through distance learning and a whole number of other factors. The movement from state-controlled education institutions, sir, to that of open-market economy ones - which is privatisation. The movement from general education, Mr. Chairman, to that of direct education. And that education is driven by market forces. In other words, we are not going to be producing degrees for a specialist in nuclear medicine when you don't have a reactor. You're not going to be producing degrees for a whole range of other so-called sciences that bear no relevance to us.

I want specialists in agricultural development and science. I want specialists to run the machinery in any manufacturing plants. I want specialists that help us to build out the biotechnology opportunities we have in Barbados, because we don't utilise our flora and fauna effectively yet to create a biotechnology industry. Those are what I want, sir. I don't want somebody to tell me they want to fly a Boeing 747 and then go get a loan for that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member has three minutes. Three minutes.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: That's my friend. That's my friend.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes, ma'am. The honourable member for St. George North. Yes. The Minister was going very well.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: He was going very good. And he was the one who criticised Tom Adams in the 1970s for saying the exact thing that he is saying now - but based on market forces and the demand and supply, you cut your job market with the education thing. So this is what we have been hearing since the 1970s, with the Democratic Labour Party criticising the Tom Adams administration on shaping education. And at that time they were talking about free education for all. This is what the Democratic Labour Party was talking about. Please continue.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: I don't know how to respond to that one, Mr. Chairman. I think it is best for me to stay focused. And I would want, Mr. Chairman, recognising the time, simply to say that there comes a time in dealing with an economy when you have to deal with the facts. If, as the honourable member for St. Peter would have distilled out, what is the fiscal position and identified what is happening to our debt because of fiscal instability -

how can the members on the other side be irresponsible enough to continue to suggest that we worsen that position, sir, and bury the economy?

The reality is - and it's the facts - because some of the things I'm hearing: we shouldn't have cut this, we shouldn't have changed this, we shouldn't have done this, we shouldn't have done that. I have to accept the reality. The only other element that is involved, sir, to get us out of this would be a significant growth strategy. You have to grow the economy, get back revenues, get back fiscal space. But there is no economy right now growing at the rates that they were growing before. So therefore we know that Barbados requires a growth rate of about 3 to 3.5 per cent. China was at about 9 to 10 and is now down to 5 to 7. The United States used to grow at 4 and 5 and is now struggling with 2 and 3. So Barbados is not at that point in time where we are going at 2 and 3. So therefore we are not actually at the stage where we are generating, Mr. Chairman, the jobs so as to get VAT, NIS, excise duties, PAYE - so we don't have the revenue in hand to carry out those things that we could have in 2007. That is just what the facts are, and I thought it necessary, Mr. Chairman, to bring those facts here to this Honourable House of Assembly. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member for Christ Church West Central, sir, to move that I do report progress.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that you do report progress to His Honour the Speaker and ask for leave to sit again.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour, the SPEAKER, and asked for leave to sit again. Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that the sitting be suspended for lunch until 2.15 this afternoon.

The question that the House be suspended until 2.15 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 for lunch, you are in Committee of Supply. And to that we shall return.

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee. Our Member for St. Lucy. Good. You spoil my job.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, as we speak on Head 77, it is quite clear that consensus has been reached on this particular topic as it relates to how we must finance tertiary education. Because what you would have heard from the other side is that even though they have been very critical in their speeches, when one looks at the conclusion, it is clear that they are saying that the society of Barbados must make some contribution. And they have acknowledged the point that in order to measure progress of a country, you measure progress based on the independence of the person and not how dependent the person is.

Mr. Chairman, as you would know, free school meals make ten cents - which is now a dollar - a contribution by the person. Free textbooks, the payment fee was \$75. So free tertiary education. It is clear that in school textbooks and school meals there is a contribution. There must be a continued policy that there must be a contribution by the person. But what is rather interesting in this debate, we must ask ourselves as a country if we have not gone too far west and now we have found ourselves east - and that is that we have so educated our country that we have forgotten that you do not get the output you want at the end, but that output must start at the beginning. And it appears that in our educational system we are now focusing more on aspects of it before building the foundation.

And that is why the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development is very interested in what is going on in education. And we are ensuring that we provide the necessary lands for the Minister of Agriculture to provide the necessary schooling as it relates to that foundation - as it relates to nursery, also for primary, secondary and also tertiary. But what is even more important, we have recognised that we have to move it to a stage where education must also be able to create foreign exchange and also to create jobs. And that is why in the northern complex that we are seeking to build at Nassau, it will be so skewed that we will not only be focusing on those aspects of education where someone goes and gets a degree and when they leave school they then have to go and look for job training. But the focus will be on preparing persons for the world of work. And that is where the northern campus will come in. And that is where the Hope Agriculture College will also be very important, because if we are to continue our educational system we must cater for the workforce

and not cater for persons just to say they have a degree and that is the end.

And you know, Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Labour Party found this problem as far back as the nineties, because here it is, we had an educational system and it was not catering for the total productive sector of the country. And we found ourselves having to encourage over 30 000 persons to come to Barbados to do work because the educational system was not balanced. And I am saying, as we move forward now, we cannot afford to allow this to occur again - where you encourage 30 000 persons to come to Barbados to work, but yet you had to create a project called Project Oasis because you had people on the block who could not find work even though other persons were finding work in Barbados. And if this is the type of educational system we want to continue, well, let us fool ourselves. But I am saying that what the Democratic Labour Party is doing is ensuring that we have a balanced, productive and working society to suit the demands of the workforce and to balance whatever work is there to be done in the country. And no one shall fault that philosophy. No one should be arguing against that.

I mean, the Barbados Labour Party might say, take our insurance policy to help fund our education - we might say, only pay 20 per cent and we will pay 80 per cent. If you tell me to take your insurance policy, what you are telling me is that I should prepare myself to fund my full education. So how can you tell me to prepare myself to fund full secondary and tertiary education and then quarrel when I only ask the people to pay only 20 per cent? Come on, come on. So you see, we now have to understand that if we want to measure progress in the country, these are the type of discussions that must occur in this House. And I want to congratulate the Honourable Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Prime Minister of this country, for picking this particular head to discuss, because it has shown how far we have reached in our development. Some people might have said, oh, you have asked them to pay 20 per cent, let us run away from the debate. But the Democratic Labour Party, under the leadership of the Right Honourable Prime Minister, have said no - if this is what society is talking about, we must discuss it with society. And if this is what will take the country forward, we must discuss it.

And I am very happy to see that the Government of the day is quite prepared to confront those issues that have been put on the front burner by the Barbados Labour Party, by the public of Barbados, and that we did not run away from. You know why? Because these issues are important to the development of country Barbados. And once they are important, we are prepared to discuss them and we are prepared to correct whatever problems there are within the education sector. And that is why - I mean, think about it - the Democratic Labour Party did not build the Samuel

Jackman Prescod Polytechnic by accident. And what is interesting, hearing the Barbados Labour Party debate this issue, every man or woman who got up said that the so-called educated people in Barbados are now forcing out the ones who would normally be going to the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic - which tells me that the people who went and got degrees suddenly recognised that it is not the degree but the trade that is also important. So it shows that as far back as when we conceived the idea, we understood what would happen in the future.

And that is why we want to congratulate this Government for having the foresight and recognising that instead of allowing that system to continue, what we have to do - and what we will be doing - is to expand it so that those persons who are constantly going to the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic will still have an opportunity to go. And at the same time, those persons who went and educated themselves at a particular level will understand that in this day and age it is not the degree only but the ability to work within the workforce that is available. And we did not run away; we acknowledged what was happening within the society and we are providing - and that is why we went to Nassau and acquired the land, because we understood. And that is why we also allocated the land at Hope, because we understand what is happening within the society.

And most importantly, sir, we cannot be talking about the renewable energy sector before recognising that in order to push the renewable energy sector it is important to have places like Nassau and also to broaden that aspect of education. And when we think about it also, when one considers that we are also expanding the service sector - and we are not only saying, but we are going to be building out the hotel sector - it is obvious that if we are going to be building out the hotel sector we also have to be training people, because there will be large numbers being demanded to come to work and you cannot be expanding and not creating the right impetus for the people who want work within the hotel sector and so on. So what you are seeing is a holistic approach by the Democratic Labour Party and a demonstration that they understand exactly what is happening within the economy and they are seeking to ensure that they balance it and provide the necessary workforce.

Mr. Chairman, it is not the degree at the end of the day - when you go to the supermarket or elsewhere, it is the disposable income earned. And I have heard the others on the other side speaking about plumbers and electricians and so on, who own their own businesses, who are now demanding their attention within the society. And it is because they are now creating enough disposable income that the people who ran to be lawyers are down there begging for jobs, while these plumbers and electricians are not begging for jobs - people are begging them to work for

them. So it tells us that we have to have a balanced workforce. And that is why I am happy that we are having this debate and we are hammering out these things, because we have to understand that these things are important and we need to go forward.

So, Mr. Chairman, we are dealing with nursery and we are providing the land for the nursery schools, the land for primary, the land for secondary, and we might even be forced - once the Ministry of Education gets the right mix - to ensure that we also provide land for those who want to come and benefit from our educational system by being part thereof and creating offshore schools, and when I say offshore, from their countries, by building in our country. So it shows that Barbados is very attractive and people appreciate the infrastructure that we have and that we are going in the right direction.

Mr. Chairman, joined all this time, they would have had nearly 25 years of the Barbados Labour Party from the sixties until now. And if they want to belly-ache about where we are, they have to understand that they too would have been part of the system for nearly 50 per cent or more of those years. So if they want to complain, they can only blame themselves for not being proactive and progressive and delivering to the public of Barbados, and for not recognising - instead of fooling people to believe that the only work you can get is in an office or something like that. But I have made the point, and I will continue to make the point, that in order to have services you must have production. And this is where the world has fooled itself. The world has deluded itself because everybody is moving towards services before recognising that in order to get a service you must have something to sell, and the services are offspring from production. And it seems to me that we have gone so bright that we do not even recognise that. And that is why it is important to have agriculture, manufacturing and things like that, because those are the industries that create the services - and the services are the spin-off from those vital industries. You do not sail a ship empty. You sail a ship with something in it that is saleable. This creates a service. You have to service it.

So I do not know, Mr. Chairman, why we continue to behave as if this country is not a maturing country. And the fact, Mr. Chairman, that we are here today discussing this issue is an admission that we have arrived. And if we as politicians have arrived, we also have to appreciate that the society has arrived also. I have three minutes remaining. So if the society has arrived, then it is only obvious that the society has to report progress and the society has to contribute. You cannot report progress and still depend on someone to pull your thoughts up for you - there must be a level of independence.

And I am, Mr. Chairman, very happy for this debate and I think the policy by the Democratic Labour Party to

get to the heads - especially those critical heads - has been the right policy. And I want to thank the Barbados Labour Party for accepting and agreeing that what we offered to them, and what they have now accepted, is a good decision by them to debate the heads. And I want to see us debate all of those heads that we said we are going to debate, because those are the things that the public want to hear. And this Estimates debate, Mr. Chairman, is not only about figures - as you know, it is the budget, yes, but it is the budget as it relates to the people and how it affects the people. And that is why it is important that what the people are talking about we discuss in this House of Assembly and that we solve them.

So, Mr. Chairman, I am grateful for allowing this intervention, but I want to say that instead of overheating the educational system, we must create the right balance. And I am happy to report that we are now back there balancing it out and taking out the curves and smoothing it out. And this debate has allowed us to arrive at that point. I thank you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, I enter this debate to speak with absolute clarity on the position of the Barbados Labour Party in respect of tertiary education in Barbados. And I do so especially after the speech of the last honourable member who, for reasons best known to him, does not seem to understand the structure or intent of the English language when used and in circumstances. Therefore, it is critical that I put on the table what is the Barbados Labour Party's position.

In August 2013, the Minister of Finance announced on behalf of this Government an intention to charge tuition fees at the University of the West Indies. Much of this debate has been pursued without reference to the facts. And it is critical that the facts be placed on the table.

I want also to say that I understand the difficult position that the Minister of Education has found himself in, largely because anyone who has worked in education their entire life in this country appreciates the critical importance of education to, one, the stability of Barbados; two, the ability to bring individuals and families out of poverty and to put them on a sustainable path to provide for themselves; and three, the extent to which this is our most competitive advantage that we have in the world. The World Competitiveness Index ranks Barbados in the top 15 countries in the world for one thing - it is education. The World Competitiveness Index ranks Barbados, of all the countries in the world, as number one in the world in the provision of primary education. We are number 15 in the world for the provision of education.

Prime Ministers who have served this country have defended, to their credit, the importance of education in the economic and social DNA of Barbados - to be able to give us the stability that we have as a country. And it is that stability that has allowed us both the quality of life as well as the economic benefits which we inherit today.

The Prime Minister today spoke and admitted that in 2011, in addressing the Barbados Community College, he indicated that it would be a retrograde step for tertiary education fees to be imposed upon the citizens of this country at the University of the West Indies. That is a fact and he has admitted it today.

Secondly, the former Prime Minister, the honourable member for St. Peter, would have spoken in a very clear lecture in 2013 at the School of Politics where he was cited as saying these words: "Our chief point of differentiation historically has been the quality and diversity of our human resources as compared to that of our immediate competitors. We will lose that competitive advantage if we curtail our investment in tertiary education while others are expanding theirs." He spoke then to a tertiary education deficit and he said it is of greater significance than the fiscal or balance of payments deficit, for it is amongst a waste of our most valuable resource. The other dimension is purely financial and economic.

So we start from a philosophical position that cannot be questioned. The Barbados Labour Party's position remains that tertiary education must be provided to the citizens of this country free at the University of the West Indies.

The difference comes in relation to whether we do it or not. For a Prime Minister of Barbados to agree that in his own deliberate judgment it is a retrograde step for a country to make is either a reckless statement that he does not believe, or it is one that, if not reckless, is an admission of incompetence - to place as a priority that which he believes to be of strategic importance to this country and to find the resources so to do. Let us ask ourselves what is it that we are really talking about - what is at stake - that the Government of Barbados says that they cannot find to pay for students in this country?

The figures are clear and the Ministry of Education in its records would show that in 2008, in the estimates that this Government approved for the very first year, the sum for tuition fees was \$24 million. Thereafter, the Ministry of Education would have requested of this House and received - and let me quote the figures. In 2009 they asked for \$30.4 million; 2010, \$37.3 million; 2011, \$32.4 million; 2012, \$32.4 million; 2013 it jumped to \$42.5 million, clearly with the pain of arrears; and in 2014 they only voted the sum of \$20 million. And this year the figure of \$3 million is in the estimates. What is the cost of tuition fees in this country?

The cost on average is about \$30 to \$35 million a year. That is what this debate is about - \$30 to \$35 million in a government budget of \$4.3 billion.

Now, government, Mr. Chairman, is about choices. It is about choices. Just as a household will determine how it spends its income - does it save it? Does it pay its rent or mortgage? Does it buy food? Does it pay for water and light? Or does it choose to spend the money in the household on gambling? Does it choose to spend the money on fetin? Does it choose to spend the money earned in the household on trivial things? Government is no different.

And we have taken a clear position. And this is one that I would have articulated as far back as 2010, and in 2012 the member for St. Peter would also have indicated that we will, at our peril, having stopped the University College of Barbados, put ourselves in a position where the race of development - Jamaica and Trinidad in the future, given what they are doing in terms of their own universities - will overtake us. And he ended with these words which I can only endorse: do not let us, for the wrong reasons, torpedo that which is strategic to our development. Do not let us ever reach the stage where we have to ask people to pay higher tuition fees for university education in this country. Those were his words in 2012.

From 2010, I stated with absolute clarity, and again in 2013 in the budget debate, that the Barbados Labour Party, Mr. Chairman, believes clearly that the priority on the public purse is in this order. We must keep Barbados safe for all of our citizens, and therefore that which is necessary for law and order we will provide. Two, we must keep Barbadians healthy, both in terms of the country's public health and in the individual health of citizens. And thirdly, we must provide for the empowerment of our citizens, either through removing them from poverty or protecting those who are most vulnerable, who cannot be brought out of poverty because of individual circumstances that are beyond our immediate control - protection of the vulnerable.

Now, with that clear hierarchy of claims on the public purse, there can be no doubt as to what and how we will choose to structure the spending of government's money. And insofar as we have all agreed in this Honourable Chamber - and I heard the member for St. Philip West, and I thank him and the member for St. Peter for reminding this Honourable House - the millstone around this country's neck is the debt service. If we take interest alone, we are spending 30 cents in each dollar. And if we default on interest, we default on our debt in the same way that if we default on interest with a car loan or with a house or whatever, we are liable to get it forfeited. And if we take our whole debt, as the member for St. Peter did yesterday, we are spending not 66 cents in the dollar - in

fact, it is close to 69 cents in the dollar in relation to debt service.

Now, when therefore asked how is the Barbados Labour Party taking this position of providing a commitment to provide \$35 million a year to pay for tuition fees out of a \$4.3 billion budget - we will find the money and we will keep fiscal stability as our priority. We are not seeking to run 6, 8 or 10 per cent deficits to pay for university fees in this country. But let us also get it right. If the GDP of this country this year is \$8.558 billion and next year goes up to almost \$8.9 billion, the Minister of Education must be able to argue with the Minister of Finance that what he is asking for, for tuition fees, constitutes just over one-third of 1 per cent of our GDP in this country. That is what this debate is about.

And while I agree with the member for St. Philip West on the issue of debt, I must now distinguish myself from him because he has asked, before lunch, if it is not fiscally reckless for us to pursue this now. I trust and pray that now that he has heard the actual numbers he may want to moderate his position and to recognise that it cannot be fiscally reckless for us to spend \$35 million in fees for the children of this country because this Government has chosen to spend money other ways.

I want to deal with how this Government has chosen to prioritise the expenditure of this country, because this is what this debate is about. And I say from this position here today, on this day, that the Barbados Labour Party has chosen to put our priority on law and order, on health, and on the education of ordinary Barbadians. I say from this position today that 80 per cent of the students attending the University of the West Indies come from poor backgrounds or working poor. And when it is taken in contrast to what this Government has chosen to commit - this Government did not see anything wrong in spending \$550 a square foot to build low-income housing at Valerie at a cost of \$24 million, almost the cost of one year's tuition for all 8 000 students attending the University of the West Indies.

Or is it fiscally reckless to pay \$24 million at Valerie at \$550 a square foot for low-income housing that should be built at a quarter or a third of that cost? Is it fiscally reckless to support fees for 8 000 Barbadians at \$35 million a year? Or is it fiscally reckless to build out Grotto at \$30 million, \$700 a square foot - as if \$550 was not bad enough for low-income housing? Is it fiscally reckless for this Government to sign an implementation agreement last year with a company to build a plasma gasification plant with an investment of US\$300 million, such that the Government of Barbados must seek to pay back in excess of \$20 or \$30 million a year for the purchase of electricity - the same amount that we would be spending to pay for tuition fees in this country? Is it reckless - and I understand the Minister may want to justify it with a co-generation plan - but to

build a \$500 million factory for the sugar industry at 10 000 tons?

These are the choices, and I don't quarrel with the Government for making the choices that they want to make. But know that the choices that the Barbados Labour Party wants to make is to prioritise the payment of the tuition fees of Barbadian young people, because we believe that those people, once given that education, will be able to rise from poverty.

I did not attend the University of the West Indies. I did not receive free tertiary education. But I believe that the only way - when I meet with my constituents and people across this country - is that some of them can get the chance to move to the next level. I know what it is to go to Ms. Walcott's funeral in St. Barnabas two months ago. She couldn't work other than very basic jobs. Her children then worked. At 50 years old, they have worked in the school meals department. Her daughter now works with a degree, having been achieved at a multinational corporation in this country at a very high level. And that story can be multiplied in thousands and tens of thousands across this country.

But I want to speak to the hoteliers, I want to speak to the manufacturers, and I want to speak to the middle class, because it is in your interest in this country for free education to be maintained and to be a priority of the public purse. Because that is how this country has been able to maintain stability and a competitive edge. And in that stability and competitive edge, they have been able to charge high rates for their daily occupancies, high rates for their products, and they have been able to live in a safe Barbados where the quality of life has been second to none.

I say to you that in this Bible of 600 pages, the Barbados Labour Party can find \$35 million for the children of this country to continue to receive free tertiary education - because it benefits the hoteliers, it benefits them, it benefits poor people, it benefits every single Barbadian. It is an essential part of our DNA. And I know this Prime Minister believes it deep down, but has not had the support from a finance and economic strategy to put them in the place to be able to continue to deliver it.

We in the Labour Party stand ready to offer this country hope again - that our way, started by the Right Excellent Grantley Adams and the Right Excellent Errol Barrow, is the right way. And philosophies don't change because you run into difficulties financially. That is when you dig down, that is when you deepen your resolve. And that is when, out of \$4.3 billion, we will find the \$35 million to do the job. I'm obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. James.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am happy to come into this discussion, of course, giving support to the matter before us and coming right after the Member for St. Michael North East, who of course spent a lot of time talking about what is fiscally responsible in this country. And I must say, having listened to her platform speech just now, I can only conclude it would not be fiscally responsible for this country to ever have her emerge as a leader of this great nation. There is a high level of irresponsibility that perpetuates the mouthfuls of the barriers to their party. And I clearly believe, Mr. Chairman, that there is a clear divide as being manifested in this debate here this week on education.

I have constantly lamented the fact that we as politicians - I have been guilty of it too, all of us have been extremely guilty - of giving Barbadians the impression that the state will provide everything for everyone whenever or however they want it. That is totally irresponsible. And I want to challenge my dear friends on the opposition benches to come on board and start to conduct themselves in a more responsible manner and stop giving Barbadians the impression that the state collects all of the revenue needed to pay all of the expenses that the citizens may determine they should pay for all the items to pay for.

We are here today talking about education, Mr. Chairman. In listening to the discussion, it reminds me of the healthcare sector as well. When we talk about health in this country, we talk only about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, oblivious to the fact that if we do not address primary care and secondary care issues, the tertiary care part - meaning the hospital - will continue to be challenged. And likewise in education, we are spending all of the time talking about the University of the West Indies that is providing education for only about 7 000 Barbadians. But yet still I am seeing in this document here before me from the Ministry of Education, in terms of the numbers, that there are 24 781 students in primary schools. There are 19 297 students in secondary schools - one who happened to be mine - and there are 15 510 in tertiary institutions, including the Barbados Community College, Erdiston and other institutions, not just the UWI. So I firmly believe that any discussion about education and the financing of education cannot revolve exclusively around the UWI. So I think that is the first point I wish to start with.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has said that in terms of UWI - let us start with UWI. I am happy to pick up the discussion there before coming back on other issues, on other parts of the education system. Look, I have sat here this week. I heard every man and woman on the opposition bench talk about the size of the deficit, talk about the fact that the healthcare system cannot be properly financed, talk about the infrastructure, the need to find money to fix the roads in White Hill, the need to provide proper public transportation, about all the plights

of the poor people, middle class, upper class in this society. You know, they have not offered one iota of a solution to any of the problems confronting this society. And if there is one thing that I have a difficulty with regarding the Leader of the Opposition, it is her ability to exude a lot of fluff. The same speech she makes over and over again. She is an eloquent speaker, but when it comes to substance, meaningful discussion, valid points that can really take this society forward, it is seriously lacking. In spite of all the high rates of inflation, I still believe paying a penny for her thoughts will be an excessive amount. We really have to get serious in this country about these matters.

So I am here and I want to make the point and reiterate it again because I said it when we first came on this issue. UWI - and I start by just declaring my interests. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition, I am a graduate of the University of the West Indies and a very proud graduate. I got my first degree from there and subsequently did my Master's. In spite of what the Member for St. Thomas may seek to say about others on this side, I paid for my Master's degree at UWI. But I was also taught by my parents that education in this country is not free and has never been free. Somebody has always had to pay for it. I always say I think one of the biggest mistakes we continue to make is that in our communication strategy we do not remind Barbadians what things are costing. It is costing almost \$35 000 per student per year to get a degree from the University of the West Indies. And all we have said as a responsible government is: pay 20 per cent of the cost, and for those on the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, that works out at about \$6 000 a year.

Mr. Chairman, is it too much for us as politicians to say to our citizens, please contribute \$6 000 a year - \$25 000 over a four-year period - to get a degree that will last you a lifetime? We go and we spend \$50 000, \$60 000, \$70 000 on a motor car that will last three or four years. But we want to tell our young children that somebody owes you a favour and will give you everything you want and you will pay for nothing. I am not raising my children like that. I do not know if the Member for St. Michael North East raised her children like that, but I am certainly not raising mine like that.

But we have gone a step further. This is what I find reprehensible in the whole discussion, because they continue to give the public the impression that as their government we have kicked down the ladder from which a lot of us climbed up, that we have turned our backs on the philosophy and policies of our founding fathers, that we will pay for everything. Mr. Chairman, that is absolutely not correct. Recognising the challenges, and I say to you this, Mr. Chairman - even if our budget was balanced, even if our deficit was down to 1 per cent, I will still support a perspective that University of the West Indies students should contribute something towards their education. So

for me personally, it really is not a factor of the state of the economy. We have reached that point in our journey in this society where people must start taking a level of responsibility for their own destiny and stop depending exclusively on the state.

It is not the thirty of us politicians who are paying for these things. It is not even all the taxpayers. Every government, including the previous government, has had to borrow to pay for these things. So do not come and give the impression that you had a balanced budget and were able to pay for everything. You have not been able to do it. But had we just said to the students, pay only 20 per cent of the cost and stop there, I would have a difficulty, Mr. Chairman, because I have constituents not just in Haynesville, but in West Terrace Gardens and Husband Heights, in Husband Gardens, in Crystal Heights - middle and upper income Barbadians who have children. And in spite of what some may think about those of us who live in big houses and have motor cars, we are not all rich, nor do we all have a high disposable income. They too have their challenges. I hear them every day. But as a responsible government, we have also put systems in place to say: look, if you or your family cannot pay this contribution towards education, you can borrow the money from the Student Revolving Loan Fund.

But what annoys me is that there is still a view being perpetuated by the Barbados Labour Party that we should not borrow money to help pay for education. This Democratic Labour Party government has not left our young children high and dry. We have not turned away from the views and the policy philosophy of our founding fathers. You know, I always say the opposition party quotes Grantley Adams and never quotes Tom Adams. They do not remember who he is, except perhaps the Member for St. Thomas. But Mr. Tom Adams - John Michael Geoffrey Adams - Tom Adams would have simply, had he been in this space today, taken the view that the time has come when the state cannot provide all of the social services.

I do not think there really needs to be any political divide on this matter. We do not need to get in here as politicians behaving as though we are canvassing and seeking votes and telling people what we think they want to hear. I know that things are rough. Things are rough for all of us. Things are not just rough for a select few. But what are we going to do? Throw our hands in the air and say there is nothing we can do to help uplift this country? I have resigned myself, Mr. Chairman, to the view that the Barbados Labour Party is prepared to do whatever it has to do to tear down this economy and society. They are prepared to preach doom and gloom whenever and however they can, because all the Leader of the Opposition wants to be is Prime Minister of this country. It is not about caring about anybody else. It is a selfish perspective that

they have over there. I stand firm that we start to cast our dice on these matters. There will be no retreat, no surrender from my perspective on this particular matter at all.

We have certainly talked about UWI. Let me make a point about UWI because I am going to come back in the discussion, Mr. Chairman. I have not heard the Leader of the Opposition raise a query, or even our Member for St. Peter raise any concern about the spiralling cost of administering the University of the West Indies. I have said it before and I say it again: I remain deeply concerned about UWI's spiralling costs.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please. Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I am trying to tell you the Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. Not only have I spoken about the spiralling administrative costs, I have also made it clear that in relation to those things that go outside of core tuition fees - such as the amenities fees - there is no difficulty for students carrying anything that is non-core. On core tuition fees, we will continue to clarify.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Proceed, Honourable Member. Thank you.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: You know, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said a few minutes ago when she spoke, trying to explain where the money should come from to pay for the education - the small part we asked students to be able to pay - "we will find the money." Now that is what people are expecting to hear these days from someone who wants to lead this country. Nothing factual, no serious points. It is \$35 million to pay tuition costs at UWI that we ask the students to pay. Now if she were Prime Minister of Barbados, do not worry, she will wave a magic wand and find the money, because \$35 million is not a lot. Well, let me tell you something. The Ministry of Industry, International Business and Commerce costs about \$35 million a year. We will shut it down and pay tuition fees for 6 000 students at UWI.

I want an expanded nursing school system in Barbados. I have not heard the Leader of the Opposition make this point, because we are facing a situation in this country where, had we persisted in finding that additional \$35 million for a couple of thousand students at UWI, we would find ourselves in a position where we could not expand our nursing school programme, so women in this country would once again start to be forced to stay at home and take care of their children. I am not hearing any of the folks on the Barbados Labour Party side speaking to this issue. I am not hearing any of them ask the question: what is the risk to the rest of our education system had this

government not acted responsibly in seeking to contain the cost of the University of the West Indies?

But I want to get back to my other point. We can beat ourselves up here as politicians on this issue of UWI. I want to ask the question: are all of us very satisfied with what has been happening at UWI? I am not talking about the quality of graduates - that is a different matter. But when I pass there and see all of the building out that has been going on over the years, at a time when we are saying things are tight in the country, I have not seen the University of the West Indies cut back at all. And I do not care what the Principal or Pro Vice-Chancellor says about me in private or public. My position remains the same. There has been a behaviour at the university - and we are seeing this not just at the Cave Hill Campus, but at Mona and at St. Augustine - as though the taxpayers in the region will always find the money to maintain whatever kind of lifestyle and whatever kind of programmes they want. I submit to you that the behaviour of UWI is poised to make it become irrelevant in contemporary Caribbean society. It cannot just be about all the buildings and all the other costs and things that they are incurring up there. Somebody has to tell the management of the University of the West Indies, starting at Mona, to sit down and face reality and start to relate to what the rest of the Caribbean are facing.

And we beat up ourselves saying Barbados - let me tell you all something. It is bad in Jamaica. As much as the Opposition Leader talks around here, whenever she is in Jamaica, she has bodyguards. Do I have any here?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes. Honourable Member -

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: - is speaking and [Inaudible.] because he is now disposed to telling untruths. I have no bodyguards in any part of the world, here nor Jamaica. But suffice it to say, suffice it to say, it is also untrue to suggest that the Labour Party has not spoken of the need for efficiency. But efficiency cannot take away a right to hope.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have three more minutes.

Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Mr. Chairman, I want to come back on this. We have to therefore help our young minds to determine around that hope that you talk about, and who will pay for that - for helping them to achieve their dreams. Mr. Chairman, my position is very, very simple in terms of the University of the West Indies as a business, as an institution: its costs seem to have spiralled out of control. If I was a shareholder of the University of the West Indies, I would summon the directors and tell them, start to explain to me where you are going to contain

your costs, how you are going to generate more revenue for your operation.

And we talk about university. Let me make a point quickly, Mr. Chairman. I don't hear anybody telling me that there has been a reduction in the number of university graduates in Barbados, because I encounter a growing number of Barbadians who are getting degrees from online universities - a growing number of Barbadians whose children are now overseas studying, including several of us in here, including myself. So we want to narrow it down to UWI and behave as though we own UWI and therefore we must finance everything at UWI.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to come back in because I want to talk about nursing schools - the fact that there is one in St. James that needs work done, the one in [Inaudible.] that needs to be expanded, and the new one promised at Hortense that must be done. I am also going to talk about what we need to have done at West Terrace Primary School. We talk about University of the West Indies students, but we completely sometimes ignore those young minds and the environment they have - the fact that we need proper supporting facilities at some of these schools, the opening hours of schools. All these things need to be addressed in a holistic manner, Mr. Chairman.

I am simply going to wrap up by saying I respect the University of the West Indies. I would like to see a complete audit of the University of the West Indies. I need to know what their cost centres are. We need to know what the true unit cost of providing a degree at the University of the West Indies is. I am not going to be sidetracked in any political claptrap about paying fees on that. There is a bigger issue. We need to ask how we can drive the cost of university education down in Barbados - not about how the state will find money to pay for it. Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you. I will come back on this matter. Thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I know from the Member for St. Michael North East that this debate seems to be about university education - the cost of university education alone. Now, I am glad to hear the comments of my colleague and friend, the Member for St. James South, that in fact this debate is about much more than university education. And indeed the issue of university education is a bit of a political red herring, because indeed there are more significant issues and challenges in our secondary schools where in fact some 19 500 very young people go from day to day.

That is why I want to spend a bit of time discussing the challenges that we have in our secondary schools and our initiatives in terms of addressing some of these issues.

Indeed, sir, the NCSA - the National Council of Substance Abuse - recently conducted a survey in our secondary schools. And I thought I would share with this Honourable Chamber some of the results of that survey, which in many ways I think leads us to a better understanding of some of the challenges that our teachers have from day to day in our schools.

Indeed, sir, I can think of one of my very good friends who has recently resigned from a secondary school. He says that in his 31 years of teaching, it saddens him that he cannot wait to leave school because of the level of violence and the level of challenges that they have in that particular institution - challenges that he has encountered that seem to be increasing from year to year.

What this survey revealed - and not surprisingly - is that the students, and these are secondary school students, tend typically to come in contact with alcohol being the most commonly used substance, followed by marijuana, inhalants, and tobacco. 71.2 per cent of the students who completed this survey said that they had used alcohol. Surprisingly, sir, the use of alcohol was higher among the females than it was among the males. I was very surprised to see that. Most significantly, sir, the average age of the students who said they had used alcohol was 11 years, eight months. 11 years, eight months. So that points to an essentially significant issue - that we have our minors of that age signalling to us that they have been using alcohol at that age.

22 per cent of the persons - and I should have said that this survey involved, I think, about 1 400 students - 22 per cent of these students said that they had used marijuana, and started at just over 13 years of age. Not surprisingly, more males had used marijuana than females. The students said that they would use marijuana, in descending order, at social events, at home - surprisingly - and on the block. Now, we would have thought that given what we hear, it would have been probably on the block. But in fact, more of them said that they used marijuana at home than they did on the block. I will come back to that because that also signals a different challenge altogether.

In terms of inhalants, just over 20 per cent of the students said that they had used inhalants, and this began for children who were just under 10 years of age. As they got older, the use of inhalants increased. Cigarettes: 18.1 per cent of the students said that they had smoked cigarettes, and the age at which they began was 12 years of age.

So just to recap - the reason why I am sharing this with you is because I want to link that to the challenges that we are seeing manifested in certain schools. Because certainly if a child goes to school under the influence of any of those substances, he is more likely than not to get

into the kind of disturbances that we see, compared to a child who is not under the influence of alcohol or marijuana.

What the survey actually brought out was that 46 per cent of the students actually felt that marijuana was available on the school compound - that there was someone on the school compound, one of their colleagues, who was either selling or had access to marijuana. In addition to which, 60 per cent of them felt that within the immediate environs of the school, they could easily have access to marijuana or to alcohol. Now, this is the type of challenge that we have within our secondary school compounds. We see it manifested quite often in the media where students are either fighting on the bus or throwing missiles in the bus. We are seeing it on Facebook and on YouTube - some very violent incidents within school compounds.

So these are the kinds of areas where we have to spend considerable amounts of time, energy, money, and resources addressing these issues. But unfortunately it is not just an issue for the school compound. You can do your best within the eight hours that the students are with you. But if what they are saying is that they can leave school and go home and sit there and smoke a joint with whoever is in the home, or have a drink with whoever is in their home, then you will see the nature of the challenge.

So that is why when we speak of the Estimates, that is why when we speak of budgeting, that with the best will in the world, you have to ensure that you make resources available for many other institutions. Because none of the issues that we face can be tackled by just pouring money into one area.

I heard the Member for St. Michael North East and I am very happy that all of a sudden law and order and the police are important to them. So all of a sudden we hear that in their budgeting process -

- that most of the money will go to law and order, et cetera. I am very happy to hear that. But the reality is that if you spend all of your money in law and order, if you spend all your money in policing, you still have some other issues that you need to address. You still have to deal with parenting issues. You still have to go into households and see how you can intervene and persuade mothers and fathers that it is not the right thing to be exposing their boys and girls to legal and/or illegal substances. You still have to re-educate parents.

You know, quite some time ago I thought that the issue of teaching parenting - I said, well, what foolishness is this that we have to teach parenting? But the reality is that given our significant challenges, we will have to spend some time, money, and effort resocialising a lot of our parents. I repeat, sir, that it is not enough for us to spend

the money in the school setting and teach our kids when in fact, as soon as they leave the school compound, they go back to all the negative influences.

So we have significant challenges. We have challenges in terms of not having enough guidance counsellors. Education would like some more money. I am very sure that the Minister of Education would love some more money so that you can have additional guidance counsellors. In most of our schools, you have a school of a thousand youngsters with one guidance counsellor. Now, that ratio tells you that he or she is almost fighting a losing battle to begin with.

So even in education, even as we speak - or as the Opposition in particular speak about giving back money to university - I am saying that the Minister of Education can use additional resources to tackle some of the issues at the lower level: to have additional guidance counsellors to tackle the issues that I am speaking about, to have different classes in terms of drug education.

The NCSA, sir, has been working with the Ministry of Education on an annual basis. We conduct several interventions. In particular, there is one - Magistrate Barbara Cook, the Learning Magistrate - who has this intervention for students transitioning from primary school to secondary school. That is a very good programme held annually. We also have something we call Project Software, where we try to help several young children with the transition from primary to junior school.

But the reality is, sir, given what came out in this survey, one can understand the significant challenges that teachers have on a daily basis - at a time, sir, when again the Minister of Education will tell you that we indeed would like to have two additional primary schools and two additional secondary schools, because we would like to reduce the intake, the numbers, at one or two of our secondary schools so that the classes become smaller, so that students - in particular students who have challenges - can have a better one-on-one approach by their teachers.

So my point is, sir, that this is not just about university education. This is about educating our people. And we need to begin by tackling the challenges at the bottom of the ladder. This morning, in my earlier intervention, sir, I made the point that we have a situation where individuals are able to pass through a primary school system, pass through a secondary school system, and cannot write a sentence. There is something wrong. So again we have to relook at our complete system.

Now, I am aware that the Education Act is being looked at. I am aware that even in addressing the deficiencies within the Education Act, there are several initiatives being undertaken by the Ministry of Education.

But the reality is also, sir, that many of these issues are compounded by our way of life - a way of life that was introduced in particular by the Member for St. Michael North East.

Sir, I will never forget how I was brought up, and I am grateful to my mother. We had serious challenges, but it made us all strong. In my backyard - and I am sure up Bayfield by the Member for St. James South - I was guaranteed that my mother was going to raise two pigs. One, sir, that was used and one that was sold at the end of the summer so that we could get clothes and books to go to school, sir.

That generation came along, sir, with an approach that they had to provide for themselves, that they had to provide for their children. And that is why, sir - and I see your signal to me - that is why, sir, I maintain my position. Having been a recipient of free everything in this educational system, I owe it to Barbados to take the burden off of them with respect to my own children, so that the resources can be made available for the same individuals that those on the other side are speaking so highly about - the individuals who cannot afford to pay.

Those of us who can should - not all of us, of course, can afford to be sent overseas to be educated. But I think, sir - I will end on this note. When you hear some people who went overseas to be educated, and you listen to those who studied here in Barbados at the University of the West Indies, you can know who had the better education, sir. I will end on that. I thank you, sir.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Tell me that you didn't speak today. You just complained that he didn't speak. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I've come back to complete my thoughts on this matter. And I'm glad for the intervention of both the Honourable Member for St. James South and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South. Because in both respects they have sought to cast this argument in terms of a choice between one aspect of education and another aspect of education. And I want to debunk that and to reject that completely at the outset of my speech.

This is not a case of reducing the provision of primary education for the benefit of tuition fees. Indeed, in respect, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South would do well to recall or to be briefed that the whole question of parent education and the subventions for parents - which the Honourable Minister of Education needs to tell us if it is still continuing - was started in 1995 by myself and the Member for St. Thomas. That parent volunteers were started by me in the Ministry of Education, so that the

notion that we have no care or understanding or appreciation - in fact, I would be happy to support an initiative from the Minister of Education in relation to parental education and greater responsibility on the part of parents in this our educational system.

But if they want to compare, then they ought to be comparing with other pages in this 600 pages of estimates of expenditure where the \$35 million in savings can come. And the Member for St. James South speaks glibly about the student revolving loan fund. But his own Minister of Education will tell him that this is a fund that in 2009 only received 365 loan applications; 2010–11, 354; 2011–12, 359; 2012–13, 437; 2013–14, 447. Now, even with the best will in the world, even with the recapitalisation of the student revolving loan fund - which the Minister needs to tell us how much he has recapitalised by - he cannot meet the demand.

And where is the evidence? The Ministry of Education's numbers of Barbadian students at the University of the West Indies show that in 2011–12 there were 8 841 students at the University of the West Indies. And remember - the Member for St. James North will speak more to it - the numbers have dropped. Yes, he will. And as he has been speaking competently for the last year, the numbers enrolled have dropped to just over 5 000 people.

Now the Member for Christ Church South ought to prepare himself for the fact that the people who have a duty to provide health care ought to focus on that. Mr. Chairman, as I was saying, perhaps the Member has not yet learned that the country is not buying what he is selling, and that he will have to contend with that. I am saying to you, Mr. Chairman, that we have a situation where almost 4 000 students have dropped out of the university this year. This is a national crisis. It is a disgrace.

And Mr. Chairman, the bottom line is that we are now being asked to believe in this House that those students will all of a sudden find the money to go, in circumstances where even though the bursaries are welcome, the bursaries cannot come close to paying half of the tuition fees that any of them have to pay. This is their reality. Now, when you carry children - or young people - to a certain level of expectation and then deny it from them, you don't only frustrate their hope, but you begin the process of what ultimately will be a brain drain. You begin the process where people then start to believe, for the first time in 40 years in this country, since the 1970s - people have believed that they can live their best life in this country. But people will now want to start to go far afield again, to be able to live a life and to get an education.

And what is the reality of that child - or that young person - carrying home a request to a man who is a truck

driver, or to a woman who is working as a maid, or to a woman who is working as a clerical officer in government? They have commitments, and it is not to say that they don't want to pay for their children, but in many instances they cannot afford to pay. They have not had increases in salaries for six years. And then for those who whisper sotto voce, "Can't they get a loan?" - more often than not, they are straining to be able to stop a foreclosure from breach of an existing loan. And that is the reality that we are facing now. If it was so easy, Mr. Chairman, 4 000 people would not have dropped out of school in the last year.

And I say to you that in addition, what is it that we are really talking about? The figures on transfers and subsidies show that this Government, in the first year when it was affording \$24 million in the estimates to pay tuition fees, was paying over \$1.1 billion in transfers and subsidies. And therefore the marginal increase is only in the vicinity of 10 or 11 million dollars when it allowed transfers and subsidies to go back up again to over \$1.2 billion in this country in the year 2013–14, so that the very year that you change the rules, your transfers and subsidies increased by over \$100 million since 2008–09. But the increase for tuition fees was only a \$10 million increase.

Now it is about choices. And the Member for St. James South and the Member for St. Philip South chose to studiously avoid the other things that this Government has chosen to incur liability for, but try to make it emotional and to choose other appropriate matters of expenditure in education that we need to continue to be supporting. Yes, we must support nursery education and primary and secondary and tertiary. And in respect of this notion of accepting responsibility, it was the Barbados Labour Party Government who said that any increased expenditure at the university for social amenities, for sports or for activities that are non-tuition related, must be covered by the social amenities fee. And I have gone on record as speaking to that already, such that the social amenities fee, according to the Beckles report on tertiary education, constituted about 2 per cent of the economic costs, which would effectively be about 10 per cent of the fees that the student is being asked to pay today. The Beckles report suggested that the social amenities fee be increased to 5 per cent. It may or it may not be. But what I do know is that - let the students fight for those additional benefits, but do not deny them the basic right to tuition at the University of the West Indies.

And there is something unique about our agreement, our social compact, our social covenant. Because on 166 square miles, if you sneeze in St. Lucy, you catch a cold in St. Philip. And therefore it is critical that we agree to be able to give opportunities to young people in this country that would hitherto not be able to have access to those opportunities. So I would like to know, Mr. Chairman - apart from making it clear, and both sides are entitled to have their position - what is clear is that the people of

Barbados will have a very, very clear choice at the next election in relation to this matter.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, I am hearing a lot of noise in my ears from people who don't - please, please, Mr. Chairman - I am hearing a lot of noise in my ears from people who don't even come into my sight. That is the truth. And in the circumstances I am duty bound to ignore them.

Now I am saying to you, Mr. Chairman, that therefore this is a clear issue of where parties stand and what matters. And I know - and I am speaking now to those in the middle classes and those in the tourism, manufacturing and business sector - what makes us unique is our ability to leverage that one asset: stability. And stability has come by our mastering public health, by our mastering access to education, not just from post-independence governments. Because we had 200 primary schools in the year 1900 on 166 square miles; we had six secondary schools. And as limited as access to tertiary was at Codrington, it was possible for some. But we instilled in our DNA that access to education and ownership of land are the two things that give Barbadians perpetual hope that they can succeed in this country. Fairness for each other. And I believe that we have a duty, 50 years after independence, to continue to respect those tenets.

If it was unaffordable - truly, if the Government could sit here and tell us that they could not - they cannot do that, because we say that the Government's position is that it has made choices. It has chosen to support projects that are unsustainable. It has chosen to support incompetence. It has chosen to support inefficiencies in relation to things that it ought not to. I speak about the plasma gasification project. You cannot even guarantee the feedstock to get that project off the ground. But you want to commit a government to giving a businessman a return over 25 years on US\$300 million - that is what it is, \$600 million over 25 years - and an annual amount has to be paid for the purchase of electricity. That equivalent comes in at about the same amount as tuition fees.

Similarly, we have a situation where the refinancing of our debt will be done, if pursued, to be able to reduce interest costs and amortisation costs. And if we can reduce interest and amortisation costs from \$1.7 billion down, then we can find the fiscal space to be able to guarantee tuition fees. And if the Prime Minister were to take the position advanced by the Member for St. Philip West on refinancing, and the Member for St. Peter and the Opposition Labour Party - on which there is consensus on all three sides - that a debt exchange, a debt refinancing programme, can give you the fiscal space not just to meet tuition fees, to guarantee the continued provision in education, but also to meet the request of the hospital and the polyclinics, also to meet the request of the Barbados

Tourism Authority. You cannot spend \$1.7 billion out of \$4.3 billion without seeking to do something about it. And this is now three straight years. And for the Minister of Finance to say it has to await restructuring - I beg to differ. Because the restructuring will only mean that by the time you get there, by next year, you will be spending \$2 billion instead of \$1.7 billion. Last year we were spending \$1.4 billion.

And I don't know what is the stubbornness of the Member for St. Michael North West on this issue, or is it that this is totally being directed by those who occupy the towers that literally rise above this Parliament? But it must not rise figuratively in our power relationships. The Governor of the Central Bank has steadfastly said he is against debt refinancing and creating fiscal space. Do not make our people feel you have no choices, because we know you have choices and we have chosen. Therefore, it may take a little more hard work. It does not mean we do not hold the university to greater efficiency in the administration. For seven years I sat on council, and for seven years I would have held the university to account. Because the other thing is that the Government of Barbados will tell you how much we are buying - it is not an open-ended service. We cannot support 40 or 50 psychiatrists being trained in one year, for argument's sake. And that is where the Ministry of Education comes in, in consultation with the Ministry of Finance, to say this is what we can afford. There have always been caps at the law faculty. There had to be caps in the medical faculty because of the requirement to provide internships at the hospital. So why do we believe that we can have caps in certain areas but not in others?

We agree that there is a responsibility of students to pay what is the social amenities fee. We agree with that. But do not stop them from getting access to basic education - to the parents who simply tell them we cannot afford to go. Four thousand out of 9 000 have not gone back this year. And the Member for St. James South should go and spend some time and get familiar with those numbers. I'm obliged to you.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, I want to make a contribution to this debate - rather, continue my contribution to this debate, which I had to interrupt this morning to attend to an urgent matter in relation to this. And it is very interesting to hear the Leader of the Opposition speak and close her remarks in relation to choices. But before I go there I think I should make the point, in response to what the Leader of the Opposition has been saying, that this is precisely why we had suggested in the first place that we should go to the Hague immediately so that we would have enough time and people could speak

two and three and four and five different times on the subject matter as we are doing now. And if they had listened to us in the beginning we would have been able to hear several other presentations in relation to this matter. But it just goes to show how belligerence and recalcitrance cause people not to be able to cooperate across the line.

But we will make the offers to them just as, Mr. Chairman, sir, we made the offer to them and I wrote the Leader of the Opposition personally to invite her to submit comments in relation to the IMF tax study. And we have not had them yet but I am still awaiting it and I am sure it will come someday soon when the member is finished working on polls and other things which she is occupying herself with.

The point that I want to make, Mr. Chairman, sir, is choices. And we all have choices in a matter like this. The Democratic Labour Party took the decision in last year - August, August 2013, sorry - to indicate to the country that we were faced with certain fiscal challenges and decisions we had to take in relation to certain matters. I think this is one of the matters or one of the items contained in the presentation which I made that was one of the more difficult and painful decisions that we have had to make in relation to this. But it is a decision that we simply had to make. And I know it is politic for opposition parties to say things just to get attention because they want to be popular with everybody. And therefore if there is a crowd that would support them in relation to saying we will pay everybody's tuition fees and we will pay everything, they will say so.

I remember as a young assistant to the then Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, the former member for St. Michael South in this House, when we brought the IMF programme and we invited the country to support us in extending the period of time that people could claim unemployment benefits and lowering the rates in order to maintain the sustainability of the fund. The then Labour Party opposition said that they would restore it as soon as they came back to government. Yes, and the severance payments too. And they never did. Just like they said in the 1970s that when they got back to office they would change the constitutional amendments back. And they did not do that either. And they were in government much longer than this Democratic Labour Party was in that post-1970s period. So we understand this, but the question is what did we have to do and why did we have to do it?

And Mr. Chairman, sir, somebody needs to place this thing within the context. And I said when I became Minister of Finance and I recognised that there was going to be a serious problem, I not only spoke to the Minister of Education and the Prime Minister - we invited the University of the West Indies. We met with them on several occasions at Government Headquarters. And we

said to the university management, we are facing a potential crisis with this particular issue of financing tertiary education, particularly at the University of the West Indies. We indicated to them that because of the financial crisis, government revenues were coming down from a high of 32 per cent down to about 25 per cent of GDP. But at that time it was down to about 27 per cent of GDP. We indicated that the university cost was going in the opposite direction.

Indeed, Mr. Chairman, sir, if you look at the figures in 2002–2003 - I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East might have still been the Minister of Education, but if the Honourable Member was not, I apologise, I stand corrected - we were giving the university \$67.5 million in tuition and economic costs. Mr. Chairman, sir, by 2006–2007 it had risen to \$97 million. You understand the amount of money we are talking about. And then by 2010–2011 it had risen to \$144 million. So you are going from 2003 - and I will mark that point - 2003, from \$67 million, to 2010, \$144 million Barbados dollars. And in between that time, sir, in 2006–2007 it was \$97 million. By 2007–2008 it went from \$97 million to \$100 million dollars. Mr. Chairman, you are talking about substantial amounts of money and a substantial jump between 2006 and 2008 when we would have come into office - a near \$40 million jump in one fiscal year. When your revenues are going south, the university cost is travelling into outer space by nanoseconds.

So in that circumstance, when you become a Minister of Finance, your first two or three weeks on the job and you see this kind of thing, Mr. Chairman, you cannot sit down and pretend that you are going to be able to sustain that kind of thing. And I spoke, Mr. Chairman, sir, about this matter in relation to when I spoke in the budget and I identified three areas - the Transport Board, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and the University of the West Indies. That is why I am saying it because when we came into office - and I draw your attention to page 95 of my budget presentation, it is here as a document of the House - I spoke to those three. And if you go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, when we came into office in 2006–2007 it was getting a transfer of \$130 million Barbados dollars. By 2010 it was getting \$161 million dollars. By 2012–2013 it was getting \$212 million Barbados dollars. Sir, when you are speaking about these kinds of figures in a fiscal crisis or fiscally challenging situation, you are not going to be able to finance this. So adjustments have to be made. Let us be realistic. Whether it was this government or that government, adjustments would have to be made.

But I say, mark the year 2002–2003. That was the beginning of the year going into those elections, when this whole policy devised by the member for St. Michael North East - the Leader of the Opposition who is in here speaking so eloquently about her support for education - came up

with the policy of one graduate per household. And we took it to understand that one graduate meant one tertiary level graduate from any of the tertiary institutions: BCC, SJPP, University of the West Indies. That is what it started out as. But then it morphed itself into one university graduate per household. And in that time, if you look at the student roll of the University of the West Indies, Mr. Chairman, it went from around 2 000 to 2 300 students in 2002–2003 to almost 9 000 by 2011–2012. An explosion of student intake.

Now, there are varying arguments for why that happened. People say, well, the Community College did not have the space, SJPP did not have the space, so the only place they could go was the University of the West Indies. And we also saw that the numbers of students who matriculated below the standard matriculation level - what they call the lower level matriculation students - increased by 2012–2013 to 56 per cent of the intake. This is what you are talking about. So students, frankly - and this is just my view, people might have other views - who might have been better placed at institutions like SJPP and BCC because there was no capacity there, ended up at the University of the West Indies. And the reality of it is this: the cost associated with educating a student at the University of the West Indies is substantially higher than it is for one at BCC or SJPP.

Now, the question has to be asked: why is it that when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister of Education, the capacity - in terms of the expenditure in the Ministry of Education - was not better and more properly directed to building out capacity at those institutions?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. The numbers at the SJPP while I was Minister of Education and at the Community College both doubled - in fact at a quicker rate than the University of the West Indies between 1994 and 2001 - and he should go and check the facts. Secondly, I would also have led the programme on articulation and accreditation such that you would be able to spend two years at BCC and get a year reduced in certain programmes at the University of the West Indies, for the very reasons that he has now discovered as a matter of original discovery, that the per capita cost at the BCC is cheaper than the per capita cost at the university. But those are not reasons to stop paying. And to find the \$35 million that he needs to find, he may be able to bring down the efficiencies, but you cannot change - it is wrong to say that we did not restructure nor did we expand in the other tertiary institutions. Proceed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You have four minutes. Four minutes left.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I want you to deduct those four minutes that the Honourable Member wasted from her next presentation. Because what articulation agreement? Where? Because no such thing exists. No such thing ever existed.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Principal of the Barbados Community College at the time, Mrs. Norma Holder, led the process of the articulation agreement. I was the Minister who asked her to lead it. And she led it not only in relation to the University of the West Indies, but with North American colleges, such that the Government of Barbados and individuals who sent their children overseas could secure a savings of one year. Because once you articulate better, it means that child is not repeating the same courses for another whole year. If the Minister wants to talk about something, talk about the substance of it. Proceed.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Let me apologise to the Leader of the Opposition because I got a little mixed up - maybe I did not hear correctly. The Leader of the Opposition said that she led a team to negotiate the articulation agreement. She then corrected herself to say it was the Principal of the BCC who led the team. But the reality is, at the end of the day, unless it is somewhere that I do not know of, there is no articulation agreement at present that I know of. Let me put it that way - that I have seen. I have asked for it but I have not seen it. And perhaps the Minister of Education can tell us when he gets it where this articulation agreement exists between BCC and SJPP, because as far as I know no such agreement exists.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member is misleading the House yet again.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Is it on the same matter or a different matter?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member has now introduced an articulation agreement between BCC and SJPP, to which I have not spoken. I have spoken to an articulation agreement between the Barbados Community College and the University of the West Indies. He is simply surmising.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Proceed.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I mean UWI. I do not mind that. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member does not want me to make the point before my time runs out that it was under her watch that there was this precipitous and dangerous expansion in university tertiary education without the appropriate financial planning with the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Education to ensure that it was sustainable. That is the point. And the failures of the member for St. Michael North East, both

when she was Minister of Education and then latterly Minister for Economic Affairs - even though the Honourable Member never really connected with that portfolio at all - the tragedy is that the Honourable Member did not have the foresight, the insight, but now pretends to have the hindsight, to have put in place an appropriate plan both on the finance end: to say, if the university student roll and expansion grows this much for this year and that year and the next year, this is how we are going to provide for it; these are the areas that we are going to concentrate on because we have done a national analysis of the labour and other human resource needs of the country and we have devised a plan to meet those needs, and this is the costing. It did not happen. And there was no physical expansion in the capacity of the BCC - you all know that. There was no physical expansion in the capacity of the SJPP - you all know that. So all of the students, not to their discredit, had to pull themselves up into the one-graduate-per-household university campus at tremendous cost to the taxpayers.

So if we have to hang a garland around anybody's neck for what has come to pass, it has to be hung around the neck of the Leader of the Opposition. Coming in here, Mr. Chairman, sir, pretending that Pontius Pilate has washed his hands and had no responsibility for it. But what is even worse is this political sanctimonious lecture about choices. Did we have a choice to build a \$700 million prison and pay \$30 million every January for it? That \$30 million could pay tuition fees. Did we have a choice to spend \$100 million at Greenland? All of that money could be paying for tuition costs. Did we have a choice to spend near \$300 million on the GEMS project? All of that could be spent on tuition costs. Did we have a choice to waste money on building two travel police stations? All of that money could be—

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Right now, Mr. Chairman, sir.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member is unreasonably exciting his heart rate. He is misleading the House because there was no choice in the prison when it burned. But in any event, all of the other things which he cited are simply things that the Labour Party did without having to sacrifice tuition fees for the children of this country.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have two minutes. Two more minutes.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: But that is the point. That is the point. That is the point. That is why the bad decisions you took then is the pain that we are bearing now. That is the problem. That is really the challenge in the question of education.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir. The Honourable Member is yet again misleading the House. The country

finds itself not because of bad decisions the Labour Party made. This Government is borrowing at \$15 million a week every week for the last six years. Eight years. I remember. And two weeks in every year would be sufficient to pay for the fees. And they have nothing to show for the six and a half billion that they have borrowed the last eight years.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: That is not a point. I want to proceed. Please. Please. Your time - you have to wrap up now.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Okay. Thank you. Wrap up? Yes, please. But the Honourable Member - Mr. Chairman, I plead with you. The Honourable Member is wasting my time. I will come back. I will come back. Sorry, Chairman. I don't want to fight. Everybody sit down. Please let me wrap up. Let me wrap up the point. Let me wrap up the point. Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman. Let me wrap up the point. The fact is. The fact is that the bad choices of the Leader of the Opposition and the Barbados Labour Party when they were -

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman. On a point of order. The Honourable Member - are you interjecting something new? The Honourable Member -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you interjecting something new?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I was trying to tell you that the Honourable Member is misleading.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No. But I don't remember - if you are not interjecting something new - because all I heard coming from you was a repetition. So if you are responding - hold on. Honourable Member. If you are responding, I -

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I will sit. Mr. Chairman. Thank you. Proceed.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: But there is something new. Bad choices. The \$140 million on Kensington Oval when they were told not to knock it down, to go and build a new one. We got to pay for that.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Honourable Member - you all remember - do something new. When the Government of Barbados -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Was that the point of order?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Misleading the House. No. But Honourable Member, he has not gotten a chance to mislead the House. No, no, no. On Kensington, sir. Honourable Member, I do not remember misleading the House.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I do not remember. There was no statement. He did not - a phrase came. There was no - you. Do not be too anxious.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Proceed, please. And I would just - look, I am going to conclude the point because clearly I have rattled and unsettled the Leader of the Opposition. Because the truth is finally out. The choices that the Leader of the Opposition made, both when she was Minister of Education and when she was in the Ministry of Economic Affairs doing absolutely nothing but meddling in the Crab Hill Police Station matter, which we will discuss later, is what has gotten us to the point where students have to pay the fees - because the debt, because the overspending of the last Government, has caused us to be where we are now having to - thank you, Honour.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you. Thank you, Honour. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. In all seriousness, this - the Honourable Member cites Kensington Oval but does not tell this Chamber that this Government signed the agreement for Kensington Oval for the money with the agreement. So let us get it straight. The other member is misleading the Chamber.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have to take any context. Okay. Yes. You have concluded, Honourable Member. You have concluded, Honourable Member. Not yet?

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I am going to wrap up now. I have been trying to wrap up but I cannot wrap up, sir. I cannot wrap up because the Leader of the Opposition realises she has now sunk in the debate. She has now sunk to the bottom of this debate.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, how much more?

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: One more minute. One more minute. And I am going to say - I get half a second. The Honourable Member has sunk to the bottom of this debate in education because we have finally exposed the Honourable Member and the Barbados Labour Party for the bad planning, bad financial management, and now Monday morning quarterbacking, trying to give people the impression that they have this sanctimonious concern for the students when they led those students down the garden path only to have them cut off - cut off because of the bad financial decisions of the last administration. I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Finally intervening in this debate today, I would first want to join with the sentiments of my colleague, the Member of

Parliament for St. Michael South East, who spoke about the level of this debate this morning and the behaviour of members on the Government side, particularly the Attorney General and the Minister of Education. They are supposed to be leaders and examples for young people in this country. And if that is how they behave and the kind of sentiments they express in here and the kind of low language and lack of class - really and truly, that is unfortunate. Unfortunate for young people.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member. Just a moment please. The Honourable Member cannot refer to another member as having a lack of class in their behaviour. No, no. Cannot do that. Honourable Member. Mr. Chairman, I think - just one moment please.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: So, Mr. Chairman, there is - Honour - would you please hold one moment?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Oh, okay, sir. Thank you. Honourable Member, I request you to withdraw those remarks in respect to the other members in the House.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Yes, sir. I withdraw, sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. And we may not go that road again.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: You know, Mr. Chairman, this debate clearly shows the philosophical divide between the two parties. Clearly shows a philosophical divide. You know, a lot of people say the parties are the same and it makes no difference. This debate clearly shows the divide because in politics, as in life, you have to stand for something. Because if you do not stand for something, you will fall for anything.

Previous to this political administration, both parties had agreed that education was sacrosanct to the advancement of the people of Barbados socially and economically. Both parties. Both parties agreed that politicians, the political administration, had a social contract with the people of Barbados for free tertiary education. Both parties. One thing we could agree with the Right Honourable Prime Minister on is that the imposition of tuition fees on University of the West Indies education by Barbadians is a retrograde step. That is the one thing that we agree on.

80 per cent of the graduates of the University of the West Indies historically have been from the working class of this country. 80 per cent. Thirteen of the sixteen Democratic Labour Party members of Parliament right now are university educated at the University of the West Indies - paid free for them. Free tuition fees. Including the Right Honourable Prime Minister who had three degrees and one legal certificate paid free by the taxpayers of this country.

It is a shame that they should now kick down the ladder and be telling people that they now have to pay and that time has come and evolved.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Thank you. The Honourable Member is misleading the House because the Honourable Member knows that it was not the Democratic Labour Party that stopped Barbadians from having the opportunity to do more than one degree, but it was the Barbados Labour Party that did it in 2003. So the Honourable Member should stop misleading the House.

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

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: You know, Mr. Chairman, as usual, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy misunderstands everything in this House and shows by his every intervention in anything in this Parliament why the late Prime Minister was absolutely correct in his judgment that he should never see the inside of a Cabinet meeting. I really do not know why the Right Honourable Prime Minister breached that judgment. Impeccable judgment by the late Prime Minister.

You know, from the time of the University of the West Indies, its establishment - state-funded education at University of the West Indies level was recognised as the only way out for the poor people of this country. As Dr. Henderson Carter said in his address during last year's celebration of the 375th anniversary of Parliament, Barbadians deserve free education because our parents had fought hard for it. The Right Honourable National Hero Errol Barrow believed that publicly funded tertiary education was a social right invested in the masses for centuries, excluded from the economic ownership structures of this society. And you know that National Hero has to be turning in his watery grave. Has to be turning in his watery grave together with the late Sir James Cameron Tudor to understand and to know that people who have inherited their leadership positions in the Democratic Labour Party have done this to poor black people in this country and have come with all kinds of shenanigans and excuses to justify it.

Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART: Honourable Member is misleading the House. And I, as I said, I have given up on the Honourable Member at length. But I do not like the name of the Right Excellent Errol Barrow being taken in vain. I know that in 1985 the Right Excellent Errol Barrow wrote the preface to the 30th anniversary booklet of the Democratic Labour Party, which 30th anniversary booklet makes very clear, so far as university education is concerned, that the party - any future DLP government - would work with the University to determine where the priorities lie and would determine how many places in each faculty the Government would be prepared to support.

Even Errol Barrow accepted that the time was coming when continuing to finance university education in the old ways - that time was going to have to come to an end. So I do not know what he is talking about. This is a published document. I can bring it to the House tomorrow.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I made a ruling about documents in the House.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, I could well understand now why that late National Hero used to mention somebody by the name of Fraud. I can now understand.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member - hold on. Honourable Member, wait. You, I believe, were one of the persons this morning who spoke about the fact that there are people listening. If we do not respect each other in here, how do you expect others outside to respect us? And we have to be careful about the level of behaviour. No, no, hold on. Okay, please. I understand the need to understand how it is, but certainly let us consider that when you point a finger, four are pointed back at you. Okay? So let us treat each other with the respect that is desired so that others on your side treat the same. And I will really ask that all members desist from that type of behaviour. Thank you very much.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You know, the fact is, Mr. Chairman, that the present head of the University of the West Indies Cave Hill contradicts what the Right Honourable Prime Minister just said. Because he wrote a thesis saying that in 1986 that National Hero spoke to him about how he could continue the legacy of the Democratic Labour Party within the context of free education and within the context of the economy at the time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for -

Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART: - must not continue to mislead the House. I am not - I do not have to say, as the person the Honourable Member is talking about - I do not quote what people who cannot defend themselves or verify what I am saying say to me. What I said in here today is in a published document with the signature of Errol Barrow on it. It is a public document. I have heard that talk about what Barrow told me that he wants me to do this. I do not have to do that. I dealt with Barrow directly and I have the published document in which he said - and he signed it - that a future DLP government will work with the University of the West Indies to see where the priorities lie and to determine how many places in each faculty the Government would support based on manpower projections. I do not have to quote anybody who cannot contradict me.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please proceed.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Labour Party in the last administration was faced with the same choice. In 1994–95, we were emerging from a recession similar to the one we have had and are still in. And yes, the Leonard Shorey Report which has been mentioned in here earlier today recommended that students pay 50 per cent of their tuition costs. And the Honourable Leader of the Opposition as Minister of Education rejected that report. And the Barbados Labour Party continued to pay 100 per cent of the tuition fees of University of the West Indies students.

Government has to be about choices. Government has to be about political will. And there has to be political will on this score. Not everyone has \$115 000 vehicles and limestone houses and electricity and carries their children to Disneyland, as the Right Honourable Prime Minister spoke about, and could afford to pay tuition fees. The Honourable Member for St. James South said even those people are under pressure under his Government today. That is what he said. That is not the average person. The average person now whose children want to go to the University of the West Indies has been laid off from their job by the Government.

One of the 3 500 people after being told last election that not one public servant will go home. They are under pressure to pay the rent or the mortgage. They are under pressure to pay the water bill or the electricity bill. They are under pressure to pay health costs for their mother or for their sick child. That is the average person who wants to attend the University of the West Indies. They are under pressure having to pay increased prices every time they go to the supermarket. The cost of living has gone up. So let us not fool ourselves. These pronouncements from Democratic Labour Party Members of Parliament that we have benefited from the University of the West Indies education and can therefore now pay for our children - we know that. But let us think about the 80 per cent out there who are not like us. Let us think about them and what we are asking them to do right now. Are they going to be like many of my constituents who have had to drop out of the University of the West Indies because they cannot pay the tuition fees because the bursaries did not come through 12 months after the Minister of Education first announced them? Are they like an individual in a St. Michael constituency right now, represented by the Democratic Labour Party, that the Honourable Member for St. George North and I met, who said that he had to drop out as a teacher because his DLP Member of Parliament refused to help him pay any tuition fees? And we saw him on the block a Saturday afternoon. That is the average person we are talking about here.

And this nonsense being peddled - that if we did not impose the fees, the hospital would have closed, and that SJPP would be on its last legs, and that students at BCC would have to pay 50 per cent of their fees as pronounced by the Honourable Minister of Education - it is pure hysteria. Because we are saying that there are certain social welfare systems that have to be kept in place, and that in a big book where total expenditure is \$4.3 billion, a government must be able to find \$35 million to continue funding the University. Yes, I agree with the Member of Parliament for St. James South that one should look to see how the University of the West Indies costs could have been cut down, and that should have been done. If the DLP Government did not do that, it shows their incompetence. Sit down with the University of the West Indies officials and show how the costs could be cut down - cut down or eliminate part-time tutors and lecturers. Those kinds of issues should have been dealt with.

Why was not the concept of the University College of Barbados - that the Barbados Labour Party had settled on, amalgamating SJPP, BCC, and the Erdiston Distance College - why was that not continued? A concept that would have created efficiencies in tertiary level education in Barbados and cut down on the cost. We speak about BCC not having expanded and try to blame the Barbados Labour Party. Why was BCC not expanded? We agree the cost for educating the student there is less. When are we going to start the expansion of BCC and the Polytechnic, which we heard about in a budget - I believe it was two budgets ago - or in the Throne Speech, which is a document of this House? When are we going to see those come off the ground so that BCC and the Polytechnic could be expanded? But these are issues that we have to face.

And even so, Mr. Chairman, even so, with the imposition of tuition fees, the Democratic Labour Party Government has still not reduced to any substantial extent the debt owed to the University of the West Indies. They came into office in January 2008 and found a debt-clear government situation with respect to the University of the West Indies. The Barbados Government did not owe the University of the West Indies any money when they came into office in January 2008. According to the Auditor General's report, the debt to the University of the West Indies is now \$132 million as of 31st July last year, I believe - and if it is different, the Minister of Education can say so. It is right now back to more than \$150 million. But we had heard two Aprils ago that \$40 million would be paid to the University each quarter to reduce that debt. Has that been done? I remember - time has expired. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate it and I will come back on this issue.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that you do now report progress to His Honour the Speaker and ask for leave to sit again.

AN HON. MEMBER: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour, the SPEAKER, and asked for leave to sit again. Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that the sitting be suspended until 5.00 this evening.

AN HON. MEMBER: I beg to second that.

The question that the House be suspended until 5.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BOYCE, Hon. J. D. E. (Christ Church South)
BRADSHAW, Miss S. J. O. (St. Michael South East)
BRATHWAITE, Hon. A. D. (St. Philip South)
CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
ESTWICK, Dr. the Hon. D. C. (St. Philip West)
FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)
HINKSON, Mr. E. G. (St. James North)
INNISS, Hon. D. O’N. (St. James South)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, Hon. D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Hon. S. A. (Christ Church West Central)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
SEALY, Hon. R. L. (St. Michael South Central)
SINCKLER, Hon. C. P. (St. Michael North West)
STUART, Rt. Hon. F. J. (St. Michael South)
SUTHERLAND, Mr. D. G. (St. George South)
SYMMONDS, Mr. K. D. (St. James Central)
THOMPSON, Mrs. M-J. M. (St. John)

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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. Mr. SPEAKER opened by resuming the Sitting suspended ‘last evening’, which had been suspended until 9.00 a.m. today; 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 are out of sequence (for example ‘[1.00 a.m.]’ and ‘[3.00 p.m.]’ during the morning, before the luncheon suspension) and have been omitted.

Q3. Throughout. The words ‘I beg to second that’ after the motions to report progress and to suspend in the afternoon are printed under AN HON. MEMBER; the seconders are not identified. Please confirm.

Q4. Committee of Supply. Mr. CHAIRMAN is not named in the source; the Chairman of Committees, Mr. J. D. Paul, is presumed. Speakers refer to the Head under consideration as Head 77, Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. The report-progress motions are printed in the Official Report form.

Q5. Committee of Supply, Mr. D. G. Sutherland. After Mr. CHAIRMAN’s ‘Honourable Member has five minutes’, the source runs the rest of Mr. Sutherland’s speech on as if it were the Chairman’s; it is printed under Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND.

Q6. Committee of Supply, Hon. R. D. Jones (point of order). The source reads ‘The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is misleading the House’ at the start of a point of order headed Hon. R. D. Jones, who was himself the Member for Christ Church East Central, while Mr. CHAIRMAN’s call breaks off at ‘Honourable Member for –’. The constituency is printed as the end of the Chairman’s call. Please confirm.

Q7. Committee of Supply, Hon. R. L. Sealy. The speech begins mid-sentence in the source (‘speak to this head, Education, Science, Technology and Innovation’). The opening words may be missing.

Q8. Committee of Supply, Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw. Miss Bradshaw refers to ‘the honourable member for Christ Church West Central – the honourable Minister of Education’. In 2015 the Member for Christ Church West Central was Hon. S. A. Lashley, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, and the Minister of Education was Hon. R. D. Jones, Member for Christ Church East Central. It is not clear which Member was meant; left as in the source. Please check.

Q9. Committee of Supply, Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw and Miss C. Y. Forde. Miss Bradshaw’s speech breaks off at ‘then we will’ before Mr. CHAIRMAN’s ‘– has three minutes. Sorry, Mr. Chairman. Two minutes.’, and Miss Forde’s speech breaks off at ‘never had’ before the call of the Member for St. Philip West. Part of the debate may be missing at these points. Please check against the recording.

Q10. Committee of Supply, Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart. Mr. CHAIRMAN’s call reads ‘Honourable Member for St. Michael South East’ in the source, but the speaker was the Prime Minister, Member for St. Michael South, as Miss C. Y. Forde confirms (‘the honourable member for St. Michael South and the Prime Minister’); the call is corrected. The speech begins mid-sentence (‘– an intervention in this debate on education’), so its opening words may be missing.

Q11. Committee of Supply, report of progress before luncheon. Mr. CHAIRMAN calls ‘the honourable member for Christ Church West Central ... to move that I do report progress’, but the motion is headed Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, Member for Christ Church South and Leader of the House, who moved the same motion later in the day. Left as in the source. Please confirm the mover.

Q12. Committee of Supply, after the luncheon suspension. Headed ‘MR. PETER R. PHILLIPS, J.P., M.P.’ in the source; he was not a Member of the 2013–2018 House. Mr. CHAIRMAN called ‘our Member for St. Lucy’, the speaker refers to the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development, and Mr. E. G. Hinkson later answers ‘the Honourable Member for St. Lucy’, so the speech is printed under Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN. Please confirm.

Q13. Committee of Supply, Hon. C. P. Sinckler and Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley. In the exchange of points of order during Mr. Sinckler’s second speech the source splits sentences between speakers (for example ‘Your time – you’ / ‘have to wrap up now’, ‘But there is something’ / ‘new’). Words have been restored to the speaker whose sentence they complete; ‘The Honourable Member is misleading the House yet again’, headed Mr. CHAIRMAN,

is printed under the Leader of the Opposition, and ‘Is it on the same matter or a different matter?’, headed Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, under Mr. CHAIRMAN. The line ‘Right now, Mr. Chairman, sir’, headed Mr. CHAIRMAN, is left as in the source. Please check against the recording.

Q14. Committee of Supply, Mr. E. G. Hinkson. The source reads ‘I agree with the Member of Parliament for St. James North that one should look to see how the University of the West Indies costs could have been cut down’. Mr. Hinkson was himself the Member for St. James North; the point had been made by Hon. D. O’N. Inniss, Member for St. James South, whom Mr. Hinkson cites earlier in the speech. Corrected to St. James South. Please confirm.

Q15. End of the record. The record ends with the suspension of the sitting until 5.00 p.m. The proceedings after the resumption, and the adjournment, are not in the source. Please supply from the recording or the Votes and Proceedings.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House resumed at 9.00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 18, 2015 in Committee of Supply on Order No. 17, continuing the debate on Head 77, Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. Mrs. M-J. M. Thompson asked the Minister of Education for a new school in St. John to serve the pupils of St. John’s Primary and the area served by the closed Society Primary School. Mr. D. G. Sutherland accused the Government of abolishing free tertiary education after its statements in the 2013 general election; on a point of order Hon. D. St.E. Kellman said students had been asked to contribute only 20 per cent. Hon. A. D. Brathwaite argued that free tertiary education decided on for 3 000 Barbadians was not sustainable for 16 000 or 17 000. Mr. CHAIRMAN struck a remark of Mr. E. G. Hinkson from the record, and Hon. A. D. Brathwaite withdrew a remark.

Mr. K. D. Symmonds referred to a Nation report of 14 November 2011 on the Prime Minister’s statement on free tertiary education. Hon. S. A. Lashley cited the Youth Mainstreaming Programme and Endless Possibilities and said the Barbados Labour Party’s 2013 manifesto had proposed only a task force. Hon. R. L. Sealy spoke of Erdiston Teachers’ Training College. Mr. G. A. Clarke

raised places at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic; Hon. J. D. E. Boyce said some \$12.5 million was projected for it, as in previous years. Hon. R. D. Jones said Government’s contribution to the University of the West Indies had risen from just short of \$98 million in 2006–2007 to some \$160 million by 2011–2012, and that the Student Revolving Loan Fund lent up to \$50 000 at 4 per cent without guarantors. Hon. C. P. Sinckler recalled raising the cost of free social services in his 2010 budget.

Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw criticised the conduct of Members and raised the shortage of day-care places and community centres in St. Michael South East. Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart traced the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic to the Democratic Labour Party and said he did not regret what he had said at the Community College graduation in November 2011, but that economic realities had to be faced. Miss C. Y. Forde asked for the status of the Edutech programme and raised the 600 teachers awaiting appointment. Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick called for more regard for technical and vocational training and said Barbados needed growth of about 3 to 3.5 per cent. Progress was reported and the sitting was suspended until 2.15 p.m.

On resumption Hon. D. St.E. Kellman said school meals and textbooks had always carried a contribution and spoke of the planned northern complex at Nassau. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley stated the Barbados Labour Party’s position that tuition at the University should be free, at a cost of \$30 million to \$35 million a year in a budget of \$4.3 billion, and said 4 000 of 9 000 students had not returned. Hon. D. O’N. Inniss called for an audit of the University’s costs. Hon. A. D. Brathwaite cited a survey of about 1 400 secondary students, 71.2 per cent of whom had used alcohol.

Resuming, Hon. C. P. Sinckler blamed the previous administration’s spending, including a \$700 million prison and \$140 million on Kensington Oval, and exchanged points of order with the Leader of the Opposition on an articulation agreement. Mr. E. G. Hinkson withdrew remarks at Mr. CHAIRMAN’s request, recalled that the Leonard Shorey Report’s recommendation that students pay 50 per cent had been rejected, and gave the debt to the University as \$132 million; the Prime Minister cited the Democratic Labour Party’s 1985 anniversary booklet prefaced by Errol Barrow. On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce progress was reported and the sitting was suspended until 5.00 p.m., where the record ends.