
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, March 19, 2015

The House of Assembly resumed on Thursday, March 19, 2015, the Sitting of Wednesday, March 18, 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)

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

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT (Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development)

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD

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

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN

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

Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC

Dr. M. M. AGARD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, honourable members. This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken last evening, we were 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.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It won't be long in this intervention, but I just want to say that I have listened to the many contributions in this debate and they certainly range far and wide. Only last night, the Minister of Finance, in fact, spoke on everything under the sun, including the issue of education. But I've listened to them, Mr. Chairman. And one thing that strikes me about the contributions of the members on the other side is the tone of their presentations. And that surprised me and it saddened me to a large extent because I think it is unfortunate, but I think it is also true that this government really has not demonstrated that it has really any or any significant level of respect for the University of the West Indies or for the graduates of the University of the West Indies. And hence the tone of what they had to say in this debate so far.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that any time a government is proposing to do anything that is going to destroy the dreams and aspirations of thousands of people, as has

happened - perhaps especially young people - I think that they should demonstrate some sympathy, empathy or remorse for what it is that they are doing. And unfortunately, Mr. Chairman, students in this country have been taunted and tortured by this government in relation to the issue of payment of fees at the university. They were assured from way back when that they would have been given bursaries to offset the expenses. They did not get those bursaries in any timely manner. To this day, they have not even been given the full amount promised. They were kept dangling from a string even after semester after semester began. Some were not able to go on to register at all. And some were only able to register well after the semester had begun and after some alternative loan arrangement had come through. When the semester was well underway, Mr. Chairman, I saw all of that and I saw the impact, including the psychological impact that had on students. The government showed no respect at all for the students of this country.

And not only, Mr. Chairman, the members of cabinet and sitting members of Parliament on the government side in this chamber. But only yesterday, Mr. Chairman, there was a report of remarks made by the Barbados Ambassador to CARICOM, who is an adviser to this government. In fact, it is known that he formulates policy for this government. So when he makes a statement, you have to listen to what he says, because chances are it is being informed by and or will inform the actions of this government, the policies of this government. And he was quoted as saying negative things about the university yesterday and the graduates. He was saying that in large measure, graduates now are no more than clerks or administrators when they come out of universities. And that university should be reserved for postgraduate teaching - masters, doctorates, professional teaching, for entrepreneurship and driving change. Those were the words that he was quoted as saying.

And I am asking, Mr. Chairman, why? Why should we ever reserve our university for only postgraduate work? Why should that happen? Where then, if we do that, are our undergraduates expected to be educated and become qualified? Where are we going to send them? Are we hearing that undergraduate work is to be done at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic or the Barbados Community College or one of the other tertiary institutions that the Prime Minister reminded us yesterday exist in this country? I say, Mr. Chairman, no way. No degree from any such institution, as they are presently structured, would or should be recognised in the same way as a degree from the University of the West Indies.

I am a proud graduate of the University of the West Indies. And it baffles and annoys me - those who went to university at a time when they did not have to pay. And the Prime Minister yesterday was quick to point out to me that

he has three degrees from the University of the West Indies - three - without paying a single cent. But these people who benefited then go on, for reasons unknown to me, to discredit the very same institution that they came from and put obstacles in the way of people going to the university. I believe if it is that there are issues with the curriculum or planning of the university, and if it is deemed to be in any way not sufficiently functional for the purposes of the planned development of the country or the region, then that should be addressed. But we must never, ever abandon the undergraduate programme at the University of the West Indies. And these are the conflicting signals that are being sent to students in Barbados. And I think that they must cease. For students to be focused and perform, there must be calm assurance, and conflicting signals would do anything but provide that.

Even the Prime Minister himself has otherwise sent conflicting signals in relation to the way forward at the university. In November 2011, he was clear in his position that never, ever would any student going to the University of the West Indies be called upon to pay any fees at all for going there. And some people, those who perhaps did not know any better, would have taken him at his word. But that was his position then. He subsequently presided over the exact opposite. Students have been called upon to pay fees at the very same institution that he said they would not have to pay fees to attend. And he has given no satisfactory explanation for the change in these two diametrically opposed positions. He sought to give one yesterday or the day before by saying that times have changed - but in 2011, when he said it, times were worse then than they are now. The Minister of Finance has come in here and said that the position is stabilised. So things were worse then than they are now. So if then they would not be charged, now that things have gotten better, why have they been charged? And these are the sort of conflicting positions that are being put out there that are making it very, very difficult - more importantly, for students and those interested in going to university - to know what will happen. You have to ask: what next?

The member for St. George North asked the question yesterday. It can be expected that next year or the year after, if and when the financial situation worsens, does that mean that we are going to hear a further increase in these fees? Is this just the precursor to some draconian measures that are in fact being planned for fees at the university? And if this is so, the government needs to come clean with the people of Barbados so that proper planning can take place as they plan the future education of their children. And I am currently in that position because I have a daughter who will shortly be approaching university age - in another year, year and a half - ready to go. I need to know what is the plan. Because if things go my way, quite frankly, I am hoping that she would be educated at the University of the West Indies. I am not one who holds the

view that going to any particular university overseas adds anything to the degree that you get at the University of the West Indies. So I am one of those parents who would need to know what is the plan, because I wish her to go to the University of the West Indies, I really do. So we need to know clearly what is the plan.

Also, I want to just take a few minutes to look at the issue of curriculum reform in Barbados in secondary schools, because I believe that a student in a school should be able to be whatever he or she wants to be. I left school many, many years ago - perhaps some 30 years or so or more. And I am surprised to see that not much has taken place in terms of curriculum reform in secondary schools in terms of the course subjects that are deemed to be core subjects. Now, as I said, a child should be allowed to be what he or she wants to be, or what he or she can be. And there is a danger in shutting down the options available to a child too early. You have a situation now where once a child reaches fourth form - certainly at Harrison College and I believe most if not all of the other secondary schools - you have to make choices. On the one hand you are being told that you can make certain choices and a vast number of different subjects have been added to the curriculum. But at the same time you are being told that there are certain subjects that you must do.

Now, I can understand a requirement that a child in Barbados or an English-speaking country must do English language, but I do not see that there is any justification for any other core subject at all in secondary schools. I cannot see any justification for requiring that a child must do English literature. Reading Shakespeare and so on is nice sometimes as recreation, but quite frankly, who cares? Nobody has to do English literature. It cannot be a core subject. And that destroys one of the options that a child may want to take or to exercise. Then you must do either history or geography. Pray tell why? Why must a child do history or geography? I did history - it is true, I did not do geography. But nothing that I am doing now in my life has demonstrated any justification for placing on me a burden to do either history or geography or English literature. Even mathematics. I can understand that one would like to be somewhat rounded, but again, there are many of us in here with professions who do not understand maths and geometry and these things in any great detail. And it has not impacted in any way on their ability to live life and have successful professions and careers.

So I believe that the time has come when, if you are saying that a child is to be all that a child can be, then the areas that are restricted ought to be looked at also, given how the options are currently set up. A child cannot leave him or herself open to testing their knowledge in relation to both the sciences and the arts, because you cannot do all the sciences and the arts in fourth form. If you do all the sciences, you must drop either Spanish or French. If you do

both Spanish and French, you cannot do all three sciences. And these are absurdities that are persisting in 2015. And I believe that the Minister has to ensure that these issues are addressed.

I want to conclude by thanking the teaching staff at both Gideon Lodge and Grazettes Primary School, but in particular the staff at Grazettes Primary, because we are dealing with a crisis management situation that was encountered where, because of a problem at the school, the Grazettes Primary School had to be relocated for almost an entire term and severely disadvantaged the students there, especially in preparation for the Eleven Plus. And I want to commend the teachers there who went beyond the call of duty, without any assistance at all from the Ministry of Education, who gave up their lunch breaks and evenings after school to put in the time and the extra tuition for those students who were being severely disadvantaged, to ensure that hopefully they will be up to speed for the Eleven Plus exam, which is going to be very, very shortly. And I want to end by just asking all of my colleagues in here and all of Barbados to say a special prayer for those students who were so disadvantaged and who will now have to face, in very short order, what is perhaps one of the most important examinations in this country. I am grateful, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable member for St. Peter.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Chairman, thank you for recognising me. Having in my second reading speech suggested that it was absolutely necessary that the Parliament should have a full debate on education, it would be wrong and strange if I did not make even a small contribution to it. I made my contribution to it, sir, in the belief that Barbados is facing what I would call a Kennedy moment. That we have reached that point where we have to say that is not what your country can do for you. The time has come for us to tell certain sections of the society, ask yourself what you can do for your country.

I have held fast to the position, which I want to repeat at the start of this debate, that the access to tertiary education supported by the state has been, since independence, the single most powerful means by which people have been allowed to escape from the pinch of poverty. I say I hold that view, Mr. Chairman, modifying it only to say that in the context of the financial situation facing the country at this time and the obligations that must be met for the immediate future, that we must continue to provide access to tertiary education, but that there must be dedicated forms of financing that would enable the country to pay for it all. Through my recent tenure as a member of the Barbados Labour Party, that was the position and I held it, and nothing will cause me not to state that position again.

I always heard the leaders of this country have from time to time had to speak to this matter. Some may ask, what would Errol Barrow himself do if he was here? I know I can only tell you that I was in this House with Errol Barrow and in the Estimates Debate of 1987 when the then Minister of Finance brought the estimates to the House without making provision for the wage increase that had been agreed in advance. He spoke. He interrupted me and spoke. He said hold your strictures until he brings the budget debate where he has to show how he will pay for it. And seriously, if there was ever a time where the need to show how you are going to pay for it matters, the time is now.

I believe that my colleagues in the Barbados Labour Party are sincere when they feel that there has to be a restoration of confidence. I believe that my colleagues in the Barbados Labour Party are sincere as well when they say that an important aspect of that restoration of confidence has to be the restoration of Barbados' credit rating to an investment grade. And I know that they are sincere when they examine the implications of not having an investment grade. It means that people and businesses will leave, as [Inaudible.] has said. It means that the cost of borrowing by business in Barbados will increase. It means, Mr. Chairman, that the cost to government of borrowing will increase and that our ability to even preside over the presentation of the existing services to the country could be compromised if we do not do that which is necessary to restore the investment grade. It is not about arithmetic. It is about the well-being of this country for the future. And therefore any discussion about what we should be doing in relation to our public finances has to take their compass bearings from those two things: the restoration of confidence and the restoration of that investment grade.

Confidence cannot be restored if policies that cannot be sustained are presented only for popular political purposes. People will see through it. And for the Labour Party - so let me tell them - that in 1994 I supported from opposition an incomes policy. I also from opposition supported the introduction of value added tax in this country because I felt that what I was saying had to be measured in the context of how sound or how unsound it is in relation to the restoration of investment grade. That must be at the centre of our consideration. Any new proposals to increase expenditure beyond what is in the estimates have to be taken into account of what is in the estimates that we have to deal with as a country.

And these are the brutal simple facts. Barbados' government expenditure is \$1.7 billion more than its revenue. Once it remains at that exalted level, there will be continuous downgrades of the Barbados government debt. What is in the estimates now, before we make adjustments, can lead to a further downgrade of the government's debt, which is already at the level of junk. To add to the

expenditure is only going to trigger further downgrades of the debt. To say that you are going to take one expenditure and replace it by another is going to leave the financing gap at \$1.7 billion. So that ending discussion about spending \$35 million more - and this is how economists must think, this is how people in Parliament must think - cannot be just a standalone initiative, but it has to be part of an overall single undertaking. Namely, it has to be discussed in the context of what we are doing to make sure that we cannot carry \$1.7 billion with us into the future.

So that any discussion of reversing the policy on education cannot just be a standalone. It has to be discussed in the context of how we are going to pay for education while also dealing with the fact that we are in a position in this country, in respect of the sovereign debt ratings of this country, of one where it is junk. And it is junk because we have a revenue deficiency of \$1.7 billion. So that, Mr. Chairman, Barbados, in order to get our rating back to where it should be, the country has to make an adjustment of \$600 million to the public finances. The Governor of the Central Bank has said that it would take an adjustment of \$170 million just to get it back on track. But getting it back on track is not changing the junk status. It makes no sense to bring proposals that are simply going to keep the expenditure where they are and that will not suffice to help us to bring down and restore confidence in the economy.

Sir, I have from time to time, speaking on the other side, spoken of how I would try to deal with tertiary education. I believe that the ladder of opportunity should not be kicked down. I strongly believe that and I have said so. But that funding of tertiary education is of such strategic importance that we should have dedicated funding for it - funding that is so dedicated that it will not cause any government, be it B or D, to have to compromise other things in order to pay for it. Have we reached that stage? We have reached that stage. And I am also saying, sir - and that is why I use the Kennedy quotation - that the genius of Barbados' development since independence has been that it has allowed some of us born into poverty to escape from the clutches of poverty through access to education. I believe so.

But the country now cannot continue to give to those of us who have escaped from poverty, and to households where they have escaped from poverty, the same entitlement that allowed us to get to this stage. And those of us who, because of the spending by governments of Barbados, have reached this stage - where we are now living and where Barbados' development has been the growth of a middle class, especially an upper middle class - must understand that our obligation to those who have not yet escaped is that we cannot continue to ask the state to do that which for us brought us to this stage, but that we must be empowered to look after our own affairs and to help

those who have not yet been allowed to escape from the clutches of poverty.

I speak on behalf of constituents who are in the same position that my parents were in 1968 when I had to go to university - that they would be the first in their family to go to university. My constituency assistant, sir, was in a situation of complete agony that her son was finishing the degree to be a vet, and to have a vet from Fort Hill, St. Peter is something that families feel proud about. I have said before, do not let us imagine how we can just fiddle with this and fiddle with that, because you can leave the situation still in desperate straits and Barbados in desperate straits.

I have said I am prepared and ready to pay a higher education levy if it would mean that people who come out of poverty can continue to come out of poverty. I have said before that I would even be prepared to agree that you can reduce the National Insurance contribution and allow that difference to be put to a higher education levy. It is so important. But do not let us come and believe that we can now fool ourselves and fool the public by saying that cut this and replace that expenditure by this, because you are going to stay in the same place.

And that is why I am hearing my colleagues from the other side. But I believe that this party is too serious to be addressed in a flippant way. Perhaps what I need to hear is that I believe that there should be means testing. And let me say so that the people who - if we are serious about making sure that in the context of limited resources we help poor people - we have to tell the whole society: if we are going to really help poor people, we cannot help everybody to the same extent as we helped them in the past. I feel so. I feel that I should now be in a position where I should be saving for my children's tertiary education. And that is why as a Minister of Finance I brought to this Parliament a registered education saving plan, where people like myself should feel that we should save for our children's tertiary education and cannot only depend upon the state, because the state's resources, like the resources of any other state, are scarce.

I also believe, Mr. Chairman, and I have said so, that if the state has to retreat, it should provide incentives for people - to empower people to help themselves. And that is why the Labour Party was speaking in terms of social and fiscal incentives for social transformation. But we cannot preside in this Parliament - and so this is all of our obligation, and I want to repeat it. The Government of Barbados - we are all part of the government - has a revenue deficiency of \$1 700 000 000. That is what this government will have to borrow this year. That is what our children will have to pay back sometime in the future. That is the objective reality that we have to start with. We may wish that it was otherwise, but this is the reality. And there

is no point believing that you can restore confidence or restore the investment grade if you say leave the \$1.7 billion as it is.

Sir, I expect that sometime the Minister of Finance is going to come to this Parliament and tell us how he is going to deal with this situation. Because if this stands - for whatever reason, including cutting one expenditure and replacing it by the next - Barbados is going to continue to face the situation where the downgrades below junk are going to

continue. And so, you know, there comes a time when you have to speak to your own. As Keats spoke in the Ode to the Nightingale. It is not true envy of thy happy lot, but being too happy in thy happiness. These things, sir, have to be done not because we envy people's happiness, but because we want them too to be happy. And there's no point of our saying that we want to restore confidence. There's no point in our saying that we want to restore what is so precious not just from a position of pride, but from a position, sir, of economic management. That grating of the government of Barbados, if we do not do things that are sound.

Sir, when I was Prime Minister of Barbados and Minister of Finance I had to make choices. I had once, on one occasion when I became Minister of Finance, the Governor of Barbados was enabling people to get what is called a university grant, a member's piece. And I asked myself the question, but why am I giving people who can afford to pay for their children's university uniforms a grant of \$100? Why not help to put our money in the poverty eradication fund and ask our people to evaluate who may need this and give it to who needs it?

Mr. Chairman, I also - and that's why I'm speaking in this debate in this forum - my government that I led commissioned a report to look at tuition fees. And we got a report that said introduce them. Stop enabling children to get them at the government's expense. We said we will not accept that advice, if only because, Mr. Chairman, we could afford it. But I assure you that if I was the Minister of Finance of Barbados and you had an unfinanced deficit of \$1.7 billion, of course I would not run the country to be able to put that there in the first instance.

The people of Barbados are not foolish. The reason why they might be a poll saying what it is saying now is that it says we heard you the last time and we will not forgive you until you yourself on the Democratic Party side restore faith. Because you told the people you're not going to do this. But that's not even the point, sir, because the people make that judgment when it comes.

But I can tell you that if I had to face as a Minister of Finance a situation where I had an unfinanced gap of \$1.7

billion, there was something of strategic importance that I needed to finance and it was strategic to the country's development. I will not leave the \$1.7 billion as it is by cutting one and replace it by that expenditure. But I believe that I would want to raise dedicated financing for it. And I really do believe that it is within our imagination as a parliament and as a country to accept that tertiary education is strategic. To also find ways of funding it that addresses the concerns of the poor without so trifling with the expenditure as to leave our overall financial position in a state where there is no confidence in the Barbadian economy and where our ability even to finance what we now have on the table is beyond the means of this country.

So that for me, sir, it is a simple proposition that sometimes in the nature of our societies you get these moments where you have what is called tough love and that perhaps what needs to be said is what we did as a government when we had to introduce a value added tax. You have to do what you have to do, but give the country the assurance that in due course, if your circumstances improve, you will review it and change it. And that is what I feel that we should be telling Barbadians. We accept this is at the core of our development. We can't afford it now. Some changes have to be made. But we give you the assurance that if and when our circumstances improve, we will review this and we will change it.

And so I will therefore speak in this debate in the hope that the government will not want to be adamant as well on this point and that at some time, if our financial circumstances in this country enable us to let people from my constituency too, follow the path to development that I have followed, that they too will be able to walk that path. I'm obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am so pleased to participate in this discussion under this particular head for education. Now, Mr. Chairman, the Democratic Labour Party administration came to office in January 2008, and we generally oversaw the administration of this government for five years. After that five years, we went back to the people of Barbados in February 2013 and we asked for another mandate. And that mandate was given to us. In those first five years, Mr. Chairman, and in the two years that we have been in office so far in this second term, at no time, at no time whatsoever, has the Barbados Labour Party won a debate or discussion with this Democratic Labour Party - absolutely, at no time. We have outmanoeuvred them, Mr. Chairman, in the elections of 2008. We came back in 2010 during the by-election in St. John, and we outmanoeuvred them again. And of course, in 2013, we presented ourselves

to the people of Barbados and we outmanoeuvred them a third time.

Now, the Barbados Labour Party believe that they are on to a good thing. We can see the common thread running through all of their speeches. They would have assembled themselves, Mr. Chairman, at the boxing gym that masquerades as a party headquarters on Roebuck Street. And they will have decided, Mr. Chairman, that they are going to back this Democratic Labour Party government into a corner on an issue that we have fundamentally decided on as a government - not now, but since the early 1960s - that education is going to be at the forefront. They have decided - we can see it running through the common theme of all of the contributions on the Barbados Labour Party side - they have decided to say to us and the people of Barbados that we have destroyed the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow's legacy. That we have cast aside everything that the late Sir James Cameron Tudor decided on in education. That we have repudiated our fundamental policy on education, on free education. That we have dismantled and destroyed tertiary education. You can hear all of that running through their themes. And that we will bring the University of the West Indies Cave Hill campus to its knees and threaten its closure. That is the common theme, speaker after speaker on the side of the Barbados Labour Party.

Now, what is fundamental to this party, Mr. Chairman, is that we have always been advocates of free primary and secondary education in Barbados. That has always been the Democratic Labour Party's policy. And the evidence of our intention is evident. We actually constructed and would have overseen the 68 primary schools in Barbados - building and supporting them - the 10 nursery schools and the 22 secondary schools in Barbados since the early 1960s. We have also maintained the continuing training of teachers at Erdiston Training College and elsewhere. We have absolutely nothing to apologise for when it comes to free primary and secondary education in Barbados.

But Mr. Chairman, the reality is this - and it was alluded to by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter who just spoke - there are some financial realities. What are our financial resources? The reality is, Mr. Chairman, that we are \$1.7 billion between what we earn and what we spend in Barbados. And that has to be a reality as to why the deficit has to be closed. We have to allocate money to health care - the QEH, the polyclinics, the ambulance service, the district hospitals, the drug service and all of the private care assistance that we provide as a government in Barbados. We have the other education commitments from the nursery to the primary into the secondary. We have housing to be funded and we are funding it. As a matter of fact, when we came to office, we found a number of projects that had fallen on fallow ground - grass growing,

cow itch in place, rusting iron, rusting steel and decaying BRC wire. And we built houses where those things were; we replaced all of those things with houses, mortar and bricks. We have a wide and varied social service - \$22 million every year - that is mostly administered by the Ministry, supplying monetary grants and other grants.

Now, Barbadians are not really impressed by what the Barbados Labour Party is promising. They promised yesterday that they can pay everything for everybody. Barbadians are aware, because they have people who live overseas in other countries - in North America, in Europe and in other parts of the Caribbean - where tertiary education is paid for by and large. So the promise to pay everything for everybody in Barbados by the Barbados Labour Party when they are returned to office is just a hollow promise on the part of the Barbados Labour Party.

Now, there is a school of thought in Barbados - a body of opinion - that contends that the state's commitments to generations of the 1950s and 1960s could not be the same as they are for today's generation. I have somewhat bought into that school of thought. The Right Honourable Prime Minister weighed in on this and I agree with his line of thought, because people of that generation - who we used to consider as drawers of water and hewers of wood - we thought, as an administration in the 1960s, that we should lift those people out of those conditions and create the kind of environment that would ensure that people of that generation were graduated out of that particular situation, so that today those same people or the descendants of those people would be in a far better position than they were back in the 1950s and 1960s. So the same conditions that would have applied to those people certainly do not apply to the people today.

And the reality is really borne out, Mr. Chairman, by the fact that a lot of middle class and upper middle class - even some of the working class people in Barbados - are not opting for free primary and secondary education. The evidence is borne out by the fact that there are 32 private primary schools in Barbados. 32. Now, those are not operating empty. Most of those schools are oversubscribed. There are not only 32 private primary schools in Barbados, but there are nine private secondary schools in Barbados. Now, who is populating these schools? They are not foreigners, of course. Some foreigners opt to go to these schools because, I believe, they do not want to have their children immersed in a culture or atmosphere that they are unfamiliar with. But most of the population of these schools - the private primary and secondary schools - are populated by Barbadians. Barbadians: middle class, upper class and some working class people. So that tells me that the Barbadian of today, especially those who would have graduated from what we traditionally know as the village situation into what they call the parks and terraces, are better off today.

So the Barbados Labour Party say they are going to pay everything for everybody. They say that we could pay the tuition fees if we abolish the constituency councils. Now, the constituency councils - and I have heard this before from some members of the Barbados Labour Party - the constituency councils have got \$40 million in this financial year. I mean, \$40 million, Mr. Chairman. \$40 million. I understand a member of the Barbados Labour Party said \$40 million was allocated to the constituency councils. \$2 million is all that was allocated to the constituency councils in this financial year. And we are getting some \$1.9 million for the next financial year. So they say abolish the constituency councils. Okay, that is \$2 million we are going to set aside and put there to pay for tuition fees. They say scrap the summer camps. I do not know how much summer camps cost. How much? \$400 000. So at one point we have \$2.4 million. They are going to make school children pay on the school buses, which is probably about \$2 million. So we are told we are running at about \$5 million. We are putting \$5 million on those programmes that this Democratic Labour Party implemented since it came back to office in 2008.

And on the question of the constituency councils, they want them scrapped. They say they want them scrapped. I am sorry that the Honourable Member for St. George South is not in his seat because I want to inform his leader that he has broken ranks with them. Because I get the reports from the constituency councils and I am seeing that almost every single meeting of the St. George South Constituency Council, the Honourable Member attends. So he has broken ranks with them. But of course it is his right to attend. It is his right, but you must not be so hypocritical and complain about the councils on the floor of the House and across Barbados and still be attending the meetings. If you do not want anything to do with the councils, do not have anything to do with them. He attends almost every single meeting.

I am addressing you, Mr. Chairman. Of course I am addressing you. So, Mr. Chairman, he attends all the meetings, but that is beside the point. But while they are asking for the tuition fees to be paid, the Honourable Member for St. James North is also asking us to add more cost. They want the \$1.7 billion gap between expenditure and earnings to be further widened. So they are asking us, Mr. Chairman, to build out the polytechnics. They are asking us to expand the Barbados Community College. They are asking us to pay off the debt to the UWI. And they are asking us also to increase the National Development Scholarships. So on top of asking us to pay these tuition fees, they are asking us to do all of these things, Mr. Chairman.

Now, I want to show Barbadians today, Mr. Chairman, that this Democratic Labour Party administration has instituted education for all in this

country. And when we say all, we mean all - heavily subsidised school meals and nutrition. This is what this Democratic Labour Party has done over time. We have instituted free bus rides for our school children and opened educational opportunities and institutions where they can all enjoy education in Barbados. And we stand clearly behind that fundamental policy of the Democratic Labour Party.

Even before the regular schools, there are day care facilities in Barbados administered by the Child Care Board for \$20 per week - the most inexpensive childcare facilities in this country. \$20 per week, administered by the Child Care Board, providing two meals per day in wonderful, splendid and pristine conditions. We, out of the welfare department, supply some \$200 000 a year for school supplies, which include clothes, books, shoes and all of that, administered through the Community Development Department. We provide the NLAP programme - a lessons assistance programme administered by that department - where we have identified children from depressed neighbourhoods or depressed households whose parents do not have the wherewithal to give them lessons. And we say that they should not be disadvantaged to the extent where their peers are being advantaged by having private tuition. We devised that programme within the Community Development Department to afford them lessons by some retired teachers and some teachers who are also in the system, giving them that advantage to be on par with their peers.

So this government, Mr. Chairman, still considers it our fundamental responsibility and duty to underwrite the largest share of the education of our citizens across the educational spectrum. We continue to fund and support nursery education in terms of the 10 schools that we have as nurseries and the 50 primary schools that have within their campuses nursery classes. We continue to fund primary education, we continue to fund secondary education, and we continue to fund, by and large, tertiary education at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill campus, the SJPP and the Barbados Community College. Mr. Chairman, we are the government with education firmly embedded in our DNA. And that will always be the case with this Democratic Labour Party government. I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman. I wish to spend a little time on education for persons with disabilities. But before I do, I just wish to say, as the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter said, that if the Barbados Labour Party were in office, this would not even be an issue of debate - payment of tuition fees by Barbadian students. The economy would have expanded since 2007, unlike what

has happened now. The productive sectors would have been working. You would have had growth and therefore you would have had revenue to fund the issue. But, you know -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The whole debate is about honourable competence. Honourable Members -

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Please, please. Thank you. The whole debate is about the incompetence of the Democratic Labour Party, management of this economy and this society, and the increase in debt which the Right Honourable Member for St. Philip West, who is a specialist on these points, speaks about. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West speaks about all the time. But you know, Mr. Chairman, education for persons with disabilities, children with disabilities is a major aspect which of course is dear to my heart. Because when Malcolm X speaks about, without education, you are not going anywhere in the world. It means education of everyone. And we really as a society need to pay attention to this issue.

We have a situation, of course, where transportation of children with disabilities is an issue. There were once five buses which used to serve people with disabilities. I believe there might only be two functioning with the Transport Board. We have a situation where universally there are free bus rides for school children, but people, including children, have to pay, I think it is \$5 to and from home on these Transport Board buses which are fitted for persons with disabilities even to go to school. And therefore you have inequity in the system. And that clearly is something that should be looked at.

You know, it is said often that even though we have had free secondary school education since 1961-62, many children with disabilities, many children with special needs, have to pay for their education at primary school and secondary school level. And this is because many have to go to privately funded schools. Yes, the charities do help and I again want to commend the charities such as Maria Holder Trust and Sandy Lane Trust, and individually, Mr. Derek Smith, because he personally has put up a lot of money to assist with nursery education and primary school education of children with disabilities. Without these trusts, which are largely controlled and managed by non-Barbadians, I don't know where we would be. The school in Robert Street, off of Robert Street, Perry Gap, is another one largely funded by trusts controlled by non-Barbadians. And we have to, as political leaders, commend that stance taken by them. But we ourselves also have to look at and see how we can bring education for children with disabilities with special needs close to the area of free primary and secondary education, certainly. And no child, in fact, should be excluded from the general compulsory and free education system on the basis of their disability.

I have introduced a resolution calling for disabilities legislation and I really hope and pray that the Government would see it fit to debate the issue at the earliest possible time in the near future, because this is something fundamental. As Mahatma Gandhi said, a society has to be judged by how it treats its most vulnerable. The issue of part of the common entrance exam being done orally also comes into reckoning so that it could accommodate children with dyslexia, dyspraxia, you know, children who may have difficulty in writing, but that does not mean that their mental ability or capacity is affected in any way. And, you know, we have to think outside the box sometimes in terms of development of our society.

We also need to look, Mr. Chairman, in my submission, at appropriately training more teachers, including teachers with disabilities, to teach children with special needs and children with disabilities. And I would like to commend your constituent, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Irving Wilson, for the contribution he has made to the development, in particular, of deaf children and children with disabilities on the whole. He had the national honour. The Irving Wilson School is named after him and, you know, he died within the last week and I would want, on the floor of this Parliament, to commend the contribution he has made to children with disabilities.

We also need to look, Mr. Chairman, at getting the requisite technology on the whole for the visually impaired - the JAWS, the talking equipment. We need to make Barbados, our schools, fully accessible to children with disabilities in terms of mobility, to make sure that adequate ramps are provided, bathroom facilities, sports facilities to accommodate them, because we need to include these children as much as possible. And I want to take this opportunity, in a conciliatory mood, to again thank the Minister of Education, the Honourable Minister and the Ministry, for providing the \$100 000 last week to the Learning Centre.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: He is misleading this House. He alluded to this House that children with disabilities pay on the public transport buses. I just want to make it known that they travel free on the public transport buses; only when their contract buses owned by the Council for the Disabled do they pay the \$5. They do not pay any money on the regular charges.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Continue, Mr. Chairman. I probably did not make myself clear. I was speaking about specially outfitted buses. Persons with disabilities - mobility disability - cannot travel readily on a normal bus. I am talking about specially outfitted buses, Mr. Minister. And there were only five of those on my last count. How

many are working? There are certainly not more than five in operation. So there could as well be five - they are not working; the parts are down. And that is what I am speaking about - the specially outfitted buses, not the normal buses.

But I was thanking the Minister and his Ministry on behalf of the Learning Centre for the speedy transfer of \$100 000 within 42 hours of me speaking on the issue. But it should not—

Hon. R. D. JONES: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Transfers are made to all of these institutions that benefit from a grant through the Ministry of Education and payments are made at different intervals. And if you consider that when the Honourable Member did in fact speak, that money was already en route to the particular Learning Centre at Orange Hill. So just standing up and pumping one's chest and claiming credit - he would know that it takes a while to work through the Accountant General to have those funds passed to whomever those funds are passed to. So it is really trying to claim something that he really should not claim.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Please proceed, Mr. Chairman. I do not know why the Honourable Minister of Education - that \$100 000 was due since last year. The facts speak for themselves that within 42 hours of me addressing the issue on the floor, the money was transferred. I do not know that money should take six months to be transferred. And the issue - please, I remember - the issue, Mr. Chairman, is that bursaries are still owing. And I would urge, I wish to urge the Minister to ensure that monies which we all agree are needed for education for children with disabilities, with special needs, which come from the State, be transferred in a timely manner. Whether it is to the Learning Centre or to the Chandler School, which I believe is also due some money. Please. You know, these are human beings as well and they need to be educated as well, so that they are not left behind.

On the issue of the Polytechnic, Mr. Chairman, we have a situation where \$3 million has been allocated to operate the Polytechnic this year. I believe that is the same as last year. And I want to suggest - and I know the Government is going to say, as the Member for St. Michael Central has said, that I want Government to spend all of this money - but the reality is that \$3 million being allocated in these Estimates is not enough to operate a materially intensive unit. I do not know if the Government is planning to charge the students at the Polytechnic tuition fees as well, because the Chairman of the Board last year at the 2014 graduation also said that the finances of that institution are in a precarious position. So if the Government knows what it plans to do, let them say so.

I would have thought that since you are in fact cutting the University of the West Indies in terms of funding, you would at least increase funding to the BCC, to the Polytechnic, so that more students could get into those colleges and so that those colleges could be resourced financially as they should be. We have a situation where the City and Guilds certification - the City and Guilds, of course, as we know, is a certification body for technical and vocational studies - and it seems as if they have suspended delivering qualifications to Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic students pending outstanding payments, because from our reports about 50 students last year studying for diplomas in electrical installation and engineering and plumbing were not given their certificates on the basis that the SJPP had not paid City and Guilds for them. And this of course is an internationally recognised certification. And I would really wish to hear from the Honourable Minister on this issue.

I agree with him on the issue of our need to expand our educational services internationally because this is an area of tremendous potential foreign exchange earnings. I must commend the Executive Director of the Barbados Coalition of Services Industries for speaking on this matter with consistency. I know of course we have had a medical school - an American school of medicine - here. I think the Seventh Day Adventists also have a school in Belleville, a university. We need more. Some of our CARICOM sister countries have gone into this field long ago and this is an area where we can generate earnings. Because we have a clear advantage in terms of our English as our first language for students for whom English is not a first language, we can look at developing our science and technology base through this manner as well. And therefore this is something I believe that we should look at.

I know that there are plans at least in the pipeline in the Ministry to build a nursery school in Lower Carlton, my constituency. I believe that school is to be funded by one of the trusts as well. I would wish to know from the Honourable Minister when that nursery school is slated to be built.

We have an issue, Mr. Chairman, with the appointment of teachers, because I know that in mid-April last year the Honourable Minister said that he knows that there are 700 to 800 temporary teachers who are up for appointment and said that a significant number of those teachers will be appointed to fill the vacancies across the system. I do not know that that has been done yet. In fact I think that is one of the thorny points in his relationship with the Union - the Barbados Union of Teachers - of which I spoke, and that clearly is an issue that needs to be addressed as well.

Mr. Chairman, we have the issue of teacher training. There are many teachers in the profession who have only a

basic two-week-long training initiation. They might have university degrees and, you know, just like in every other profession - certainly in my profession - I am fully in agreement that attorneys-at-law should have to retrain and have to do a basic minimum of hours of education every year to get their certification annually, and the same applies to teachers. So the issue of teacher training - I would wish the Honourable Minister to address in his response, especially for those in leadership positions and management positions: the principals, the deputy principals, particularly including training in financial management. And I mean the summer vacation - I know a lot of teachers believe that the nine-week summer vacation is sacrosanct and should not be touched. But this is a period which could be used for additional training, workshops, and conferences to train teachers. I am obliged to you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I rise to enter this debate for the first time and have had the benefit of listening to everyone who would have spoken before and, Mr. Chairman, while the debate has tended to focus on university education, there are a number of other critical areas that I believe we should give focus on to ensure that we have a fulsome debate on this particular Head.

Now I wish to congratulate the Minister, the Hon. Minister of Education, for the exceptional work he is doing in the ministry. And of course, as all of us would have experienced, under difficult circumstances he has been able to keep our flagship on education going well. I especially reflect on the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, when he brought to the debate a higher level of thinking relative to where it is we need to pitch our views and how we need to examine issues related to education.

I have asked myself, after reflecting on what has been established as the goals of education, how has the society changed over the years, even in modern Barbados? How has the society changed that would give rise to altering or formulating additional educational goals? Because one could easily surmise that the primary goal of education is to advance the learning of the society. And one could distinguish between learning and schooling and ask oneself if they are the same in that regard. But I am of the view, Mr. Chairman, that we have now reached a stage in Barbados, in modern Barbados, where we have to look again at the goals of education to ensure that the needs of the society are being met on a consistent basis through the educational system.

Now, of recent, we have been hearing a lot about deviance and we have been hearing a lot about crime and

these things, and we have been asking ourselves whether or not we are meeting our young people where they ought to be met and shaping their attitudes and their behaviours and so on and so forth. I would want to suggest that one of the primary undertakings of education, especially in this modern era, has to be the socialisation of our society - and the socialisation of our society, not restricted to preschoolers or elementary primary school students. The socialisation of the society as the society seeks to respond to the social drivers that are impacting where we are and where we are going in this modern Barbados.

I believe strongly that we have to clearly understand what is required to keep our society in some state of equilibrium or balance, because that balance is critical to how we live and how we move and how we experience our being in our society. We now boast of an educational system that educates people from the cradle to the grave. You have, of course, your preschool education, your primary school - what would ordinarily be termed formal education - and it works its way all the way up to lifelong learning. Lifelong learning being a system that reaches out to those persons who have passed adolescence and young adulthood and are still searching for a niche in the society relative to their skills, that may have been lit in discovering those skills. And therefore education cannot be simply confined to having a discourse on the University of the West Indies - that is part of the educational continuum.

I hear the phrase tossed around - looking after the most vulnerable people within the context of education. I asked myself who would be the most vulnerable person in need of education in our society. And I came to the conclusion that the most vulnerable persons in terms of educating the society would have to be the younger children, the young people in our society, the adolescents in our society who require to be educated.

Now, the truth is that what the Democratic Labour Party government has done over the years is that we have accentuated our commitment to free education as it relates to the most vulnerable people in the society. And I hear this make-believe view that the most vulnerable persons are those persons who were unable to register for university education. That is absolute rubbish. It is really rubbish. Because I would like to think that the young people, the preschoolers and the primary school children in class one and two and three and all the way up - they are the ones who are the most vulnerable. And should we not educate them, we would be courting a society of chaos. That is the reality.

Now, a person who is in their 20s or 30s, who has eclipsed the educational ladder and has gone through primary and secondary education and is now trying to find out where they want to go for college - that person at that stage of their development cannot be considered most

vulnerable. Unless you are trying to define vulnerability in terms of their capacity to pay for their education - that is how you would determine vulnerability. But in the context of developing a society, vulnerability has to do with the enabling of those persons who otherwise would not thrive in a society. And that is what I think. That is where we need to continue to pitch our focus. We guarantee primary education, we guarantee secondary education. The reason why we have done that is because we understand, Mr. Chairman, sir, that in order for us to raise up a functional, highly functional society, we have to make sure that those people who would be most vulnerable in terms of their educational life are looked after by the society.

Because if we believe that the minds of human beings are especially shaped during those early years of life, then it would mean that we would have to impact on the development of those minds at that early stage. Now, I remember not too long ago as a youngster in primary school - and you couldn't really, in those days you had a fellow called a probation officer and when you didn't go to school, he would track you down, run you all through the bush, capture you, drag you back, ask you where you live. And you better not give him the wrong address. He would drag you right by the house and he would ask your parents, why isn't this child at school? And in my case - and I am not ashamed of the gospel of my life - in my case I was not at school. Not because I didn't want to be in school, but because part of my development was to help take care of the family. So I would be working in the cane field, I would be working in the grass piece. And so when you got there, my parents would have to find an excuse. Well, he ain't got no shoes or he ain't got no clothes. And what they would do, they would furnish you those things. But there was a reason for that. Because the system considered persons at that age to be most vulnerable in the society and in need of help.

And therefore this notion of imperilling the economic state of the country by suggesting, by policy of the Labour Party, that they would make sure that all university education is free - that is a far-fetched view by a struggling political organisation who is still seeking to find its way and is finding it difficult to spell "way" because of the uncertainties and the tribalism that exists over there. And listen, I remember when the Democratic Labour Party was going through its hardest time in Barbadian politics. Every single day they would broadcast across this country how inept, inefficient, paralysed the Democratic Labour Party is. And we sat down and went through 14 years of being pelted with all kinds of criticisms. Now it is your turn. And you are going to have to sit down and rest yourselves and endure the journey. Because we are not going to give you any government if that is what you think. We are not handing any government to anybody. The fact is that the people of Barbados determined not once but

twice that we should be the government of Barbados. And we are the government of Barbados.

Let me make it clear. We are not just the government by symbolism. We are governing this country, and those persons out there throughout the system who believe that the Democratic Labour Party has been voted in but they still run the government - I have news for them. They do not run the government of Barbados. The Democratic Labour Party is the party of choice. Still the party of choice, no matter how much the Honourable Member for St. James North talks, because he likes to talk. A few days ago, when we are politicians - a few days ago he made a statement in here. But he has a way of making statements in here that are horrendous, at least by simple definition.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member. Yes, Honourable Member. Pardon me. Yes.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Sorry. The Honourable Member. Sorry. Yes, of course, of course. My apologies. My apologies. The Honourable Member is on record as saying that the people at the - [Inaudible.] So that is chieftdom.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: He called them thieves. I remember - for St. James North, the point of order.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Yes. What is the point of order? The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I never said that, sir. Never said that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your discourse is with me, not with the Honourable Member as well. Okay, thank you.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Continue, Mr. Chairman. That is one of them. But he made another one that, in a moment of being so inglorious, he said two days ago that if you put a dress on a pig, you still have a pig. Yes, he said so. He said that. But you know, my business is about observing. Because when the Honourable -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Member. Member for St. James. Now again, I -

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. And I don't know what line he is going down - if he is dreaming about me in the night, in which case I would be very concerned. But again, I never said that. And I would like that struck from the record, as well as the previous comment about me saying about the QEH and people stealing away stuff. I would like both of those struck from the record. I never said either of them. Certainly not. That is not my language.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment. Honourable Member. That certainly was not - all right, Honourable

Member. The truth is that it is his interpretation. And I will note that you indicated that you did not say that. Okay. And that is going to go on record that you did not say it. But that is about it. Honourable Member.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Please continue, Mr. Chairman. You see, Mr. Chairman, I have just figured out a puzzle, which is that the Honourable Member for St. James North opens his mouth and says all kinds of things, many of which he is not even conscious that he is saying. Yes, and that is a very frightening reality, you know, because the reason why I remember is that when the Honourable Member said so about the pig and the dress - but incidentally, the next day on the front page of the Nation, there was a big pig. I don't know if you all remember a big pig, but I remember. When the Honourable Member said so, Mr. Chairman, he had his gaze pitched in a certain direction and his gaze went over the member who sits next to him from the City. The Member for St. Michael East was not in his seat at the time. Well, because you frightened him. The Honourable Member frightened the other member. Honourable Member, please speak to the Chair. Yes, Mr. Chairman. So the Honourable Member for St. James North has made some statements in this debate and he centred his thoughts around university education. As a matter of fact, what has happened in this debate, coming from the other side primarily, is that they have found -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Pardon me. Your time is expiring. You have one minute. One minute to wrap up. Yes, you can come back.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Chairman, I will wrap up this particular thought by indicating that what has happened in this debate is that rather than pushing our line of thinking beyond where we are now, we have allowed ourselves to get nitpicking at different things that have absolutely minimal value to the construction of an educational system and the building of an educational system. That is what happened. And that is why the Labour Party - the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter again made a masterful speech here today reminding his former party, because remember, he said that party can no longer lead them because they have lost their way, they have lost their conscience, their soul, as a matter of fact. So I believe that rather than spending time trying to demonstrate to Barbadians how they would go about managing an educational system in the context of a government, they chose to pick at every little thing that you can imagine. We are focusing on building out our template for how education should happen in this day and age in Barbados.

And when I come back, if I am able to come back, I would like to talk about the role of character or moral education in a modern educational system. I would like to put that on the table, because if you are going to be able to

lead Barbados, you have to embrace a certain code of moral education and character education. I am obliged to you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I spent the last couple days, Mr. Chairman, listening to the debate on education. And of course, that debate centred for the most part on the financial considerations, implications as they relate to education. But I want to go in a different direction in that I strongly believe that perhaps now that we have all of the challenges and the issues regarding or relating to education, that perhaps this is the time for us to really look at our educational system, what it is offering, and to see exactly where it is now at this juncture of our history in this modern Barbados.

And I say that, Mr. Chairman, because I've always felt for a long time that our educational system was becoming out of sync with the demands of the labour market. And I believe, Mr. Chairman, that is a critical factor that needs to be addressed in Barbados. All of us in this chamber would agree, I believe, that there's a direct correlation, a strong correlation, between social and economic development and the availability and quality of tertiary education. That is a fact.

Why am I saying this, Mr. Chairman? Several years ago, for example, we were one of the leading countries in terms of solar technology. But even way back then, when we had that competitive advantage, we did not see the corresponding levels of training and academic support for that particular venture. And so then Professor Headley died. And although I believe Professor Leon Mosley was also associated with that project, we didn't have enough to go with in terms of taking it forward and really making it something that would have added significant value to this country.

We were a country that depended heavily on tourism for years, for all of our history since independence. Yet it was only within recent times that one could do a university degree in tourism at Cave Hill. When we went into offshore business, international business, I'm told that we did not have the infrastructure with all of the various components to deal with that. And perhaps if we did, we might even have done much better than we did.

Mr. Chairman, the time has come, I believe, when we have to look at the educational system, to bring the applied side of that system - that is the technical and vocational training - on par in terms of status and everything, as with the academic side. We have been concentrating for a long time on the academic side of education. I believe it was in England some years ago,

perhaps in the 80s, when the British authorities came to this same conclusion with regards to what was happening in England. And I must tell you that at this stage, things like higher national diplomas and ordinary technician diplomas are now valued more in the workplace than Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degrees.

I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that the Government ought to look at what the Barbados Labour Party sought to do some years ago with regards to the University College of Barbados. And even though there may be some challenges in terms of bringing those institutions together, I will argue, Mr. Chairman, that the challenges that we will face if we don't do that will be far more insurmountable than what challenges may exist at this point in time. This is a must. It is a must.

And I heard yesterday the Honourable Attorney General speaking to his view that there were a large number of our young children who are coming out of secondary and primary schools not being able to do this and that. And I remember reading something on education, a study that was done by a Professor Alcinda Houan, I believe the name was, from the United States, relating to education in Africa. And she coined the phrase the "waithood generation" - the waithood generation being those young people between childhood and adulthood who could not find jobs, and so they were in a state of waiting. And we have a similar situation to that in Barbados.

And I'm not speaking about people who might have been laid off, whether it was 2 500, 3 000, 3 500 - all the different figures that I've been hearing. But we have that situation, Mr. Chairman, because people are leaving school, some without academic achievement and then without any technical or vocational achievement as well, because they might not have had the opportunity.

And so, Mr. Chairman, I'm saying that if we really look at this thing seriously, I would argue that we may come to the conclusion that we probably do not need any more secondary schools as we know them. That perhaps there may be a need for a couple of technical institutes instead to supplement and complement what happens at the Polytechnic. We have a situation where the services industry is significant for us. Perhaps it is time that we look at having a services academy. We have to look, Mr. Chairman, at things that are employment-generating.

What we have is that we are training people, we are educating people in areas where jobs do not exist, at least in the abundance that is required in order for those persons to be able to earn a living. We have to move away from the view, I believe, where education is seen as something to help people to develop themselves, and really focus on the issue of providing employment. And if we do that, then I believe everything that we do in terms of education and

training will be more meaningful for those people who are participating in these things. Because at the end of the day, the light at the end of the tunnel is the possibility - the real possibility - of earning a job.

And that is why things like entrepreneurial activity within the educational institutions, as the Honourable Minister of Education spoke to, those are things that we need really to push, and push really, really hard. I think, for example - and I believe the Honourable Minister responsible for Culture might have mentioned something about this yesterday - but if the cultural industries is going to be one of the major things going forward, then we have to provide the infrastructure so that that industry can be built out properly.

Foreign languages, for example. Maybe we need to have another language institute in Barbados. I remember when I did Spanish at the university, I was introduced to something new called International Business Partners. And for all the years that I've been studying Spanish, that course for me was really the most relevant, the most significant one that I had done. And I felt that something like that, especially when we're looking to Latin America to do business, is something that should be taught in every secondary school in Barbados if we are going to be serious about what we are doing.

Yes, the edge of the bill for education may be increasing. But I believe if we have a focus and a strategic approach to education in all of its facets, including technical and vocational training, that at the end of the day, perhaps we may be able to provide something that is even much better than we envisage at this time. With that, Mr. Chairman, I am obliged.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I re-enter this debate to make a contribution much along the vein of the one we actually just enjoyed from the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown. I want to actually congratulate him for that nugget. He actually made some very good, useful and constructive points, dare I say. I am not trying to be invidious. It is probably one of the better, if not the best contribution I have heard from that side. It was not any haggling and hankering about the numbers - that UE this or UE that or tuition this or tuition that - but speaking about our national needs and our skills. And I am being very serious because I even alluded to this in my previous contribution. What are we doing in terms of post-secondary education in Barbados generally? Because that in essence is what will determine the quality of life of Barbados.

It is not only about a university and, do not get me wrong, I have enjoyed university education. There is nothing wrong with university education. But if you do not have a network of other tertiary institutions providing those skill sets, then I think you are going to find yourself in some difficulty as a developing nation. And so while I take the comments for what they are worth, I would just point out some of the things this Government is doing along the lines of work in the tertiary institutions beyond the university, because I think it is important.

I also have to again reflect that, and I believe this was alluded to earlier by the Member for Christ Church East, that if indeed you are constructing a different model where resources that are slim and limited are being applied to your primary, secondary and other post-secondary tertiary institutions, then I think it makes a lot of sense. I listened to the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter and the point he was making about having these difficult decisions to make. And it is very interesting listening to him because I certainly recall when I was sitting on the other side - an opposition that was small in numbers but dare I say quite effective.

Of course we used to turn up, but beyond that I remember - the Member for St. Philip West is here and he was especially vocal and strident in the point - that the carnival of borrowing that the then Government was engaging upon was going to have a comeuppance one day; there would be a Waterloo. We were filled with foreboding. I believe that is the term that the Roman poet Virgil used - on the bank of the river, filled with foreboding. We told the Government one day. It was not there. They were not affected. Money was gushing, plenty of money. Did not even bother to have budget speeches, and borrowing left, right and centre. And we said this is going to have implications. And now our comeuppance is here and we have tough decisions to make. Now more than 60 cents out of the dollar has to go to doing what? Servicing debt.

Remember the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter talking about the debt cross? Debt by definition is nothing you can create instantly. Debt is something that by definition happens over a period of time - an accumulation of deficits, an accumulation of borrowings. But that said, we are where we are. And again, this idea that the Barbados Labour Party opposition can just take this hands-off approach - their fingerprints are all over this situation. The debt that has us now choked up, that we have to make these difficult decisions. But again, as I said, with all the difficulty we are still able to do some good work, in my view, with many of our other tertiary institutions.

I think the Barbados Community College - an excellent initiative that was started in 1968 - has to be commended for doing excellent work. And in the area for

which I have responsibility, tourism, what we refer to as the hospitality division, the Pommarine is doing an excellent job at churning out young people. What is interesting is that with an intake of anywhere from 200 to 400 - it fluctuates - the applications are usually ten times that. It is difficult. The interest is there. People want to be a part of the sector. And part of the reason why we are planning in a responsible way for the expansion of the sector is to create these opportunities.

This Government laid a White Paper in Parliament that had as one of its pillars human resources development. That White Paper corresponds to a Master Plan. And the Master Plan also speaks to manpower planning. I heard it suggested - a Member in here said - I am curious, I would wonder how he got his hands on a Master Plan. It is not a secret document. A whole slew of people helped the Government put together the Master Plan and it has been shared with all and sundry. It is not any secret document that you have to go and acquire under cover of darkness, wearing a long coat and a hat, and go meet somebody in some dimly lit corridor. It is readily available and has been circulated to over 60 different organisations, including all of the tourism agencies, the airport, various ministries - almost all of them: Environment, Culture, Housing, Health, Commerce. The President of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association, the Intimate Hotels Group, Control of Customs, Chief Immigration Officer, National Heritage Department, Atlantis Submarines. The Barbados Agricultural Society has a copy of it. The Barbados Fire Service, the Barbados Council for the Disabled - the Member for St. James North would be happy to hear that. Department of Emergency Management, Barbados Small Business Association, Barbados Sailing Association, Barbados National Trust, Barbados Museum and Historical Society. There is a secret document, circulated all over the place, partners up and down this island. I am told it is a secret document, but we usually hear folly from that particular Member. So let us move on.

The Master Plan is proposing to continue to see that we can intensify internships as well, so that those persons who want to work in the sector can acquire the appropriate skill sets. And we have seen an increased uptake as well for our young chefs to be encouraged to come into the kitchens of our top restaurants and at the hotels and so on. They are encouraging internship programmes even where some of the young chefs can get stints abroad. And that in itself is important because one of the areas that we are pushing is the whole concept of culinary tourism - the epicurean niche, persons who are foodies and so on. We have had our food festival; we had this guide at one stage, but we are trying to push that.

And one of the important reasons - Mr. Chairman, you know this only too well - is the whole concept of farm to table, the linkage between agriculture and tourism. And

in essence, by developing your own local chefs and culinary specialists - and do not forget the mixologists as well; we are the home of rum - that in itself will also help the agricultural sector because fresh produce will be needed in order to have world-class culinary offerings. And I might add, when I say world-class, I do not only mean fine dining. The Oistins Fish Fry has been recognised by international publications and we have had chefs come down here for the food festival talking about what they refer to as street food. And much of what we take for granted and get out of the back of a Suzuki van is actually something quite delightful and something that our visitors want to enjoy, and we have to continue to push that.

So I think the hospitality division and the work that they are doing to see that we can continue to develop our skills along those lines is quite important. It is in keeping with what is discussed in the Tourism Master Plan and in keeping with what we are attempting to do to also have more value added from the sector. And that is in essence where we are on that.

I also think that if I can nip across to the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic - again, the Member for the City was speaking about this - whether you are talking about the services or for that matter the traditional productive sectors, you need skills that come from having an enhanced scenario where your polytechnic is concerned. And I think the effort of the Minister of Education to broaden the offerings, try to increase the intake, even having other campuses of the Polytechnic in other parts of Barbados, is very much in keeping with what we need to do.

I also know - I neglected to mention when I was talking about the hospitality division - that they have already, I understand, started doing courses off-site and want to also develop that and grow that, in addition to increasing the number of beds offered at the Pommarine, so greater uptake, greater training. But I was talking about the Polytechnic and its importance as well in terms of national development. This idea that somehow a polytechnic is a watered-down university is not true. In the city of Toronto, Ryerson is a polytechnic and it is just as prestigious as the University of Toronto or York. And when you graduate from Ryerson, understand that you could leave the Polytechnic with skills that actually have a greater economic return than a university degree. So let us not get ourselves mixed up.

And I will say that what my Ministry has been doing - and specifically international transport - is that having signed on to the International Maritime Organization Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, we are working with the Polytechnic on a course in basic seafaring. And this is important because we all know that once upon a time many

Barbadian youngsters would have gone to sea and earned and sent home money, and would have built houses and fed families from a life at sea. Well, those opportunities are still there, but obviously things have changed. First of all, it is no longer gender-specific. There are men and women that can in fact still go to sea. But what has changed is that with the cruise industry there are other opportunities as well. And as a matter of fact, the cruise industry - those cruise ships are in essence floating hotels with some activity. So the whole question of the hospitality division also ties back in. But if you can do the course in basic seafaring - which you have to do now; the days of perhaps when it was a little easier to just go and get a piece of work on the sea are gone; now you have to be certified - but we are doing that. And I think the work of the SJPP in this effort is something that should again be saluted.

So I am happy to have had this opportunity to also again highlight some of those other tertiary institutions that we tend to take for granted. The one that we take probably the most for granted of all, as I said, is probably the most important - Erdiston Teachers' Training College. Small, I guess - what, maybe 400, 300, maybe 300. But that is a fraction of the size of the Polytechnic and even a smaller fraction than the size of the University. But important work and a very impressive history as well, started in the 1940s, I am told, and has no real parallel in the Caribbean. There is nothing that quite compares. It is of course a regional teachers' training college. There are other things that might be similar to it, but none quite like Erdiston. And of course their efforts at the continuing education element, early childhood - so it is not only teachers hoping to get into the system or that are in the system. Ordinary Barbadians that want to learn about early childhood education and so on are going up there on evenings, making their way up that knoll to go and acquire skills. That is wonderful. And I think the Government should be commended for trying to expand those programmes and keep things going.

I just want to say that I believe that we have held the course and we have done our part. International transport - even beyond the formal SJPP arrangement - the Barbados Civil Aviation Training Centre is training air traffic controllers, and in this Estimate you will see some money in there that is dedicated for upgrading the radar 3D. And we are happy to have those critical parts so that we can continue to train air traffic controllers, and of course working with the aircraft private aircraft club as well to see that we can start to offer PPLs - private pilot licences - and so on. So other education again in and around the system to help build out the civil aviation sector that we are trying to offer.

So once again, Mr. Chairman, just thank you once again for giving me this opportunity to highlight some of the other things that are happening beyond the University

of the West Indies to develop tertiary education in Barbados. I am obliged to you.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, sir, I beg to move that you do now report progress to the Honourable Speaker and ask 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 until 4.15 p.m.

The question that the House be suspended until 4.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting of the House of Assembly is resumed. When the suspension was taken, we were 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 in Committee. Honourable Member for St. Michael East. Thank you.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Chairman, first of all, let me congratulate the Honourable Member for Christ Church West for a presentation he made. About two days ago he took us on a journey - about two days ago, he took us down a historical path dating from the first half of the 19th century. The great debate that occurred before the 1833 decision on education for us in the post-emancipation period. Unfortunately, he did not have enough time to extrapolate from that information, which I know that he has some important interpretations of what occurred on that occasion.

But there was a heated debate in the House of Commons among the intellectuals of the day, the Church. There were some persons who did not want the expansion of education and there were others who felt it should be restricted - that if you give us too much education, too much knowledge, then we will have desires for other greater things in life. And that group of people wanted us to

stick with the plantation model, which at the time showed that level of omnipotence and full control over a people who could not even advance a word within their own interests on what kind of education we ought to have.

So I am very proud tonight to know that we are engaged in what I personally feel is a healthy debate. I also recognise that during that contribution he touched at different junctures on the changes that were made in the system and brought us right into contemporary times, where we are at present. I was trying to persuade him that he need now to even give greater clarity to the political sociological interpretations of what that journey meant to our people. Because I think that is where the debate ought to be focusing - where we are in this current 2015 and how do we escape what is described by George Beckford as persistent, persistent poverty, which is also described by Beckford as what kind of society?

And I think that the Government side had a wonderful mantra about the concept of the construction of a modern society. And I think it is worthy of putting on the table. There are going to be a lot of critical views on it. And I also recognise that many of us are not clear on what that mantra meant and what methodology we ought to put in place in order to arrive at the best model.

I also heard the Honourable Member for the City express the view that we must or ought to have what he described as specialised institutions if we are to do business with Latin America. And he gave an example of when he was studying Spanish in which he indicated he has a very good grasp of the knowledge of Spanish, but he recognised how ignorant he was to that Spanish - and I mean the word in the true sense that you will find it in the dictionary, not in terms of Barbadian vernacular. I am not going to suggest in any way that he is an ignorant man. I mean that he had no knowledge of what he called business Spanish, applied Spanish - how could you relate to people? And he felt, I believe what he was saying to us, that it was difficult to communicate about business. And he was suggesting that we should be using these specialised institutions so that we can encourage business in Latin America and so on.

And I thought that he was suggesting - he seemed to be suggesting - that we need a modern humanist model. And I say a modern humanist model because if I call it a modern socialist model, it may stop people from respecting what I want to say, if what I am saying makes any logical sense. But in my body - the name is Samuel Bowles - in that book, a great sociologist also spoke about the ideology of the Cuban model and how Cuba related to challenging economic circumstances. I don't have all the details of it, but I am just trying to explore some of the models that we have before us in the Caribbean.

He spoke about how Cuba, after 1959, facing an embargo from the United States of America - how did Cuba respond to the needs of the society? I believe, according to my knowledge, that Cuba has about 11 or 12 massive universities and probably many other specialised educational institutions. Cuba was able to develop an educational system that is at the core of the superstructure of the society itself - education. Fidel Castro also said that revolution itself is education. And not sometimes when these words are used, sir, people tend to believe you are talking about something militant. But he is talking about radical change - a system itself is education. And he looked at what were the social needs of a society like Cuba after getting rid of Batista and the Americans and also facing the embargo - how could he put an educational policy, and in general, a social policy across Cuba in order to continue to help with the elevation of the quality of life of the Cuban people.

Cuba has produced, as a result of coming up with a model of state finance, thousands of students in Cuba. And they have expanded that programme into the external market as well, where Cuba caters to thousands of students across the Caribbean. Well, people with the colonial and the plantation mindset, regardless of how good that work is, always question the quality of the work. And so even when Cuba offered scholarships to Barbados, the only country in the Caribbean that questioned the standard of education in medicine was Barbados. We sent students from here to Cuba - through an embargo. A country that sent over 2 500 doctors in order to help the African continent with Ebola. A country that many leaders in the Caribbean, when they are facing medical challenges, they don't go to the hospitals in the other parts of the Caribbean - they head off to Cuba. A country that went through an economic embargo since 1959.

I really believe that a model like that ought to be put on the table. There are always going to be modern-day forces who would not want to respect that. And they will shout loud about communism in order to drive fear in our hearts of the value of our own homemade product, our own project in the region - that not only by theoretical presentations, but by adequate, glaring examples of the success of the model itself.

What I want to say about that before I even talk more about the plantation model - because the plantation model gave us laws, oppressive laws. The plantation model stripped us of identity, saw us as tabula rasa. The plantation laws gave us the little tracts of land that we converted at a later date into roads. The plantation model, especially the traditional plantation model, caused a lot of us to believe that no other model exists but the one that they imposed upon us. Well, I believe that we are at a stage now that we need to look back at all the ramifications of that kind of

indoctrination, that kind of physical model, and put a structure in place.

I know that no one man can come up easily with a comprehensive formation that is best suited for us to address the challenges that we face. But the major point here is we do not design a programme for the future based on where we are financially. Because Cuba did not do that. Which means if we have to change our cultural habits in the society in order to accommodate education, we will have to change those cultural habits. So the Honourable Member for Christ Church West will have to stop wearing his shirt and tie and enjoying the ostentatious things of life. Because we have to stop doing these things, sacrifice them, because it is a worthwhile sacrifice that we ought to make.

I don't want to go back to any debate about all that. If four students are in a classroom this morning - a lecturer called me. I have 13 students for three courses. Are you talking about - remember, that is two minutes - you talk about 13 students for three courses. And most likely one of the courses may have two or three students. It might be good for the Minister to at least make a tour to the university, probably even unannounced, so that you can have the empirical evidence that you need to understand where we are.

I don't feel that we need to continue to put blame on anybody. I personally don't feel that. I think that we are in such a position at such an important political juncture that we need to remove that kind of approach. I only want to suggest things - I can't dictate, like how the people in the plantocracy dictated what should be done. But I believe that you should make a tour to the university, see what these alterations, the harm that these alterations cause on the students at the university. The ones that are jettisoned from the system would not be there. But you can have words with some of the others that remain. And you see the kind of tensions that exist within the university. An institution like the university - it is not even healthy for the students that remain in the university itself.

So I, to some extent, am prepared to go with him as a comrade. As a socialist comrade, I will go to the university with him and provide the required security so that he could get in and out safely. But Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for the time and I hope that this small intervention at least will be taken into consideration, especially by the Minister of Education. Thank you very much.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It is my intention to bring this Head to a close.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I spoke about the cross-talking across the floor. No, Member, please continue, sir. Can I intervene? I have no indication for anyone else that they wanted to speak. I am going up to wrap up. Okay, but I did not see anyone stand. So that is the point. Just a moment. Hold on. Members, let me make it clear - I have no difficulty at all. It is just that no one stood. And when the Minister got up first, I thought that was it. But once you stand, I have no difficulty. That is the problem. Honourable Member.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for accommodating me. The lines seem to have been crossed. However, sir, I know that the honourable member on the other side earlier spoke about the Barbados Labour Party and the challenges that it would have left for this government. And I just want to put the record straight. I know the honourable member for St. Peter had made comments as well in relation to the university. And I agree that proper management will change things. I want to say how proud I am to have been a part of the team with the honourable member for St. Peter as the Prime Minister and the 14 years that we served this country with distinction. We were the gem of the Caribbean as a result of the measures that we undertook successfully.

So, sir, life was extremely difficult in 1994, Mr. Chairman. And the Barbados Labour Party in its manifesto pledge, amidst all of the challenges, indicated one of our first pledges will be to give back the 8 per cent. And we lived to see that happen. Mr. Chairman, it came to reality - job number one will be jobs. And we saw 30 or so thousand jobs developed. We dropped unemployment to 6.7 per cent from up in the 20s. So I am saying we did some projects exceptionally well. There would have been one or two where there were challenges. But like life, some days we are up, some days we are down. And therefore I will not want to accommodate the comments made by members in that way where they talk about planting all these nursery schools.

And so the Barbados Labour Party started the whole exercise of nursery schools by expanding some of the primary schools to accommodate the nursery, because there was a proper study done to determine that too many children were coming into primary school with deficits. Some of them were not speaking well, some of them did not socialise, and I do not have to go through the whole thing in the interest of time. And as a result, we constructed five nursery schools across Barbados because we found that nursery education is extremely expensive and poor people could not afford to pay for their children. And that is the reason why children came in at four and a half and five in the regular primary school. And there were so many challenges. And we must really make sure that whatever

platform we develop helps to ease the task of teachers and indeed parents. And that is the history of the situation.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I also want to say that I recommend to the Minister a few ideas. Perhaps some may be in train already, but one that particularly concerns me is associated with the Media Resource Department. I know it does excellent work. I know of the years when the media department - we used to call it the Audiovisual Aids - printed stories of Barbadian children. It was a project in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture. I still have some of those little storybooks. There were three or four storybooks from the primary and the secondary schools. Excellent stories. I still use them with my little community groups, and I want to recommend that the Media Resource Department be given the mandate, where possible, to work closer with schools to ensure that the various pageants, the skits, the plays, the poems - we have a lot of innate abilities, Mr. Chairman, in our schools and in our society as a whole. And while some children may not excel in the mathematics and English and the academics as we call it, I believe that a lot of the talent can be tapped.

Indeed, every public holiday we see what happens at NIFCA. I saw some performances a couple of days ago where you can tell that the individuals who are performing are now adults and parents. We have so much talent, especially at our graduation time, that I believe that we should be seeing a little bit more of that on our television station at least three times a week. I do not understand the language of some of the films that are shown. I am not crying down anybody from in the region or any other international world and their films, but a lot of what we see is really trash and it is not appropriate for some of our children to watch. Everybody has not got MCTV and the other forms of media. So I want to recommend to the honourable Minister that the \$2.7 million allocated this year at least have some kind of incorporation. If we are training young people in digital media, then within the Youth Affairs Department there must be synergies so that we get more of that on our local television, making a difference and showing others that our funding in education is really properly spent in preparing our children for the world of work.

We know of the movie with Chrissy, and that is an excellent one. It has gone internationally now, and I believe that the digital media department would be able to do a bit more. The other thing I want to touch on, certainly in limited time, is other synergies. And I recognise that, having been exposed to a lot in the Education Department at the time when I was there, the synergies between - or among, I should say - a number of agencies do not seem to be working out well. So if a child in the school is a welfare recipient or part of a family that is, then Education does not know, the Childcare Board does not know. And then we have our individual information in our agencies that we

seem to hold close to our bosom, when we know that if you are looking at the children and their performance and their development, it must be done in a holistic way.

And so I want to find out from the honourable Minister what is happening. Sometimes our children have to go to court, sometimes they are sent up to Summerville and Dodds - they still have to carry out a curriculum because at some point in time they have to be released. What knowledge does the Ministry have? How are they treated? I know some children who would go on for a short period, and by the time they got back to school the principal says do not bring them back here because of whatever the infraction is. And unless we become a forgiving society in that respect, we are going to lose more children who are going to fall through the cracks.

The Youth Affairs Department and the cultural activities - remember the CHECKS programme and the Youth Achieving Results - incorporating young children and learning about the landship and how to still walk: those are aspects of our culture that are now lacking. And our children - the ones I saw go through the programme - I saw a beaming of self-esteem and growth and development in the cultural interests as well as in their performance in the classroom. Having gone through the training, the Children's Development Centre - I am not so sure what connection there is with the Ministry, because some children will have to go there because of a hearing problem or whatever. But for me, we need to still have that kind of dialogue going between that agency and the Ministry so that we know where these children are at and how to treat to them, if you are talking about mainstreaming in the system at some point in time. So I consider that aspect of it very important if you are to make the difference.

And the final one, sir, is to do with the Edna Nichols Centre and the excellent work that I have witnessed over the years - more than 12 years that I have been in close connection with it, from the point of view that I have a particular interest in young children, especially those who have problems. And I am not so sure the honourable Minister will be unfamiliar - I am sure he will be familiar because he was in the profession. But we have found - I have witnessed - that there are a large percentage of children at second form, both boys and girls from all of the schools, grammar as well as the newer secondaries, that are extremely disrespectful. They are playing truant, they are doing all kinds of strange things. And when they get to the Edna Nichols Centre I know that there are programmes. But what appals me most of all is every year the young pregnant mothers - the young pregnant mothers. And I am not going to reiterate anything I said before. But that has me extremely concerned because you are talking 13 and 14 year olds; at one point in time I have seen an 11 year old. And I want to know what happens to them after school, because the programme that is offered by Edna Nichols

focuses on how to look after a baby with a small budget, how to look after the baby generally. But then what happens after the baby is born?

And I know that there are still some schools - Mr. Minister, if you will allow me, sir, to say that there are still some schools that are kind of rejecting. Is there still a policy where children after 16 years go out of school once the school has not got space? But if a child is 13 and 14, I do not understand why that child would not have to have a second chance in going back into the school system and taking advantage of the education that is being offered. I do not think it is properly followed through. I am still seeing a lot of young children on the road and a lot of young boys. And I think the boys - not meaning any pregnant boys, but the young boys who are underage, under the age of 16 - and we cannot be boasting of this free educational system and at the same time asking children to defer writing Common Entrance at 11 years and wait in school until 12, and still have an old Education Act that says you can have five years in the school, but when the boys get to 16 in particular they are sent home. They only get four years of education at the secondary level. And I would like to hear from the Minister on that one, if it is possible, sir.

I know that the honourable Minister, as a BEU President in 1995 when he heard of the Alternative Secondary School, the honourable Minister and his team then made laughing sport and they talked all kinds of strange things. But out of that was the birth of the Alma Parris School that was specially designed to accommodate students who were at what we call composite schools where there were no proper curricula for them. There was so much delinquency.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman. And those students were running wild. At St. Lawrence, at Holy Innocent, at St. Giles, at St. Andrew's Primary. There were about six to eight schools where those students were and they were all taken in. Teachers indicated to the Ministry that they wanted to teach at Alma Parris because they had the special skills. And therefore the Alma Parris school had 10 excellent years. I know nowadays it's in the Ministry, but that's not my concern now, even though I would like that matter to be resolved. But the Alma Parris school in its programme did diagnostic testing so that you got to know where the child was. And most of the children at those schools are boys. So if you have boys who cannot read, then you can tell what the repercussions would be later on if it is not taught.

And we know that those boys and girls were put into a programme called the School to Work programme from Third Farm. And they were going to do boat building, cosmetology, working in bakeries, working in offices and so on. An excellent programme that I know had been transferred to the St. George Secondary. But my point is, I

saw in the estimates and I want the Minister to explain if there is a new alternative secondary day school, because it takes out from that acronym that we know about in the past. And then we were calling for that school for a while to be a more central school, to be able to facilitate individuals from St. Michael and the adjoining community. Since we know that the Alma Parris school is in St. Peter and it called for busing the children in and out.

And I would like, sir, for the Minister to indicate what is the status of that school and if possible, whenever selection is coming, if the school is to be established, that more males be given the opportunity to teach at the school once their talents can be harnessed. Because if you're having a larger number of boys, all boys are being dominated - I call it dominated, perhaps for lack of a better word - in the scout movement, because most of the leaders, the Akelos, are women. Our boys are out there in the schools and most of the teachers are female. So if in the selection of staff or the identification of staff, more males can be invited to be a part of it, as long as they have the skills to work with children who are late developers or slow learners, then I would want to give it a thousand percent of support because I know it is very necessary. And as the time goes on, we may even have to look at having another one somewhere in the east, where the numbers are spiralling at this point in time. But to make sure that the quality education meets each of the students at his or her level.

So once that school is coming on stream, I want to congratulate the Honourable Minister for making sure that another institution is made available to look after the needs of the late developer, the slow learner, and so on.

And finally on that note, sir, I would like to find out from the Honourable Minister what is the status of those teachers who pursued the Mount St. Vincent training in the Master's degree in special needs. All of us are aware special needs is not associated only with late developers and slow learners, but gifted children as well. We have got a lot of gifted children in the system and some teachers will become frustrated as we know, because some classes are fairly big and when a gifted child completes lessons, the teacher has to find additional assignments and give feedback to those children so that they get to know, well, school needs me too.

I want to find out from the Honourable Minister if these people are really now still being assigned in the school system working exclusively with the children at risk or the special children to be able to make a difference in the life of them. There is no point in spending millions training teachers and then not assigning them appropriately in the system to carry out their craft in the area of their expertise. And therefore, I would wish for the Honourable Minister to indicate what is the status.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, finally, finally, what succession plan does the Ministry have? We have seen an exodus of a lot of the senior personnel in the Ministry. Some have gone to the CDB, some have gone on retirement with a lot of knowledge and skills and they have their doctorates and so on and so forth. And the Ministry is now - for me and this is my word and not anybody else's - to my mind, it is going through a phase and a change that really says it needs some strengthening. I would like to know what training programmes I am sure the Minister has in mind to be able to carry the Ministry of Education back to the level or to a higher level. Because at the end of the day, I think that teaching and education generally must attract the best and the brightest brains and the persons who are willing to sacrifice and offer services that will help Barbados to remain on the cutting edge of all that is good and the admiration that is given to our country because of the high standards in education that each of our successive governments have continued to put in it to make the difference in this hemisphere of the world. I wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I know that we are coming towards the end of this debate and I thank you for the opportunity just to summarise and to offer one or two more perspectives to the Honourable Minister of Education, who from yesterday indicated. I genuinely believe that he and the Prime Minister believe that the continued provision of free tertiary education is the right thing, but that they have found themselves backed into a corner because of the economic and fiscal advice being given to his government. To the government that is, of course, the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South and I say this in all sincerity. I served for seven years as Minister of Education. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has now exceeded the time that I served and becomes the longest serving Minister of Education, I believe. And therefore that, combined with a lifetime in education, causes me to know the sincerity of his heart in this matter. I genuinely believe. I believe, sir, that this issue is too important for it to be the subject of a political football. And therefore I enter this debate as a citizen of this country with everything at stake for this country.

There are those who believe that what we are saying is not possible. And I accept the genuineness of that doubt on the part of those people. Not in this Parliament alone, some outside too. But 25 years of involvement in public life has allowed me some level of experience, but equally the ability to reach out and to draw on a range of skills in order to be able to make things happen. And we have done this in the Barbados Labour Party. And I want to give the country the assurance as I stand here this afternoon that we

have not come to this position lately. We don't believe that we need this position, in fact, to be partisan or even to beat the Democratic Labour Party in another election, in the next election. We don't believe that we need it. They have done a wonderful job on their own in respect of other things, but I'm not going there in this speech.

What I do believe, however, is that when I entered the Ministry of Education, I understood that educational policy, like foreign policy in Barbados, had no partisan divide. And that is one of the reasons we have been able to see sustained development decade by decade. The Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow took up from the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams. If Sir Grantley Adams did not build the four secondary schools - Parkinson, West St. Joseph, Richmond, Nelson, Lester Vaughan and Princess Margaret - the Right Excellent Errol Barrow could not come in here and in one sentence give the country assurance that he was making education free to all citizens. Because there would have been no school places to satisfy the demand and there would not have been sufficient private places as well as the public places to satisfy that demand.

If the former Honourable Member for St. George South, Sir Louis Tull, and a former member for the City of Bridgetown, did not build on the work of the Right Honourable Sir Lloyd Sandiford with the Community College, with the Polytechnic, we would not have been able to see the beginning of the expansion of tertiary education in this country. On top of the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus, that the Right Excellent Errol Barrow facilitated when the plant was established at the harbour before he took it to Cave Hill, where it is now.

And if - I believe I still call them Honourable, because even though they're not in this chamber, they're still Honourable - the Honourable Keith Simmons and Cyril Walker did not build on the work of the Education Act that Dame Billie and others put in place, and to expand the secondary schools with the construction of Daryll Jordan School and to start the work for the construction of Lester Vaughan and Sarah Walker, we could not have been able to expand the number of public secondary school places. When I went to school there were many private secondary schools in Barbados that you don't see now. And when I went into the Ministry of Education at the tender age of 27 or 28, whatever it was, I took up and found two primary schools that the previous Democratic Labour Party was building - Hilda Skeene and Ignatius Byer.

I found a technical study on the Barbados Language Centre asking what was the performance of Barbadian students in languages. Now that study had been commissioned. The then government didn't get a chance to sign off on it. But I was able to take the study and in short order do the work that has now led to the Barbados

Language Centre that the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown referred to as needing expansion in his speech. And in fairness, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has continued a lot of the educational policies that we left there - coming out of Edutech, coming out of the Criterion Reference Testing programme, coming out of the necessity to put reading at the centre to improve performance. To the point where he and I can look back and Reginald Farley and Anthony Wood and Cappy Greenwich can look back and say to the country with confidence that 21 years ago 60 per cent of our students were leaving the secondary school system with less than four certificates. We have turned the corner in respect of that. We have equally turned the corner in respect of the implementation of technology in our classrooms.

In spite of the objection of the United States government that objected to the provision of the Edutech loan to Barbados, because they did not understand why a small country would want to borrow the equivalent of \$400 million from the Inter-American Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank - not just to fix buildings, but to reform our educational system in terms of curriculum reform, in terms of teacher retraining. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas just asked the minister to update us on the Mount St. Vincent retraining for special needs teachers that came out of the Edutech programme.

So I rise, therefore, this afternoon, in all sincerity. And I give this Honourable Chamber the commitment, and this country, that the Barbados Labour Party will produce within the next six weeks a paper for distribution to the country, including the government, to all university students, to all of those public servants and persons working in the private sector who constitute a large percentage of persons going to the university. Because we in this debate have talked about our children and our young people, forgetting that one of the things that the expansion of tertiary access, tertiary education did, was that it allowed a considerable number of people in Barbados who are working to go there to improve their qualifications so that they could continue to earn more for themselves and their family and to retire at higher pensions. And I want to give this country the assurance that we will do so.

Now, when I spoke yesterday, I made it absolutely clear, echoing the points that I made on Monday. On Monday, I said that the most important thing for this economy, in our view at this stage, was for us to be able, one, to restore investment grade, because we cannot build out Barbados' development on 10 per cent and 12 per cent interest rates; and two, that we also needed to be able to have a refinancing of our debt, because \$1.7 billion out of \$2.5 billion of revenue is unsustainable. In fact, it works out to just about 69 per cent. And if we were to segregate interest payments alone, interest payments come to about

30 cents in every dollar of revenue earned by the Government of Barbados.

Now, in those circumstances, Mr. Chairman, we therefore have a duty to deal with the fastest growing item of expenditure. Interest rates have virtually doubled as a cost to the Government of Barbados between 2007 and now. And for the benefit of the member for St. Michael South Central, who spoke earlier this afternoon, who continues to believe that the problem for the debt was 14 years of the Barbados Labour Party governing in this country, when debt increased by \$2.8 billion - I want him to go and read the Central Bank reports and look at the debt figures. We left debt in this country at about \$5.6 billion. Debt in Barbados today in March 2015 stands at about \$11.9 billion. And it has increased by \$6.3 billion. And that is the reason why the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, as far back as 2010 - to his credit - put on the table, when interest costs were \$200 million less a year than it is now, when amortisation cost was about \$500 million less a year than where it is now, that this was going to be the largest growing item of expenditure. Because in order to meet the next year you have to borrow. And if you continue to borrow, you continue to pay higher interest and accumulate higher principal. It is simple. Every household knows it. Every individual knows it. So let us put to one side the nonsense that the Barbados Labour Party has put us in this debt trap. And I'm not interested in blame herein after this speech. What I'm interested in is how we get out of it.

Now I want to appeal to the Honourable Minister of Finance with all sincerity. I'm not interested in the political posturing. I am interested now in a country that is desperately falling. There are papers available that the Minister of Agriculture has tried to put before him, that the member for St. Peter spoke to last year and this year, that I have spoken to for the last two years - in relation to the Jamaica Debt Exchange, in relation to the debt exchange programme with St. Kitts, in relation to the debt exchange programme with Belize and Grenada. The difficulty is that in some cases where countries went under a debt exchange programme, some of them continued to build new debt again. Now that requires discipline from us on both sides. And when I give the country the assurance that we will find the \$35 million for tertiary education while not compromising this country's fiscal stability, it is a solemn promise. And I don't normally make promises in public life, but I make this solemn promise to this country because growth is strategic to our future. In order for Barbados to get out of this crisis there must be growth. And in order for growth to happen, the greatest single ingredient in growth is our human resource development and technology. And in order for technology to be effective, we must have that human resource development. Now we say that if we fail to do that we will be compromising our medium to long-term growth prospects.

But I want to make this other point quickly before I end on the article that I will leave as a document of the House. When you improve the skills in a society, those who have skills at the bottom also have their terms and conditions of work and pay improved. Because apart from anything else, unions now use the skilled labour as a relative point from which to negotiate. It is why Barbados has had a better performance in a Gini coefficient like Uruguay than most other countries in the hemisphere. But in addition to that, those who are skilled and who are earning more have disposable income to purchase what we call the services in the lifestyle industries - the manicures, the pedicures, the other things that cause people to want to enjoy a little bit of their life - that other services of people who perhaps are unskilled or minimally skilled have to provide.

In addition to that, I want to make the point that our commitment to be able to pay the \$35 million that is at stake is not in isolation. We have said let there be refinancing of our debt to create fiscal space so we can reduce both our interest and our amortisation payments on an annual basis. And secondly, let us restructure the structure of our government because we know that governance is about choices. But it is our judgement that the hierarchy of expenditure - first, law and order; access to health care; maintenance of public health; and then empowerment of our people, primarily through education and secondly, protection of the vulnerable - must take the first claims on public expenditure.

Now, sir, what was the experience of Jamaica in 2010 when they pursued the Jamaica Debt Exchange programme? In the first year, and in the case of Jamaica, Jamaica's debt to GDP ratio was 135 per cent. It was US\$13 billion. Ours today is virtually US\$12 billion. What is the experience of Jamaica? Jamaica had 55 per cent domestic debt, 45 per cent foreign exchange debt. In our case, it is about 70 per cent domestic debt, just over 70 per cent, and just under 30 per cent foreign debt. So we are actually in a better position than Jamaica to embark on this programme. In Jamaica's case, 99 per cent of the persons who held bonds and different instruments participated in the debt exchange programme which was to trade in shorter debt at higher interest rates for longer debt in order to be able to create the immediate fiscal space. You know what Jamaica did in the first year of the debt exchange programme? Jamaica saved US\$500 million in debt service payments which was the equivalent of 3.5 per cent of GDP.

In the case of the National Insurance alone, the National Insurance Scheme's debt has increased from \$1.4 billion in 2007 to virtually \$3 billion today. That is the Barbados National Insurance Scheme lending to the Government of Barbados.

The last point is this - trying to make both of these documents of the House. Lessons in sovereign debt restructuring, looking at Greece, Jamaica, St. Kitts, Belize and Grenada. And the first point - just read the executive summary; you can read the fuller document if you want. First, debt restructurings have often been too little and too late, thus failing to re-establish debt sustainability and market access in a durable way. That is why we repeat the call for the Minister of Finance not to ignore the calls from all three sides in this House, not to believe that debt refinancing must come after the restructuring of the government. In order for him to appropriately restructure the government and put the government's fiscal position back in order, he needs growth. For every hundred million dollars increase in nominal GDP, he gets about thirty million dollars in tax revenue. That is how his revenue will increase again - not by increasing tax rates.

And in the circumstances, we say to him that please form a committee of this House. Use the skills. There is agreement within your cabinet, among the independent benches and within the Barbados Labour Party. This issue is too serious. It is not about political popularism. It is about securing the medium-term future of this country. And those who laugh - because I remember - I remember, your time has elapsed in a way that reflects that they do not care about the future of this country. I make this speech, Mr. Chairman, and I thank you for your indulgence, with all sincerity and in the hope that this Parliament will rise to the occasion and we will put the paper on the table for serious, solid discussion as to how it can be done. I'm obliged to you, sir.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me at the outset thank all colleagues on both sides of the House for their contribution to Head 77 which deals with the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. I'm going to be relatively generous this evening, even though there is much which was said on the other side that does not bear any resemblance to current reality. They seem not to have been reading or understanding what has been taking place in the dynamic environment called education. And therefore there has been much repetition in fact on projects which have already been completed or are in fact about to be completed. But I will bring some, hopefully some clarity to the process.

Much of the debate has been taken up on funding the University of the West Indies. Much of it. And I want to make the record relatively straight by providing some statistical evidence relative to what the Democratic Labour Party has been doing in the last seven years to try to hold that important ship of education afloat. And I make that as a very serious thing because in our - what I call the

evolution of a seamless educational structure - the University is implanted at its apex with the Barbados Community College as a tangent, the BCC as a tangent, Erdiston Teachers College as a tangent.

I started in my presentation at the level of the continued build-out. I like to be fair; I don't go and claim somebody's soup kitchen, I try to build out mine, or if they build upon theirs, so I don't get caught up in that. I started this - and we are too dynamic a reality, and education is a dynamic reality. I credited the last government for responding to the programme process of the commencement of really looking at our three year olds. That process continued with the bail-out of the Maria Holder, the Talma Berry, and now the bail-out of the five additional plus the rebuild of the government nursery schools basically. Now, to some extent with the participation of the private sector, we satisfy that agenda. Unless the reality of our birth rate changes, we would have satisfied all of our nursery school children going into a school, finding a place within the school environment, therefore meeting the agenda - not by 2015 but most likely by 2018 - to have all of these little ones, these very beautiful little ones, in an educational environment that would satisfy that agenda.

I spoke as well to the commencement of the one at Churchill. It wouldn't be called that - it would be given an appropriate name - followed sometime in April with the one at Oldbury, followed next year by two others along the western coast and in St. Michael. And to be concluded - even though we are going to do a re-evaluation - possibly with the one at Sales Court to satisfy that.

But the main point: the Government introduced what has long since 1995 been a university policy that first 15 and then 20 per cent of what is called the economic costs should be paid for by students. Jamaica straight to students - you pay, because of their reality. Trinidad went through different contortions till today. They have arrived, I believe under Prime Minister Manning, at what is called a GATE initiative, where there are some ideas as to when you must finish. If you fail, the grant becomes a loan - got in different forms - and it is not only located at the level of the University of the West Indies, but also to the state universities, and I believe there are two or three in Trinidad and Tobago which students also receive that funding to help them through the difficulties. I'm also aware that there is substantial noise now -

in Trinidad and Tobago saying to the government, look, you need to step back a bit because of what you're doing with GATE and the students. It is causing some difficulties in some other areas of social assistance across the worldwide area of Trinidad and Tobago. But they will deal with that. They will deal with that particular reality. Since 2008, the Barbados government was providing \$126

million, \$126 million to the economic cost for the University of the West Indies gradually declining to about \$118 million and approximately \$30 million tuition fees for our students. In fact, if you listen to the statistics between 1998-99 and 2006-07 the operating expenses at the University of the West Indies, based on UGC funding - it is called University Grants Committee funding - was \$476 405 000, 476 million between 1998-99 and 2006-07. Round it off at \$477 million. Between 2007-08 and 2014-15, the money paid was \$980 million. Consider these facts. These are the facts. Then let us add to those the tuition fee component. And if you add for the previous period mentioned, 1998 to 2007, it was \$127 million, giving a grand total for that entire period of \$602 million. For the other period of 2007-08 to 2014-15, the grand total inclusive of \$222 million - the grand total would have been \$1 129 754 000 in the period in which the Democratic Labour Party came to office, doubling what was happening the previous period. And I tried to divide them equally during your tenure and the current tenure. And this was happening at a period when recession was visiting us in our faces, when there were substantial blows to nearly every sector - international business, the tourism sector, sugar, you name it, that was happening. But because of our commitment, because of our deliberate action, we continued to fund and to fund, including their billing up in debt. Today that debt stands at \$186 million. \$186 million. These are facts. They can be found anywhere. No one has to scurry about to find them. These facts are there. Nobody has to call in to the office of the Ministry of Education trying to find out. They can call the Minister, you could call the Minister. Because there are facts. There are facts. Nobody has to make the place miserable and just call and get facts. That is not my nature, you know. So the persons who do that and try to put the character of people under stress should stop. Always speak to the Minister and you will get the facts as they are. As I said, a debt biller. But we never stopped funding. In fact, we said, look, we will borrow funds to pay the debt down. And this is what we have been doing - to pay that debt down so that the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill and the University generally will not be so constrained that it cannot deliver quality education to Barbadians or to whoever comes to our shores.

I understand very well the reality of reaching the apex of the educational journey from nursery education right through to doctorate and other postgraduate qualifications in study. But we have also had stresses at the Barbados Community College and Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic - stresses which, even in the difficult period, we tried to accommodate within the mix. And therefore we built out, I believe it was 10 or 12 new classrooms at SJPP because we realised that there was a heavy demand, particularly by young women, for the area of cosmetology and aesthetics. Heavy demand in Barbados. The whole notion of being clean, being healthy, well

adorned, looking good, smelling good and feeling good. We responded to that. We responded to the issues generally at the Barbados Community College. But we know that was not enough because there was a period when the expansion did not continue, but the expansion had to continue because you were lifting the base of secondary education even further and responding to the demands of students who were matriculating at a higher rate and therefore improving the environment. That was spoken to by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, where there were situations of students not leaving with any subjects at all. Today, out of subject sittings, the highest point was achieved last year of 72.4 per cent in subject sittings, up from 2012 where there was a little change in the system and a bit of decline. But in 2012, 2013, back up. So right across that you have seen that there was a growth in that system and every single school was responding - from a high in the high 90s by two or three of the schools that compete in the high 90s. I am not going to get into the names but it is expected of them because of the intake into the structure. If in fact they were performing less than this, one would have to investigate the pedagogy, the teaching and learning environment and what was impacting on the students.

But not to be left out, there are some interesting cherries in that educational mix. When we want to look at Dalton Griffith and his performance - the Alleyne School in St. Andrew is a gem and if you want to call it the north performing exceptionally high rates in the education system, throughout you can see all of the good results that school brings. Dalton Griffith Lodge. You are not going to leave out the Grantley Adams Memorial as well. There might not be any 80s or 90s, but because of the mix of programmes that they bring, and that they bring in more of, one is seeing very good quality and very good results. And from year to year nearly 50 per cent of the entrants. Now I want to see more students going forward because their numbers can be higher. You cannot have 180 students in the various age cohorts going through and then at the end of the day you do not see 100 or 150 of those students doing some kind of exam. We have now taken care of that. And I can tell the Honourable Member for the City that we have said, look, the Caribbean Vocational Qualification is now written in to the qualification system so that those who, yes, are cognitive but are more bent towards hands-on experiential learning, that they too will benefit. And the St. Lucy Secondary School was the first school to roll out CVQ qualifications in Barbados, albeit among 30 or so odd students with triathlons just looking to do something else to qualify. More and more will do it this year and I hope that within the next three or four years literally 1 000 students will be writing the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications in any area of the standards which exist. And a standard is similar to what you might call a discipline, an academic discipline, but in that arena it is referred to as a standard. So barbering, cosmetology, masonry, electrical work,

plumbing, tiling, bricklaying, steel bending - you name it - is a standard. And that standard at level 1, equivalent to a CXC subject equivalent, will be rolled out across the state. It has commenced without much fanfare, without much noise. Because it is about students, it is about the youth of Barbados. It is not about hard-back men and women like we are who have gone through many experiences and many journeys. Our commitment must be to them.

Recognising of course that in every society there are always challenges to the value of the resources you have in your hand. And unless there is greater input, greater amounts of money placed in detail, you cannot take out what is not in. And you always have to create little quirks in a dynamic reality. When I first spoke on this head and I spoke last week on the two supplementaries, I said - and I am not into the worship on this - that we need to put this to bed: how we are going to fund tertiary and higher education in Barbados. I said that I invited a bipartisan committee of this House to so look at it, so that we would not be mounting the platforms and screaming, I am going to do this, you will not do that, this is my crown, that is your thorn. We do not need that for our young people. Our young people need the opportunity to reach the highest level, the optimal level that they can reach with the talent, skills and abilities that they possess.

I also want to tell the Member for the City that under the Human Resource Development Strategy, the five pillars - there was, I believe, pillar three - the National Qualification Framework, which looks at equivalencies of qualification, has been completed. We have not laid it in the House because they are still working on, not the qualification framework, but looking at the National Qualification Authority which will implement the framework. And what as Minister I have said is I do not want two separate and distinct bodies. I want the Accreditation Council and the National Qualification Authority embedded in one structure. So you will have a National Accreditation and Qualification Authority. There is no need to create various structures to deal with issues such as that. And that consultancy is ongoing even as I speak. That is the reality that is taking place. But good work is also taking place. But I leave that for the Minister.

On the other side, in addition to the National Vocational Qualification Standards developed for Barbados by BIMAP in many areas, but mostly for out-of-school youth, so that area as well can be very well satisfied within providing the skills and competencies that we need to build out Barbados - I said to the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic only two weeks ago, as they went to the fair put on by the British Universities here, that Barbados has taken a fresh look and a fresh guard at its tourism product. The Barbados Community College, through Palmare or the Hospitality Institute, cannot prepare all of the workers for that arena. You must get involved. And I was pleased to

note the Principal responded and the two members of staff who were there said, Minister, do not worry, we can do this. We will roll out, to satisfy a segment of persons who are interested and want to work within the hotel sector, customised programmes for that reality - that is happening without thumping our chests or screaming.

The Government of Barbados, the Democratic Labour Party, stated already by the Prime Minister, is not going to step back from providing resources for tertiary education. But we understand the reality, all of us. You know, there are some people who claim greater fame when they refer to Claude McKay's work. I come from the nigger yard of yesteryear. That is a reality. We are the products of the plantation society, but we have liberated ourselves not only through familial relationships or communities or districts, but through the provision of efficient and effective education. And some who thought that they would never be able to exit any of the stages of education have done so. And there are some who when exiting secondary school had not won a qualification but because of the adult education programme went right back in, because we all learn at different rates and at different times. So a fellow might leave at 16 but by 18 he has bypassed the qualifications of the one who left at 16. You understand the reality - it is dynamic. Learning is dynamic because we come to a particular focus in our lives. We say that I must not squander opportunity at the given time. And the Democratic Labour Party understands this. And coming shortly to this House would be an order adjustment to the order which deals with adult education in Barbados - shortly to this House - to show how we are building out.

We look also at children. Not everybody can learn in the school with a thousand children. Human beings were not really born to be in a closed area rubbing shoulders every minute of the day. Some people like a little more space, some people like a little more room, some people like a little more freedom. And that is why we spent, I believe, about \$2.3 million in a complete refurbishment and build-out of the old Erdiston nursery school to establish what the Honourable Member for St. Thomas called an alternative school environment called the New Horizons Academy. Look at the naming culture applied to it and you can understand the psychology of so doing. And we have been utilising some of those persons who are trained with the Mount St. Vincent Special Needs programme and deploying them and constantly deploying them across the system to ensure that those funds previously invested in their training are not a waste of time. That is what has been happening. Those children who cannot sit comfortably, who get into a little friction, who get into little difficulties, have challenges. We have said you must not slip through the cracks. Come - small classes, social workers, guidance counsellors, the technology, the sports and graduate events, the Agricultural Training Institute. I hope it is fully completed. Agriculture. So there we will still be carrying a

programme - multifocus, multidirectional. It is not play and no work. And also enrichment programmes, enrichment exercises to give them appreciation that there is a total society in which you must live and have your being as well. And any forms of hostility within that environment will cause major fracture.

This is what has been happening and this is what has been taking place for years. After what used to be called the School Leaving Certificate, the Government of Barbados - both sides - have been searching for another quality exit qualification. The first set of the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence will be taken by four schools this year - four, including Copper Hill. Four schools. We spent a lot of time going through name contortions for nearly 20 years. For 2015, the first set of students will be having the Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence after nearly 20 years. But you know, things start, you re-evaluate, you re-examine and you move on. You do not thump your chest. Life, yes, has many divergences but at the end of the day it reunites - not at the base, it reunites at its outer edges. And that is what we have been doing and that is what we have been talking about.

I am not pleased though with some things - and not because I am a miserable person, but because there is a constant quest for excellence. There is a constant quest for the fullest involvement of people, parents. There is a constant quest for the fullest involvement of teachers. And that is why today I am bothered after reading the papers - I believe yesterday - that one of our trade unions in the teaching fraternity is saying we will no longer be engaged in correcting the students' SBAs, School Based Assessments. We will only correct if we are paid - something that was being done since the beginning of the Caribbean Examinations Council. That bothers me. And CXC is a regional institution; it is not Barbados alone who can move to that posture because it then puts our children at a severe disadvantage. Or we will correct them normally and help supervise them and work with the children and then when they are finished we will tear them up in a stack and come and put them in the head teacher's room. Where are we and why are we going in those kinds of directions? What miasma of the mind would cause anybody to go into that particular trajectory? There are teachers who leave Barbados and go to many countries where the examination centres are and correct the scripts on behalf of the CXC and they are provided with some stipends. I believe they are making the assessment that evaluating the SBAs might be a CXC exercise. So hands off - matter finished - our secondary school students who do CXC and other external or regional exams, unlike my time, but that was a long time ago, children go on study leave. My question is: when children go on study leave, what are those teachers doing? That is not a criticism, that is a question. When they go on - children go on study leave - and the fourth, fifth forms or

sixth forms - what are the teachers doing? What scripts are they correcting? Maybe internal scripts for promotional exams. I am asking the union, all unions, to look again. These are our children. It is not about collecting \$100 or \$200 or \$300 - it cannot be about that today. It surely cannot be about that. It has to be in the interest of our children. There are no fees charged, as far as I know. Unless you want to make a little contribution into the private contracts or providing lessons - those are private contracts. So you cannot intervene on a private contract. And I am not complaining. But to whom much is given, much is truly expected. Therefore, I appeal. Or maybe if they do not want to hear my voice, maybe the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East can appeal so that we are together on this matter. Barbados belongs to every one of us - in here, up there and out there, those in the diaspora as well. So that when they come back home, they are welcome to our shores. That is my view and that is my understanding of the reality.

Unions have a right to represent the interests of their members. Not all particular points will be seen eye to eye between either the Minister, the technocrats or anybody else. I have always encouraged - because I cut my teeth as a leader of a trade union. A leader. So I understand - you, Honourable Members, well, had a little experience with me for a few months. I believe it would have made her a better person. I know. So it has made her a better person under my leadership. So I am not anti-union. What I am anti is stupidity. That is what I am anti. Not unions. I will support unions always in their fight because I still am a worker. I am a worker on behalf of the people of Christ Church East Central. And I am eternally grateful, notwithstanding the machinations of other things, for their support over these years since 2003, being in this House.

Another correction. Look, we can pull figures, we can pull statistics, they can be manipulated, et cetera. Yes, there was a decline in the numbers in the transitional phase between the government paying for everything outside of the \$1 100 that they pay for university fees. That transition has caused a decline in numbers - in the latest statistics of 20.5 per cent. And it is not only in Barbadians, but in the OECS as well - those students who come to Barbados. 20.5 per cent. The figures being not pulled out of a basket in the sky or in the contorted minds of the wishful - is that currently between undergraduate and graduate programmes there are 6 863 students recognised at the University of the West Indies. And if you add the 20.5 per cent, the rate of decline would have been about 1 600 to 1 800 students - too many. That is a fact - too many. But persons took decisions relative to the availability of the resources in their pockets. The student revolving loan fund moved ahead in trying to ensure that as many students as possible would have benefited from the loans. 4 per cent loan, no guarantor, no surety, up to \$50 000. We made adjustments for those in medical sciences so that they do not pay 20 per

cent, they pay 13 per cent. And that 13 per cent is moved across to Trinidad and Tobago where we have medical students and Jamaica where we have medical students. But we might have to look now not at what they are paying - because that is a decision and accepted - but the numbers that are in fact coming out. We need a little more specialisation rather than just the person simply graduating out of the University of the West Indies.

Of course, recognise as well that persons with exhibitions and government scholarships are not within the cohort of 35. They are outside of that cohort. So if 22 who got government scholarships want to study here, they appear under a slightly different head or subhead. So that would mean 25 here and 22 - be 49. We do not have 49 intern spaces at the QEH. We have just 36. And that is creating some difficulties and some problems. So we will look at that.

I will have to speak more in an external place to many of the dynamics of education, many of the very positive things that continue to happen, many of the Ministers of Education over time - going back of course to Sir Grantley Adams who was the Minister of Education, Luther Thorne who was my principal in secondary school and who was the Minister on the Barbados Labour Party, Cameron Tudor, Hilton Vaughan on the Democratic Labour Party in the early 60s - you name them. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph named all of them down to this current stage. And I believe there was genuine commitment. People might do things slightly differently but they are not held up to ridicule because somehow somebody understood something that was not stated or somehow groceries might be late. I would have loved if I had the resources in my pockets without fail. I would have presented a cheque to the University of the West Indies and turned away because they are the people of Barbados. But those resources were not there. We got those resources as they are. We said to the University, if somebody comes forward to me and says I am going to help you, this is how I am able to - here is \$1 800 or \$1 500 - I would say thank you. If I were building a house and somebody says this is \$1 500 in blocks, I know that I am going to get three truck-fuls. I am going to say thank you because I do not have to look for it. We cannot create in the minds of our people that in reality somebody does not pay for what I get. Somebody pays for it. The state does not have money of its own. It has money on behalf of the people in trust and it has to use it and it has to stand on the dock. Every government stands on the dock. So it has to use it in relation to the priorities across the system. We did not say you pay all, we did not say you pay for every credit hour. We said we will carry the majority of the cost. If 80 per cent is not the majority, there is something wrong with the maths of the Honourable Member for St. James North. 80 per cent is four-fifths. I am saying - and I appreciate the reality - if it were possible that not one cent, Honourable

Member for St. Michael East, not to be put, it would not have been put. But I am saying let us gather at the table of peace. For those who smoke pipes, they can smoke their pipes. But at the bottom end of the day, let us gather, let us look and we look. There are

ideas, there's no real difference. You know, you said in your manifesto, we will look at this and we will do that. We will find this and we will find that. We are saying let us set that bipartisan committee beyond the work of the Backers Commission. And I want, as I call his name, to thank him significantly for his work at the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill and congratulate him for being elevated to Vice Chancellor now of the Federal University. I think it's truly well deserved. He has been a pioneer in his own way, a brilliant mind, an excellent writer and a great citizen of the Caribbean.

I also want to congratulate a teacher taken under the arms of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East at the time, a young man from St. Peter - Mr. Glenroy Cumberbatch - who is now the Registrar of the Caribbean Examinations Council. I wish to compliment him, a former Deputy Chief Education Officer. Extremely competent. Very competent today.

So Barbadians are making strides in their promotion of its people. We have as well two persons at the Caribbean Development Bank - Dr. Ida Mayer Denning at the Caribbean Development Bank in the Policy Unit, and recently, and I spoke about that gentleman last week, who headed the RPC Unit, Mr. Murphy, who has now gone over to the Caribbean Development Bank. All of them had their engines and their hearts in the Ministry of Education and they all worked well. I am willing to say that as Minister, I recognise they all worked well. I never had a problem with one of them. Sometimes if I said can I get it next week, before I turned around, it was on my desk. I compliment them for their stewardship and for their work.

And I hope that we can, as a people, look at the reality of Barbados. It is not going to be always like this. There are going to be more stars in the sky tonight than there were last night. Because I always live with hope. I always live with optimism. And I know that the Democratic Labour Party, committed to the social agenda of our people, will rise even higher along with its people to satisfy their legitimate demands, their legitimate claims - and know that all of us essentially drink from the same cup of the University of the West Indies or being educated at the higher levels across the world. So we are all Barbadians interested in the best of Barbados. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The question that Head 77 stand part of the Estimates was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. CLERK: Mr. Chairman, Head 23 - Ministry of Health - in the amount of \$251 249 359.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment, please. Honourable Members, the amount is \$251 249 359.

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.

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: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Sir, I beg to move that the House be suspended until 6.20 this afternoon.

The question that the House be suspended until 6.20 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Give notice of the Banks Tax on Assets Amendment Bill 2015, further notice of the Consolidation Tax Amendment Bill 2015, and further the Income Tax Amendment Bill 2015.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I beg to move the first reading of the Bank Tax on Assets Amendment Bill 2015, the first reading of the Income Tax Amendment Bill 2015, and the first reading of the Consolidation Tax Amendment Bill 2015.

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

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: This House is now in Committee.

Mr. CLERK: Head 23 - Ministry of Health - in the amount of \$251 241 359.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, sir, I am delighted to introduce this Head under the Ministry of Health in the sum of \$251 241 359 as indicated by the officer. Sir, I am encouraged that, having heard the tone of the last contribution from the opposition side on the earlier consideration, I am encouraged that we should by now have reached a stage in this Honourable Chamber, as we look at these Estimates 2015–2016, where we can work towards a oneness and an objective which aims at continuing the wonderful development that Barbados has experienced as a nation state and being able to seek areas of cooperation as we build towards an even stronger environment.

Indeed, sir, during the discussion on education, it was often mentioned that the similarities between the thought processes and the philosophy of our approaches as government to education and the obvious similarities, as I said, sir, with our approaches to health - as a matter of fact, they were sometimes specifically compared. So, sir, I want to deal with this Head in a way that tries to set the perspective for Barbados, for this Chamber's consideration, which understands the stages through which this consideration should go.

And in looking at the overall allocation, we find that there is an allocation of some \$28 million for primary health care services. And we ask ourselves, obviously, what is primary health care? And again, we will have an opportunity to elaborate on this. There is an allocation to hospital services of some \$192 million, care to the disabled of some \$2.8 million, a pharmaceutical programme to which is allocated some \$26.2 million or so. There is a care of the elderly programme - and this is very important work in the Ministry of Health, I think - which is allocated some \$36.38 million; of course, our HIV/AIDS prevention and control project, some \$10.2 million; and the very important environmental health services, some \$16 million.

I want to assure Barbadians that the health care system in Barbados, by our estimation and our measurement in the Ministry of Health, has continued to be reliable. It has continued to be affordable in large measure. Indeed, public health is still available free - free to all Barbadians. And it continues to be universal and available to all. In this regard, we are signatories to the WHO programme on universal health care, and as a result we are often referred to as leaders in the delivery of universal health care.

In terms of the measurements which are used to estimate the extent to which our health care results, we have maintained a position of a leading health care provider in the Caribbean region and we continue to be looked up to in this regard. We are often sought after in terms of that leadership. And as recently as our programme to prepare Barbados in the event of the outbreak of Ebola virus disease in Central Africa, our preparations here in Barbados were highly commended by the Pan American Health Organization and WHO, and we have assisted in helping other countries in the region build their programmes up to that stage.

Of course, we do not want to have to deal with a case of Ebola virus disease and nobody wants to have to deal with such a case. But the facts are that we have prepared Barbados to the extent that we are confident that if it were to occur, we can handle that event safely and effectively. It is indeed a testimony to the extent of the development of our health services that we can take this position. Because we have entered into a strong programme of training and retraining - preparing our port health, preparing our primary health care providers, preparing our polyclinics, preparing our accident and emergency centre, and indeed preparing our private deliverers of health care, private doctors and their clinics. We are confident that such an event can be effectively dealt with.

And I want to take the opportunity to thank all Barbadians and all officers of the Ministry of Health and the private sector who have taken care of preparing Barbados for such an eventuality. And I want to relate an incident - a story - just two Fridays ago when we hosted a group from Southern Carolina University. One of the faculty members is a Cyril niece and she made the comment to the Ministry that she was extremely impressed in the way she was treated at the Grantley Adams Airport by the port health authorities. And she did not feel in any way discriminated against. And she felt it was really a testimony to the kind of training which our officers have undertaken and which our officers have absorbed. I thought I would start at that stage to help to build that confidence in our Barbados community - not that we should drop our guard, but that we should be prepared to roll out those practices which we have made sure that everybody is aware of.

I believe, sir, that our success in tackling health care will depend on how well we are able to develop our primary health care system beyond even where it is today. And we have a very sophisticated primary health care system within the eight polyclinics in Barbados, scattered all over the island - from the north, the Morris Bar in the south, Randall Phillips of course in Christ Church, the St. Philip Polyclinic, in Bridgetown the Eunice Gibson, Wards, Winston Scott, Branford Tate. And all of these eight polyclinics help to deliver a primary health care

service which we believe is at the centre of success in delivering affordable care to Barbadians.

Why do we say that? It is recognised all over the world - and Barbados obviously is no exception - that the major threat today is no longer in communicable diseases, which we were so familiar with up until about the 1960s and 70s, but in terms of non-communicable diseases: stroke, hypertension, diabetes, and of course forms of heart disease. And we are convinced that the factors which have been identified as precursors, if you may, to these kinds of diseases can be best identified - and can be identified early - in a dedicated and sophisticated primary health care system. And as such, we have continued to train and retrain our health care workers within our polyclinic system to ensure that they can deliver the best primary health care to our people.

And we see a large number of people in our polyclinic system. Upwards of 500 000 persons per year are seen in our polyclinics - there are 500 000 visits. In other words, obviously there are some people who visit the polyclinic weekly, some who visit bi-weekly, some who visit monthly. But there are about 500 000 visits per year over the polyclinic system. We get highs at the Winston Scott, obviously the Bridgetown catchment area, in the region of 100 000 to 110 000. We get lows at Edgar Cochrane and some of the other areas in the region of 60 000 to 70 000. But the average tends to be 70 000 to 90 000 visits per year in these polyclinics. So the staff again is stretched to deliver these services. But again, one is satisfied with the kind of dedication that they bring to their work in the polyclinic system.

If there is a strength which comes to mind immediately in primary care, it would probably be in the area of community services. If we could develop a larger cadre of nurses and doctors who went out into our communities and helped to do visits, maybe we could catch some of our delinquent patients more often and we can bring them back into a health care programme before things get too difficult. Remember, one of the realities of mankind is that if we go to the doctor and we begin to feel better, it is a natural tendency to start to ignore the treatments that are recommended. And unless something happens again to jog our memories and to jolt us, we can resort to behaviour which can lead to a reoccurrence of the challenges which we may have faced. And this is a characteristic, I think, of the non-communicable diseases we are talking about.

So this is where we again believe that education and promoting healthy lifestyle within Barbados can help us to tackle this problem. We intend that the Ministry of Health, through our health promotion unit, in collaboration with what we know as the National HIV/AIDS Commission - NAC - we have suggested and they have taken on board a

partnership which can see the Ministry of Health take advantage of the education and promotional activities which NAC has been involved in and supplement our work in the health promotion unit so as to really roll out an education programme in Barbados which helps to bring home the point to Barbadians that if we adopt a change of lifestyle, we can assist the entire primary health care programme. And because of the success of the primary health care programme at that stage in identifying and treating disease early, we can therefore reduce the burden on our tertiary health care units - and we can get to that - the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, of course.

So this is the potential for helping us to make Barbadians more aware of their own responsibility in this regard and how they can help us - help all of us - to reduce the overall cost of health care in Barbados. Because if we can treat it early and reduce these tertiary interventions at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, we can reduce the overall cost of health care.

Of course, we want this programme too to target especially our children. Because, believe it or not - and I believe I have said this on many occasions in making presentations all over Barbados - obesity among our children is a major issue which we have to tackle. We therefore want to get into these schools with this programme. We want to get our programmes going with parents so that we can help them to understand how important it is that we feed our children healthy diets, that we make sure they maintain these healthy diets, that our schools and our linkage with the Ministry of Education allows us to make sure that what is offered not only in our school meals programme but what is offered on our school campuses is essentially healthy lifestyle. We do not expect that this is going to happen abracadabra - it is not going to happen like that. But we believe an investment over time can see, in five years' time or so, major results.

And I want to draw Members' attention to the kinds of activities that are going on around Barbados, say, on early mornings. I had my walk this morning at around 5:30 and I am telling you the number of people who are out there walking, exercising early in the morning - it really almost shames any of us who are remaining in bed or eating large breakfasts and that kind of thing. It really pays dividends to get out there and do some exercise, bring our children along with us. Yes, I must admit up front our roads are not necessarily designed for this kind of activity - in large measure we do not have large sidewalks. But once you are careful, once you select your route - or in our case in Christ Church South of course we just go to the beach - we are covered, there is no danger there. But even so I want to encourage Barbadians to move to a stage where we increase our physical activity, we change our lifestyle so as to help us in the Ministry of Health and our health caregivers in tackling this whole question of non-

communicable diseases - and tackling it early, so that we do not have that kind of burden that we have become so accustomed to.

And this takes us to our tertiary institutions, because when primary health care fails and the disease develops to a stage where we require intervention, then the only resort is to go to our Queen Elizabeth Hospital. And you know, whereas there are many institutions in Barbados being built out - our doctors or consultants are putting up private clinics - I think it is recognised that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is really at the centre of tertiary intervention medicine in Barbados. And indeed we have had a lot of commentary about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, especially of late. But we can demonstrate that this is not new. It is a dynamic situation we are in. And once again, we have made it very clear that the resources which we have at this time as a country - the financial resources - have to be shared and prioritised in a way that makes sure that at the end of the day, Barbados can be preserved.

I want to say thank you to the management, the board and management of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I want to say thank you to the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners and all the other agencies, including the Barbados Nurses Association - all those agencies who joined together to deliver the tertiary intervention health care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I want to recognise, of course, that in the challenging times of recent times, we have been able to establish a pattern of dialogue. And I keep in constant touch with our Director at the hospital, our Chief Executive Officer, and he has assured me that dialogue is being maintained with our doctors and the management of the hospital so that the priorities can be shared and they can be easily identified and executed. And this is important.

I am not the kind of minister who negotiates in the newspaper, and I think that by now a lot of persons must have recognised that. I like to negotiate face to face, and I have encouraged the team at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to continue to negotiate face to face. When it is necessary, press releases are made to ensure that Barbadians are aware of any details which are important. At the same time, sir, I have always made it clear that I have no difficulty with the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners or any other entity who see fit to publish in the newspaper any press releases which they believe are necessary to put their perspective. We want to work with them and we continue to work with them, recognising that any crisis that occurs at the hospital can impact immediately on their professionalism, and it certainly will impact on the public view of the delivery of health care at the hospital. So we want to avoid crisis too, and we want to manage them down.

So the question of medical supplies, et cetera, at the hospital has been dealt with. It is being dealt with. It has been debated and discussed all over Barbados. And I really do not think that I can add anything at this stage to that debate. But I would listen to hear what questions may be raised from the other side, and then I may very well be in a position to provide direct answers to you. But I know confidently that those negotiations are taking place. I know that the dialogue and the priority setting between the management of the hospital and the doctors who deliver health care in the hospital - that dialogue continues. And it is important that it does. And I do not want to stand in the way of that dialogue. It is open dialogue between the professionals who have a job to do, and they must be allowed to do their job to the best of their ability. Where services are required, where resources are required, we as a government are responsible to provide those resources. And where they are short, we as a government must stand ready to bear criticism and to explain why those resources may be in that state.

Sir, that brings us to the entire question of health care financing. And this is where I hope again that the discourse over the next couple of hours, as we look at this Head, can help us to come to a position in Barbados on health care financing very similar to what we just came out of in discussion of university tertiary education. I believe health care financing falls under the same bracket. We presently provide free health care to all Barbadians and we provide free drugs to under-16s, over-65s, and those with chronic diseases of any age. So there is a very clear, precise, free-at-delivery health care service in Barbados. It has been traditionally funded directly, as we see, from the Consolidated Fund. But I think we have reached the stage - I know we have reached the stage - where these shortages must be examined. These shortages at the hospital and indeed at any other place anywhere else in the health care system must be identified and corrective action taken.

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Ministry of Health have spoken to the question of health care financing and the need to roll out a new package in terms of how we treat health care finance in Barbados. And we are taking suggestions on board even as I speak in this regard. And obviously, as I said, I will be happy to listen very carefully over the next couple of hours and hear what the opposition has to say about how we can tackle health care financing in Barbados, what suggestions they may have that we can take on board. And rest assured, when the time has come, I want to invite them too to participate in the discussions we will have across the island in respect to implementation of health care.

At the same time, of course, I have made it clear that if there is a position which the Ministry of Health and the health care provider decision makers can reach which would bring immediate relief and in no way compromise

our health care delivery, we are prepared to put that in place - even if it is on a trial basis - to make sure that we can tackle this niggling problem of health care financing. And it is not a problem unique to Barbados. In Canada, they pay a large percentage of their taxes towards health care. In Europe, 50 to 60 per cent of taxation goes towards free health care and all kinds of elaborate social programmes. In the United States, President Obama has nearly lost his job over the question of health care financing. And those same visitors last Friday were almost jaw-dropping when we described to them the health care offering in Barbados. There is no such thing in the United States. You cannot walk into a hospital and sit and wait for treatment unless you have some form of credit card to produce for the hospital financial people. It is just not heard of.

I believe that this debate in Barbados has reached the stage where we are ready to entertain some kind of investment scheme - some kind of contributory investment health care fund - which would see to the provision on an annual basis of some of the urgent and important supplies at the hospital. And this is absolutely urgent, especially in today's technological world, because we are faced at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital today with a situation where we purchase equipment in the year 2015 and by the time two or three years have passed, that equipment is obsolete, or if you want to continue using it, there are unique charges -

associated with continuing to use that kind of equipment. And the other reality is that the professionals cannot really perform their work without that kind of equipment. So it is essential and it cannot be avoided if we are going to be able to continue offering the kind of health care that we have become accustomed to in Barbados. And let's speak about what the hospital has achieved a little bit because, you know, in terms of ophthalmology and in terms of cardiac surgery, in terms of brain surgery and hip joint replacement surgery, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital now offers nearly every available, every thought of intervention required by a population. We are presently spending much less in our medical aid scheme, which is a scheme which looks after the treatment, specialist treatment which is not available in Barbados. An examination of the figures will show that we've moved from an average of about \$5 million being used up by the medical aid scheme to about \$1.5, \$1.8 million this last year. Remember, on top of that is the actual charges because five years ago, the charges internationally for an intervention were nothing like they are today. I mean, the kind of cost that we have to deal with when we send people overseas for this specialist treatment is really unimaginable in some cases. US\$250 000 is not an unheard of figure. It is a very regular quote for these kind of interventions. But we have guaranteed Barbadians this kind of help and service. So we have to be in a position to deliver this kind of care.

That is why I said we need to start thinking, we need to start putting our minds towards what kind of programme, what shape would a revised health financing programme in Barbados look like? So that is the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I'm sure I have not covered every aspect of its delivery of care. And again, we can revisit it as we continue this discussion and ensure that we provide all the answers that may arise from the opposition or from any other party.

Sir, the pharmaceutical programme. We know that a couple of years ago we made a drastic change of where that programme is delivered. And we are now down from a high of some \$52 million in the pharmaceutical programme - that's the Barbados Drug Service, essentially - to something like \$26 million which is anticipated to be spent this financial year 2015-2016, on the pharmaceutical programme. And this is by attention to the way in which the programme is rolled out in the public, and the public service has taken up a larger, a much greater role in the delivery of pharmaceuticals. At the same time, we are in negotiations with the private pharmacists who have raised with us issues about how the programme works today. And we are certainly looking positively at some of their suggestions and hopefully within very short order, we will be able to roll it out.

I'm going to deal with HIV/AIDS and the special programme when I return, sir, but I want to spend two minutes on care of the elderly because the Shadow Minister of Health made the point about the care of the elderly and indeed she spoke to this question of final stage treatment. I want to say very clearly, of course, our elderly care programme is rolled out in our geriatric institutions in St. Lucy, in of course Bridgetown, at Bakers Road in St. Philip and in St. Thomas. We have been recently - not even so recently, for a couple of years now - we have been in discussion with the Barbados Overseas Cancer Association, a United States organisation, about this whole question of what they call palliative care. And I'm sure that members are very familiar with what we're talking about. And again, the Ministry of Health has taken this on board. Not so much that we are in a position to provide today a dedicated palliative care centre, but we believe that our geriatric institutions can be rolled out to offer centres for palliative care. As a matter of fact, the geriatric hospital at Bakers Road has already committed to introducing an area of palliative care which will help us to manage our relatives at the final stage of treatment in their lives. And this is a very important area.

And I want to commend the Barbados Association of Palliative Care, Ms. Diane Sobers and the team, for the very studied way in which they've gone about introducing the programme in Barbados. And I want to commend the volunteers too, sir, who have been working with the

association in ensuring that this care is made available for Barbadians as the need arises.

Our environmental health services are very important. We had the incidents of Chikungunya last year. That was managed very, very well by the ministry. We can talk about that. The dengue fever, et cetera, and indeed health in our children, general public health institutions and the management. Earlier today we talked about the Grazettes Primary School. And again, that programme has been managed very carefully and they have been able to deal with that.

Mr. Chairman, sir, I crave your indulgence just to mention the St. John Polyclinic. Of course, the Barbados Labour Party will not venture into that area because they allowed the St. John Polyclinic to remain fallow for 14 long years. So that steel rusted - they tell me that even concrete blocks rusted, sir. So when you've reached the stage where even your concrete blocks have rusted, you can imagine what we had to deal with. So we have gone into the St. John Polyclinic and we have come to an arrangement even today which will see this polyclinic delivered to the people of St. John in very short order.

I am sure that the member for St. John has a message from her people for the nation. And we are going to make sure she is heard on the matter. And not only is she heard, she has already been briefed. As a matter of fact, as early as this morning, I have already updated the member as to the state of St. John.

So that polyclinic will be rolled out. It is actually a very beautiful building. And I need to say a little bit about it, though, because lest the members over there get too excited - the polyclinic, along with primary healthcare, will facilitate further decentralisation of the emergency ambulance service through the provision of an ambulance bay and basic diagnostic services. In addition to providing healthcare services, the facility will also provide accommodation for social services activities provided by the Welfare Department, the St. John Constituency Council, and the National Library Service. So this concept is much more than just a healthcare institution. But it represents the kind of all-of-government approach which we talk about too as we go forward in this discussion. I'm obliged to you, sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I note the opening remarks of the Honourable Member for Christ Church South as he indicated that this debate should proceed in the spirit of cooperation. I have no problems, Mr. Chairman, of a debate proceeding in the spirit of cooperation. But I believe that there are some fundamental

truths which need to be stated. And where I find consensus, I am always happy to acknowledge and recognise that progress. But where there is need to state clearly objections, the Minister should rest assured that these objections are going to be chronicled here in these chambers.

I too want to thank all health professionals because they do work in one of the most arduous and laborious sectors. And praise should be given to all of them for the work that they have done. I want also to say that we too believe in universal health care. And I am glad to hear the Minister indicate that there is a commitment to universal health care in Barbados. Because certainly a healthy population is fundamental to society's development as well as to economic growth. And certainly there is a reciprocal relationship because the health sector is linked to very serious macroeconomic implications.

We only have to look at what transpired here last year when there was a chikungunya epidemic. I know that we have been managing dengue for a very long time. But last year we had the peculiar situation of having to deal with both dengue and chikungunya. And in spite of the fact that all health authorities here have tried to limit the cases registered of chikungunya by only using figures confirmed by CARPHA, we know in Barbados that chikungunya devastated Barbados. We might have heard that there were just 146 cases. But the reality is that there were thousands of people afflicted. At times entire households were affected by chikungunya - and my colleagues are saying even districts - because of course, once an individual is affected, you can rapidly become affected by these mosquitoes.

But the point that I want to make with respect to the macroeconomic implication is that the workforce was affected. We lost millions of dollars - thousands of dollars - as a result of people unable to work. Our NIS fund was inundated with claims. Latent diseases were exacerbated at an additional cost to the individual. And even now people complain of a lingering complication as a result of that initial exposure to chikungunya. So there was a local cost. There was a local cost to that short stint of chikungunya in Barbados. But in terms of our macroeconomic implications, it wasn't just the communicable diseases. As the Minister has indicated, our non-communicable diseases are also taking a toll on the cost of health care in Barbados.

Now, what really concerns me is that even though he is prepared to put a very healthy spin on this particular scenario, the truth is that with respect to those diseases, we are not going in the right direction. There are still far too many diabetic cases in Barbados. According to the Barbados national registry, over 10 per cent of the population is afflicted by diabetes. That is some 28 000 individuals. Forty-two per cent of those who actually

present to the hospital - the same hospital that we are suggesting is overburdened - almost 42 per cent present with either diabetes or complications of diabetes. When you twin that with hypertension, the debilitation is severe. We are known as the amputation capital of the world. We have over 600 strokes annually. We are grappling with heart attacks, we are grappling with obesity. We are grappling with not only type 1 diabetes, but we are grappling with childhood obesity and diabetes. Things that we ought not to be grappling with. And all of these things have a cost.

So I want to state that there is that reciprocal relationship between maintaining a healthy population and the management of cost. But with respect to cost and healthcare financing, I think that if we are going to be committed to universal health care, the first thing that we need to establish or agree upon is that, led by government, we need to carve out for ourselves a fiscal space for health that will actually see the allocation of more funds to the health sector without actually creating vulnerability in the budget on the whole. And I know that funds are not allocated in a vacuum, but the reality is that we need to start, Mr. Minister, with more if we are to compare, for example, the allocation in other countries.

You said that Obama almost lost his job, but the reality is that they have recognised the importance of health care. It is the primary priority, I assume, behind security. And they have allocated 17.7 per cent of their budget to health care. You also have places like Canada, France, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, allocating between 11 and 12 per cent of GDP to health care. Now, in Barbados, where we like to boast that we are the number one developing state and we aspire to the status of a developed nation, our allocation is less than 10 per cent. Now, I know that we have to work with what we have been given. And this is one of the reasons why we do need to grow our economy. But the reality is, Mr. Minister, that our benchmark ought to be 10 per cent of GDP - I am sorry, 12 per cent of GDP. No less than 12 per cent. And you are a senior member, so you should be able to negotiate a greater cut for the health sector. You might not get it. You might not get it. But certainly we must make every effort to achieve that goal.

Mr. Chairman, in addition to struggling to get a greater allocation of funds for the healthcare industry, we must also look at efficiencies. Now, I have heard the Minister speak of efficiencies within the industry and quite frankly, I am happy to hear of those cost-effective measures that have been implemented. But the reality is that more needs to be done with the existing resources that we now possess.

I was hoping that the Minister would have clearly identified for us his vision - his vision for health.

Thank you for saving me, Mr. Chairman. Honourable Members, please. We need to hear the contribution from the Member. Go ahead.

I was hoping that the Honourable Member would have given us a greater sense of direction with respect to healthcare financing. But I can appreciate that he danced around that particular concept. He does not want to speak to the issue of health care financing and the fact that the Democratic Labour Party wants to place a greater responsibility of health care financing on the people. He does not want to do that at all. He is hoping that I will do that. The Honourable Member does not want to do that at all. He is actually hoping that I will do that for him. And I want him to know that I am not afraid of dealing with the issue of healthcare financing, especially when it comes to personal responsibility.

But the first thing that I will say to him is that we do not exist in an environment where we can ask any Barbadian who has been affected by the economic contraction within this country to take a greater responsibility of their health care financing. It is not an equitable approach to take for the simple reason that those most affected do not today have that level of disposable income to put toward their own health care. And let us be fair - those who need it the most are those who are least able to provide it. When you look at the non-communicable diseases, you will find that they virtually devastate working-class communities. Places where there is intergenerational poverty are very much affected by these non-communicable diseases. But these are the people with the least capacity to finance themselves. And therefore we need to have that commitment of public health financing for these individuals. And I will stand by that. And I believe that the Barbados Labour Party stands by that as well.

No, I am not afraid to touch health insurance because I am going to be as fair to these chambers as I can be. I am a proponent of the use of health care insurance where it is applicable. In fact, Mr. Chairman, I honestly believe that the Democratic Labour Party will do well to actually have an educational programme to advise people on the use of their policies. Because there are too many people in Barbados holding policies and not really knowing how to use them. They actually do not use them for intervention. They do not use them for prevention and they are almost fearful of their use. And I would suggest that you actually have that educational programme so that those who have insurance would use it, would use it wisely, would use it in prevention and early intervention to limit the cost of their actual treatment of disease when it becomes progressive.

However, Mr. Chairman, I need to make the note that many of the holders of health care insurance have been disadvantaged by retrenchment and job losses because

many of their health insurances were linked to employment and they no longer have employment. And therefore there is no fallback for those individuals. In fact, when you see an increase of attendance to polyclinics and even an increase in attendance to A&E and the hospital, it is because many individuals who were once financially independent within the last two or three years have so lost their financial independence that the only thing that they can do for themselves and their families is to go to public care against their will. But that is the situation.

So I am not afraid to deal with health care financing in any way. But I would like to think that we are going to have an in-depth conversation about that particular approach to ensure that not a single Barbadian is denied health care because of affordability or lack of affordability.

Now, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member has said that we will not want to touch the St. John Polyclinic. I am still dealing with efficiencies in the healthcare industry. I want to debunk a notion that continues to be peddled by the Democratic Labour Party that the Barbados Labour Party sat on that polyclinic and refused to do anything for 14 years to the point where concrete blocks rusted. To my knowledge, that project was stopped under the Democratic Labour Party. That project was stopped under the Democratic Labour Party. That is true. And they ought to be ashamed. They ought to be ashamed to come in here and try to place that blame on the Barbados Labour Party.

But even more importantly than that, Mr. Chairman, in terms of cost, I want to agree with the Honourable Member that we need to build out our polyclinic capacity. And there are times I wonder if it would not have served Barbados better to have taken that \$16 million that was allocated to the St. John Polyclinic and directed it to the building out of the other eight polyclinics in Barbados. And the \$16 million has now escalated to almost \$30 million. And after five years of promising us that every single year the polyclinic will be open, this is 2015 and we still have not seen an opening of the polyclinic. And I want the Honourable Member for Christ Church South to tell us quite honestly if there are any inherent or fundamental complications that prevent that polyclinic from being open. We need to hear it in here today. Because we cannot continue to put money behind the polyclinic unless we are certain that it will eventually translate to functionality for the people not only of St. John but also of St. George.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Your time is up.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: I thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will come back.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. John.

Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for permitting me to speak. I rise to speak on this head because there are just two matters really that I would like to look at. And as the Honourable Minister spoke a while ago, I wondered if he had read my mind. Because the first issue I want to look at are the non-communicable diseases which I call the silent killers. Because these diseases really and truly form a formidable death squad which people do not really seem to notice but are a certain danger to Barbadians.

I was horrified when I examined the statistics which revealed that one quarter of Barbadians has an NCD - a non-communicable disease. And that is really quite alarming. And so I wanted to speak tonight really to implore Barbadians to make every effort to see what they can do to shield themselves from these diseases. Because it is all very well for us to talk about all that the Ministry of Health is doing or what the hospital can do, but by and large the onus really ought to be on the populace to do what they can - or we can - to take care of ourselves, because, as is often said, prevention is better than cure. And not only is prevention better than cure, it also costs considerably less.

So what are these non-communicable diseases? Heart disease, stroke, different forms of cancer, diabetes and obesity.

And the cause of these non-communicable diseases? I cause lifestyle. So if we could only make adjustments to our lifestyle, we would be able to tackle these NCDs. By lifestyle I mean diet, poor eating habits, smoking, lack of physical activity and exercise and excessive consumption of alcohol. And the Ministry of Health has along the way collaborated with NGOs and various organisations. And I must add that I am impressed with the efforts by the Ministry of Health under the able leadership of the Member of Parliament for Christ Church South in collaborating with these groups and really seriously tackling, trying to make changes to the way we live and function in Barbados.

And as you know, the National Task Force on Physical Activity and Exercise was formed out of this Ministry of Health and they have well run a programme designed to promote and encourage more physical activity by our citizens. Of course I was very much a part of that task force. I am still a part of it, although not as involved as previously. And this group still goes out and holds health fairs and tries to train people who can then lead exercise groups et cetera. And basically just try to keep Barbadians moving, whether it is walking on the beach or the boardwalks or wherever, or encouraging people to play various games, which really is a very good way of keeping physically active. You play a game, you enjoy yourself and you really don't even realise just how much you're exercising. It doesn't seem as onerous, as difficult.

So without just being repetitive and going over all that the Minister already said, I would just like to implore Barbadians to examine their lifestyle and tackle some of these non-communicable diseases in this way. The other area I wanted to look at was the fact that it seems that whenever a person is plagued by some illness, the inclination is to head directly to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. And we really, as the Minister said, have a very good primary health care system in the country. So I guess that we should make more use of the primary health care system. In fact, we should improve on it as much as possible so as to avoid this overburdening of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

And so that brings me of course to the matter of the polyclinic project in St. John. The people of St. John are downright angry. I am displeased at the length of time that it is taking for this project to be completed. But as the Minister pointed out, I spoke - we had a good long talk this morning - and I can't say that anybody in St. John is any less angry. But I understand some of the difficulties that have prevailed and I am pleased to hear that we are looking to get back on course and get this project completed by mid-2015. That still does not give me a definite date. But I shall therefore give the Minister a date of June 30, 2015 and hold him to it. Your word is your bond, sir. And I wish you to complete this project by that time.

Yes, I really don't think that the people on the other side ought to be making too much noise about this project since I don't even think that this is something that should have been discussed in 2015, 14, 13, 12 or 11. Really and truly, this project should have been completed some 18 years ago. I noticed that the BLP insists that it is the Democratic Labour Party that stopped the project. But the point is it could have been started back. Why wasn't it started back? You came in, you said you had all of this money. So.

And as to the idea of the polyclinic in St. John not being necessary at all - well, that is the impression that I just got from the Member for Christ Church West - that the money should have been channelled into the other eight polyclinics. But I certainly do not agree with that. Just a moment.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. What I actually said - and please, please do not let it be recorded here that I indicated that the St. John Polyclinic was not necessary, because I would never say that a polyclinic anywhere is not necessary. What I said, Mr. Chairman, was when we look at efficiencies, considering the length of time that it has taken to complete the St. John project, I

questioned whether it would not have been better to distribute those funds to the building out of the other polyclinics at this time. But I also went on to state that if there was an inherent or fundamental problem that was preventing the polyclinic from its completion, that the Minister should let us know as we look forward to the completion and the functionality of that polyclinic.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member. All right. Honourable Member, please proceed.

Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON: Well, Mr. Chairman, if you use the funds that are intended for that project to build out the other polyclinics, well, that implies that there could be no St. John Polyclinic. So I don't think that I was too incorrect in my interpretation of what the Honourable Member said. Anyway, permit me to close, Mr. Chairman, by once more repeating that I hold the Honourable Minister to the date of 30th June for the completion of the polyclinic in St. John. I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, please. The Member for Christ Church West.

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

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

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Members, this sitting is now resumed. When the suspension was taken, Members, we were 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. Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Chairman, I am compelled to speak on this Head because it is very important that we find out from the Minister a number of things which I hope that he will respond to either tonight or tomorrow. And I am sure he would agree with me, because he agrees with his founding father, the late Right Excellency Barrow, that the captain must always be the worker himself. And therefore a Minister of the Crown is supposed to work on behalf of the people and work long hours.

I believe that it is fair to say - and I like the Minister a lot because he is my friend, and this exercise, I hope I would not speak anything personal - I just want to say that he is presiding over a bad period at this time. But of course the management style has made it worse. And of course the management style of the Ministry. I believe that he has to be more proactive over this Ministry. I would think that a Ministry of this size, he does not have a Parliamentary Secretary, so he has to do a lot of work. And therefore he has to put proactive management in place in order to move the Ministry of Health forward.

But I want to deal with the Member for St. John and her polyclinic matter. She said that the polyclinic was to be opened almost 15 years ago. It is true that this polyclinic was started in the 90s and it was suspended in 1992 and it was restarted sometime in 2009. And I recall that in the by-election of St. John it was said that it would be finished in one year. The bay lecture was in 2010 and it was to be completed in one year. That was the promise made to the people of St. John. And of course I speak also as a resident for some time in St. John and I am very close to the people of St. John. It is a desire. The people of St. George, St. John deserve the polyclinic. But of course it has taken so long. It has taken so long.

And of course we have heard that the contractor has not been paid for a whole year - not a single cent. The contractor has problems in getting money out of the Ministry of Health. The contractor had to sell, as far as someone mentioned to me recently, had to sell personal property in order to pay staff. It is a bad situation. And the Ministry of Health has not put in place a proper programme for scheduling the payment for this important polyclinic.

The second point is that the polyclinic is a very large polyclinic. I believe it would be the biggest polyclinic in Barbados. I believe that this polyclinic did not have a

proper plan. It was not planned for. And I am not sure if the Ministry will be able to outfit this polyclinic. You build a clinic - you build a building and then put resources to it. That is, you said it will house the constituency council. You can imagine - you build a building for the constituency council, for the health services, for the library, I understand, and other things. But I believe, speaking as a St. John man, that it could have been a smaller size. It could have been completed almost more than 10 years ago. Because it is necessary, it is highly desirable that this polyclinic be completed.

Many persons - I have a sister living in St. John. Many people from St. John have to come to the St. George polyclinic for service. My sister who lives in Sherman has to walk to the road and then down to the Polyclinic at St. George, and many residents face the same situation.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment. Honourable Member for St. John.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: While the Member is trying to explain himself, I just want to remind the Member what I said about the polyclinic. He is misleading the Chamber, Sir. The polyclinic will facilitate the further decentralisation of the ambulance services - not only a polyclinic - through the provision of an ambulance bay and basic diagnostic services in addition to providing health services. That is why it is large. The facility will also provide accommodation for social service activities provided by the Welfare Department, the St. John Constituency Council and the National Library.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Yes, Mr. Chairman. All these things have been added to the polyclinic building and it is going well. But I am saying to the Minister that you design a building and then put services into it. In other words, it was not intended for all these things from the outset. That was not the original intention.

Anyway, Mr. Chairman, I am calling on the Minister to keep his word to the people of St. John. You said it is going to be finished by June. The people of St. John must hear from this House of Assembly tonight that the polyclinic will be finished in June - we are holding the Minister to his word by June this year.

The other problem is, Mr. Chairman, the Minister said tonight that he wants the doctors, the unions and the other critics to avoid the press - that he does not want people to go to the press. He feels that if you go to the press he is not doing business with them. Those are the words of the Minister. But if you do not go to the press, then nothing will happen. And I am saying that nothing happened in this Ministry unless the press is called in. The people at the QEH had to fight. The doctors and all the other personnel there had to fight and threaten to let people

know what is happening, and then the Minister reacted. The Minister promised money - last year I think it was \$20 million, \$22 million, or whatever - but they got very little of that help. So they must go to the press in order to get something to happen in this Ministry.

And we want to ask the Minister why this is happening - that every time there is a promise to help the QEH, they are not getting that help that was promised. I must say that the doctors and nurses work very well. They work under stress, they work long hours. In fact, some doctors work 12 and 15 hours. They are not compensated properly either. When they put in claims - doctors said to me they work 10 and 12 hours. I am saying also, Mr. Chairman, that at the hospital you have problems not only in terms of procurement. And I want to ask the Minister what is happening with the procurement exercise at the Ministry in terms of drugs, foods, fruits, vegetables and meat. I understand that you have second-class products going to the hospital. I understand that many times you have the same person producing these products at the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. We have a problem and you must be aware of it. That is one reason why I said to you, you have to be aware of what is happening as far as procurement is concerned - that you have a problem with the types of food, the types of fruits, vegetables, meat and so on.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: The Honourable Member is misleading the House when he tries to indicate that any supplies to the hospital are substandard. The hospital buys only the best and correctly available foods and services and other requirements. The Honourable Member is not only misleading the House but is likely to give the public an impression other than what actually goes on. I take it upon myself, on behalf of the staff of the hospital, the procurement department and the officers, to defend them and to say that nowhere is there any kind of record to indicate that the provisions of the hospital are anything but of the highest standard. Please continue.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: It was reported to me that a large quantity of the meat and the vegetables are thrown into the garbage on a number of occasions - substandard. I am told that almost 50 per cent of the vegetables brought in by a certain person out of a certain Caribbean territory had to be thrown away. I am also saying that you end up paying for these things and that is one of the reasons why this shortage occurs. That is one reason why the shortage - the hospital is always out of money because this person is being paid up front.

And in this debate we have to call a spade a spade. You have a lot of equipment out there that is obsolete. Obsolete equipment. Doctors and nurses working under those conditions. I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that you have a number of problems at your hospital that need to be

addressed. The hospital is an old institution but I am saying it can be modernised if the Government puts in resources. I do not blame the Minister - resources must be found. And this whole question of a new hospital must be taken off the table because you will not have a new hospital. The money that the Minister spent in planning a new hospital - the Minister said he planned to spend \$50 million in drawing up plans for a new hospital. That \$15 million could have been spent in the QEH. It could have been spent in the polyclinics that are doing good work.

The Minister is presiding over a Ministry that does not have rat baits. They do not do fogging anymore. And I am just giving him the overview of what we are going to come with tomorrow - tonight we are just giving you the overview so that you can go home and plan. Tell us - tell us how often, and tell us if it is not true that you ran out of rat baits last year, that you could not get rat baits. There was hardly any fogging. And that is one of the reasons that leads to the problems that we have in the dengue programme. And these are the things that we have to raise in this debate. How much money, Mr. Minister, do you spend on rat baits? How much money do you spend on fogging to help the people of this island against mosquitoes? We have to ask these questions.

We have to ask the Minister: what money will you be spending to upgrade the equipment at the hospital, to upgrade the computer system that is not working properly? How much money do you intend to spend this year in keeping the hospital a good hospital?

I am happy - I am satisfied that the Glebe Polyclinic, under stress, is working. I am happy. But you have so many people going to the Glebe today it really needs an expansion. But I have to tell the doctors and nurses there - you do not have the money, you do not have the resources, so you have to do with what you have. But we must insist that when the Minister usually gives his contracts out, at least consider some people from the St. George area, because we can paint too. Somebody went up there and painted it in a dirty green, and then it was repainted in a purple. Now there is somebody giving some more information on what is happening. So you have a situation where the Glebe Polyclinic was painted like two years ago in 2013, 2014, and it was still walking in 2015. I do not understand why these things did not happen. So I am saying to the Minister that he has to know what is happening. He has to be active. And as his leader said, the captain must also be the worker. You must find out what is happening in your department.

Mr. Chairman, I am of the view that the time has come for us to look carefully at what is happening in the Ministry of Health - that we have to examine every detail so the Minister cannot run away from this debate. We have to examine every iota of what is happening in terms of the

hospital, the polyclinics, what is happening in the general Ministry. We want to make sure that we get value for money. We want to make sure that every cent that is spent in this Ministry is accounted for. Mr. Chairman, I will be back. Thank you.

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

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. I rise of course to join this discussion at this point in time. But let me start by saying that nothing I have heard so far from the opposition benches surprised me. Because in as much as one would like any debate in Parliament about healthcare matters to rise beyond pettiness, I don't think we can really expect much from the opposition. Because the truth of the matter is that I am not surprised that any debate about healthcare in this country tends to centre around the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Just as I said earlier this week, any discussion on education tends to centre around the University of the West Indies, and I think it is very unfortunate because Barbados has over the last couple of decades built up, in spite of what anyone may say, built up a healthcare system that is truly laudable under the circumstances.

The fact remains that today, unlike the Honourable Member for St. George North, who maintains his membership in OHIP, the Ontario Health Insurance Plan, who goes to Toronto every year for his annual check-up, all other Barbadians have to make use of the healthcare system here in this island. And the truth of the matter, as much as we condemn this system, the reality is by and large that it works. Of course everything is not perfect. But the truth of the matter is that the Ministry of Health and the public healthcare system and indeed the private healthcare system working in tandem do deliver and deliver well for Barbadians from cradle to the grave.

I think we need to reflect on what is our public healthcare system, what are the components, and its importance to our economy and society. It is not just the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. And I keep stressing that point all the time. It is about environmental health, for example. So when I hear the Honourable Member for St. George North talk about rat bait, and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West talk about Chikungunya and these other things, those things speak really to the heart of our environmental health system, and the fact that Barbados has been able to eradicate some illnesses. The fact that we are pretty much a healthy society is due in large part to the environmental health offices and the work they have been doing and the programmes and policies that have been worked over the years.

We also take care, of course, on the pharmaceutical side of life. The fact that in spite of what anyone may say,

yes, occasionally there are shortages of some drugs - not just in the public sector, there are also shortages in the private sector - the truth of the matter is that Barbadians do have access to the best drugs available in the world. And no one on that side would ever get up and thank this Democratic Labour Party Government for containing the cost and bringing down the cost of operating the Barbados Drug Service. In 2010-11 the Barbados Drug Service was spending \$53 million. Today it is spending about \$26 million. And I remember well when, as Minister, I heard all the condemnation from the opposition benches about how Barbadians would die because they did not have access to drugs, including some of the physicians who joined that choir for their own selfish political gains. And today you cannot point to any one of them that has suffered because of changes in the Drug Service. But that is how a responsible Democratic Labour Party Government operates.

The reality about it is that when you look at our overall healthcare system, it is not just about the QEH. It is the fact that we have a mental health programme that works - one that under this Democratic Labour Party Government has sought to move it away entirely from the psychiatric hospital and make it more community oriented. Because it all hits at the basis of the Government's policy, which is wherever possible to decentralise healthcare and make it more accessible to all Barbadians. And of course our primary healthcare department - and I keep saying that this is where to my mind we have to deploy a lot more resources and a lot more emphasis. The fact is that if we do not place a lot more focus on our primary healthcare system, we are going to be forever talking about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The primary healthcare department is the one that really channels the numbers over to the QEH and therefore we have to do a bit of pushback and do it in there now.

Mr. Chairman, I hear opposition members talk about our healthcare system and constantly condemn it. Let me say a few things about what we are really dealing with here. In spite of all that is said in terms of expenditure on citizens and healthcare, Barbados has one of the highest in the Caribbean - \$1 291 per person as compared with the Caribbean average of \$551. The Government of Barbados, or Barbados generally speaking, is spending twice as much as the average Caribbean island on healthcare per citizen. And certainly, Mr. Chairman, when we look at the healthcare profile of our system here in Barbados, we have to realise that this perhaps gives a clear understanding as to what we are dealing with and perhaps can point us in the direction of where we want to take our healthcare system. A death rate of 8.8 per 1 000 population. The leading causes of death being heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and prostate cancer - eight of the 10 leading causes of death being NCDs. And let me join with the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and the Honourable Member for St.

John in reflecting on the fact that a lot of these illnesses are preventable. A lot relates to lifestyle challenges.

But when we get up and talk about the QEH and the challenges therein, we do not reflect on the fact that the average length of stay for diabetics at the QEH is 19 days. And these are things that really and truly could be dealt with if Barbadians adjusted their lifestyle. So when we look at the level of challenges in many other areas, we realise that each person can do much better at providing for their own healthcare situation. Here as a Government we have invested heavily in healthcare - both Governments, the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party. Quite frankly, I don't think that there is any divide in terms of the importance of our healthcare system to each citizen, because none of us know when any one of us will get ill. Each one of us certainly wants to know we have access to the best level of healthcare.

Well, Mr. Chairman, as we move the discussion beyond what I consider to be somewhat pettiness in terms of what funds are being thrown away in the healthcare system -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. George North, what is the point? Is the Member misleading this House?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I want to remind the Member that this is committee stage. This is not a second reading. We have to examine the Estimates and ask questions - this is how it used to be done and this is how it has to be done. You have to ask the Minister to explain every cent that has been spent here, and you have to tell us where it is that you have run out of essential things. I want to make this abundantly clear, and the Clerk of Parliament should confirm this: we are in committee stage to ask how we are spending this money. It is not frivolous. And the Prime Minister knows this.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I take the point. But the Member does not seem to remember that.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Chairman, moving beyond frivolous and vexatious matters such as that. Let me make this point clear. We have to be very serious in this chamber. We need to realise that a lot of the things we say in here go out into the public domain, and then people pick up and fall into a lot of pettiness.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Will the Member please answer his phone. We are in the House. I need -

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I want to know why it is that the hospital is throwing away 40 per cent of its procurement in food. That is what we want to find out. It is causing a lot of money to be wasted. And do not tell me

that we should not ask this question. The Minister of Finance needs to know why it is that the procurement exercise is not working. The hospital must come to account. And that is why I asked last night that the Minister bring his officials down here - let me look at them eyeball to eyeball. This is how we do it. Bring the officials down here.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I take the point. The Member may continue.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Chairman, I am not calling the Honourable Member for St. George North out of order. We can ask anything in this chamber. We can ask if it is true that the Honourable Member for St. James Central said that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew is a fraud and a vagabond and a thief. We could also ask if it is true that a leading opposition figure embezzled the funds of the Barbados Labour Party. We can ask all these things, but the truth of the matter is that I do not know that they are very critical in terms of national development. If you

want to call your colleagues a thief and a fraud, that is your business. The reality about it, Mr. Chairman, is in terms of healthcare matters - I think that we need to stay within the bounds of relevance. So let us stick to the relevance. I will be guided by you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. I am really stressing the relevance of some matters here. Look, when an individual Parliamentarian gets up and makes a comment that 40 per cent of the food procured by the public healthcare system is thrown away - we need, in making these comments, to realise that someone out there is going to read a front-page article saying "40 per cent of food wasted." But let me ask the question: would you prefer if that food was served to the patients?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: No, no. Hold on.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, Honourable Member, I have not granted you the floor.

possible health care system them. I'm obliged to you, Honourable Member. Before you continue, I just want to say something. If you are supposed to address the Chair, first of all, the other thing is that even if a member makes a reference to you or asks a question, it does not give you the right to stand up and reply. You are supposed to address the Chair and a member is supposed to speak uninterrupted in his delivery. You only get up on a point of order and it must be a substantive point of order. I will not any longer tolerate members getting up on matters that I consider extremely silly. So please remember, do not get up and respond to things just like that. You are supposed to sit down and listen to the member. He has 15 minutes and it means therefore that I need to hear him uninterrupted for 15 minutes. And that is a substantial point of order, and I

will determine when it is substantial. Thank you very much, Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I am looking at Head 23, Ministry of Health, Sub-programme 0375, the QEH, page 111. We are allocating \$155 million in this estimate to the QEH. I want the Minister to tell me - and it says provide grant funds for the payment of wages, salaries and operating expenses of the QEH - by now the Minister should have got a brief from the QEH. Can the Minister tell me on this committee how much money will be spent on salaries this year? I want you to tell me how much money - and I told you before last night, come prepared. How much money is being spent - how much money do you propose to spend for the doctors, the nurses? What money are you going to spend on the air conditioning, Sub-programme 361? You need to tell us what money. And the reason why we have to bring this Ministry under the microscope, the reason why this Ministry must come under the microscope, is that for too long we have heard that you have had problems and people are calling out saying there is a shortage. There may not be a shortage, you know, you may have had enough money, but by the way, how is it being spent? And I want to examine this Ministry in its finest detail. I have told the Minister that from last night. So therefore the Minister must tell us what is happening at the QEH about the air conditioning unit that had been broken down for a long time. Are you going to replace or recondition the unit? And what can you tell us, Mr. Minister?

Honourable Member, please speak to the Chair. The Minister is confusing me. I want to find out - he is going to buy - these funds are provided for wages for the QEH and I want him to break it down to tell us what is happening with the wages at the QEH. And I also want him to tell us the machines he is going to buy - autoclave machines, air conditioning units - and he is going to carry out a feasibility study. What feasibility study are you carrying out and what is the cost of this feasibility study? I want members to understand that this is a committee stage and therefore I need to find out these things. I also want to find out from the Minister if the insurance companies are really refunding the QEH for patients who have medical insurance. This has been - this is a concern. It is a concern to me because I believe that the QEH and the Ministry of Health needs to come to the modern age. I believe that too many times services at the QEH and indeed the health service are paid for by government funds and not necessarily by the insurance companies. When I was Minister of Public Works, I discovered something. I discovered that every time a vehicle struck a pole - and this is very important - every time a vehicle struck a pole the Ministry of Transport and Works men went and replaced it when the insurance company should have paid for it. This is not happening. I have spoken to the Chief Technical Officer at the Ministry of Public Works at that time. I am

not sure if he is doing it and I am sure that the same thing happens here. If - and I want to ask the Minister - if a person has an accident and a person has to go to the QEH, who pays for this service? Who pays for this service? And I want to ask the former Minister to get up and answer that too, because I am not sure if the QEH has any mechanism in place to bill the insurance companies. I want to say this to you: these insurance companies make millions of dollars every year for the shareholders. What is it that is passed on to government? Now you tell me, is government collecting anything? Is there any inefficiency here? I remember -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I remember. If you are going to respond to that, I would not -

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: I am not going to respond to water. I think the Honourable Member is misleading the House. He has said - or implied - that the Ministry of Health or the hospital is not charging insurance companies for accidents. I just wish, in bringing clarity to the matter and showing how he is misleading the House, to reflect upon the fact that he and I, when I was Minister of Health, would have had discussions where he would have raised concerns about relatives and friends of his who would have received bills from the hospital because they were involved in accidents. And when I explained to him that it was the policy of the hospital to submit invoices for accident victims where an insurance company was involved - so he knows full well that the policy is in place and has been working. Proceed on.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Remember I asked the question: is the Ministry of Health - primarily the QEH - do you have a system in place to adequately and efficiently collect those funds from the insurance companies? I am asking a question. I do not know, because I am of the view - I am of the view, having spoken and examined this thing myself - that the insurance companies are not paying their full due for their clients when accidents happen. And I believe that many times persons go to the hospital and they leave a large bill, especially those persons that can pay a large bill, for the QEH to carry. And who is carrying it? The government. So the government ends up spending \$155 million at the hospital - the taxpayers' money - and the insurance companies end up carrying their whole profits for their shareholders. And this cannot be fair.

I am saying the hospital must come of age. There is no reason why the hospital should be running out of funds. And if this \$155 million is given to the hospital in the right time - now, I know it is going to take some time to get this money from the Ministry of Finance through the system - the Minister must tell us when will the first tranche be given to the hospital. We have to rely on the hospital. The hospital is the only hospital that we have. And I have said before, it works well. The hospital - the doctors, nurses, people that work beyond the call of duty, they work long

hours - they must be paid. But when will the tranche come? I do not want to hear, Mr. Minister - and I am trying to help you - I do not want to hear that this year the hospital ran out of funds. I do not want to hear about the inefficiencies that are happening at the hospital. We have to bring it under control and we have to ask our people to be accountable. Your board - the Chairman is my friend and he has to be accountable. Minister, the Permanent Secretary must ensure that adequate reports get to his desk, and of course to you to sign off and to the Cabinet. The Cabinet must set up systems in order to ask questions. These are questions the Cabinet should be asking the Minister from time to time: why is it that you have ongoing problems? Bring it to an end. And I am saying to you that we need to know how this money is being spent at the QEH.

We know we are going to come to the polyclinics, we are going to come to the Drug Service, because I am of the view too that too many people receive drugs over and over again. You go into some people's homes and you see the same drug on their wardrobe ten times. I am saying we need - ten times too many drugs. So I also want to find out - because we need to look at these things - and I believe tomorrow, Mr. Chairman, we will come back. We will come back to this Head. We come back to this Head and we do not want the Minister to think that he is going to run away tonight. We will come back to this Head to ask more questions about the various polyclinics, the mental health. We need to find out about the geriatric, the psychiatric - all those things. If you are getting value for money, when we finish the Ministry of Health you will be pleased that we have done it this way. I am obliged to you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, speaking on Head 23, I would like to make the point from the outset that it was not the Democratic Labour Party that moved the Queen Elizabeth Hospital from the main - from part of the normal budgeting. But I am putting it on the record: it was the Barbados Labour Party that not only did that, but they also, in doing that, gave them permission - gave them permission - to borrow money to finance the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The point I am making is that they will want the public to believe that the QEH is only a problem since 2015. But this is a problem that the former Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, recognised as far back as the early 2000s. And he was so sure - he was so sure that the ministers that he had under him, that no matter how much money he allocated to them, he knew they were going to overspend - that he also made provision for them to borrow because he knew that they would have overspent the budget. I don't -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: For St. George North. The member is out of order.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I, as Minister, always ask my head department to account for what the money that we got, and it is not true.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Please proceed. He was the one responsible for the highway, Chairman, and there is still a massive debt left by him for things. So I would like to know how he accounted for that, sir. But the point is, sir, if you look at the records, you would have recognised, sir, that it was not the Democratic Labour Party that removed the QEH, it was the Barbados Labour Party. And not only did they do that, but they made the provision for them to borrow money because they knew that they were going to overspend the budget. And that is exactly what occurred. Sir, I heard the Honourable Member in here and this is not the first time he has made the charge. He said in a previous speech, not within this year. So I am not reflecting that the people who sell the drugs to the QEH overcharge the Government today. Now he is in here telling us that 40 per cent of the produce purchased is no good and has to be dumped. It is strange that this Honourable Member could only know all the negatives that occur within the QEH. And you know, it is a pattern that is occurring within the Barbados Labour Party. I remember for St. George North - I preface my remark by saying what is your point of order? Remember misleading the House. I said that the QEH worked well. I said doctors and nurses work 12 to 15 hours. I complimented the hospital for doing well. And I also said that you have a lot of problems that have to be addressed to help save money. We need to get value for money. That is all I am saying. What I remember saying, sir, is that the employees at the hospital are incompetent. And he got in here and said - and that is a very serious charge because I know civil servants are not incompetent - that they ensure that they buy the right produce.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Yes. I have never said - never used the word incompetent. I never said the people were incompetent at all. I said that we need to get value for money. If the Government does not want to get value for money, there should not be a government. You should not be in government. The Government needs - the question I am asking here is what the Government should be asking. What the Minister of Finance has been asking the Cabinet, the ministers, to present him every year. And you cannot tell me that you have spent \$150 million at the hospital and not ask a question. You cannot tell me this. You all cannot be serious as a government.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am saying that when the Honourable Member comes to this House and tells the whole public that the officers at the hospital are buying vegetables and bare rotten vegetables and up to dump 40 per cent, I am saying that information

cannot be correct. Because if it is correct, the Honourable Member will continue over the years to make the point that we have incompetent people working within the civil service. And I want the Honourable Member to know that the President-to-be is hearing him. And I hope the President-to-be will defend his workers against him. The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member. Point of order. We are in the House of Assembly. We do not see strangers in here. So any president or vice-president who is here - I have that right to ask these questions and I will ask them.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I will ask them, Mr. Chairman. So I have a right to ask the questions that the Government should be asking.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Everybody knows that the Honourable Member for St. George North is the President-to-be because that is his role. Apparently he is now having influence over the civil servants and he is now telling them how much vegetables to dump and how much produce to dump. It is a pattern of the Barbados Labour Party and is one of the strategies that they are trying to use right across the 30 constituencies where they believe that they must encourage their people to destroy the system that we have created and to ensure that they sabotage anything they put their hands on. And I am very glad, sir, that the Honourable Member for St. George North has reported progress so that we can now investigate and use him as a witness to find out who are the ones sabotaging the hospital. Because no matter how much money we give them, I remember -

Mr. CHAIRMAN: For St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: I never used the word sabotage. I do not think people sabotage things. But you may very well be in a situation where you might be buying the wrong product at the wrong time. So I am not saying anybody sabotaged anything. I am saying that you have to get efficiencies within our government system so we get value for money. If the Minister of Finance does not ask you this question, I am very sorry. Because the Minister of Finance must ask the various ministers to account for the money that they spend.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please proceed.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for St. George North for that admission because he has just said to the House that the members of the civil service are buying the wrong produce. So it means that he has now admitted -

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I have never once said that civil servants are doing wrong. I am saying that we need to get value for money in each department. Each minister must ask his Permanent Secretary to ensure that the money that Government provides is accounted for. You cannot ask the people of Barbados to forgo all this money every year and then spend it badly. It is not fair. And I am saying that we as an opposition must ask Government to account for every cent.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment, just a moment. Let me just rule on this. Look, the matter is subject to interpretation. You have the opportunity when you get up again to make the point and clarify it. Apparently the Honourable Member is trying to interpret what you said, but you have the opportunity to clarify. So let us proceed because we do not need to get up on this point again.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, as I said, I am happy that he has reported progress - now we can carry out the investigation because we know where the problem is. And I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. George North for identifying the problem and also identifying the people who have advised them to do that. We understand what is happening over there - mash up and break up the economy. And I want to thank you for advising the people to purchase badly. Your admission alone - I want to thank you. But one of the things I would say, sir, is that the Honourable Member for St. George North was in here when there was a report laid on the QEH by a former member of this House, Dr. Richard Christopher Hands - the Hands Report. And the Honourable Member knows what was in that report. So much so that the report recommended that the hospital should really be closed down, a new one be found, and a general cleaning be done of that hospital. So when I hear them coming in here now, 14 years or so after the report of 2015-2016, behaving as if this hospital now has a problem, I want you all to know that what was said in that report has not changed and it never had the opportunity to do what was recommended in the report. What I would say, though, is that if they had listened to the Democratic Labour Party they would have kept the central hospital open instead of closing it down so that you could have carried out the necessary repairs. We gave you a spare and you destroyed it. And now you are coming here talking about the hospital as if they gave us a good hospital and how good it was. But I do not mind these crocodile tears in here over the QEH. I was in here long enough to know. You can criticise and you can share lashes but you cannot take them. So you should really keep yourself out of this debate. If you want to debate me, you must be prepared to take your lashes. Mr. Chairman, as I was saying -

I withdraw those remarks. Thank you very much. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas does not want to go there. So, Mr. Chairman, what I am saying is that we

understand what has occurred within the health system and we are not going to allow persons who have destroyed the health system to come in here and behave as though their hands are clean. And the worst thing is that they want to speak on the QEH when the whole public knows that they had a golden opportunity to solve the mess that was at the QEH and instead of keeping the facility open they closed it so that it could not be repaired properly, and now they come in here with false tears. I thank you.

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

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I do not want us, as we did in the previous debate, to spend all of our time on such a dynamic area focused on just the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The hospital is but just one aspect, although essential, of our overall healthcare framework. In that regard, I want to shift our conversation a bit to the issues that we have with respect to the abuse of drugs, the impact that has had on our healthcare system and on our people as a whole, and the prevalence of mental health issues in our society and what we are seeing in terms of that impact also in our criminal justice system.

You have heard me say some time ago, sir, that we conducted a burglary study about a year or two ago at Her Majesty's Prison. And what that study revealed is a significant number - and I don't remember the percentage, it was a very high percentage - of the individuals who were then interviewed said that they were at the time either abusing some kind of substance, either abusing alcohol or abusing marijuana, or abusing cocaine or abusing alcohol and marijuana, et cetera. The conclusions that we reached naturally was the fact that there was indeed a link between their abuse of those substances and what led them to crime. Indeed, many of them said that at the time that they were involved in burglaries, they were high on some kind of substance, and in several instances that was a driving force that led them towards that particular criminal offence.

I begin there, sir, because of the importance therefore of the time and effort that we spend educating our people about drugs as a whole, whether the abuse of legal drugs or the abuse of illegal substances. And I am sure that under this head the Ministry of Health will continue its programme in association with several agencies that I will mention, because we cannot give up the fight. We have to spend a continuous amount of time in terms of educating our people with respect to this issue. And of course, needless to say, there are also the other consequences in terms of cirrhosis of the liver, et cetera, that tends to happen. I'm not looking at you, Member for Christ Church South - you know, that tends to happen in terms of the abuse of certain substances.

This year I am very happy to report that we have been discussing the issue of a drug treatment court and I am happy to report that in fact we have launched the drug treatment court in this country. As you know, the rationale behind the drug treatment court is that where the abuse of, whether it be drugs or alcohol, leads the person to offend, let us treat the root cause - not treat the offence, but let us treat the root cause. Let us treat what has led that person to the crime and try to see if we can get them off the dependency on the particular drug. And hopefully in so doing, that individual will not go back to crime. So I am very happy to report to this Honourable Chamber that in fact we do have our first cohort, our first set of clients in the Drug Treatment Court. I believe the number given to me was about 15 individuals. These are non-violent individuals. One of the prerequisites is that the individual has to agree that they have a substance abuse problem and that they are in fact in need of help. And of course that admission then allows us to work with them.

Of course, one of our greatest difficulties within the criminal justice system and indeed within the prison system - I was very shocked recently in discussions with the prison officials. We were planning a juvenile justice conference which we are going to have next month. And someone said - I don't remember who reported it - but someone said, well sir, the reality is that out of our population of about 900-odd persons, we probably have about 200 persons in the prison system whose difficulties are more mental health related than criminal related. And in many instances these individuals are sent to prison because there is nowhere else to send them. And that creates a significant amount of difficulty within the prison system. And of course it calls for a new approach in terms of treatment. And yes, we have access to the Psychiatric Hospital and to their services there. But I regret to admit that try as we may, I do not believe that we have adequate resources within the prison framework to address these mental health issues. In fact, as I speak to you, sir, we presently have, I believe, a shortage of two doctors and three nurses. And one of the doctors, of course, we are looking for someone with psychiatric experience, and also one of the nurses, because we do have a significant number of individuals within the prison system who have mental health issues and who of course have substance abuse issues, and we have to treat those issues.

And yes, sir, I admit that we do get some support from the Ministry of Health - in fact, I will say a large amount of support from the Ministry of Health. But it seems to me that we need to find some coordinating mechanism to spot these difficulties from early, as opposed to waiting until the individuals come into the criminal justice system. And of course, one of the difficulties that we have in our society, in particular with mental health individuals, is how do we get the families to deal with them and to accept the challenges that these individuals have.

And how do we train the families to spot when someone is in need of further professional assistance in terms of medication or counselling or whatever the case may be.

I am happy, though, to report to this Honourable House that we do have some significant partners who are working with us on the substance abuse side. I would have said yesterday that it concerned me the number of young people, the number of school-age individuals who we are seeing with either mental health challenges or with substance abuse challenges. I want to signal the support and the continued support of several of our partners. Verdun House, as you know, sir - and I am sure that the Minister at some point in time will support me in this because I did see him with their 2014 audited financial statements and report - they are still doing a significant amount of work with males. They are the only residential facility that we have at this point in time in Barbados, other than the Psychiatric Hospital, where from time to time, unfortunately, we have to send individuals for assessment. I visited Verdun House on at least two occasions and I can speak to the holistic approach that they have. I remember in particular that they have made a success of their agricultural programme. They have a large amount of poultry and vegetables. That is part of the therapy, that is part of the therapeutic approach that they have with these young men who are there. Of course, they not only have a residential component, they also have individuals who come in for counselling and who go back to their homes, and also individuals who go into the community to work and come back in residence, et cetera.

The Counselling Addiction Support Alternative, which we commonly call CASTA - again, we give some support to CASTA. CASTA does a significant amount of counselling. The last occasion I visited with them, there were also a significant number of young people there for counselling in school uniform - young people who are undoubtedly of school age. We have the Drug Education and Counselling Services also working with us, of course, the National Council on Substance Abuse and the Psychiatric Hospital. Even with all these partners, including the Ministry of Health, the reality is that there is a significant amount of cost, time and effort involved in not only trying to educate individuals, but in trying to assist individuals and trying to divert them from the abuse of substances.

There are some other things that we have to do. I believe that the Minister of Health will presently be bringing to Parliament an amendment to the Health Services Act and some regulations, because what we recognise is that there are some issues in terms of staff standards, in particular for treatment services. So we want to ensure that we are able to regulate service providers so that there is a common platform on which an acceptable level of support - whether it be psychological, psychiatric

or otherwise, or just counselling - is given to individuals who are in need of that support. So I look forward to seeing that amendment to the Health Services Act in the very near future, because that is also consistent with our new effort in terms of the drug treatment court.

Finally, on this note, we spent a considerable amount of money - and it is one of these areas where, in terms of diversion, you do not know how many individuals you reach. But certainly it is one of these areas where we need to continue going into our schools. We need to continue going even at the junior level, as I said before, secondary, tertiary, et cetera, and going into our communities. One of the things that we have in Barbados is, without doubt, a culture where the macho thing is that you have a drink. And in fact, even from early, you tend to be socialised into believing that from the time you reach 18, it is accepted that you will begin having a drink. Now - yes, yes, Prime Minister.

But the problem that I have, sir, is that in particular within the private sector and within the public sector, the cost to this country in terms of productivity - I am sure that there are none of us here as ministers who within our own ministry cannot point to some individual or individuals where we have no doubt that there is a loss of time and productivity because these individuals are either ill at home or somewhere where they should not be, having a drink as opposed to being at work. It is one of these things really, sir - and I am not being hypocritical here because you know, sir, that I am on record as saying that I do not mind having a whisky and soda water from time to time. But it is really one of these things that I think as a country we are going to have to tackle seriously in terms of resocialising our people into addressing the whole issue of the abuse of alcohol. I am not standing here to say that people should stop drinking, but the abuse is what I am discussing and the substantial cost that it causes this country in terms of our healthcare facilities and in terms of lack of productivity.

Now, my colleague from St. Philip North - I know that in the amendments to the Road Traffic Act, soon we are going to have breathalyser testing. Now, I have heard the pros and cons of breathalyser testing, et cetera. I have heard individuals say that in fact there is nothing to support the contention that many accidents are caused because the drivers were under the influence at the time. What I say in response to that is that we do not need to wait for the evidence. I drive home sometimes, in particular on Saturday mornings and on Sunday mornings, and I see individuals in front of me who I have no doubt are either tired, sleepy or lack the ability to drive effectively. Well, the Member for St. Michael South is already at home - I am very sure about that. So I am not including him in this comment. But you know, I am also very sure that in fact there are many accidents, there are lots of accidents early Saturday mornings, early Sunday mornings, that I have no

doubt about. And yes, we have had one or two bad accidents in my own constituency and one or two of my constituents have been involved, unfortunately, in fatal accidents. It is something that has to be done and I want to urge my colleague from St. Philip North to let us have the legislation, let us bring it here as soon as possible, bring it to my desk, then let me sign it off because it has to be done. The cost to this country - the cost out of my colleague's budget - in fact it would allow the Member for St. George North not to complain about lack of rat bait, because in fact we will have additional money if we can save some costs there to do some other things.

So these are just a few areas that I am concerned about and a few areas that I am aware the Ministry of Health is doing a tremendous amount of work in. As I said, I am particularly concerned about our mental health issues. I am aware again that there are proposals to have amendments to the Mental Health Act very soon brought to these Chambers. We need to modernise certain parts of our Mental Health Act. We do have, as I said, to spend a bit more time and effort educating our people.

You know, sir, I am particularly passionate about this area. Yes, I am going to wind up now, sir, because I will always come back to this - because I have an aunt who is now retired who was a mental health nurse and I used to go driving with her across Barbados, in particular going into the country, because it was a time for us to have a drive across Barbados. And one of the things that struck me continuously was the fact that in almost every household that we went to, Aunt Merce - and that is what I call her; her name is Mercy, but we call her Aunt Merce - used to have to spend as much time with the family counselling the family and giving the family support as she had to spend with the patient. Because quite often, as you very well know, the first thing that the family does when there is an episode is that they call the police and put their hands up, and we need to spend lots of time supporting them and educating them. I will come back, sir. Thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now I believe that we all admit that the matter of the cost of health care and the current Barbadian experience is a matter that we have to discuss. We have to discuss it, sir, because the health of our population is very important and essential to our circumstances, sustainable development. And if we are going to develop as a healthy society, obviously the delivery of healthcare would be one of the essential points that we would have to contemplate.

Now, I believe anywhere in the world that when it comes to the delivery of health care, the cost factor is an essential factor that we have to give and to pay attention to.

And really, Mr. Chairman, the cost of health care is not an unreasonable point of discussion. We have to discuss it. We have to discuss it intelligently. And we should not just look at those areas that are troubling relative to the mounting costs of health care. But we have to discuss it from a solution perspective. What are the solutions we are prepared to offer? We have to look at the trends in health care and we have to ask ourselves, where is health care trending and what is influencing those trends, and begin to break it down from that perspective so that it allows us to put together or to continue to construct a health care system plan that is commensurate to where the country is today.

Now, of course, Barbados has a population of just under 300 000 today. Barbados' population is far more aged than it would have been 25, 30 years ago, 50 years ago. And therefore the implications for health care become even more substantial because of the status of the population as it relates to the ageing population in the country. As you age, you take on board more challenges with your health. As you age, you take on board more circumstances where the provision of care in general becomes an important contemplation in the conversation of the country.

Now, I want to position my presentation by looking at not just the cost of health care, but what is driving the cost. What is driving the cost? Is it the fees charged by doctors and other consultants? I am not too prepared to fret about that because these are individuals who have invested a significant amount of money in their education. And of course it is important that their payment plan or payment system is commensurate with international trends. So we cannot really beat up on the doctors and so on and so forth. What we can question, though, is the overall relationship between doctor, nurse and patient and to ask ourselves whether or not the relationship is of such that, at the end of the day, the patient gets the best possible care in the system. And that is where I think a lot of the conversation has to be. The other area is whether or not doctors are allowed to be part of the planning process sufficiently, where they can inform the institution of some of the things that the institution needs to be aware of. I am just saying that these are things that we can put on the table for conversations.

But when we look at disease - at the heart of health care costs is disease, disease patterns. We know that disease comes on board as a result of one's genetics, what some call the bio-physiological influence or impact on disease development. We know that some diseases are driven by lifestyle and lifestyle choices, so that we have a whole plethora of non-communicable diseases that impact upon health care cost. And we understand, Mr. Chairman, that one's attempt to access health care is also driven by one's socialisation. There are some people in the society who believe that they should wait until the very last minute

to get health checks and so on and so forth, while there are others who believe that at the sign of anything unusual they should find a doctor. Sometimes the A&E cost is driven by the careless access of accident and emergency services, where sometimes people for minimal health infractions will go to A&E and clog the system up, and that creates a problem.

So there are a number of things that we should look at and we should not just spend time on this particular debate concentrating on why more money is not spent here and why more money is not spent there. Because remember the position of the opposition is that the deficit is too high. There was also a suggestion that the Minister of Finance is hiding information someplace in the document. And then there is another suggestion that we should spend more money - so you have a bulging deficit, but yet still the recommendation is that we spend and spend. So at the end of the day it may just be a collection of ideas, some of which are very intelligent ideas, over the fact that those who plan the fiscal activities of government must clearly understand how best to utilise minimal resources to get maximum impact.

So as we think about those things, I want to focus my presentation then primarily on the non-communicable side of disease development and disease perpetuation. Now I have had the opportunity, if you should so call it, to attend the QEH on more than one occasion. And I must tell you that the health care that I received there was superb at all levels, whether it was the dietitian in the kitchen who came to make sure that you were eating the right stuff, the ancillary staff who made sure that the rooms were kept clean, and so on and so forth. The nurses. I spent six weeks in the intensive care. Yes, six weeks in there. And I have to tell you, you reach a point after a while where you become so addicted, if you will, to the degree and level of sensitive care that you receive, that when it is time for you to move out into another area, you do not want to go. And that is the truth, because there are people there who are committed to your recovery and committed to your regrounding in normal life in the society.

And I was extremely ill when I got there. But what I discovered over the process of the six weeks is that there are people there who are desperately committed to delivering the best possible health care to their patients. And that is what the QEH experience is for many people. I am not saying that there are not persons who will go and claim that they have had bad experiences - and perhaps they have - but I am saying that during the time I was there, and I have been there twice, my mother was there before she passed away and was very well taken care of. And not just at the medical end of the care, but also at the personal end of the care, where people sought to make you feel as comfortable and confident as possible in your experience in the QEH. And I am saying this for the record, that anybody

who wishes to make anybody believe that the QEH is the worst place to be because you cannot get linens and you cannot get toilet paper and you cannot get this - their account of the experience is absolutely off base. Perhaps they were not there; they are working from second-hand information. And I want to congratulate not only the Minister of Health, but I want to congratulate the staff across all sectors of the healthcare system for the work that they continue to do there. And I think it is commendable work and they should be commended for their work done at the hospital.

So when I begin to talk about the non-communicable side of healthcare, I am talking about, first of all, what diseases are plaguing our population? That is the first question you have to ask yourself. And there are a lot of common non-communicable diseases that seem now to be plaguing our population and some of them were mentioned earlier this evening. But I believe that in order for us to be able to roll back the impact of non-communicable diseases, we have to look at health care from the preventative side. How do we stop things from happening before they happen? And now some of us say that well, we are not too good at that, because for example, sometimes you are feeling unwell, you try to engage all kinds of old-fashioned, old-style remedies and then after a while you find that those remedies are not working. You gallop to a physician trying to get a recourse on the situation. But in general, I believe that what the Honourable Member for St. John said in her presentation - that we have to start working with our population, particularly among school-age children, about how they should take care of their health and talk about better health practices - is correct.

Now we have a problem in Barbados with childhood obesity. And we know that there are a number of circumstances that are associated with such. We have a number of amputees. We know that is also an issue. We have a number of persons who come down with hypertension. And we know that there is a link between hypertension, diabetes, compromising your health,

amputations and so on. So there is a chain of events that happen in that regard. So the first thing that we have to do if we are looking at preventative health care as an approach to helping to manage costs - because, Mr. Chairman, if you get preventative health care right, you are going to be able to manage down your cost for health care in general. And that is the point I wish to make. And when we talk about that, we have to look at socialisation. How are families socialising their children around preventative measures in terms of the reduction of obesity in childhood, in terms of having your children involved more and more in activities that are healthy activities? How do we get that done? And how do we understand the impact of home life practices in terms of preventative health care? And how do we look at the promotion of positive preventative health

care practices in your home? Because sometimes we only associate preventative health care with diet, which is important. We associate it with consumption and consumption patterns, which is important.

But I will come back, I promise you. Because what I want to also suggest is that in preventative health care, you have to look at social habits. You have to look at social habits that include, for example, the consumption of illegal drugs, the overindulgence of alcohol, crime, domestic violence, which can also have a serious impact on your health care costs. And the truth is that any administration which wishes to lead Barbados has to have a strong position on domestic violence because it is a mounting problem in our society and it is really causing a lot of problems in the society, not only at the traditional medical health side, but also on the psychiatric health side, where a number of persons whose families have been disruptive and, of course, an escalation in violent acts against those who are abused. And it is not only women who are abused; it is men who are abused as well.

So I am looking forward to the day when that private member's resolution that has been brought to this House will be debated, because we want to talk about domestic violence and its impact on health care costs. It is a very serious issue. The Member for St. George North is out there egging me on. But the truth is that I believe the Member for St. George North is moving - yes, is moving the resolution - and the Honourable Member would know the perils of domestic violence because he is a man who gets through his community. He works his constituency day and night. But he understands the implications.

And the point I am trying to make is that when we begin to talk of health care costs, we just cannot be talking dollars and cents. We have to be talking practices, philosophy, what guides the development of services and what are some of the perils in the society that have a propensity to drive up healthcare costs. Because I am saying that things like HIV/AIDS, which is a lifestyle choice, are also having an impact on our health care costs and therefore we have to begin to address those things. I see the Honourable Chairman is indicating, so I believe it is time for me to say thank you, sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: Mr. Chairman, it would seem as though anytime this side wants to speak about the QEH that it makes that side very nervous. But it would be remiss of us to neglect that aspect of the debate, because as the people's representatives, it is our duty to raise issues that are of concern to Barbadians. And every day we are bombarded by questions, we are bombarded by concerns, we are bombarded by complaints from Barbadians who

speak about issues at the QEH. This presentation that I am going to make, I will not deal with supplies per se, but I will make the point that we reserve the right to speak in that vein, because that is a vein that concerns Barbadians. But what I want to bring, what I want to deal with at this time, seeing that we are speaking about non-communicable diseases, I want to go back to the issue of chronic diseases like diabetes.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I would have said that of the 10 per cent of Barbadians who suffer from diabetes, we have 42 per cent actually presenting to the hospital. What that actually means is that in our facility of over 500 beds - I believe it is 590 beds - you have quite a percentage of beds being taken by individuals with chronic diseases. The other side wants us to speak to the vision of the health care system, what we would like to see being done and what we would propose. And I always wonder, why is it that we continue to treat diabetic cases at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital if so many of our beds are taken by that very predictable condition? And I am saying to you, Mr. Chairman, that the time has come maybe for us to consider a specialised care facility where we transition our diabetic patients for specialised care rather than at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. What that would do would be to free up our bed space for acute cases and surgical or tertiary interventions.

Mr. Chairman, it concerns me that we are still being called the amputation capital of the world. And I know that has nothing to do with the severity of the condition in most cases. But that is a financial decision. There are people who make that decision, or they are encouraged to make that decision based on their lack of financing. And this bothers me because every time there is an amputation, there is a reduction in quality of care and quality of life for that individual. And we have a vested duty - I believe that irrespective of the financial situation of the individual - that we should try to save life and limb at all costs. So I would like to see the development of that special care facility for diabetics, if it is possible, so that we can take those individuals out of the system.

Now, I also want to say that I have heard so many boasts being made of the amount of cost or the money that we are saving in our pharmaceutical services. We have taken \$52 million and we have reduced it to \$26.2 million. And that is to be commended in some regard. But the reality is, or the question that needs to be asked is, at what cost have you reduced these costs from \$52 million to \$26.2 million? It has come at a cost to Barbadians because they are not accessing the drugs via the health service, or the public health service, I should say. And many of them cannot access the drugs via the private health service, and that leads to suffering. That leads to suffering of many Barbadians. I am inundated every day by people who call crying that they have got to purchase drugs - some as much

as \$1 300 for a prescription. And you are saying, Honourable Member, that it is not true. So let me give you an example. There are people who are unable to access their cancer drugs and they have to purchase them at \$1 300 upwards to \$1 600 a prescription. And some of them need eight regimens to survive. Do not say it is not true, because it is a very real fact. And I am saying that it is commendable that you can say that you have saved all of that money. But at the same time, it is a cost. It is a true cost to victims who suffer through these experiences. And I am saying that if you are going to save money, make sure that your cancer victims, your patients, are not disadvantaged. There are people who go to public polyclinics and they spend six to eight hours at a public polyclinic. And after diagnosis, there is no drug, there is no medication. They are still not in a position to access care after six to eight hours of waiting at a polyclinic. We have a responsibility to ensure that these patients are not disadvantaged in this way.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to raise the issue of infection control. I heard the Honourable Member say that the Haines Report suggested that a new hospital was required. And certainly the one that was there needed proper cleaning. But beyond that point, there are too many people complaining of secondary infections. We have had to grapple with infections such as *Staphylococcus aureus*, the methicillin-resistant type. We have had to grapple with infections caused by *Klebsiella*. We are very much aware that the autoclaves break down frequently. So do not say to me that all hospitals grapple with those kinds of diseases, because if you do not have a functioning autoclave, then you certainly cannot assure infection control. And every day I hear the same story - my relative, my elderly relative, has had a secondary infection. This is of concern to Barbadians. I do not wish to put out there that everyone who goes to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is at risk, because I know that is not true. Like the member who spoke before me, I have had my fair share of time in there. And I cannot necessarily say that it has been a bad experience. In fact, I know that my life was saved on more than one occasion as a result of my stay there. But in as much as we thank the staff for saving many lives, the fact still has to be made that there are too many people who are dying as a result of circumstances that otherwise should not be. And even if it is only one, it is one too many. It is one too many. That is the point. So for those individuals who are concerned about infection control and who feel aggrieved because their relatives were affected in that way, even to the point of death, I am saying that this is something that we need to look at and it is not an unfair criticism on my part. We honestly need to look at it.

The other thing that we need to look at - now that I am on the issue of death - I have sat in here on more than one occasion and I have heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, the Minister of Health, suggest that

the mortality rates at QEH are improving. And I honestly need to question that. I want to question that because I know that UNICEF does an assessment where they use the under-5 mortality rate as a state of well-being of a nation. And I am well aware that for 2011 to 2013 we were very, very concerned about our under-five and our infant mortality rates because we were stating that the under-five mortality rate was 20 in every thousand. The infant mortality rate was 18 in every thousand. And what was significant about it is that they were saying that we had fallen 25 places. Now this is serious. I would like the Minister to speak to the issue of infant mortality rate in this country. He has to. You cannot say that you are not going to answer me because this is not the Opposition saying these things. This is the World Health Organization reporting on Barbados. So do not say that you are not going to answer the question. It is a critical question, a very critical question. So these issues, Mr. Chairman, are not frivolous and they are not vexatious. They point to the issue of life and death for too many people. And I am going to ask the Minister to speak to us on these issues when he rises again. Thank you.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to say a few brief words as I enter this debate for the second time. And I am not going to start with the speech from the Honourable Member who just sat down because I am convinced that her emphasis in terms of her presentations are not necessarily topics that can be spoken to in this vein. Death is a very serious discussion and is something which needs to be addressed in usually very private quarters. I know the Honourable Member has expressed an interest in discussing euthanasia and topics of that nature. And again this evening she wants to talk about morbidity and death in the hospital. We know that these things occur. But every event has its details. And I as Minister would like to suggest that maybe there is another forum on which we can discuss the details of morbidity in the hospital where it applies to the public of Barbados. If you want to talk in broad terms of what causes death, well, that is a different matter. And I think we have tried to indicate in Barbados what the major causes of death are. Specific occurrences have their own story. And I as Minister would not have those details to share with the public at this time. But I would suggest that is something which is more suitable for discussion with your consultants from time to time. But if the Honourable Member wants to meet at the Ministry of Health and let us set up a session where we can talk about these things in that kind of detail and specificity, well, let us do that. I certainly do not think that we need to go there at this time, not in this debate.

Mr. Chairman, we have spoken to the major cause of illnesses, of sickness in Barbados and the major cause of the need for the hospital to be the place of last resort of intervention treatment for Barbadians. And we have spoken to the fact that this represents the largest single cost in the

hospital. Your member spoke to the question of the treatment of diabetes and she said that in Barbados we need to transition from only treating diabetes in final stages at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and try to set up some kind of intervention clinic. The member must be aware that it is now about 18 months that we have set in practice at the Warrens - well, if you are not aware, please listen - what is happening there is that diabetic patients are referred to the Barbados Diabetic Foundation where specialist treatment occurs for them. We are awaiting the first cohort of reports from that treatment which are now outstanding, which will help us to point in what direction we are going in terms of the treatment of this disease. Of course there are other treatments available. I have tried to encourage the Ministry of Health. We have not got a lot of buy-in yet. But there are other non-traditional treatments which have been tried by Barbadians, which are being tried by Barbadians and which are reporting some levels of success. I believe that there will come a time, Honourable Member, when we will have to discuss that factor also - non-traditional treatments of these non-communicable diseases - because that can be a very important discussion too in terms of the cost at the hospital.

Of course we anticipate that. We know that some \$14 million a year is spent on end-stage treatment of diabetes in terms of dialysis. And there are currently about 233 persons on dialysis at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, an increase of 150 persons since 2011. Clinical needs in Barbados are expected to grow based on lifestyle, based on trends in disease which we are seeking to turn back because of the promotion of healthier lifestyles and because of the kind of promotion we anticipate to take place between the Ministry of Health, the Non-Communicable Disease Commission and, as I mentioned today, with the joining together of the forces of the National HIV/AIDS Commission and the Non-Communicable Disease Commission. And again I want to commend the work of Professor Hassell, Sir Trevor Hassell, and the members of the Non-Communicable Disease Commission who have really taken on board this message and are working with NGOs including the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, which is an NGO headed by Professor Hassell. And they are working locally, regionally and internationally with the WHO and PAHO. And indeed there is a new initiative with the Commonwealth Secretariat which will see again assistance being offered to the region for the promotion of population education to prevent the onset of these diseases and to try to encourage our population. And yes, the Honourable Member spoke to the question of obesity in children as an important factor. I think I mentioned that in passing in my original presentation. And we are going to be looking, as I said, to emphasise education and lifestyle change as a way to bring about this improvement.

So the example I have drawn of dialysis is important as it is a direct indication of the connection, the nexus,

between non-communicable disease and the cost of end-stage treatment at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. And anything we can do to alleviate some of this cost is important to me. When we listened to the discussion on our debt management and what we could do to create some space in our debt management, it is like the solution which we discussed again very recently with the hospital staff and the Ministry of Health. We are looking at moving some of the patients who are treated at the hospital into private care because there is a private care offering which costs us per patient about two thirds of what the cost is being reported at the hospital. This payment, the treatment for dialysis patients, is paid by the hospital.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, the Minister has given some figures which we need to be clear on. I want to find out if the figures that he included include the private care. You say you have to send some out to the private care. Is this money coming from the QEH grant of the provision by to the consolidated fund to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital?

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: So of the \$150 million you are voting today or we are seeking to approve, you can put aside 13, 14 million dollars for treatment of dialysis patients. As I said, 233 patients who require as many as three sessions per week to lead a comfortable lifestyle. And again this is where we are saying that, as I was saying, the questions we examined the deficit and how we could manage our debt, etc. Again, where we can have this service provided a little cheaper, a slightly less cost. As I said, something like two thirds that cost. We are looking to create some space in the hospital because the other thing about the 233 persons is that it takes up all the dialysis capacity and more of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. So you get a picture of the seriousness that we are talking about when we talk about the impact of non-communicable diseases. Without this treatment, of course these patients would die and certainly would not have any opportunity to lead any kind of a useful lifestyle.

The Honourable Member for St. James South did mention the question of health information systems, IT technology in the hospital, the ability to access records and to keep records at your fingertips. We envisaged a time when in Barbados both public and private health care records are available for the appropriate agencies to do the analysis so that we can really pinpoint what is happening in our country. And this is important. Indeed the health information system which is now being rolled out by the name of MedData is already in operation at the Winston Scott Polyclinic and the Edgar Cochrane Polyclinic. As I speak, we are also rolling out at least the appointment portion of MedData at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Eventually we want to, as I say, come to a point where not only are public patients on the MedData Informatics platform, but private patients will be persuaded to be. The

doctors in private practice are going to be persuaded to join us in understanding the value of having that information available so we can accurately report to Barbados and so we can accurately report to people like the World Health Organization, to whom we are required to report in terms of disease management.

And this health information system, for the record, was made available through the final approximately \$4.5 million of the HIV World Bank loan. We utilised that portion of this loan to purchase the health information system. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that indeed as we contemplate the fuller rollout of this health information system - MedData as it has become known - we may even have to come back to this chamber for more resources to ensure that we do not drop the ball at this very crucial time. And the analysis is being done in the Ministry of Health to make sure that we identify the critical resources that will be required to bring about that final rollout of an effective and efficient health information system.

This will help to inform too our health financing model. It would help us too in the area - and I believe the Honourable Member for St. George North in one of his questions raised the question of insurance and the insurance persons who have private insurances and the ability of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to utilise this insurance information. And we have asked this question many times of the hospital and they have assured us that the method of admission includes a questionnaire which includes whether you have insurance, and once the patient has been seen - remember emergencies are dealt with as emergencies - so we see everybody. When you move from the accident and emergency and you are awarded, if you go to a public ward of course you remain there. But if you go to

a private ward, the admissions people at the ward immediately complete your information and that becomes an accounting function to access the appropriate funds from the insurance company. I agree, and I think the Ministry of Health agrees and the hospital agrees, it is not a perfect system, so that we have again to sit down and see how best we can tweak that system. And indeed I contemplate that with MedData in place, it will allow us to accurately track insurance patients who can pay.

The Honourable Member also spoke to the question of Chikungunya and the outbreak last year. Was it the Honourable Member from St. George North too, or was it another Honourable Member - Christ Church West? Well, I do not know what is a success story other than the way that the Ministry of Health and the Environmental Health Unit have been able to deal with the outbreak of Chikungunya in Barbados. The facts are - the figures are different between the reported cases and the suspected cases. I believe that is what the Honourable Member was alluding to: that at a certain stage of the epidemic, the CARPHA organisation,

who do the tests, decided that they would discontinue the testing for Chikungunya because, more or less, the symptoms were there. Everybody knew the symptoms. And it was about getting to your doctor, getting the treatment prescribed and getting ahead with taking your medicine.

What had to happen then on the ground was that the Environmental Health Unit had to move into the areas which posed the greatest threat and make sure that the fogging exercise, which we carry out all the time, was intensified. Now our fogging exercise in Barbados has improved to the extent that it is informed by a GPS system which tells us where the highest incidence of the offending mosquito - the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito - occurs. So if there are areas of low incidence, you are not going to see a lot of fogging in those areas. But you will see fogging in low-lying areas along lower Carrollton and coming up on the west coast, obviously up through St. Michael. Virtually the entire St. Michael is considered a high-risk area. And then onto the south coast up to the St. Lawrence area. And of course the swamp - that is where the Graeme Hall Swamp is located. We all understand why the programme would look like that. As I said, it does not mean fogging did not occur in other areas. But the success of that Chikungunya programme is that we contained that spread very relatively quickly. It is not a fatal disease but it is a very painful disease. I had an attack of Chikungunya myself, so I know - my case was relatively mild, but I certainly have an idea what it feels like.

But the other point that must be made was that we also had - it was at the height of our tourism season. So we had to engage with a number of visitors from the United Kingdom and the United States of America who heard about this outbreak in the Caribbean, because Barbados is a microcosm of what was really happening in the region. As a matter of fact, we managed our processes much quicker than a lot of our other neighbours were able to manage their processes. And I must again commend the Ministry of Health because I read the correspondence between some of these potential visitors who were expressing caution at the initial stages of the outbreak, but who were comfortable once they heard about the programme being offered by the Ministry of Health, and were comfortable to continue their holidays.

I want to congratulate Barbadians most of all, because I was so impressed at the way the people of Barbados responded to the Environmental Health Unit's exercise. Communities came out, constituency councils joined in, communities joined in and made sure that on Saturday mornings, on Sunday afternoons, they promoted this idea of getting rid of any collection of stagnant water, et cetera. I want to thank too the private sector, because certain manufacturers came on board and joined us by providing us with materials and insecticides. They got some mileage for their product too, but they provided us

with insecticides to aid the programme. And this is a testimony, sir, to the general response to the Ministry of Health in the public in Barbados.

So I want to urge the Honourable Member for Christ Church West - it is not all negative in the Ministry of Health. We lose battles from time to time, some battles are lost. But the point is I am satisfied, and I do believe the public of Barbados is satisfied, that in the majority, healthcare continues to be the hallmark of the Government of Barbados. We make sure that we examine all the details related to health care and make sure that the best solutions are put in place as they are required. And that confidence has got to be maintained. That is why I do not like to get into the debates in the newspapers. The newspapers like to promote these issues. We have to manage the issues where they are occurring and get the professionals to join with us and share with us in achieving these solutions.

As I said, I did not say anything about telling people not to say anything. I said very clearly that even at the end of our meetings, I always make the point: ladies and gentlemen, at this stage we have nothing new to communicate to the public of Barbados. But certainly if the professionals believe - and we support them - that they must make their message heard so that people understand what the situation is, sometimes we have a different view on that, but this is a process. This is a work in progress. Dialogue continues. Dialogue is important. I do not want any misunderstandings to go out there. And I think we are doing very well so far. And certainly so long as we can continue to maintain that supply of monies to the hospital, we can guarantee that service. And we will do all in our power to make sure that is maintained.

Mr. Chairman, I believe I have answered a couple of the questions. As I said, I do not have the details on the matter raised by the Member for St. George North at this time. But I do not know whether he is serious or not, because I have a photograph which I have been carrying around with me for years now with Hallam Nichols, Glenn Clarke, [Inaudible.] and Jonathan Danos, and I have asked him if that is him in it and he said no - because this Jonathan Daniels, of course, under the headline that this man, Barbados contractor Jonathan Daniels, admits paying huge bribes to Caribbean government officials and their middlemen - and whenever I show him that photograph he tells me that is not him. So, sir, I have to figure out often whether the Honourable Member is serious or not. But I will seek to get the details and when I come back tomorrow I will try to provide the more accurate information. Thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, sir, I wouldn't be able to answer the question being asked on the side

because I understand we are going to Head 11 and therefore I just want to make my small contribution. It is not an effort to be - sir, you will have to quarrel with the people on your side. They're in charge. Mr. Chairman, I apologise. I just want to make my intervention and to speak first to the whole issue of the overuse of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the sense that we understand that numerous persons flock there daily for services and while I appreciate the sentiments that were expressed, we all must agree that many people still use the option - those who can afford it - of private care, and therefore people go to the private doctors in their communities and elsewhere, specialists and so on, rather than have to wait in the long lines at QEH. But we know that formally, sir, indeed previous to 2013 many Barbadians opted for the private service and I felt that gave way to a number of individuals who really needed to have access to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to be given that opportunity in a shorter space of time. But with the loss of employment and income and days cut short and so on, more persons have been forced to go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

I want again to put on the table the whole issue of polyclinics. I know that the fast track takes place at the Winston Scott Polyclinic and it does an excellent service. I've taken people there after hours and they have been well treated. But I want to make a case again for the Warrens Polyclinic area - now the Eunice Gibson Polyclinic - from the point of view that that area has now been so commercialised and the demographic shifts in the country where hundreds of houses are now being put in St. James, St. Andrew, St. Thomas and so surrounding communities that would really normally use the Warrens Polyclinic. I want to make a case for the Warrens Polyclinic hours to be extended at least till 8.30 or 9.00 at night. It will take some of the pressure off the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Secondly, that goes for the Morris Bay Polyclinic if that is not yet in the system. And I believe that rural people will get a better opportunity to get service closer to home, making it easier where the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is concerned. I know that the Warrens area is very congested now and of course if that polyclinic is open, if there are accidents where persons have minor injuries and so on, the polyclinic will be available rather than having to clog up the system at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

The other concern I have, sir, and I understand there are financial constraints, but my big concern is that for many years Barbados always had a debushing programme. It not only kept the society cleaner and the environments so well enhanced, but what it also did was to help to generate some employment for people in a seasonal way as we move around the country. Barbados is really very dirty. And when we acknowledge how large numbers of staff were made redundant - the NCC workers, many of them have gone home; the Beautify Barbados workers, a lot of them have gone home; the Ministry of Public Works persons,

many of them have gone home - many of our streets, and I can speak for the communities surrounding where I live and the ones I travel every day, Barbados is really a very nasty country compared to what we knew before. But the role that the bushing team played made a tremendous difference in our lives. I heard other Honourable Members speaking about the chikungunya. I know that there are many people who suffered from leptospirosis as well. I am now a victim of chikungunya in the latter stage of the disease. But the point is there is no other person that has more land lying fallow and so many opportunities for farming and so on to take charge than government's properties. And I believe that the role of the debushing team would have helped a lot in cleaning up Barbados and making it safer for the citizens and the visitors who are among us.

I also want, Mr. Chairman, to refer to the psychiatric hospital and of course to indicate my commendations for the staff working at the psychiatric hospital. It is a very arduous task, especially when you see the kind of work that has to be rendered to the clients who are there. It calls for a real interesting disposition of staff members, particularly the nurses and the general workers, to be able to carry out their duties effectively at the institution. I know that institution too is suffering from a lack of resources, but I want to congratulate even the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health and I know of the quality work that he has done from hearing many of my colleagues and friends who have worked at the institution speak about the role that the workers play in nurturing the residents.

What I think can happen, however, if Barbadians really understand mental illness - anybody can go mentally ill at any time. It is like the same chikungunya. None of us knows our destiny. None of us can comprehend what could happen to us in another hour from now. I know that over here and in the communities where I live and generally across Barbados, many people are undergoing a lot of financial stress. And therefore we do not know when we will snap - if our house may be threatened to be taken, if we are not paying the mortgage, or the vehicle, the only thing we have to take our children to and fro, and so on and so forth. It can create a lot of mental stressors. And therefore I believe that it is important that families be made direct contact with and embraced so that they understand that mental illness does not necessarily have to be a lifetime thing for those persons who are afflicted with the disease. And of course I believe that dialogue takes place more often if the funds are there for persons to do the training. I believe that in the psychiatric hospital there are residents there who could really go back to their homes. But because families are afraid - because we believe that a person with mental illness is going to take something and destroy you when you're sleeping - families are afraid. And I share the sentiments that were expressed by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South when he spoke to

the whole issue of the impact that drugs and other substances that people abuse have on people's bodies and on their lifestyles.

I know that I've heard the criminologists speak. I have listened clearly to the National Council on Substance Abuse and had a chance to see some reports. And we are learning by the day that even our primary school children are very exposed to drugs. Now, I know, Mr. Chairman, that there are some parents who blow the smoke in the children's face, in the baby's face. Some of them give it to the children to drink as tea. And therefore, from an early age, these children are exposed. And there are some that are so ridiculous, Mr. Chairman, that they even put it in their children's bags to sell to others in the school system. I think it is important that we pay closer attention to our children and that the education reaches those parents and guardians who tend to deviate from what we consider to be the norm.

Now, I understand the whole marijuana issue, and the cocaine seems to be even more lucrative than I even anticipated in my naive way, because every day we're hearing how much is confiscated at the airport, how many bags, persons are coming and passing out, how many interventions there are with the police and the defence force and the marine unit in getting hold of those individuals who are bringing marijuana into Barbados. And therefore we know that. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that we seem to have lost that whole matter of drug addiction. And it hurts my heart to see where that scourge takes our people, whom we have invested so much in - in the health as well as in the educational sector - to see many of them gravitate from wherever, St. Philip, St. Thomas, St. Lucy, wherever, into Bridgetown. Some persons in Bridgetown are homeless, but not all of them. There are a lot of young men and women now who are on our streets as a result of the abuse of drugs.

I think it is incumbent upon parents and guardians as well to bring their children to the various institutions for check-up. I know it's a difficult task, but one has to do it. I've tried it two or three times with individuals and it has worked. And Vernon House has taken them in so they can get some help. But I'm only one person. Families sometimes give up. And as a result, the children and the other relatives are on the street because they steal the jewellery, the food of the house - we know all of the repercussions. And I believe that if families are brought on board, when those young people get the necessary treatment, whether it be at the psychiatric hospital or elsewhere, to bring them back to a level, families need to take over. Every family has a role to play and not all children will obey, but we need to work with them in a different way. And so I am asking for us to try our best to make a difference.

I don't know if we should go the route, Mr. Chairman, of Jamaica, where they have just passed legislation that if a person is found with two ounces or less, they're given a card or they're paying some small penalty, but not having to go to court - I don't know. But the fact that it's so embedded in our system now - if you go to Fairchild Street, smelling the smoke, if you pass by the block, you're smelling the weed wherever you go. Now, even in Bridgetown, I'm seeing minibus drivers, Mr. Chairman, driving with a spliff in their mouth. I saw a young man last week in an area in town. He was wearing the T-shirt or the polo shirt of the company at which he was working. Three of them were together and he was not even having any shame in the middle of Bridgetown - taking his puff and handing it to somebody else. So it is a real serious problem. It is a terrible scourge in our society and no government will be able to find enough funding to work on that. But if families help out, I believe it will minimise the whole exercise and make a difference.

The other thing I wish to refer to, sir, is to ask the Honourable Minister, because I learned from the Throne Speech - and I know from some discussions that would have taken place, meaning the Throne Speech of 2013 - that there's a plan to construct a new hospital. We go to the hospital and we see how there are challenges. I don't know how in this economic time it may happen, but I know the Honourable Minister had talked about a consultancy fee that was being paid out in relation to the specifications for a new hospital and the plan. And I trust that we will be able to get some word from him in this debate.

Sir, my other area of concern is to do with this ageing population. And I believe that it is integral that whatever forward planning we are making, we incorporate plans for ageing Barbadians. I have had the privilege over the last five years to meet ten centenarians - two at the Gordon Cummings District Hospital, three around the villages where I live and others in Welches and other communities in St. Thomas. And therefore, that tells us we are living longer. And I believe it is as a result of consecutive governments ensuring that proper health care systems are put in place, helping people to live longer. And I believe that it is important that we in our educational sector, with the synergies that education and health would have, as I said on another occasion, that we look at identifying more persons. Gerontologists are limited in this country. Persons are coming down with dementia and Alzheimer's and so on, and few doctors seem to be able to direct how to treat, even though they would have had background information. But I believe that a gerontologist will be able to better attend to the matter. And so I would like, Mr. Chairman, for the Honourable Minister to give us some word on it.

I can say generally that the district hospitals do excellent work under the circumstances. I have had the

privilege to see the one at St. Philip District Hospital with a friend's mother who was there. But I have a more intimate relationship, as the Honourable Member for St. Philip West will know, with the Gordon Cummings District Hospital where I see nurses go beyond the call of duty to look after those persons left under their care. They even bring linens and towels and cotton wool and different things from home to make sure that they top up because they know the requirement. And the association of the district hospital there plays a very integral role in meeting some of the needs of the patients and the clients who live in the institution.

I just want to find out, sir, from the Honourable Minister, what is the work that is happening - I want to find out about the ambulances from the United Arab Emirates. We know that some ambulances came in and then we heard nothing more about them. I would like the Minister to tell us what has happened to that gift and how those ambulances are being utilised.

And the final one will be to do with the sex workers and the HIV programme. I want to highly commend the HIV/AIDS Commission, as well as the other non-governmental organisations that work in association - there is a food bank, there are extra services. And I would like to know what the Ministry is doing in relation to spreading the word, especially to our young people, because I acknowledge that our young people are the ones that are more exposed. They're the ones that are our workers of the future, our parents of the future. And unless we work with them and send some good sound messages to them about HIV and AIDS, it really will create problems. I would like to know what are the most recent statistics, how impactful has the programme been in reaching Barbadians to sensitise them about the scourge called HIV, how are the sex workers approached, how are they accepting the training, if the training is reaching them, and how can we as a country play our part in not stigmatising or discriminating against them, but embracing them, because their lifestyle should not separate them from being human beings who should be able to enjoy rights and privileges that everybody else is enjoying. That is my small contribution, sir, and I wish to thank you very much.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I do now report progress to His Honour the Speaker and ask for leave to sit again, sir.

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 this sitting be suspended until 9.00 tomorrow morning.

The question that the House be suspended until 9.00 a.m. the following day was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

AGARD, Dr. M. M. (Christ Church West)
ARTHUR, Rt. Hon. O. S. (St. Peter)
BLACKETT, Hon. S. D. (St. Michael Central)
BOSTIC, Lt. Col. J. D.
BOYCE, Hon. J. D. E. (Christ Church South)
BRATHWAITE, Hon. A. D. (St. Philip South)
CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
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. M. A. (St. Philip North)
LOWE, Dr. the Hon. D. S. (Christ Church East)

MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
PRESCOD, Mr. T. A. (St. Michael East)
SEALY, Hon. R. L. (St. Michael South Central)
SINCKLER, Hon. C. P. (St. Michael North West)
THOMPSON, Mrs. M-J. M. (St. John)
TOPPIN, Mr. R. St.C. (St. Michael North)

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while correcting and preparing this report. Members are named as in the 2013–2018 Parliament.

Q1. Front matter. The source does not record the PRESENT list; the Members listed are those identified from the record. Mr. SPEAKER opened with ‘Good afternoon, honourable members. This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken last evening, we were in committee of supply’, so the source’s convening sentence (‘Pursuant to the adjournment ... met at 10.00 a.m.’) is replaced by a resumption line without a time. The proceedings of the evening of March 18 and of the morning of March 19, if any, are not in the source. Please confirm from the Votes and Proceedings.

Q2. Throughout. The bracketed time-checks in the source are out of sequence (for example ‘[12.30 a.m.]’ and ‘[01.00 a.m.]’ during the afternoon and evening, and ‘[02.30 a.m.]’ after the final suspension) and have been omitted.

Q3. Throughout. The words ‘I beg to second that’ after the evening motions to report progress and to suspend are marked speaker-uncertain in the source and 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. The Committee considered Head 77 (Education, Science, Technology and Innovation), which the source records as passed in narrative form, and then Head 23 (Ministry of Health). The motions to report progress are printed in the Official Report form.

Q5. Committee of Supply, Lt. Col. J. D. Bostic. Headed ‘HON. MICHAEL A. LASHLEY, S.C., M.P. (City of Bridgetown)’ in the source. Mr. CHAIRMAN called the Member for the City of Bridgetown, the speaker urges the Government to revisit the Barbados Labour Party’s University College of Barbados plan, Hon. R. L. Sealy calls it one of the best contributions ‘from that side’, and the Leader of the Opposition refers to the language centre ‘that the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown referred to’. The speech is printed under Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC, the 2015 Member for the City of Bridgetown. Please confirm.

Q6. Committee of Supply, Hon. R. L. Sealy. The opening words ‘Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.’ are headed ‘HON. MS. MARSHA K.-A. CADDLE, M.P. (St.

Michael South Central)’ in the source; she was not a Member of the 2013–2018 House. Mr. CHAIRMAN had called the Member for St. Michael South Central, Hon. R. L. Sealy, and the words are printed as the opening of his speech.

Q7. Committee of Supply, Mr. T. A. Prescod. Mr. Prescod congratulates ‘the Honourable Member for Christ Church West for a presentation he made’, a historical account of education from the first half of the 19th century, and later refers to that Member as ‘his’. In 2015 the Member for Christ Church West was Dr. M. M. Agard. The Member meant may be the Member for St. Philip West, who traced the history of education earlier in the debate, but this is not certain; left as in the source. Please check.

Q8. Committee of Supply, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley. The source reads ‘the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael North East’ (the speaker’s own seat) for the Prime Minister, and twice ‘the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central’ for the Minister of Education, the longest-serving holder of that office. In 2015 the Prime Minister was the Member for St. Michael South and the Minister of Education, Hon. R. D. Jones, the Member for Christ Church East Central; corrected. Please confirm.

Q9. Committee of Supply, Head 23. The Clerk first reads Head 23 ‘in the amount of \$251,249,359’, which Mr. CHAIRMAN repeats; at the later reading and in Hon. J. D. E. Boyce’s introduction the amount is ‘\$251,241,359’. Left as in the source. Please check against the Estimates.

Q10. After the second resumption. The source moves from the first readings of Bills straight to Mr. CHAIRMAN’s ‘This House is now in Committee’; the motion to go into Committee is not recorded. The call of the Member for Christ Church South that follows is headed Mr. SPEAKER in the source and is printed under Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Q11. Committee of Supply, Dr. M. M. Agard (point of order). Headed ‘DR. WILLIAM F. DUGUID, J.P., M.P.’ in the source; he was not a Member of the 2013–2018 House. Mr. CHAIRMAN called the Member for Christ Church West, and the point of order restates Dr. Agard’s earlier remarks on the \$16 million allocated to the St. John Polyclinic, so it is printed under Dr. M. M. AGARD. Please confirm.

Q12. Committee of Supply, before the evening suspension. Mr. CHAIRMAN calls ‘The Member for Christ Church West’, but the next words recorded are the motion of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce to report progress. Part of the debate may be missing at this point.

Q13. *Committee of Supply, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce (point of order).* Mr. CHAIRMAN's call reads 'Honourable Member for St. John' before a point of order headed Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, Member for Christ Church South, on the St. John Polyclinic. Left as in the source. Please check.

Q14. *End of the record.* The record ends with the suspension of the sitting until 9.00 a.m. the following day; there is no adjournment in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House resumed in Committee of Supply on the afternoon of Thursday, March 19, 2015 to continue the debate on Head 77, Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. Mr. R. St.C. Toppin said that students had been promised bursaries which had not come in a timely manner. Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur said Barbados faced a 'Kennedy moment' and spoke of tertiary education as the path out of poverty. Hon. S. D. Blackett said the Government still funded the largest share of education, including 10 nursery schools and 50 primary schools with nursery classes. Mr. E. G. Hinkson spoke on education for persons with disabilities, thanked the Ministry for a \$100 000 transfer to the Learning Centre and said that the \$3 million allocated to the Polytechnic was not enough; Hon. M. A. Lashley and Hon. R. D. Jones intervened on points of order. Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe called for attention to the purpose of education and to moral education.

Lt. Col. J. D. Bostic argued that education had fallen out of step with the labour market and proposed technical institutes, a services academy and a revival of the University College of Barbados plan. Hon. R. L. Sealy welcomed that contribution and described the Government's work in tertiary institutions beyond the University. After the suspension Mr. T. A. Prescod cited the Cuban model of state-financed education, Miss C. Y.

Forde said the Barbados Labour Party had created some 30 000 jobs and reduced unemployment to 6.7 per cent, and Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley asked the Government to form a committee of the House on the financing of tertiary education. Hon. R. D. Jones replied on the Head, which was passed. The Clerk then read Head 23, Ministry of Health, and progress was reported.

When the sitting resumed again, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce gave notice of and Hon. C. P. Sinckler moved the first readings of the Bank Tax on Assets Amendment Bill, the Income Tax Amendment Bill and the Consolidation Tax Amendment Bill, 2015. In Committee Hon. J. D. E. Boyce introduced Head 23 in the sum of \$251 241 359 and described the St. John Polyclinic. Dr. M. M. Agard asked whether the \$16 million allocated to the polyclinic, since risen to almost \$30 million, might have been better spent on the other eight polyclinics; Mrs. M-J. M. Thompson said that a quarter of Barbadians had a non-communicable disease and held the Minister to June 30 for the polyclinic's completion.

After a further suspension Mr. G. A. Clarke questioned the \$155 million allocation to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and said that 40 per cent of the food it procured was thrown away, which Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, Hon. D. O'N. Inniss and Hon. D. St.E. Kellman disputed; Hon. D. St.E. Kellman also referred to the Hands Report. Hon. A. D. Brathwaite spoke on drug abuse, mental health and a burglary study at Her Majesty's Prison, and Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe on the causes of rising health costs. Dr. M. M. Agard raised the treatment of diabetes and under-five mortality. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce said that some \$14 million a year was spent on dialysis for about 233 patients and that the MedData health information system had been bought with about \$4.5 million from a World Bank loan. Miss C. Y. Forde asked for longer hours at the Eunice Gibson Polyclinic and about ambulances from the United Arab Emirates. On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce progress was reported and the sitting was suspended until 9.00 a.m. the following day.