
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, August 17, 2016

RESUMPTION (SEQ 1)

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. Honourable Member, please note that your airtime is two hours and forty five minutes and I will alert you five minutes before the end.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, may I at the outset before I start extend my deepest sympathies to you on the passing of your sister I believe.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay. Thank you.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for the opportunity to speak and I thank in particular God, my constituents in St. Michael North East, the members of the Barbados Labour Party and indeed, Mr. Speaker, Sir, my family who continue to support me. Sir, when I existed this Chamber has evening I asked myself the question that I believe that tens of thousands of Barbadians would have pondered after a near three hours address by the Minister of Finance. When all the flowery language was complete and the electioneering trinkets thrown out, the billion dollar question remained where is the Budget. Where is the creative realistic plan that is designed to rescue Barbados from the economic quagmire in which it has fallen, to the economic meltdown of 2008 be continuously blamed for the lack of creativity and the implementation deficit that has plagued this Government ever since its election to office in 2008 and particularly Sir, since the death of the last Prime Minister. Sir, every since 2008 January, we have heard similarly long sugar coated speeches painting a picture of Barbados that is beyond our every day experience. Sir, this is not the Barbados that Bajans know. The Barbados that the Minister of Finance referenced yesterday is not one that is lived in by the majority of our citizens, I dare say by 90 per cent of our

citizens. The package yesterday left me wondering whether this Budget was written by the fortune prosperous few who continue eat from the meat of the fatted calf. Sir, this was certainly not the Budget that the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados said was necessary. I refer to the Governor's June 2016 Economic Review where the governor laid out in very clear terms of the last paragraph of that review that there was a need for foreign exchange restrictions to come in the upcoming Budget. He did not say next year, he specifically said the Budget. Indeed, Sir, it was not the Budget that informed commentators in our mix insist that is required. The Minister himself in the preamble set out clear objectives for the Budget, the measures however, Sir, that he outlined are not geared towards realizing those goals in the same way that they were not geared in the last five to six years. Indeed, Sir, the speech last evening reminded of a line from Paul Keene's Douglas story in which Paul Keene's Douglas referred to the kite with the tail that was joined up, joined up. This speech was a joined up, joined up speech reflecting the input of several individuals from varying perspective and with varied and varying agendas, it was a patchwork Budget.

Mr. Speaker, we saw the arms of the technocrats in the Ministry of Finance. We saw an attempt of those eating the meat of the fatted calf and, of course, we saw and heard the politics as introduced by those who sole mission is to have this Government remained re-electable in the sight of the electorate. Madam, all these special interest groups have a hand in this Budget and the final product reflected this. Sir, in the beginning of the speech it bore no connection whatsoever to the middle of the passage and by the ending we were clearly into the general for the General Election campaign of 2017 or 2018.

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Whenever, the result would still be the same. Clearly the Minister of Finance was at war with himself. On one hand, it is the international

community that is breathing done on Barbados, technocrats were also trying to suggest that you had to at least give the appearance of some semblance of order. Then, of course, the comrades in George Street who he left on Sunday and will rejoin this Sunday again and who do not want to go into a second day of conference as the Democratic Labour Party against the background from the fallout from a painful Budget of \$160 in new taxes and indeed who needed but a few trinkets to celebrate believing that their Government, their Democratic Labour Party Government though not delivering to the public of Barbados could still be electable. Sir, that is why there was an absence of any frank and informed discussion with the people who are concerned about why in Barbados they have not turned the corner in their own personal finances.

Mr. Speaker, a Minister of Finance telling us all the time that we have turned the corner. Well, the only corner he could be turning is the corner on a roundabout but the average Barbadian cannot attest to having turned the corner in their own finances. Sir, the real casualty though, and this is serious, the real casualty is the ailing economy of Barbados and the people of Barbados who are still no better off, no better informed and no better prepared to face next month, next year or to make decisions about their lives for the future, that is all our people want but they cannot do so after yesterday's Budget. Sir, once again, the Minister of Finance passed up the opportunity to address the real issues affecting Barbadian households, Barbadian businesses and in general our productive sector, not to mention the state of the Government of Barbados. Sir, nothing that he said will live beyond the headlines of today and the suffering of the people that our people would experience in the next few months. Sir, nobody is going to remember this next week as has happened all of the Budgets before. Their problems that existed the week before the Budget shall continue to plague the individual sectors, the household and the businesses next week when this 72 hour exercise is done. The hopelessness and frustration of many shall remain with greater intensity when once the dust is settled on this debate. Sir, all that this Budget would achieve is to give the Government and the country a little more time before the international community steps and says enough is enough. Indeed, Sir, I will address shortly why we are meeting here this week for this Budget in the middle of a summer recess and in the middle of Olympics but the reality is that this is a Government and a Minister of Finance who associated himself with a Medium Term Fiscal Strategy in February 2010, then there was a Revised Medium Term Fiscal Strategy in November 2011, then Mr. Speaker, Sir, there was the 19-month Fiscal Adjustment Strategy having gone to the electorate and told them no layoffs, no sell-offs and no fees for University of the West Indies, we were then confronted with the massive adjustment fiscally in August 2013, that was to literally catapult this country into anxiety and crisis. By that was not enough for that 19-month adjustment strategy as plan number three started to be

revised every few months. On 13th December, 2013 the Minister came back and announced the sending home of 3 000 public servants or statutory board employees and what he seems to have forgotten the also 2 000 more public servants over a five-year period through a process of attrition. That was his change number 2 to the 19-month strategy. Sir, then he came in March 2014 and he announced a new tax on the assets credit unions and he announced an increased in excise taxes among other things. Then he came in December 2014 and he made further announcements again including the tax amnesty and other things and then, Sir, he came in June 2015. Sir, in June 2015, he removed all of the income tax allowances barren those for children and one or two others to put Barbadian taxpayers at the mercy now of an even greater tax grab than they had seen from the increase in VAT, which by the way, this is the six anniversary of the promise to repeal it this year.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday marks yet another chapter in that exercise. The August 2013 19-month fiscal adjustment strategy, revised in December 2013, March 2014, December 2014 we were then told that it was going to be a 31-month adjustment strategy down to March 2016, Budget in June 2015 and indeed, Sir, adjustments again in the last Budget. To use the words of John King, "how many more" further strategies must the people of this country and must this Parliament endure before we realise that we are on the wrong course and what is amazing, Sir, is that the piecemeal manner, and I will come to the advice that he got within his own Cabinet, telling them from as far back as 2013 that he was on the wrong path. He does not only disagree with the Minister of Agriculture now, he publicly rebukes the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados with language so clear to suggest that anybody who comes now today to tell us that we need foreign exchange restrictions is talking absolute nonsense and needs to check their facts again. That was his language yesterday. The only body who spoke about foreign exchange restrictions was the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados and he did not only do it once, he did it twice.

In his July monthly report which the Nation newspaper summarised for the public of Barbados under the heading "Protect Local Dollar" the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados said our foreign reserves are adequate, "but in order to return to a comfort zone further fiscal restraint is needed to adjust the drain and to restore the foreign reserves of the Central Bank of Barbados which has been lost in the last three years. The message of continuing fiscal austerity is unwelcomed but the contrast of the economic fortunes of Jamaica and Barbados over the past 50 years reminds us that it is a very worthwhile cause. Just as we are grateful for the sacrifices that were made to defend our currency in 1991 we owe it to future Barbadians to make the sacrifice." What was the sacrifice the Governor was referring to? A sacrifice to protect the reserve of this

country, Sir. What does the Minister of Finance say at page 12 yesterday in a most unministerial-like manner, causing us to be reminded why he should not be the Minister of Finance in this country and why This Side express no confidence in his ability since October 2013. Hear a Minister of Finance to the Parliament and to the whole world, “let me therefore make it abundantly clear, this Government sees no reason for the introduction of any special measure to limit Barbadians and/or business from exceeding foreign exchange in Barbados. What is already provided for in the Exchange Control Authority Act is sufficient.” Who said it? Who put their hand in the cookie jar? It was not anybody on This Side. Please turn to page 5 and I am going to make this a document of the House again. On the Governor of Central Bank of Barbados’ June 2016 Press Release which he repeats verbatim on video, “Foreign exchange outflows will be tighten but the measures to be announced in the forthcoming Budget.” Mr. Speaker, those are the words and we have a Minister of Finance who rather than understand that the country will get greater anxiety from the Minister going right and the Governor going left comes in here and publicly rebukes him, insensitive to the consequences of his actions, insensitive to the fact that he has caused greater panic by that public rebuke than any other single statement he made in his Budget Speech in the three hours that he spoke yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, this is the piecemeal and insensitive manner in which this Minister of Finance has treated to the people of Barbados in their hour of greatest need in this our 50th year of independence. What makes it even more dangerous is that he sought to find a soft landing for these austerity measures, \$160 million in new taxes, correctly predicted by Mr. Ryan Straughn and admonished that you do not need to continue on that path because it does not and has not worked, but he seeks to cushion these measures in a disingenuous and dangerous way to say the least because the proper diagnosis that is required in order for us to move forward and protect the stability of this country was ignored. How do you come with a midterm review, it is really a midyear review, because midterm was last year, so he really could not mean a midterm review, midterm was last year November. How do you come with a midyear review in October but seeks to prescribe medicine today in August? Bajans understand that you do not prescribe medicine without going to the doctor and having the doctor examine you. When you go to the doctor, you do not expect the doctor to take general off-the-shelf medication and give you because they know that every drug is not capable of curing every ailment. What you need is detailed analysis and whether that analysis requires further action when you go to the doctor sometimes he gives you a physical examination, sometimes he gives you an MRI but he is able to treat to your condition as a result of the detailed analysis that he does. What do we have here instead? I will tell you why we have it and I will tell you

why we are here in two minutes but what we have instead is a rush to judgment, a piecemeal, patchwork, join up, join up set of initiatives to meet the condition of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) survival rather than the country of Barbados’ survival and stability.

Sir, do you know that I spent the whole night going through all of the minister’s speeches? Do you know that this Minister of Finance last year told us that we were losing reserves? The reason he had to come here, on page 6, early on, we were losing reserves at \$10 million a month but yesterday he told us that we were losing reserves at \$20 million a month. Which one is it? Then again this is the same Minister of Finance that has had to apologise to the Parliament on two occasions, well technically one, one to the country for misleading Parliament over the National Insurance Scheme matter earlier this year in March and the other time when the Honourable Member for St. James North raised the issue of the Barbados Agricultural Management Corporation and the laying of its report when he misled Parliament on that occasion. This causes me to believe that the same callous insensitivity to the facts is now occupying the presentation of budgetary speeches in this Honourable House. We paint these pictures every year. I challenge the members of the media in this country not to take our word because the Budgets are here - the blue for 2015, the green for 2013, the yellow or beige rather in 2010 and another yellow in 2016 -- and to go and read them and see that on every occasion the Minister set the same targets, comes and declares success of victory but by the next year he has to come and make adjustments again, and as if trying to take in front before in front takes him yesterday early, all of these measures are not because of any failure.

Mr. Speaker, we do not get to determine whether we succeed or fail, that is the judgement of the people of Barbados and the people of Barbados know that you cannot come to me and take money out of my pocket unless you need it more than me and if you are turning the corner why do you need that money more than me, why are you so insensitive to whether I can buy groceries or pay my rent or my light bill or my water bill. In fact, I have to get water first. Why are you so insensitive to that?

Mr. Speaker, as I turned into this Parliament I heard the people from NASSCO Limited saying that if you have not yet bought a car and you need to now go and buy one, to look for an increase of at least \$1 000 to \$2 000 as a result of the Honourable Minister of Finance yesterday and the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, that is what we have.

Mr. Speaker, every year he comes and admonishes us, hold strain on our ambitions, absorb a little more pain, carry a heavier burden and make a greater sacrifice, and now he even find a lot of long talk and long words for a tax. Tax is spelt TAX. We now have what? A National Social Responsibility Levy to give a fancy name for a

three-letter word called tax and to try to hide it behind the provisioning for healthcare because he feels that he can make it more palatable to Bajans if he does that. Well, he did not tell you and remind you that in last year's Budget in 2015 he did the same thing.

The same Queen Elizabeth Hospital that is to benefit this year was to benefit last year too from the Cess on gasoline and diesel remaining for another year in order to finance the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The poor National Insurance Scheme had to go and financed a Bond for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital too, and rather than doing from the beginning...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: This is before your time in 2010 or 2011 when the former Prime Minister was Minister of Finance when he said he was sending the National Insurance Scheme to pay for the equipment at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, do not look as though you do not know.

What is most amazing is that this Government waited eight years, six years after fiscal difficulties to know that healthcare is the most difficult and fastest growing area of expenditure. In 2011 when they brought the adjustments to the Barbados Drug Service they told us that they were going to find a formula for healthcare financing then, but let me tell you the truth because I really have to tell you the truth. How is it that I could know from six weeks ago that a tax to raise \$140 million was coming? How is it that Ryan Straughn could accurately predict it?

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy wants to know who is Ryan Straughn. If he turns to his left and asks the Honourable Minister of Finance who was the consultant for the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) that allowed him to review public expenditure in this country and to announce yesterday a new mid-year review and who drafted up that whole document that the Honourable Minister of Finance commissioned from ECLAC, he did not have a problem with Mr. Straughn when he was not a Member of the Barbados Labour Party but now that he is he has an absolute problem, calling his name in a very disparaging way yesterday. The truth is that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would now find out that the Mid-term Review which is to be trumpeted coming from ECLAC as part of the overall review of public expenditure management was in fact drafted by Mr. Ryan Straughn, not that he wanted to know.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is: Why are we here today and why did we know about it? This

Government and this Minister and its representatives met with the International Monetary Fund in May of this year when they came for the Article IV Review and the Government told the International Monetary Fund that in order to address the difficulties related to debt and mounting deficit, never mind the 19-month or 31-month programme the deficit is as high today and yesterday as it was when he delivered his Budget on the 13th of August 2013, the exact same 7.9 per cent... He set a target to bring it down yesterday that was about the same target that he set in August 2013 as well. He set a target to bring it down to 5.4/5.8 per cent: déjà vu. When they met with the International Monetary Fund and the International Monetary Fund said but look you either need to restructure or refinance your debt which we agree with, that the Honourable Member St. Philip West agrees with and the Honourable Member for St. Peter agrees with, the only people who disagrees with it is in fact the Minister of Finance. They also then put what none of us agreed with and that is the adjustment of the exchange rate, and I think I could say safely that nobody in Barbados wants to see it because we all agree it is the anchor for our stability. The Government said no we are rejecting both, we will continue with the fiscal austerity programme and we will find a way of introducing a tax to raise \$140 million to help bridge the financing deficit this year.

Mr. Speaker, that is what they did but the public is unaware that the International Monetary Fund Board meets on Monday to address the draft Article IV Report which the Government has had in its hands for weeks and that the Government wanted therefore to show progress given the commitment that it made to the International Monetary Fund. This is the most amazing thing. They trumpet a home-grown programme but in December 2013 we had to meet in here on Black Friday the same day that the International Monetary Fund was leaving in order to show that they were prepared to send home people.

We are meeting today now to show the International Monetary Fund that we are prepared to impose another \$140 million in taxes, \$160 million overall, driven by a tax on imports. Most people do not even realise that it is on domestic production too with the exclusions that the Minister gave in his speech yesterday, that is what it is. Mr. Speaker, it is intended to dampen consumption in Barbados, put in plain language to stop Bajans from spending as much so that the foreign reserves can be protected. The very same foreign reserves that the Honourable Member got in here yesterday and said that it was not an issue, the very same foreign reserves that the Governor said that the measure was coming in the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016. Sir, well it seems to me that the Governor was right, rather in terms of the name as a foreign exchange earning restriction, it is an item that is attached to suppress demand to protect the foreign reserves.

Mr. Speaker, when you take away all of the prettiness, all of the three hours, all of the electioneering, we were in here yesterday to be able to put a tax on Bajans to stop Bajans from being able to spend, to protect the foreign reserves. Sir, I am going to come to that but I had to pause there and remind us why we are here. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the thing that galls me is that this Government is seeking to applaud 50 years of Independence, as it should, but the truth is that every achievement that they trumpet is in the first 42 years of Independence. They do not have anything to show in the last eight years by any measurement and as we go through today you will see how every index associated with this Government and this country has dropped in the last eight years under the management of this Democratic Labour Party Government.

Mr. Speaker, when historians write the period they are going to refer to these last eight years as effectively the lost years. Sir, how does Barbados now find itself as the most indebted country in the Caribbean? What is worst, it is among the top three indebted countries in the entire world. Mr. Speaker, I am not using my figures, I am using the Honourable Member's figures. This Minister came and put a figure of about \$12.1 billion in debt, with a Gross Domestic Product... Mr. Speaker, even if we give them a Gross Domestic Product of 49 billion, which it is not, you are now at over 136-137 per cent in debt to Gross Domestic Product.

Mr. Speaker, the Caribbean Development Bank who was using data that was aged in respect to the last few months had us at 131 per cent of debt to Gross Domestic Product, never mind that the Honourable for Christ Church East Central tried to deny it when we spoke to it in the Estimates of this year. Barbados is the highest debt Gross Domestic Product ratio in the Caribbean and it is rising. Jamaica is now second and declining, but what makes all of this even more worrisome is that it does not include the arrears which we and the International Monetary Fund were told were in the vicinity of probably \$1.5 to \$1.6 billion.

Minister, I will come to it, so you do not need to put up your face. Mr. Speaker, these memorable outstanding features of the 'lost years' do not only relate to indices that have us now floundering at the bottom of the barrel, it also relates to the kind of Government and the kind of behaviour that we have seen. Mr. Speaker, who can forget the middle-in-the-night licences issued for importation of eggs and chicken wings to which we still have no answer, much to the chagrin of the agricultural sector? Who can forget the manner in which contracts were issued for molasses tanks and how much for them, with a third one still to be built? Who will forget, Sir, the contract for Coverley and the construction of housing projects at the Grotto and Valery, a tale which is still to be told to the Barbadian public? Who will forget, Sir, the fact that we

still have not seen the Sandals Memorandum of Understanding, in spite of the fact that it was signed in the name of the people of this country and not on the behalf of any individual sitting on that side?

Mr. Speaker, when I say that we are deeply concerned, we truly are, and when we consider the unprecedented level of participation that went into this Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016. I read the Press on Sunday like anybody else and in my 25 years either in the Other Place or this place in September, I have never seen so wide a cross-section of Barbadians getting involved in advancing ideas and requests for things that they wanted urgently to see the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs put in his Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016. Mr. Speaker, but what the Honourable Member gave to them was a little trinket, a little trinket, not because it would stabilise their sector but because it would appear to buy back some grace for this Government with them, a form of political hush money.

Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago I said to the country that it was my considered judgement that rather than the 72 hours debate that would take place here that we needed to call in all of the stakeholders. I say so still to the Right Honourable Prime Minister, that the stakeholders must be brought around the table and that the full and frank truth be given to them to allow people to know what it is we face and how we may best address, recognising that we must share the burden of adjustment fairly and committing to sharing the bounty on recovery as fairly as we have shared the burden of adjustments.

Mr. Speaker, everybody said it, yesterday's editorial was entitled, "Budget must respond to our needs." It went on to make the point that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs must not come to this place and continue to tinker, because that is what we have been engaged in. why do I say that there is tinkering, Sir? If our situation is as bad as it is with the data that the Honourable Member has revealed and the Honourable Member has not yet told us about the \$1.6 billion in arrears, or whatever is the number because we do not know the exact number. Sir, let us go through it, this Government owes the National Insurance Scheme of Barbados, which is responsible for all of our pension, \$330 million or more for contributions, reimbursements and noncontributory pensions which the Honourable Member raised yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member might as well have done in raising them yesterday, I am glad that the pensioners are getting an extra \$1.42 per day, they having not gotten an increase for two years. It is the least that they can do, remembering especially... Mr. Speaker, the truth is, though, that the smallest bill in Barbados is \$2 and he could have at least given them \$2 so that they would not have to take home coins.

Mr. Speaker, this Minister would have announced an increase of noncontributory pensions by \$3 million but the Honourable Member did not tell the country that they have not paid the National Insurance Scheme for the pensions that they already owe since April 2015, that for the last 16 months the Government of Barbados has not given the National Insurance Scheme a cent in reimbursement for paying the old people's noncontributory pensions. The Honourable Member did not tell the House that he owes them money for the contributions for employees. The Honourable Member did not tell the House that he has not paid a cent in rent for any of the three buildings that the Government either rents, or the ones which it has to pay for the Caribbean Examination Council and that the arrears to National Insurance Scheme is now \$330 million and is climbing.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member did not tell the country that separate from the arrears to the National Insurance Scheme that the university is almost another \$200 million again. Mr. Speaker, let us do a back-of-envelope exercise, SBRC continues to claim that they are owed about \$20 million. UCAL is claiming that they are owed another \$20 million. Let us not get to the VAT and income tax refunds because when the Honourable Member tells you that he has paid out all of this...

Mr. Speaker, I really think that the Honourable Member deserves an Oscar. Today I was trying to get an Oscar to bring for him because if nothing else, the healthcare deserves an Oscar to keep in his living room.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I do not mean Oscar the grouch, I genuinely mean an Oscar because the Honourable Member has been blessed with the gift of the gab. The problem is that it is not buttressed by anything that can be recognised as facts or the truth. Sir, I took the time this weekend to compile all of the refunds. I hope that these young Members of Parliament and those aspiring to Parliament recognise that data is there to be used and researched. The Accountant General puts out a monthly statement and an annual statement. To our chagrin, it has been dated for some time, but it is now eight months old. The last set of documents down to December 2015 were laid in this Parliament last Tuesday. Sir, the Accountant General is the official repository of the data pertaining to the accounts of Barbados, and from his reports, let us see what is the real story with refunds and this Minister and what we were accustomed to in this country. I make this a Document of the House, Sir.

In 2006-2007, Barbadians received across Income and Corporation Tax, Value Added Tax (VAT), Land Tax and Customs, \$300 million in refunds. I want you to remember that number: \$300 million in refunds. Of that

\$300 million, \$188 million was VAT alone. Sir, in 2009-2010 it was \$116 million in VAT and \$275 million in refunds. Are we good still? What happens next? By 2012 that had dropped to \$169 million overall in refunds, of which the Government only gave back \$27 million in refunds for VAT. From \$188 million in one year to \$27 million by 2012. In 2013, the Government gave back \$192 million in overall returns for all four taxes, and VAT was \$53 million that year. By 2014-2015, \$196 million was given back and VAT was only \$55 million that year. Mr. Speaker, by 2015-2016 we were down to \$27 million down to the end of March 2015, and we are aware, because of last week's documents, that the Minister did another \$73 million in Corporation and Income Tax refunds. Let us tell the story of that, because even with that \$73 million and the \$5 million before, we are still \$50 million down from the \$136 million that was done in 2014, Mr. Speaker.

These things are not extinguished because he happened to pay \$70 million or \$80 million. The debt is carried forward, and what makes it even worse is that we all know that VAT is a two-legged tax: input and output. If one leg is not working, the other leg of the tax cannot work. We have Barbadian businesses on the brink of insolvency; cannot get money back, having to incur overdraft charges to keep their businesses afloat, and this Government has arrears for them. I want him to tell us the story. What is it? Is it 200? Is it 400? Is it 500? Is it \$300 million? It comes on top of the \$330 million to the National Insurance Scheme; it comes on top of the names of the ones that I mentioned just now, and it comes on top of the one for the University of the West Indies. Without having access to the files and the facts, we have just counted up there over \$900 million in arrears, and we have not started to go through 500 pages of departments as represented in the Estimates. This is serious, so when Bajans think you are getting on and getting out of this, we may face another ten to 15 per cent of debt on top of what is already being declared. As much as he can get in here and curse and deny, I know this; that if God gives us the grace and the people of Barbados exhibit the will for the Barbados Labour Party to be the Government of this country, the facts will eventually come out. Remember today. My father used to tell me all the time that you can hide and buy land, but you cannot hide and work it, and the reality is that the people who we owe this money to are not ISIS and are not aliens; they are Barbadian businesses and Barbadian households who are struggling to stay alive.

Sir, when I say that I am deeply worried, can you imagine that we have come in here to listen to a Budget in the middle of the Olympics? That is how much this Government is out of touch, you know. That is truly how much they are out of touch, because the majority of Barbadians still do not have cable. The Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) still only has about 25 000 Multi-Choice customers, but there are 90 000

customers who rely on Channel 8. At the time when a 200 metres final is going to be run tomorrow night, they are going to be listening to a Debate in the House because the Government had an obligation to try and put it this week before an International Monetary Fund (IMF) meeting. That is what it comes down to. I say to you, Sir... Thanks for reminding me. In the middle of August again, this is the Government that was supposed to be about 'Families First'. August is the month which people spend with their families, and let me use this opportunity to apologise for the absence of the Member for St. Michael North who, only on hearing about this Budget a week ago, had already committed to things that he could not get out of. Everybody knows that this is the time of the year that people spend with their families; their children especially. The Speaker of the United States Congress only took the job on condition that he could go home and see his family every weekend. That is a fact. That insensitivity to your audience, to the people that you need to help bring this country along, is what is being displayed by this Government. What is the true, true, true thing? Why is it that we were here? I have answered, but what is it that was missing? Where is the real Budget? Why is it that it was padded with all kinds of things to disguise really two tax measures and then an announcement of \$50 million in cuts from Government expenditure? It is what could otherwise have been a short delivered speech, because they are frightened of the impact that it will have on Barbadians.

I want Barbadians to go into the supermarket today and tomorrow, and make a list of six or eight items, and write down how much you pay for them. Milk, sugar, sardines, cheese. Write them down, and then go back and write it down in two months' time, and then you will understand where the \$140 million is coming from. It is coming from your pockets, at a time when you can hardly make ends meet. What is it that he did not tell us? He did not help us to see forward next week or next month. Mr. Speaker, one of the problems that still exists is this: Do you know, Sir, that in all of this lot of long talk yesterday there was not a word on the Central Bank printing of money? Not a word on the Central Bank printing of money, and in this last year alone the Central Bank's printing of money has almost doubled. It has almost doubled. Go back to the same Central Bank Report of June 2016, and I wish the media would help the rest of us because, you see, when it comes from the Opposition then you hear it is partisan. I do not want to be the one talking about these facts. I want the independent voices of Barbados to be the ones speaking to them.

4.53 p.m.

INSERT S6 chris

INSERT S7 CHRIS

Wednesday, August 17, 2016

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: (Seq 8)

... the Government well knows that the limit that they have set themselves for Government investment is in fact 60 per cent. This is the same National Insurance Board that you prevented from investing anywhere outside in the last few years. Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no doubt that when the Government sell normally a bond to fund its deficit it might look to finance 10 per cent of its deficit from the Central Bank of Barbados or one of the others taking up paper but, Sir, you know what the Central Bank of Barbados Quarterly Reports have shown that in 2013, as I have told you, you over \$400 something million hold Government paper, 22 per cent of the Government financing needs came from the Central Bank of Barbados, in 2014, it was 57 per cent and by 2015 between the National Insurance Scheme and the Central Bank of Barbados virtually did all of the Government paper. Sir, what is sad is that it really not voluntary.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking that this country recognise that this Minister of Finance sought to come here yesterday and not address any of these issues. It is a fair comment for some people to say that while people remain concern about the impact that printing money will have on the reserves, the Government sought to address the issue of reserves without addressing the issue of the printing of money. Sir, all of us know that if you create extra credit, if you print money without having the foreign exchange to support it, it will have an impact of draining your foreign exchange because you cannot have it support by foreign exchange that is earned, borrowed or available to support the expenditure of increase credit, so we are just playing with fire.

Mr. Speaker, every single Article IV Report including the one that came last year that to this date the Government refuses to release to the public of Barbados. Sir, it is an amazing thing that every single Article IV Report since 2013 has said that you have to spot printing money and what makes it worse is that the Central Bank of Barbados agreed with the assertion that money ought not to be printed in the same Article IV Report, in the one the public has they said and in the one that the Ministry of Finance or the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados refused to let the public see, they said it. God knows whether the public would be allowed to see the one that goes to the Board next week but, Sir, people can only treat us how we allow them to treat us.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the reserves, let us deal with it, this Minister.... Sir, I find it amazing because if there is one person and one person that has made the issue of reserves an issue it is now the Minister of Finance. Sir,

why do I say so? The Minister failed to recognise that the conflict between him and the Governor, as I have stated earlier will do more to destabilise people's confidence than anything else. Sir, I am not sure who he was setting up. he nearly gave the country an explanation of how our reserves are constructed and I thank him for giving the country that definition because very often we are told that the country has Xx amount in reserves and the Minister correctly said in the breakdown that he gave us that the reserves are made up of something called special drawing rights and special drawing rights are simply the quota which we have with the International Monetary Fund and of that \$883 million the Minister reminded us that \$182 million of that is special drawing rights and the import of special drawing rights, which he did not tell the country is that invariably, it is used when the country is experiencing a balance of payment problem. It can be used to exchange with another country for currency but more importantly, Sir, it cannot be used without the permission of the International Monetary Fund and hence those special drawing rights do not have the same characteristics as liquid currently normally has to be able to meet the legitimate demand of commercial banks applying to the Central Bank of Barbados for foreign exchange if they run short or if they need a tie over to meet the demands of their customers.

Mr. Speaker, he then went on to tell us that of that \$883 million apart from the \$182 million in special drawing rights, he then told us that there is something called a Government Sinking Fund for foreign debt. I do not think he told us what establishes it but I believe that it is the External Loans Act, that establishes that Government Sinking Fund for foreign debt and which makes it absolutely clear that the proceeds within that Government Sinking Fund for foreign debt can only be used to service foreign debt.

Mr. Speaker, people call me this morning and those people told me that when you take out the \$182 million you end up at \$700 million and that when we take off the \$322 million for the Government Sinking Fund for foreign debt....

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: do not let us say it is not so. The reason why this Parliament passed that a Government Sinking Fund for foreign debt be create is to make sure that when that foreign debt becomes due and payable that the Government of Barbados is in a position to be able to pay it because every year it puts aside 2.5 per cent of whatever the foreign debt is, or ought to put it aside because the Accountant-General Report shows that the Government has not been faithful in that commitment of putting aside money for the Government Sinking Fund too, which is another breach of the law. Sir, when you net out that \$322 million, you are left with about \$379 million which then

works out based on their numbers to between five to six weeks of import cover instead of the 12 weeks or 13 weeks that they have been trumpeting. Sir, I can understand why the Minister of Finance says that the Government Sinking Fund can be used for other purposes because this is the same Minister of Finance who in this Budget debate last year told me that they were entirely acting legally and with their rights to have the Housing Credit Fund withdraw \$30 million and send it as a dividend to pay for Grotto, only for us to find out less than two months later an opinion from the Solicitor-General saying that it was entirely unlawful and entirely in breach of the trust deed for the Government to declare a dividend of \$30 million and to withdraw the same as a dividend in the Housing Credit Trust Fund.

Mr. Speaker, if you are accustomed taking things out in an inappropriate manner, I imagine you would want to do so yet again with relation to the Government Sinking Fund. Sir, what is amazing is that it was not the Governor who made this an issue, it is not the Opposition who made this an issue, it was the Minister of Finance standing up here who said that the liquid reserves of the Central Bank of Barbados, things that they could use with limitation were done to \$379 million. If we understand that, we now understand why we are here in the middle of August, in the middle of Olympics, in the middle of summer recess and we now understand why \$140 million tax has been put on the backs of Bajans.

Mr. Speaker, I could have come in here and I could deal with corruption but today is not the day for that. I could come in here and deal with some of the other things wrong happening in Government but where this Government has carried us, and that is why I spent so long on the Minister of Agriculture's letter. It is at a state where, if we do not seek to get it right now as a country all of us are going to pay the price and that is why I asked this Prime Minister to exercise leadership and to bring everybody into a room, the social partnership that hardly meets, the stakeholders, you do not have to invite the Opposition if you do not want to, we are prepared to bite our time but what I do know is that you have a duty to be frank and honest with the stakeholders in this country and this trifling with the facts, this cavalier disregard cannot continue because when I go into my constituency and when others go into their constituency, what do we have? Let me see the stuff there on water, please. We had a whole debate in here yesterday and nothing on water but yet, listen to the communities that have been without water since the first week of August, take time and listen.

In St. Joseph - I want the Prime Minister to listen because he went up there to do a Town Planning appeal but never went up there to see the suffering of people who do not have water to bathe, to drink, to wash dishes, to deal with children and that is the kind of callous disregard and contempt that we have for a Government -- Chimborazo,

Melvin Hill, Tourville5:32???, Surinam, Vaughn's 1, 2 and 3, Parks Road, Blackmans Road, Spa Hill, Fruitful Hill, Orange Cottage, Bonden Alley, Bissex Housing Area, and I am sorry that the Honourable Member for St. John is not here because on and off for about two weeks straight, Edgcliff, Sherbourne, Wilson Hill, Clifton Hall, Glebe Land, Colleton, Venture, Easy Hall, Hackelton's Cliff, Four Hill, Pothouse and Mr. Speaker, in St. Thomas on and off - the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is not going to tell you. When she is in Welchman Hall, Vault Road in particular, Content, Canefield, Airy Cot, Shop Hill, Vacluse Tenantry, Farmers, Vacluse Development, Grandview, in St. Andrew, White Hill, Gregg Farm, Turners Hall, Belleplaine, Morgan Lewis, Mount Hillaby. I know that the people from St. Lucy may get some relieve soon because of the desal plant. I understand two of the trucks are here with others to come but do you imagine that in spite of us raising this matter on 31st December last year that the Prime Minister of this country does not even find it possible to go and hold their hands and tell the people down there that help is coming. Mr. Speaker, I would not know how to do without water for three or four days far less weeks and months and the Honourable Member for St. Joseph has been speaking over, and over, and over, and over and I feel sorry him. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, our candidate for St. Lucy, Peter Phillips, our candidate for St. Peter, Collin Jordan, they have been out there mixing with these people and, Mr. Speaker, it is not right. There are parts of St. George that went without water on occasion, there are parts of St. Michael, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North is not here and yesterday we are treated to three hours and no address on water, but it does not end there, Sir. Do you know why I am so disturbed, Sir? Let me tell you why I am so disturbed.

Before we lost the Government, and I want the public to bear with me on this, we knew - and the Honourable Member for St. Michael East has a direct interest in this too -- that The Belle water well and the Codrington water wells were always coming dangerously close, they were not over, to the 10.0 limit for the double way choke on nitrates. This has been written about in the Press already, this is nothing new, but we knew it, and our Leader of Opposition Business in The Senate was Minister of Water Resources and brought to the Cabinet a request for proposals to build a reverse osmosis plant and to sewer The Belle. I want the people in Licorish Village in The Belle to hear me. The ads went out in order to be able to put a reverse osmosis plant to deal with the contamination issues to make sure it does not reach crisis level and to be able to sewer The Belle so that the hundreds of people -- I hear the Minister talking about people living in insecurity, I want people to go into The Belle and Licorish Village and see what people have been reduced to living under because they cannot get the security to even go and borrow 10 cents for their house ...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I do not want to hear that it has been going on longer because I would exhume Tom Adams from his grave, I would exhume all who have passed, Errol Barrow, all of them, I cannot live in the past, I live in the present. Sir, at the very time that this Government finds it possible to divert resources to Coverley and the Grotto to build at \$548 a square foot, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of National Housing, the whole Cabinet, in fact, the request for a proposal was not acted on expeditiously by this Government. Sir, it is true that there have started to act on it and the Minister of Water Resources, I believe, has finally recognised the critical importance of that reverse osmosis plant, not just for the people in The Belle now, because the reverse osmosis plant will help deal with the contamination of water for The Belle, Codrington and a number of wells, and I hope that he will look at the sewerage system because that is what is going to deal with the security of tenure for the residents. Could you believe, Sir, that project having not enjoyed this Government's prioritisation in a public sector investment programme, and let me explain, Sir. In Government, you have a public sector expenditure programme where you prioritise the projects that have first claim on Government's resources but I have said enough in here to let you know that this is a pop-kite Government and in a pop-kite Government, every minister going off want to do this and want to that, but when we were leaving Government we knew that we would have to spend over \$1 billion in expenditure to deal with the water situation in this country through the reverse osmosis plant, desal plants, additional new pipes, all of those things and the officials in the Barbados Water Authority will tell you that they met with me as Minister of Economic Affairs and the Economic Planning Division to be able to set it out.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the Minister of Agriculture built a Barbados Water Authority building because I do not think it was a priority, not with those things in place but having said, that is them, I cannot change it. Why are we not proceeding with the reverse osmosis plant? Is that project now to be the subject of an argument between the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Water Resources yet again, just as it was with the Barbados Water Authority building? What makes this more serious, Sir, is that on August 6 of this year not only has the Government had plans to do it and had an offer from the Canadians to do it but the Canadians have agreed to provide the financing and since the beginning of this year, and we are now eight months into the year in a year that would come to be characterised as a year of water difficulties, the Ministry of Finance cannot find it possible to be able to deal and accept an offer from the Canadian Government at concessionary rates to be able to have a reverse osmosis plant built in this country and to be able to protect us against the excessive nitrate levels.

Sir, I am not going to ... it, but he wants and I will do it later in his speech in his wrap up, but I do not know if I have it here, I will give him the data to show why every Barbadian ought to be concerned that this ought to be a project that commands the attention of Government.

What is more, how does a Canadian Government recognise that a matter relating to the quality of Barbadian water must be of such utmost importance that to have a financing offer sitting around for eight months is totally unacceptable. Sir, we will go further and indicate to the Government that there are other Caribbean countries that want water projects and that this offer has a limited lifespan. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East could go and speak to his constituents and tell them that as they have been talking and quarrelling and others were telling them where they cannot move into -- and they got empty houses mind you but those empty houses are not good enough for the people of Licorish Village and The Belle to move in all of a sudden - this offer remains the subject of non-communication by the Government of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, if it has been approved in the last few days I will be the happiest person because what is at stake is the people of my constituency too with the Codrington water well. The people in my constituency have had to put up with what would now be described as another intrusion on the part of people from overseas who believe that they could come in and play fast and loose with the health and public health of the people of Barbados.

Sir, in addition to the absence of the reverse osmosis plant, I refer to a photovoltaic farm to be put on a national botanical gardens site right next to the Codrington water well which is already facing dangerous limits in nitrates. This is the kind of pop-kite planning that goes on in this Government.

I say to you, Sir, that I want to know that the same urgency that the Government can find to find counterpart funding to do Sam Lord's Castle, a project which ought to be done by the private sector... If a hotel cannot be done by the private sector, that is what they used to say, then ask yourself why not. Sir, these kinds of water projects can only be done by the Government protecting the people of the country. Enough said on that.

It is embarrassing in the extreme that a Government has now had to write a Prime Minister to tell him that a financing proposal that would give you access to financing at 3 or 4 per cent when you could only otherwise get it at close to double digits or more... Two per cent is available but has not been taken up yet, that is a fact. If we had to go to the markets now to do the same thing as happened with the previous one from the same Canadian Crown Corporation... We saved US\$35 million in interest on that

and we supported it then because we said that you cannot go wrong accessing 2 per cent money when otherwise you are accessing 10 and 11 per cent.

I trust and pray therefore that my constituents in Codrington and the constituents of the Honourable Member for St. Michael East in The Belle and those who live in the wider St. Michael area who are serviced by The Belle and Codrington wells will be able to benefit in a meaningful way from this project.

Sir, inertia cannot define the Government of Barbados. As I said about Deltro on the photovoltaics farms, let me make the point... Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that I have a constituent who sells cows' milk for a living? He lives in Bush Hall, he was keeping cows on that land at Waterford for years, he has been moved by this Government, initially he was asked to move by us and subsequently when he went back again he was then asked to move by this Government, and both Governments made the point to him through the regulatory officers that it was a dangerous thing for him to be tending cows on that land, and that is what caused this Parliament to agree to a Resolution to acquire over 200 acres of land which has still not been paid for for the last eight/nine years for the establishment of a national botanical gardens. Do not tell me that it was a Barbados Labour Party initiative because I have the paper too where this Government upon being elected also endorsed the national botanical gardens on that site, it is a fact. It was done under the former Prime Minister who is not with us, the former Honourable Member for St. John David Thompson, so that this Government committed itself to a national botanical gardens there too, and I was happy. It is not for me. You have over 100 000 people living in St. Michael and other than Queen's Park and Carlton, where have they to go and recreate. If they do not want to play cricket or football where can they go and hold a picnic, where can they go and have a little children's party, where can they go and run so that they are not on the road to get knock down by a motorist, where can they go and cycle, or where can they have a public space so that they could play as a band and let people have a free concert? Where? You mean we are not people too. You mean we only know how to be people when we are in England and Canada and the United States of America and Central Park. Can you imagine somebody telling the people of New York that a photovoltaics farm is going to be put down in the middle of Central Park that is used for people to recreate? Can you imagine somebody telling the people in Canada that a photovoltaics farm is going to be put down in the Rockies?

I mean nobody on that side have the conscience... I am not getting into the manufacturing of the photovoltaics units. If it is a good proposal it would stand on its own. Mind you I find it shocking that they are no longer interested in the Banks building and I am told that they are

going elsewhere to buy a building, but today is not the day for that. What I am concerned about is that you want to put a photovoltaics farm... It is not panels. It has batteries. These lithium iron batteries are in cases. What happens if there is an accident right next, you mean so, to a water well that already got problems that is causing us to go and borrow money from the Canadians as well? Right so.

It is not good enough for my constituent to keep cows to sell cows' milk but it is now good enough for people to come from over in away and take up 70 of the 200-odd acres of land and put a photovoltaics farm. I say, Sir, it is wrong and last year I spoke about it because I do not know what the National Conservation Commission is doing by wanting to sign a power to purchase agreement with the same Deltron company. Since when is the National Conservation Commission a power provider? Sir, to add insult to injury, 100 000 people must now have a hope of 200 and something acres where they can run about, move about, people from as far Brittons Hill, Bay Land, down to the same farm, across to the Ivy, Carrington's Village, Bush Hall, Jackson, even some of the people from St. Thomas and St. James will come across there, because we have no similar facility.

Sir, not even King George V Park represents what we are trying to establish in a country for our people. Sir, it is not even Bajans who will be putting up that photovoltaic farm. Sir, there is no reason Bajans cannot do it because the foreign exchange that would be saved from not having to import all, you would now have to repatriate in foreign dividends to these Canadians who would now take the money back out.

Mr. Speaker, I have no difficulty with foreign investors. I have no difficulty with a photovoltaic farm. I understand the argument of Barbadians that the opportunity should go to Bajans, that is what the Barbados Labour Party would do, but if this Government feels minded to give it to a foreign investor, good Heaven's, not on a botanical farm site. Stand up for something, stand up for something in this 50th Year of Independence.

Mr. Speaker, what hurt me, what hanged me like a fief in the night was that an environmental town hall meeting is called the Thursday before Kadooment weekend. I could have gone but I said I was not going because I was keeping my powder dry to be used in here, I am a Parliamentarian. I saw in the newspaper a report that the owner of the land who has not been paid went and found out that not only has he not been paid but that these people have said that Government has agreed to lease them 70 acres of land from which he has not been paid. Where has our decency gone as a country and as a Government? Sir, to add insult to injury -- the Ministry of the Environment and Drainage is not here -- those investors told the meeting that they have to go read the Scoping

Study at library on the National Conservation Commission, because they are in a world where everything is available electronically, so that you could not have known what was in the Scoping Study unless you went to the library at the National Conservation Commission Headquarters, yet there was everything else sharing about on the internet. Sir, do you think that is right in this country.

Mr. Speaker, to add further insult, what do they say in the Scoping Study? The Scoping Study says that we do not believe that there is any need for an Environmental Impact Assessment Study, that the Scoping Study is sufficient. Sir, this is happening in this country, in 2016 in the Year of our Lord, in the 50th Anniversary of Independence, in a country that has just celebrated 200 years from Bussa revolt, in a country where black people have never had land to run about on or to recreate like other people?

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: You could be part of that, for these on this side I will not be Leader of the Opposition anymore on speaking on this issue, I will be the Honourable Member of Parliament for the people of St. Michael North East. It is wrong and I pray that if you want to have them do a photovoltaic farm, you should carry it somewhere else and not between the Belle and Codrington water wells.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am not calling it a Cahill but I know that it has the same unfortunate lead Minister. I wonder why the same characters of Cahill are floating their or thereabouts with Deltron. I said and still believe that if they want to manufacture photovoltaic panels for export, then I will support that. I really will, because anything that brings industry and jobs me will support, but it has to be done properly. We have to make sure too that in the manufacturing process an Environmental Impact Assessment Study is also done to make sure that the workers who will be working in that manufacturing plant will not be subject to anything negative. If you can show that and you can do those things, then we can move forward on that issue.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the only thing that yesterday's Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016, did not deal with. I talked about water just now. Yesterday's Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016 did not deal with giving this House an update on Hyatt. Sir, I sometimes wonder about this Government. Sir, in every single Estimates speech, in almost every single budget speech the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs trucks out these projects, we can go back from

Pickering, to the Pierhead, to the Cruise Pier, to Silver Sands, all to start next week.

Asides.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, before I get to the Hyatt let me ask the Honourable Member... I heard that Sam Lord's Castle was special, all the others had one groundbreaking but Sam Lord's Castle had two groundbreakings. Mr. Speaker, I was the most shocked person to have learned that the detailed drawings for the Sam Lord's Castle have not been completed and have not been submitted to the Chief Town Planner. Do you understand that the Deputy Chief Town Planner said last year that it typically takes four and one-half months to approve drawings, but we had a groundbreaking in September last year and we had a groundbreaking two to three months ago. We saw a Hilton coming down in 20 seconds but we are taking four months to demolish a Sam Lord's Castle that is all flat. I cannot understand it. Mr. Speaker, I was then told very clearly how can you have an approval when the detailed drawings for the hotel have not been completed.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, when the Minister tells us that the money is coming in shortly, has the Honourable Member negotiated a different arrangement with the Chinese or is it still, as the Resolution that was brought here to approve the loan said, a buyers' credit? The Resolution did not call it a loan, the Resolution said that the Chinese were giving the Government \$170 million in buyers' credit. In other words, they are going to send the materials; they are going to send the equipment; they are even going to send, we learnt to our horror and especially to the horror of the people of St. Philip, that they are going to send 60 per cent of the labour to build Sam Lord's Castle, as if there are no carpenters, masons or labourers in St. Philip, St. John, Christ Church or in St. Michael.

Mr. Speaker, then again Jada advertised two or three weeks ago for A-class carpenters to build the extension of Sandals, yet I can carry you to the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. George North where there is a man who has not worked for months. His wife was laid off from the National Housing Corporation. She has had heart problems months after months after months. She has been in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital no less than three or four times. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North knows her too, I am sure, just as the Honourable Member for St. George North. She calls me and the bank is running her down for a debt of \$1 600.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, do you understand that she has a young child now in second form and she does not have the ability either to ward off the bank for a \$1 600 debt, get shoes or school clothes for the child,

or medication that is not easily available on the drug formulary and the man who is the child's father cannot even find consistent work? I can go constituency by constituency. I could go district by district and give you other examples. I get these confused messages. It reminds me of yesterday when the Minister of Finance talked of this national cleanup. I want to be a part of it but it cannot be a one-off. A national cleanup has to be anchored by a national botanical gardens. A national cleanup would have to be anchored by a national botanical gardens, and to that extent I see, Prime Minister -- I do not know why he did it to you -- that in the written document he has it led by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Public Works. He told the country you were the patron, but clearly he did not make that decision when the document was being typed, so that was just to make you not feel left out, Sir. I am like you; I do not want to feel left out, and I so do not want to feel left out that I want to make sure that those workers who have been laid off from the National Conservation Commission and who are the ones who were the first to go in and who were laid off, will be among the first to get piece of that five-month work. Sir, the National Environment Enhancement Programme (NEEP) is not about politics because the ones who came in under the NEEP were people who came in under your Government but I feel, in fairness, that these are the people who got laid off. These are the ones who have now to benefit from the fact that the country has been allowed to run to bush and to garbage. We talk about the four-phrase mantra that the Dems have - socially balanced, economically viable, environmentally sound, transparency and good governance -- and everything I am discussing in here today is a breach of one of those mantras. Every single thing.

Mr. Speaker, those are the things that did not come in the Budget. Sir, we did not hear anything yesterday in the Budget about the sugar industry. We did a 'Rubbing Shoulders' about four or five weeks ago, and there is distinct concern among the people involved in the industry. This Government keeps making promises to them, but you cannot determine that you are going to send subsidies to people at a time when they can no longer plant. Agriculture is time-sensitive. You have to plant at a certain time of the year. On top of that, Sir, we still do not have any clarity. How can you be building a \$500 million factory with a sugar industry that earned less than \$10 million in 2015, according to the 2015 Social and Economic Report? It earned \$6.5 million, according to the Report laid by the Minister of Finance yesterday. I say to you that if it is that you are making a case for it because you are generating electricity at a price that is within reach of what makes sense for Barbados Light & Power to do this, say so, but you have not even said that. In the meantime, we have problems with the cane industry. There are people who now, in order to deal with the ratoon-stunting disease,

have to do certain things. They do not have the time or the money or the confidence.

Sir, I want to put on record that the Barbados Labour Party believes that we need a sugar and grass industry to be alive in this country in order to keep our countryside ecologically viable. We believe that we also have a lot to gain by producing Barbados molasses for Barbados rum, in order to expand our production there. The notion of keeping happy with an \$80 million rum industry is a nonsense when the word "rum" comes from this country and when we stand to get the greatest benefit from it globally because of the value-added and our historical association with it. These are things of which we heard nothing from the Minister of Finance, but yet he tells you about growth. He mentions it, but there is no platform to be able to see what you are putting that growth on. Sir, he did not mention anything about the common reporting standards for the international business sector, and the Member for St. James Central will speak to that, because we have given commitments internationally and we expected the legislation here since late last year, having opted to go on early. These things will come to affect how the international community views our international business sector. Sir, we did not even hear anything on the Hyatt, as I said.

Mr. Speaker, Bridgetown is a World Heritage site; that is the first thing. I am not against investment of hotels in Bridgetown. In fact, I support it. I support it for this very reason, and the parliamentary group of the Barbados Labour Party had a strong and vigorous discussion on it. The Barbados Labour Party commits today not just to public access to beaches but to public facilities for Barbadians on beaches. You cannot want a national botanical gardens and be satisfied just by going through a two-by-two alley to get to a beach. We are not in that. The old fish market site needs to become a public facility that has restaurants and bars and changing facilities for the average Barbadian going to Bay Street, because you cannot accommodate everybody at the Brown's Beach facility just below the lights at Government Headquarters. We commit to putting one there. We do not approach the Hyatt investment from that perspective alone, but what bothers us, Sir, is that the tenor and the character of Barbados' tourism has to mean something. We primarily pay our bills from Cobbler's Cove to Crystal Cove on the West Coast; that is where we get the greatest value-added. If the Minister of Planning and the Minister of Tourism want -- I saw the Press release like anybody else; nobody has briefed us -- to put up a 15-storey building on Bay Street, a building that may be almost twice the height of the Central Bank, then there has to be a duty to consult the people of Barbados for that kind of facility.

Sir, right now the handbook that Town Planning gives out that gives the guidelines puts a five-storey 55-

foot limit on all hotels on the beach side. The Minister of Tourism is aware of that. The Prime Minister must be aware of that as Minister of Planning. If you are going to change from that and that which is specified in a National Physical Development Plan of 2013, then you have a duty to consult with people. If you are going to consult with people, then instead of just saying that the Hyatt is coming next month, next month, next month -- last year June the Minister of Tourism told us the Hyatt would start in August last year -- then you need to pause and start the consultative process with the people of Barbados. This court case, Ulric "Buggy" Haynes Coaching School and the Minister of Planning and Sustainable Development in Trinidad deals with the duty to consult, and I make this a Document of the House. The case in the High Court of Barbados -- Adena Geronium Archer and the Chief Town Planner and the Attorney General, No. 1367 of 2008 -- also deals with duty to consult. Let us pause. Mr. Speaker, when the Minister says that the money from Hyatt is one of the things coming to boost the reserves, we understand why we start to....

Aside.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: He said so, Sir, on the call-in programme. He said so on the call-in programme two Sundays ago. He spoke about Sam Lord's too, for which we now know that the detailed plans are not finished. He spoke about the Barbados National Terminal Company Limited (BNTCL), and I am coming to BNTCL separately because I expect that the BNTCL one will finally come, having promised it every year from 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and indeed in the Estimates for the 2015-2016 Financial Year, where BNTCL revenue was listed as coming in to be able to help. In his Budget yesterday, he said it could not be available, and hence, the deficit had to be reduced by one per cent. I am saying to you, Sir, that the second point is this: What is the Government's role in the construction of Hyatt, the Government owns the old Harbour Police Station. Has the Government sold the lot? Is the Government leasing the lot? Is the Government providing the lot as equity? What is it? if so, one of the investors, you do not see him as one of the usual suspects but the other one is the usual suspect from Hard Rock to Coverley to Valery to Grotto to whatever. Can we carry alone a couple of thousand Bajans with that usual suspect this time. Can we ensure that a couple thousand Bajans get a piece of the action if they are leverage properly to be able to create a balance sheet in order to borrow. Sir, as I have said only one of two is a usual suspect so we have to give the other one the benefit of the doubt because he is not one that we have seen around this Government.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when are we going to deal with giving Bajans a chance. It is not bad enough that you are giving away jobs at Sam Lord's Castle to Chinese labour but we now want to make sure that having used your office and having used Crown lands to create opportunities for

tourism that ought to be genuinely and fully created by the private sector alone that you are determined that only a handful of people again are to benefit. I say no and I say that if it is this Government's judgement that they ought to be higher building there fine, we will support it but we cannot support a 15-storey building in a Bridgetown World Heritage site and if you want to have higher buildings you need to cluster them together. Sir, you know mercifully I know the difference between right and wrong and I know the difference between right and wrong to know that you can want to do the best project but if you do it the wrong way and in breach of the law then you would have difficulty in telling our constituents in the St. Michael corridor why they must not feel aggrieved when they are picked up and arrested every day for breaking the law and that a man who ought to know better can say soto voce that she does not want any project to be done. I do not want any project breaking the law to be done and if that is a problem for the Minister of Finance then so be it. Sir, I have learnt something in here because last year I spoke in here about Cahill and you believe that this Government got up in here from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central when I sat down to the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister...

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I say that I am so accustomed to the cursing now that I say to bring it on. In fact, if you do not curse me I do not feel that I have done a good job. Sir, that is the truth. Sir, I cannot believe that after talking about Cahill last year and being cursed that this Government walked away from Cahill three months ago doing what they should have done the night of the Budget when it was raised in the Budget debate but more importantly I could not believe that ...(4:00) the Order Paper a question to have the agreements made documents of the House but to this day, I have not seen a document from the Government of Barbados signed in the name of people of Barbados coming into Cahill, and to add insult to injury a Minister of Housing gets on a front page and denies that land that is acquired for Cahill to go on in Vaucluse was not intended for it. I do not think he is a nice man. He needs to be voted but he does not have malice and he does not want me to produce the paper that shows that 26 or 27 acres acquired at Vaucluse for millions of dollars was intended to be Government's contribution to Cahill. He would do well to keep his mouth shut at this point in time for a change. I do not want to set up not trap for him but what me most astounded, Mr. Speaker...

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Prime Minister, you have to forgive me because I sat down opposite you, in front of you. Sir, this is a gentleman who came in here and distinguished himself in his first Budget speech with

Emperor is now naked talking about the Honourable Member for St. Peter and this Prime Minister did not wipe his mouth, did not cut his face, looked as though he was horrified, when I spoke about four Ministers, signing an agreement before the Cabinet ratified it, saw it. Sir, imagine how shocked we were when we discovered that the Prime Minister was the very person to sign the first agreement half of which was justiciable and half of which was not back in 2000 six month before...

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: They were planning to do the BOLT plant. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas can deal with that when it comes. I ask the question now, who is now naked? Which emperor is now naked because as I stood in this spot in last year's Budget Reply I ask the question of the Prime Minister to investigate how four Ministers could go and sign this agreement in advance of Cabinet but little did I know that he signed it six months before them too and that the Cabinet still did not know because the agreement had to be ratified by Cabinet after the five signatures on the two agreements.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want Hyatt to degenerate into that because unlike how the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, we need new investment in Bridgetown. I do feel so and that the people in the in the City of Bridgetown would welcome it but what we cannot have is insulting the intelligence of people to build a 15-storey building in a World Heritage Site where there are conventions and best practices set out and without consultation with the public. What we cannot have Minister of Tourism is you telling people every two months that it is starting next week or next month. Sir, as the Minister told us in the Budget last year that it was starting August last year.

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, at least he has been generous enough to say that it is the planning that has started. I have every expectation that he is going to curse me in his usual personal way when I sit down but I will recognise and give him that that he has at least been honest in admitting that it was only the planning that he was referring to but he kept it in his head and let the public feel that jobs were coming right away.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me move on. Sir, I am not going to talk about the fact that we did not have an update of CLICO or BAICO which has been an issue since over a year ago and passed in this House. I am not going to talk about any of those things. I want to get quickly to the Budget because the Budget had 17 initiatives and you know, Sir, you can give them name because a lot of these initiatives other than the two taxes were forms of things to

do to get back in the good graces of those whom we have offended or hush money of some type. Sir, do you understand.

Mr. Speaker, somebody may say inducement but I would say things to encourage people to look at you in a different light having had some bad sessions with them. Let us deal with the special development areas. The northern one from Speightstown to St. Lucy, Harrisons Point, I would like to call, Sir, the Moon Town amendment because the truth is that it goes all along there. We in principle have no difficulty with the extension of the special development areas but I want to know how the Government sees that is going to work and how far inland the geographical boundaries will be because...

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: No, because Moon Town is on the coast so Moon Town will inevitably be in it. No it does not have me at all because I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy needs to expand his establishment and must have 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year to do that which means that the only way we can see that full expansion of Moon Town is if he is no longer the Member of Parliament or indeed a Minister in this Parliament. I am fully supportive of it. I do not like the weighing of the macaroni but I support everything else.

It is a real point for those in Christ Church and St. Philip because you have excited expectation, St. Lawrence Gap, Bridgetown and Speightstown were easily identifiable. Instead of setting out Ragged Point as an area or other areas as an area the swath of land between St. Lawrence Gap and Ragged Point is so wide. Is it going to be coastal? Does it include all of the land? These are valid issues and the point that I have been trying to make to this Minister of Finance, and this is his biggest downfall, he brings in Budgetary initiatives things that have not yet been thought out, fleshed out and tested because he does not recognise that a minister of finance can only engender confidence if taxation is certain, initiatives are specific and people do not have to be butting about trying to understand what the Minister of Finance really meant when he spoke. Too many of these initiatives suffer from the disease of vagueness, the absence of clarity therefore, it causes people concern. Special development areas the Opposition can support but we need to see with greater clarity the geographical districts so as to ensure that we do not undermine the very integrity of the revenue that we want to protect because it was this Minister in 2013 who came here and as his very first initiative in the adjustment programme made the point that we have to reduce the number of fiscal incentives and concessions being given to people to protect the integrity of the revenue. Those were his words. It is true that after he did that, the first thing he did was to send the Sandal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

This one, Sir, has us baffled. The administrative and legal arrangements in place for a duty free shopping zone in Barbados, Hastings, Worthing, Bridgetown, Holetown and Oistins, I believe. Sir, it sounds good and this may well be called the Abed Amendment because the President of the Chamber of Commerce has been the one calling for this but the truth is, Sir, think it out. It is replete with difficulties including significant amendments to the Exchange Control Authority Act because to spend foreign exchange in those businesses you have now to be authorised dealers and further than that, Sir, because it is against the law for you to buy in foreign in Barbados.

2) You have another difficulty that you are affectively recognising foreign exchange in exchange for duty free access, you are affectively then telling the majority of Barbados hoard your foreign exchange rather than submit your foreign exchange to the bank because people will now believe that if I can go and buy a fridge or a television in a duty free zone why should I go to Sheraton and buy it? What happens to those stores outside of those duty free zones? This is the Sandals equivalent of the retail sector from tourism. How could you want to create three different types of commercial people, vendors who are itinerant, who more often than not are being harassed if they do not have the proper piece of paper do not mind others get to break the law and build buildings without being harassed? People would have stores outside of the duty free zones who would now have to face the fact that a person would go a buy an item, a fridge, a stove, a microwave, a watch, an i-pad or an i-phone in a duty free area rather than come to a non-duty free area in Sheraton or Six Roads. Six Roads has a mall, Sheraton has a mall, up in Welches has a mall, and we have legitimate business people who have invested their money. I am saying to you, Sir, that what you may think is otherwise a good idea ought to be tested in your ministry before exposing it to oxygen in the public of Barbados as Minister of Finance. What does he hide behind? Oh well if it does not work, I told them to set up a committee. It is true, he told them to set up a committee but a Minister of Finance cannot be floating ideas that is for a junior, school, that is not at this level where people are holding on to his every word to make plans and investments about their future.

Sir, it is ironic because the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados has written an article about dollarization. I have to ask myself, is this a backdoor attempt to introduce partial dollarization in Barbados? The Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados wrote the article not me and the Government needs to be sensitive to these things when they announce these initiatives. Sir, we agree with the Tourism Development Act multiyear initiatives, it makes sense but I want to speak to the Minister of Tourism again, Sir, because in the 50th year of independence he is an independence child too. However much you let the horse out of the stable with Sandals you have to make it right

with Bajans and Bajan hoteliers. This is a country that has been characterised, Mr. Speaker, by fairness. Fairness and social justice are part of our DNA. How do we create three categories, three classes of hoteliers in this country? How do you do it? What do I mean by that, Sir?

Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where Sandals is effectively a duty free zone for 40 years, they have their own warehouse, they bring in their own food, drink, whatever. I do not know whether you can get Mount Gay or Banks, they are not getting into that because I do not know. I do not drink beer and I do not drink rum.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I hope you can, but I will say this, that if you want to give it to Sandals, then you have to give it for those hoteliers who have been carrying Barbados' tourism product for longer than we have been independent. Barbados has a tourism product that is older than 50 years. Now what has this Government done? I was in shock when I discovered last week that of those 19, 20 or 21 hotels that have been given access to some of the benefits here is what they got. They got access for one first, Smoked Salmon, they got access for some meat, they got access for heavy cream and they got access for alcohol. Do you know, Sir, that even for those limited things that they get access for, they cannot just go and get them? Every time they need them in the hotel they have to send up to get a request approved by the Minister of Tourism, the Minister or the Permanent Secretary. Let me tell you about the law. What the Minister of Finance announced here will require amendments too and it tells me that the Minister of Tourism either is indifferent to it or I would like to believe that the Minister of Finance never consulted with him. I would like to believe that the hoteliers can use their voices to represent themselves too because how can you run a hotel and every time you need Vodka, wine and rum, smoked salmon or steak that every two to three weeks you are sending up to a Ministry of Tourism to get a duty free waiver signed and Sandals has to walk across the road and take it out of the freezer or take it out of the warehouse and go back into the hotel. It is wrong, but it does not end there. The third class of hoteliers is those who are not getting it at all, those who were told that they owe taxes. Sir, I understand that but if you do not contextualise things you would run into trouble. These are the same hoteliers who this Government stood on that side and told the people not to send home the employees, to hold them. These are the same hoteliers who the Government told them to juggle between salaries and supplies and utilities and payments, and some of them ended up raking up arrears to statutory liabilities, but what is the reality of that. Sir, do you know that they have to pay almost twice or three times more for a bottle of vodka? Do you know that instead of paying \$4 for a bottle of wine they are paying \$11 for the same bottle of wine? Do you know, Sir, that if these 40 hotels that are

now deep in the hole could pay the taxes they would be benefiting from the duty-free access, but instead of extending them the access and then demanding and working out a programme with them to pay monthly to bring them the arrears, we leave them cemented in a hole in a road to perdition, yet these are more than two-thirds of our indigenous hotel stock.

I ask myself what has this Government done to the people of Barbados that we accept behaviour that we would never want to extend to our animals far less to each other. How do we in the 50th year of independence condone a programme that gives Sandals... The sad part is that Sandals never had to satisfy that conditionality about tax compliance because it got every possible tax waived, and I am sure that including the National Social Responsibility Levy now they are not going to have to pay a cent.

I have nothing wrong with Sandals. I believe it is a good thing for Sandals to be here. I believe they helped with the airlift but I believe that the manner in which the Government has allowed them to come in has caused significant problems for our tourism industry in terms of fairness and equity, and I believe ultimately it would compromise that portion of the import taxes particularly to create the level playing field.

Mr. Speaker, let us get real. If a major hotel is getting access to pricing for wine, vodka, meat and all of those things at a third and a quarter of the price of another one, they must be able to charge less and they must be able to command a better competitive position than the same ones that are struggling to eke out an existence. I ask the Minister of Tourism to make wrong things right in this matter in the same way we have offered support for the multiyear refurbishment and renovation projects that does not see a person having to go back every year.

The other thing the Minister of Finance did not tell us about yesterday was the ease of doing business, and this is part of the problem why people do not find it easy to do business in Barbados and that is why we have dropped year after year after year in relation to the ease of doing business. I say to the Honourable Minister of Finance that he has to get it right because we have dropped from 91 to 119 in the last two years. Do not talk about the Global Competitiveness Report, we are not even in it this year. How do we benchmark ourselves? How do we get people to want to invest here or want to visit here? None of these things the Minister of Finance dealt with yesterday in a Budget, and that is why I ask you: Where was the Budget?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me move on. In the relation to the other matters pertaining to the other initiatives, Sir, you are paying almost as much to register a jeep now as you would to register a boat. That Gilkes amendment is really... I have never seen a mega-yacht spend more than six

months in Barbados and the irony is it may well conspire to undermine the revenue of the Crown because people can then buy the yachts duty-free in other jurisdictions and bring them in here for longer than the six months without having to pay a cent. I want to see the expansion of the yachting class and I want to see the expansion of yachting in Barbados. I believe that by 2030 every child under 18 years old should be given the chance to swim, but this is not the way how we do business. Let me see a yachting regime that we can support not this little trinket here and trinket there and trinket there because it causes us not to believe that you are serious about the development of the sector.

Sir, we support the reimbursement grant of the \$50 000 for the local companies in order to get them internationally compliant but we need to be doing far more than that as we outlined in our manufacturing plan in 2007 which the Government could do well to look at. Similarly, we are wary about all of these funds that keep getting set up but do not get to the intended beneficiary.

Sir, the one comment I want to make is that I cannot believe that this Government has left an Industrial Credit Fund there with \$130 million and waits until the eighth year to extend support to the business sector of the small business community having not delivered on 40 per cent procurement, having not delivered on so many other promises and having capital sitting down there. Sir, you know what the truth was, a lot of that money was being taken up to hold Government Paper, Treasury Bills et cetera, and that is why it was not available to be able to help businessmen in this country create and expand their businesses.

Sir, I have already told you about the National Social Responsibility Levy. I think that the Government has urgently, if it expects this tax to start in less than two weeks' time, to say and point out how it is going to work. This is not just for the International Monetary Fund's benefit on Monday, there are people who have to implement this, there are local producers who are asking how is it going to be implemented on their local production because the Budget says that \$19 million is to come from it. The Government has a duty to outline how this tax would be implemented if it expects it to be applicable from the 1st of September because people genuinely do not know.

Imports at the port is straightforward. The ones to be excluded, they might have a little doubt there but that is relatively straightforward. What is not straightforward is how it is going to attach itself to local production. We understand why the Minister has done it in order to ensure that he does not breach international trade obligations because whatever we extend to regional imports we have to extend to domestic. We have been down that road already.

Sir, I have already spoken about the \$5 million clean-up programme. Prime Minister, if this is to be a national programme let us start right by making sure that we have the people who really need it. Those persons who were let go from the National Conservation Commission after 10 years and 12 years and 8 years are the ones who need the help. Sir, I make the point that I deplore that the decision of the Tribunal did not insist on reinstatement because in the absence of reinstatement those people have lost a right to a full pension in many instances. It is wrong, and I say that the only thing worse than that form of political victimisation is political genocide. These people have not been working for two years and one year's severance pay cannot help them, they owe away that money already, it is wrong, and I hope that this programme can be used to help cushion them in a serious way.

Mr. Speaker, I do not walk away from commitments I gave. In February of this year I stood up in this Honourable Chamber and said that we will support efforts to increase the Budget to deal with the debushing of this country in order to be able to deal with public health. You have brought it. My only request of you, especially since the Minister has said that it would involve donations from the private sector and other institutions, is that it truly be national and that it not be a one-off activity for independence because a one-off activity cannot help us in the middle of the rainy season especially.

Sir, in relation to the \$2 million for the Welfare Department, what can I say. The Welfare Department needed the \$2 million before the tax and it would not go any major way to helping the real level of suffering. In the Estimates we told this Minister that the level of true suffering in Barbados is real. Mr. Speaker, there are too many people who come to my office in Bridgetown every week and the excuses that are given by the Welfare Department, in many instances, that they do not have the money to be able to help people.

Sir, I have constituents who have their houses recently and who are trying now for two or three weeks to get an answer. My fear is that the people, including two minors, are sleeping back in the same house that has fallen on them in the first place. It cannot be right and I cannot get an answer from the Welfare Department. I left the message for the Chief. I called the National Housing Corporation. I did the right thing, I spoke to the General Manager. The General Manager would tell you that maybe I have called her once in three years, because of an acute emergency involving two minors and two other people in the house not working, with only one breadwinner.

Mr. Speaker, the lady told me that she genuinely does not have any housing units. Now, I want to believe that is true but I happen to know that the Grotto is empty. I am sure that those people do not mind sleeping in the

Grotto, even if they have only to carry some mattresses to be placed on the ground and that we could put some other things in there. Mr. Speaker, I would hate to think that the rest of that house falls down on that family, I really would. Sir, I do not normally make public appeals for constituents but I am doing it because they do not have any genuine alternatives. There is going to be a fundraising for the one of the five who is working. I believe “Stiffy” is going to be performing and I am going to let the public knows about it in September, but I would not know what to do if a house falls on you while you are sleeping.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has indicated that he would look into it and I am grateful to him for that. Mr. Speaker, the bank asset tax goes up from 0.2 per cent to 0.35 per cent. Mr. Speaker, my comment on the bank asset tax is this, this is likely to lead to an increase in ATM and other fees yet again which would be passed onto the consumer. This is why I am saying that had we sat around a round table and discussed these initiatives, we would have been in a better position to allow a Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs to come here with a credible programme that all 30 of us in the 50th Year of Independence, at this perilous time of our history, could say that we are in support of this programme.

Mr. Speaker, I want them not to doubt it because we are already confident that without this we would beat them in the next election, so you can afford to cooperate because cooperation is about making the lives of Barbadians easier at this stage. Now, the other problem with this tax is that it is also retroactive and taxation that is retroactive is not good taxation. Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Minister will clarify whether the Honourable Member truly intended for it to be retroactive or whether like the other taxes, the Honourable Member intends for it to start on September 01. You cannot ask people to plan out their affairs and then to impose a tax that goes back to April.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The assessment still means that it is tax from that period, so that it is still a form of retroactive taxation. Sir, the tax amnesty once again we welcome it but as I said before... Mr. Speaker, I know, Sir, because while I may not owe these taxes personally, the firm with which I am associated owes taxes. I do not have anything to hide, it has been hard because we have a hell of a lot of money in receivables. Sir, but do you make a choice to send people home or do you make the choice to keep them.

Sir, I believe the Minister at least is doing a six-months' period because the truth is, have you ever tried to

get a loan from a bank in Barbados? You cannot get a loan in less than two or three months, unless you constitute the top tier of the very, very, very high. The truth is that a lot of people would like to be able to pay something but the difficulty comes in the length of time in being able to process the loan.

Mr. Speaker, if the Government could get 10 per cent or 20 per cent of the \$568 million that is owed to it, then I would be the first to say yes. Sir, perhaps we have to find a way, perhaps of thinking outside the box, where in the absence -- and I want the Minister in particular to listen to this -- of banks being able to give people the loans, rather they cannot come up with a programme that in the same way the person will be paying the bank a bank loan, that if you come up with a 10-year programme that says that Government will do this, that Government will accept “X” amount over 10 or 15 years in a proactive way.

Mr. Speaker, but because the Barbados Revenue Authority is so much under pressure, my view is that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs needs a dedicated unit to deal with it and unless somebody comes to work every day to make it happen. Mr. Speaker, Bajans, for the most part, do not have a problem with paying taxes but there is a genuine inability to take blood from stone now. I really feel that people would prefer to pay the Government at 2 per cent, then having to pay the bank at 5 per cent or 6 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, this Government would have nothing to lose because Government is already owed the money. These are the kinds of things that will help to improve the revenue so that you do not have to bring a tax or \$140 million.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Minister already knows how I feel about these \$50 million cuts, you cannot cut expenditure in this country with a scalpel, using the finesse of a lumberjack. Sir, that is what happened in December, 2013. Now, if you are under pressure that is what you are going to do but this Government has had enough time to be able to go about the effort of reconstructing and deconstructing. That is why in the “Covenant of Hope” we set out at page 26 an approach to fiscal governance and I will ask Members of this Honourable Chamber to read it because it is not there because we felt like writing words, at page 26 we believe that the first thing that you have to do is to prioritise your spend in relation to what is absolutely necessary, what is then highly desirable and what is then optional and that thereafter if you cannot accommodate it in spending... Government has other powers, Government can legislate, Government can regulate, Government can facilitate, Government can empower but if you sit around a table...

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the midterm review is not going to be a mimic of the Estimate speeches, because we will not get anywhere if we do that. If we sit down in a Committee and ask questions and put suggestions where there is not the need for that kind of behaviour and 'one upmanship' then we would be able to advance the work of the people of this country. Sir, that is what we want to see happening because none of us is enjoying suffering in this country.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the Registered Retirement Plan the problem is that I do not agree that the Minister should have removed the right to claim that as a saving allowance, as a country needs savings. Indeed, Sir, I am going to make this a document of this Honourable House because one of the things that the Minister should have addressed yesterday is how do we deal with the fact that for the first time since 1991 Barbados has experienced dissaving, that Barbadians are drawing down on their savings to survive, that the country potentially is opened to the lowest bidder because people will not have options. We have a dissaving rate in 2014 of minus point-five. We have a savings rate in 1991 of 15.3 per cent. We had a savings rate in 1998 of 18.1. How therefore do we get to a negative savings rate of minus point-five?

Mr. Speaker, what bothers me is that Barbados is supposed to be a role project of creating wealth. We on this side are not in here just to say that we are going to stand by and let people earn a living, we want Barbadian families to become creators of wealth. Sir, wealth only happens when you pass money from one generation to the next. If people have now to deplete their savings they cannot end up in that way.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your air time expires in five minutes.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: In five minutes, Sir? No problem, Sir. I will decide whether I want the TV or if I will go beyond. The reality is, Sir, that we have a situation with the public servants where the Government has now offered this trinket to them. I made the point that Section 13 of the Public Service Act makes it absolutely clear, and others on my side will speak to it. The Member for St. Joseph will speak to it. Section 13 makes it absolutely clear that what this Government is offering people was what it was duty-bound to do in 2008 when it became the Government and what it promised in October 2007 from the former Prime Minister in relation to it. This is the same Government, however, that wants teachers to have their pay docked for going to a meeting. This is the same Government that will not allow the statutory board employees at the Investment Development Corporation (IDC) to be able to be paid. They have had neither salary nor pension since January, and in circumstances where other statutory board employees are nervous, Sir. Mr.

Speaker, if it is not so then tell the attorney-at-law that it is not so, because we are still waiting for the judgement. I have told this House before, Sir, that on a matter of principle, I did not answer the Prime Minister when he said it because an Attorney General does not set what work comes to Parliament. The reality is that there may have been reasons why the then Government -- whatever they were, it was not my idea; it was my own knowledge -- did not bring the age 62 to 67 for the Auditor General and the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). What I do know is this: We had the two-thirds majority. What I also do know is this: The Attorney General does not set the work of Parliament and the Debate of Parliament. What I also do know is this: Regardless of whether it was done or not done now, there is a blatant discriminatory act taking place with respect to statutory board employees who, at 58, 59 and 60, suffer the same fate that the Minister of Finance described in regard to temporary officers in the Public Service. Therefore, we are happy that right will finally happen for those public servants who should have been appointed since 2007 and 2008, but we are also saying to you that you have to make wrong things right with the statutory board employees.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say as I start to close that the Barbados Labour Party recognises that we cannot make idle promises as we go forward, and we are not going to come here and make promises to do A, B and C unless we know we can afford them, because of the dire nature in which the country has found itself for the last eight years. Sir, we recognise that trust is the most important commodity in this country, and we recognise that as a result of that, we give the House assurance, because we do not know whether this is the last or whether there will be another Budget, but we know that within 120 days of our being elected, having sat down and done the very thing that I asked the Prime Minister to do - to bring everyone around a table to be able to discuss frankly what is our condition -- that we will bring a true Budget. We will not bring a series of trinket measures or a tax to be able to satisfy the International Monetary Fund that you have done something. Sir, we recognise that that is most important and that we have to be able to cultivate hope in this country again, and that is why we recommend the Covenant of Hope for people's reading. While it is not giving you specific policies, it gives you the conditions under which we will make decisions in this country. Sir, we know that how we do things is as important as what we do, and that is why I can say with conviction that the manner in which we disregard consultation and the manner in which we have allowed things to offend good governance in this country, will not be the way that a Barbados Labour Party Administration would operate.

Sir, there is also the manner in which we treat to people like Customs. How do you have a Customs Department for two or three years not knowing if they are

going to the Barbados Revenue Authority (BRA) or not? I give them the commitment today that the Customs will not go to BRA because that was our decision before we lost Government, and we will stick to it again. Sir, I also give the commitment that if there is anyone who believes that the Barbados Labour Party will support any form of corruption, understand that there will be a zero tolerance approach to it. I can speak to the things for which there is not any money outlay needed. Sir, I can speak to the fact that Ministers in the future must not believe that they are to be defined by cars and all kinds of fancy things, because if we are coming to serve the people, we are coming to serve the people. Sir, we believe that the small contractor class and the small mechanic class have been ignored, and we have seen them being ignored in aid of one or two large contractors. I want to say something that I tell them on the ground every day; that we have 4 000 pit toilets in this country.

Before the Government recognises that nobody in Barbados in the 21st Century should be sleeping while having a pit toilet on a rainy day like today, it should be making sure that we raise the money just as we raised the money for Sam Lord's that should be done by the private sector. Just as we are raising the money to deal with the water, the Government should make sure that those 4 000 people get a water-borne facility on their houses. Sir, nobody has a pit toilet in 2016 because they want it, and the bottom line is that no large contractor is going to do any water-borne facility. When you have 4 000 times \$15 000, that is \$60 million in work over five to six years for small contractors in Barbados who spend money in every community every Friday, and money circulates. Similarly, you have mechanics who cannot now afford to buy stuff such as pieces of equipment to deal with the modern technological changes. Sir, it is even more so now, because people are putting down their cars because of the state of the roads. We also know that, to add insult to injury, a Transport Board that used to have over 200 buses on the road now has less than 120. It cannot work. At one point last week, it was less than 100 buses. The Minister dealt with the garbage trucks. The thought of the two per cent tax being at the disposal of the Minister of Environment has me so frightened that I cannot even talk, but this country needs buses too. You cannot have such a situation.

Mr. Speaker, what has happened to the ZR pilot project? Why are we bringing in a Trinidadian to work at Mangrove when we have UCAL (United Commercial Autoworks Limited) that is owed \$20 million and that supports 120 families? Do not tell me that UCAL has buses for months, because UCAL has a labour-only contract. Why is Simpson Motors only delivering parts if you have cash? When the Minister of Finance goes to cut this \$50 million again, what happens to the transport system in Barbados, which was not protected yesterday? Where is the Budget of the real needs of Bajan people? Mr. Speaker, we

told this Government when you sent home 3 000 people to give them a quarter-acre of land to farm, give them a vendors' licence, deal with the banks to help stabilise them. The Member for St. Peter came and called it affirmative procurement. We use his language. If you have to lay off people, put something in place to give them that soft landing. That is what this Government did not do.

I say to you that we are in a position where none of us can speak with truth and know what the real situation in this country is until the Ministry of Finance and the Government put everything on the table. What we can tell you is what kind of Government we will be. What we can tell you is what kind of people we will be. What we can tell you is what we will stand for. Barbadian students must know that their education will receive top priority in relation to them being able to get themselves to the University of the West Indies freely, because too many people have only got out of poverty by way of that route. We cannot kick down the ladder now for any reason. We also have a situation where the Student Revolving Loan Fund does not have money because the Government has not responded swiftly enough to the Caribbean Development Bank. We are not even talking about the fact that the National Insurance Scheme's (NIS) \$9.4 million is not even in cash. You now have sent the NIS to go and cash in a Treasury bill, which will have to be discounted, but that is what happens when you make policy on the trot and come in here and announce it.

Mr. Speaker, this country deserves to be returned to a level of governance that befits its legacy and that befits the aspirations of its citizens, and today I commit on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party and a team that is now expanding and reflects all elements and all skills and classes in this society, that we will work to always keep your trust. I have not spent 25 years in public life to descend into a form of behaviour that is not worthy of the very highest standards, and I am acutely aware that, as a child of Independence, those of us who were born around Independence have a duty to show that what we received with distinction from Sir Grantley and the Right Excellent Errol Barrow and Tom Adams can be equally matched by those of us who were given the benefits by them. Let it not be said that those of us who benefitted have now come to preside over Barbados being the third most indebted country in the world, have now come to preside over Barbadians not getting decent services.

Mr. Speaker, let it be said that those young people who want now to employ themselves and be global citizens through the practise of their craft whether it is information technology, a sportsman or artist, nurses or as professionals that we are going to facilitate it. Sir, I ask today that we remember as we go to support the 50th Anniversary of Independence that we have choices. We could have decided whether to send a team to Utah for the Senior

Games for \$151 000 or we could have chosen to put that money to ease the burden of people on welfare. We sent a team to Utah last week for the Senior Games. We could have decided to watch the Olympics on TV instead of a Minister going to watch the Olympics in Brazil at a time when we need to set examples.

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, that is whole point. It is coming before Independence but we want to make sure that our priorities are in the right place. I am saying to you that we have a duty to put Barbados first at a time and in putting Barbados first, let it be known that the people of Barbados will stand to judge us because for as long as we are here, there is but only one Government and the Government has a duty beyond its role as a political Party. Regrettably, what we saw yesterday was a political Party put itself first and put people last. Indeed, Sir, it seems as though they have rewritten the timeless biblical admonition that Jesus first, yourself last and others in between and that mantra was written by them to be myself first, the people last and our finances in between.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that Barbados would know that we do not want any more lost year and that we will remember that as long as there is a leader who permit Ministers to do as they like and function as pop kites then you will have this kind of performance for a Government. Sir, we will step into the breach and we will resume the path to give Barbadians that which they became accustomed to in the first 42 years of our post -- Independence existence. I solemnly pledge on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party to ensure this is done in the name of all Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

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

Hon. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, firstly allow me as I make my contribution to this Budget debate in 2016 to congratulate the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West for what was a carefully crafted and expertly delivered Budget yesterday. Sir, the policy interventions enunciated by the Minister of Finance are aim at achieving the critical objectives of protecting our foreign reserves, consolidating our public financing, stabilizing reducing debt and, of course, promoting growth. I think that we have addressed all those core issues in the Budget and it is also clear from the response we have gotten from the public that they agree that this indeed was a very good effort. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member who just too her seat by and large when she got to the Budgetary measures, the Honourable Member was agreeing with a lot of what was

contained in the Budget. Sir, in essence, when we got passed the huff and puff because apparently, this is an election Budget for the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. It is not an election Budget for us. We have work to do and we have to continue the process of restructuring and building and taking the economy to another level, the recovery process and growth. This is no election Budget for us. I suspect it is a two-part election process for her because of what is supposed to happen in October, returning to the Barbados Labour Party and their own election, so there is a two-part election exercise going on here. Sir, nonetheless the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East says that I normally get up and curse her but that is not true and I would like to start out by commending her. It is my understanding from her that the Barbados Labour Party is discussing access to the beach in Carlisle Bay. She said the parliamentary group is discussing beach access in Carlisle Bay. I have to congratulate here that is a quantum leap from discussing who is thieving money from where and pelting chairs at each other and they are now discussing beach access in Carlisle Bay and that is good to hear. I am glad they are not slandering and libeling one another in parliamentary group anymore and going to court, who carry away which money from where and all that type of thing, so I am not cursing her, I am commending her that is good.

Mr. Speaker, however, I would just tell her in the process of planning, development, et cetera that you do not do it like that. You cannot determine a beach access at a group meeting a night over a few drinks, this is where you are going to put the beach facility and the beach access. Sir, Carlisle Bay is part of a development plan and it is not entirely a Democratic Labour Party plan either, the last Government also agreed that there is potential for development in Carlisle Bay from a tourism point of view, starting from the Pierhead right up to Needhams Peninsula, the Parties agreed on it and that is the exercise that we are engaging in. We are getting advice from the Chief Town Planner on this issue and you need not worry all the development taking place there will be within the four corners of the law. The Chief Town Planner that has actually been advising us was the Chief Town Planner that was appointed by the last Government, so who are you really attacking.

Mr. Speaker, this is a worrying trend of this Opposition trying to get at a Government by making victims out of innocent public servants. We saw that the other day with the constitutional amendment where an Auditor-General and a Director of Public Prosecution is to suffer because of a desire to make political points, so that is where we are at that. Again, I want to commend her.

Mr. Speaker, we were discussing the debt situation and I think that I should just speak to that a little bit. Again, a large part of the member's presentation dealt with

information containing correspondence written by a member on this side, a member of the Cabinet and again that is also good that she is using correspondence from members on this side. I do not supposed she is interested in any correspondence from the Honourable Member for Christ Church West or the Honourable Member for St. Peter and maybe their correspondence would be put one side but she is interested in the correspondence from the Honourable Member for St. Philip West but the point contained in the letter from the Honourable Member for St. Philip West have been embraced by this Government and that is the point. The national debt situation and the call for it to be restructured that call has been heard and we have an international agency that is going to be working with us first starting with the contingent liabilities, the parastatals and from there we will move very carefully on this business of debt restructuring. It is correct that if it is done hastily or improperly, it can impact confidence, it can impact your credit rating, it can amount to a default of your national debt in the eyes of some and it has to be handled carefully.

Mr. Speaker, on this issue of debt, let me just say because we heard how indebted Barbados is as a country but I think that it is important to also look at some analysis on this because I remember very well when I was sitting on the other side we used to make this same point, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would remember. As a matter of fact, the then Honourable Member for St. Michael North West used to make the point about the high levels of debt and then he crossed the Floor. Do you know what he said when he crossed the Floor and became a Member of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government? It is not a problem because the debt is mainly domestic debt. That is what he said. We do not have too much debt and the real picture is, as indebted as we are, only 38 per cent of our debt is actually owed overseas and that amounts to BDS\$2.8 billion. I am not at all saying that we should ignore it. Far from that, measures would have been put in this budget to deal with our level of indebtedness but I am saying be careful with the comparisons with other Caribbean countries because it is the other way around in those cases and that is why they are serial attendees of IMF programmes because if the foreign debt component is in the majority and the domestic debt component is in the minority that situation is a little more dangerous, therefore, I think you need to be fair in your analysis and not simply say that we are the most indebted country and that is the end of that. Japan has a debt of over 200 per cent of its GDP but 5 per cent of it is foreign, and all of it is domestic. I am not saying that we are necessarily comparing ourselves to a country that is quite old and highly industrialised but I am just making the point that it is a situation that can be managed within the context of a well-structured programme, which is what this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) has for the economy. Printing money as if it is a crime. That is what central banks are for, to print

money. You are supposed to be reasonable about it and that is why I said a well-structured programme. We are not talking about doing like what Idi Amin is reputed to have done when he said that he would go and put a gun to the Governor of the Central Bank, I need money, print money. That is not what we are saying. We are saying there is a ways and means access and there is a reason why central governments have central banks. The point is that you do not know it recklessly or irresponsibly, there is nothing wrong with doing it once it is in the context of a well-structured programme and we have put precisely that in place so that our debt situation becomes manageable and so that we are seeing an economic growth. This Government has identified, not surprisingly, the tourism sector to see that we get some growth and one of the things, of course, is the fact that we are trying to facilitate private sector investment but we are also undertaking some investment ourselves. I am glad to hear the Leader of the Opposition that the Sam Lord's Castle project should be a private sector project. Of course, when Almond closed down and nobody in the private sector was interested we were told how ineffective a Government we were because we did not move in to protect the jobs, protect the rooms, protect the airlift so now we are seeing a sort of a change in position here. We will get to the classes of hotels as well to because you see there are some myths that were allowed to go out there.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: That is a fact, Sam Lord's Castle has town planning permission and has had it for some time. The question of the final design drawings, obviously there is an operator, the Wyndham Group and they are going through the last process with BTI and so on because they have their own standards as the second largest hotel operator in the world and that exercise is going through so this idea that somehow there is no planning permission and all we are doing is demolishing a building for four months. We are putting in roads, the civil works have to go in. It is a large site but the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, I think, has it. These projects seem to be causing a problem, some anx with the Opposition and there is a reason for it. It is not only the 450 rooms at Sam Lord's, it is the expansion at Sandals and it is the idea of a hotel in Carlisle Bay in the form of the Hyatt. The idea is that if we can ...

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Sam Lord's Castle is US\$250 million. We are talking about close to \$1 billion in investment in the tourism sector. We could see another 1 500 rooms, imagine the economic growth, jobs, the foreign exchange capacity, that is what it is about so you have to throw a little spanner in the works. This business about classes of hotels. I find that very, very interesting because

we had the GEMS project. If that is not classifying hotels I do not know what is. Of course, we now have to clean that up and again the private sector should run hotels. That is what we just heard. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was the Minister responsible for economic development at one stage and had responsibility for the GEMS project. I do not remember how anxious ...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member, is misleading the House. I have never had a responsibility at a ministerial level for that so please do not mislead the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: You are distancing yourself from GEMS and I do not blame you, I would too but having said that, I would only say that indeed the Government took a decision that we were going to treat tourism as an export sector. Indeed a lot of done by the last Government when the Tourism Development Act in 2001, that was not intended to be an in. The plan the next step from there was to have all of the impost and their correspondence to that effect. As far back as 2003, so the business of what were have done by way of the amendments to the TDA. It is not in responds to anything given to Sandals, it is the correct thing to do. The last Government recognised it but they did not do it. We have done it and I am happy to report that 30 small hotels in Barbados have refurbished since we have amended that TDA. Let me just say once and for all because this business about the MOU for Sandals and so on and so forth, I do not remember the Honourable Member for St. Peter when he was in the Prime Minister and a few of the folks over there were a part of his Cabinet bringing MOUs in here to explain the waiver that were done left, right, centre, backwards, we brought a statement in Parliament and said exactly what we were doing. We indicated then that the project was in excess of US\$200 million and we thought it should get certain concessions. We made the point in that statement and I read it, Mr. Speaker, that the entire sector would eventually be brought up to speed even though large project over the threshold of \$250 million would be treated slightly differ. I have here with me a document that I am going to make available to all members of this so we can once and for all stop talking about Sandals concessions Sandals if it is something different. I can tell you right now there is nothing that has been given to Sandals that has not been given or promised to someone else as some stage previously:

That is under T, D and A. Inputs for the operation of the tourism product. We all get that, that is available under TDA but under the amendment for the TDA the minister can approve any item required for a hotel that is not on the second schedule and by the way, as the Minister

responsible for signing those letters, because under the Act is says the Minister of Tourism.

I do not know where the Leader of the Opposition is getting her information from every three weeks a hotel has to be sending to get letter a signed. This is a hotel, this is somebody selling chicken wings on a Friday night on the corner of the street. They do not buy supplies every two weeks. Even the woman who does that would get a crate of wings every other month or whatever. It does not work so. The hotel sends extensive lists, I see them. They are not only for Salmon, they are for all of the fancy proteins and all of the different alcoholic beverages and so on. They send large lists.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: You want me to call them. The lists are for halibut, caviar and all of those kinds of things so - people in here know very well about that - and for champagne and all the vodkas and 15 cases of this and 20 cases of that and 30 cases of that. It is not every two or three weeks, that is not what happens. Anyhow that is available to Sandals and it is available to all hotels.

Waiver of import duties on vehicles require for the operation of the hotel is given to Sandals. Other hotels do not have it but on a case by case basis the Ministry of Finance can issue it and has issued it. When you see Sandy Lane driving those big fancy cars from the airport, they have gotten those duty-free not only from this Government, but the last Government did it too, but you want to hear something, the little fellow operating a guesthouse on the South Coast cannot do it and it is because this Minister of Finance and the last Minister of Finance based on the advice from their technocrats say no, treat Sandy Lane differently, so this thing about classes of hotel is not new, it has been going on for a while and we need to be honest about it.

Waiver of stamp duty on property acquisition with respect to loans and mortgages, Sandals gets that. Again that has been given under Cap. 67B to other projects like Royal Westmoreland. Permits for the repatriation of all capitals and profits are granted to several properties under Cap. 67B.

Grant of work permits for hotels staff is necessary. That facility is available to all properties under the Immigration Act. We all know that for years we have heard people complaining about immigration employment practices so that is not new.

The tax holiday for the waiver of duty on personal and household effects of staff who would be working in Barbados and not citizens of Barbados is given to Sandals, and it was granted for the Pierhead Marina by the Barbados

Labour Party Government and has been given to other projects as well. The tax holiday period - the Honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke of this -- which is 25 years tax free with an extension of 15 years at half the rate of the tax payable is available for 15 years for hotels but previous large projects like the Pierhead Marina was also given 25 years by the Barbados Labour Party Government not by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Exemption from land tax during the tax holiday would not be applicable. It applies to Sandals. All hotel properties are entitled to a waiver of 50 per cent of land tax. The Pierhead Marina was given full land tax exemptions again by the last Government.

The so-called Sandals concessions really are not that new, there is nothing in here and I think that this needs to be made a document of the House. If we are going to come to the court, we have to come with clean hands. It is going to be a document of the House. If the hotel community in Barbados wants to complain about what we are doing with Sandals, I can understand, they are in a position to do it. I do not remember hearing them complaining about what the Barbados Labour Party was doing with Sandy Lane and Royal Westmoreland, that is true, but still they can do it. The leader of the Barbados Labour Party cannot do it because of what they have done previously. This is a document of the House and I commend it, Sir, for you to put that issue to rest once and for all.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak to the Special Development Areas Act because I think it is an interesting initiative, it is something that would do well for community tourism and it is something that would help us as we look for new frontiers for tourism development. We already spoke about the Carlisle Bay area but also the north of the island around Harrison's Point and indeed the south-east. As we see the Crane Hotel building out we hear of a project in Foul Bay. We of course look forward to Sam Lord's Castle coming on stream. The Bushy Park facility does a lot of sports events there. The opportunities for micro businesses to flourish within the Special Development Area is of course good.

In bringing it right back to home as well, in St. Michael South Central I have an urban constituency and the current boundary for the Special Development Area happens to be right along the boundary of where the constituency of the City of Bridgetown meets the constituency of St. Michael South Central. I am not saying there was anything political in that. It might just have been a chance that Halls Road was the most convenient place to put it, and I am not suggesting that the distinguished former Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown would have in any way tried to deprive the people of Carrington Village of what her constituents should have gotten. I am not saying that, I am saying I am happy it is happening.

I am obviously grateful to still have this opportunity after 13 years to speak on my constituents behalf in the Budget debate but we will certainly take advantage of the opportunities, there is no question about it. With the UNESCO inscribed site right there, there are opportunities for culinary practitioners, opportunities to develop tours and opportunities for other things and we need to encourage that.

Mr. Speaker, it was a stated objective of this Government to broaden the stakeholdership in the sector. Mr. Speaker, by creating the Barbados Tourism Product Authority, we have been able to do that. They are doing some amazing work throughout many, many communities, again nothing political. One of the biggest policy they are doing is in Speightstown, hardly a bastion of the Democratic Labour Party support but we are doing it because it is the right thing to do and that is the point and therefore we are hoping to see that this can work to our advantage.

Mr. Speaker, closely related to establishing the SDAs and the obvious investment and the impact that would come through to the local economy, I think that the duty-free zones - I am not prepared to throw as much cold water on the zones as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East did - ties in perfectly with the Special Development Areas expansion. There is no doubt that for some time now Barbados already has a formidable reputation in the region as a shopping mecca and I think we can build that out and develop it. I appreciate there are some issues that need to be worked out in terms of the legislation and the ability to have foreign currency and the like, but there is no doubt in my mind that it is a step in the right direction. As far as I know again where duty-free shopping is concerned you are restricted to certain items so the idea that nobody is going to buy a fridge from Courts or anything like that because they could go into a duty-free zone... I do not know who is going to go to Limegrove and buy a stove. It is leather goods, perfumes, I believe, jewellery and certain things like that, so that does not really make any sense at all.

I think that the concessions granted to sector have had administrative issues. We know that and we are working those through but I think that with the mixed that we have of encouraging hard investment in bricks and mortar, driving up the room stock and dealing with the product issues as well and getting things for people to do, we are building a firmer and stronger tourism product. We have to continue to do that, Mr. Speaker, because 2015, as you know, was a record year for arrivals in tourism. We had 592 000 people visiting here for the first time and so far year-to-date we are 5 per cent up on last year's record performance, so in 2016 we would have 600 000 long-stay visitors for the first time in Barbados' history and if we are

going to sustain that we have to plan effectively. I heard people laughing

when I made the point that we were talking about planning first. Apparently when you are talking about a project, there is no planning phrase to a project. I really did not understand that. I would have thought that the architects of EduTech and so on would have appreciated the importance of...

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: I am saying that planning as a phase on a project development is quite important, that is all I am saying. Mr. Speaker, apparently I announced that a project is in the planning stage but apparently it seems that people are suggesting that jobs are supposedly to be out there. I know that the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown does not agree with that, the Honourable Member is the biggest supporter of Hyatt and I am the second biggest supporter. I am all for jobs, I am all for tourism coming to the people of St. Michael. Sir, this idea that the people of St. Michael in my constituency, in the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown constituency and in the Right Honourable Prime Minister constituency that we are not good enough for tourism. I do not understand that, that is a very strange public pronouncement.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five minutes left in which to conclude.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, the people of Christ church could handle tourism; the people of St. James can handle tourism, but somehow do not bring a hotel in St. Michael because apparently we do not know how to behave. Sir, that is foolishness. We want a piece of that action and we are going to get it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I want also to say very quickly on the issue of new frontiers in tourism, the decision to tackle yachting tourism in a significant way, again I did not understand that. Sir, in her presentation the Honourable Member spoke about an Ex-Lac study but it is interesting that Ex-Lac and people involved in Ex-Lac are good enough on one hand but they are not good enough on the other hand, because it was an Ex-Lac study that spoke about the potential of yachting tourism element, it was the Ex-lac study. Barbados has less than 100 berths for yachts and we are missing out, you have Grenada who has just over 407 berths, 11 marinas and they estimate their earnings to be EC\$132 million from that sector, employing 750 people. Saint Maarten, a very small country of thirty-something square miles has 13 marinas and 1,020 berths. The USVI has 842 berths. The Bahamas has 845 berths. Martinique, which is just around the corner, has 1 178 berths, with Antigua which nine marinas and 340 berths.

We are missing out on an entirely new axis of tourism. These people spend, it creates employment, the ships when they are here they have to be serviced, they have to be repaired, they have to be provisioned, you have a ship chandlery, the fact that the yachts people still want to go and get something to eat, the restaurants benefit, et cetera. It is an entirely new ambit of tourism that can work well for us.

Mr. Speaker, I want again to salute the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs for having the courage and the foresight for us to be able to deal with that.

Mr. Speaker, very quickly I just want to say that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South will get into the details but that the idea of a 2 per cent levy in order to shore up the quality of healthcare that we have to offer as a nation is something that should be commended. Mr. Speaker, the truth is that we are working on a national health insurance plan to which the Minister spoke, but until we get there we have to put this levy in place.

Mr. Speaker, I thought that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East had a golden opportunity, because it was the Barbados Labour Party who put the idea of a national health insurance plan out there, around the time they implemented the Barbados Drug Service. Of course, it never happened because it was deemed to have been too expensive. Mr. Speaker, as the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs mentioned, when you have a situation where almost the personal households are contributing \$284 million to prop up the economy then we have to do something about that. I think a levy, as appropriately named, social responsibility because it is essential in ensuring that your social infrastructure, quality healthcare, et cetera, as we have all agreed socialised healthcare must lead the way and that quality healthcare that is available for our citizens is something on which we cannot compromise. Therefore I think that the 2 per cent levy has to be looked at in that context.

Mr. Speaker, on the subject of the tax burden, I do not remember the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East speaking about easing the tax burden when we adjusted income tax and the band for property tax. The overall tax burden when you think about it, has not really been impacted negatively upon. We are doing it for ensuring that we have a quality primary care, a quality preventative care and of course the acute care that is available at our institutions, especially the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I think we have to put it in its appropriate context.

Mr. Speaker, once again I want to commend the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. As the Honourable Member said it in his conclusion, we are handling the twin challenges of economic growth but are building out our society beautifully. This is the social

balance that we spoke of and continue to speak of. It is what differentiates us from the other Government.

Mr. Speaker, running a Government is not only about the arithmetic of economic matters, it is about the society that you are trying to build out. This Government has been proven, we were tested through some difficult times and we have been proven. Sir, yes, it has been a long and weary pilgrimage at times but there is no doubt that we still have the capacity to succeed. Sir, 50 years into our nationhood this Government has proven that we can handle the difficult times and we have set, indeed, the framework for further prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, our decisions, even though they are made in difficult circumstances, and yes there are casualties, they are aimed at building a stronger society, they are aimed at building a better country and it is in that context that I once again want to commend the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West and say that I completely support these budgetary proposals, 2016. I am obliged to you, Sir.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable House be now suspended for Dinner, to be resumed at 8.30 p.m.

Hon. R.D. JONES: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question was put to the Honourable the House and resolved in the affirmative, without division and Mr. Speaker suspended the Sitting accordingly.

No.C38B (21)7

38 p.m.

SEQ 22 BLANK

S23 BLANK

Wednesday, AUGUST 17, 2016

Seq. 24

RESUMPTION

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Members, this Sitting of the House is resumed. When the suspension was taken, we were on Order No. 21, and with that we shall continue. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, we are once again gathered on an annual exercise which I have to say from our end, and speaking on behalf of our constituents,

has now become a mockery, a sham. Sir, it is now I think what the classical scholars would call a “brutum fulmen”: a thing writ in water. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I can really think of no more apt a description that “a thing writ in water” because by definition, a thing written in water leaves no evidence of what was there. Sir, when we examine the Budgetary Proposals delivered by the Minister of Finance yesterday, we cannot honestly say that they serve any purpose beyond satisfying the Minister of Finance’s desire to summon us to Parliament to hear him speak.

Mr. Speaker, as a child I was an avid reader and I have a fond recollection of reading a fairytale by Hans Christian Anderson, and it had to do with a boy who was carrying cheeses to market. For those of you who would know anything about Europe, you would know that cheeses were round. A cheese fell off the cart and rolled to the bottom of a hill, and the boy sat and cried and wondered what he would do to recover this cheese, so he decided to roll another cheese down the hill behind it in the vain hope that the second cheese would bring back the first, Sir. Of course, no cheeses came back, and after a few more minutes he decided to roll yet another cheese down the hill, Sir. At the end of the exercise, Sir, that boy had lost all of the cheese that he was to carry to market. He had lost his capacity to earn, and he had engaged in nothing more than a futile endeavour. Mr. Speaker, when we consider the annual efforts of this Administration, we are reminded of an exercise in rolling yet another set of cheese down the proverbial hill in the hope of bringing back some prosperity and growth to the Barbadian economy.

We have had it for eight years, and I think we have had this current Minister of Finance for six of those eight years, and every year, Sir, we come to this Parliament for his annual Budgetary Proposals. Mr. Speaker, when we reflect on what happened the year before and the year before that and the year before that, I would suggest that no Member of this Chamber would recollect what the previous year’s Proposals were, except they took up the book and read it. Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that that is instructive. It is instructive because if we cannot immediately recollect a single one of last year’s Budgetary Proposals, then it means that they have left no mark on the Barbadian society or the Barbadian economy, Sir. It is a thing writ in water. I challenge any Member on that side to tell us what some of those Proposals were, or the Proposals given in the year 2014 or 2013 or 2012.

Mr. Speaker, a former Leader of the Opposition and a former Prime Minister of Barbados said on this side in 2008 that he had served as Chairman of Cabinet for 14 years and as Prime Minister for 14 years, and that the buck stopped at him. He, standing on the Floor of this Parliament, was man enough to say that all and any of the failings -- and they were not many -- of a Barbados Labour Party Administration between 1994 and 2008, he accepted

responsibility for them. Sir, it is a position that I urge on the current Prime Minister; that he be brave enough to stand in this Chamber and announce that the buck stops at him and that he readily accepts responsibility for year after year after year of failings of his Administration. Mr. Speaker, the other Members of Cabinet are not to get away because we operate on the basis of a system of collective responsibility, and we all know what that means, or we should know what it means. On that Government side, there are numerous instances over the last few years where one Minister said "I did not know anything about it," and the Prime Minister said "I have not seen the document. It has not come to my desk. I did not do this and I did not do that." Mr. Speaker, they have been very eager over the last eight years to find ways of casting the blame on somebody else. Now, Mr. Speaker, eight years into Government, most of the way through their second term, the blame of the Barbados Labour Party now rings hollow and empty, so the Prime Minister and his Cabinet are forced perhaps for the first time to acknowledge that the failings in today's society are theirs. The blame cannot be put on a Barbados Labour Party anymore.

Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that we have come here today to respond, I suppose, to an empty set of Budgetary Proposals, I am not surprised that the Member of the Democratic Labour Party who just spoke in his opening comments started to heap praise on the Minister of Finance. He said "I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance for this" and "I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance for that." Sir, it is remarkable that we, in our 50th year of Independence, in a mature Parliament, have now reached the stage where we are now heaping what I guess some would call "all glory, laud and honour" on what are nothing more than a set of ordinary, at best, proposals which will leave no mark on the Barbadian society. In fact, Mr. Speaker, ordinary might be too generous a word, Sir. We could perhaps call them lacklustre. Mr. Speaker, we have a booklet which in summary sets out 17 proposals of this Administration. Mr. Speaker, these proposals lack any substance. They lack meaning, Sir, but most worrisome, they lack promise. There are Barbadians who had hoped and prayed that, upon listening to the Minister of Finance yesterday evening, they would have been thrown a lifeline somehow; something to give them a hope for a brighter future for themselves or for the next generation if not for themselves. However, the Minister of Finance, in his fanfare and his corsage, having summoned us to Parliament, has given us a mishmash of proposals that are more reminiscent of projects undertaken by service clubs like the Kiwanis or Lions or Rotary, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it is remarkable that in the year 2016 we could be asked to come to Parliament and give wholehearted support and praise for a cleanup and debushing programme. When I was in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Sir, at the age of 18 years at

Combermere School, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme as a service project had cleanup and debushing programmes.

Aside.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: The Girl Guides? Mr. Speaker, I do not know how the Member who just spoke would know, because by agreement, Sir, we would attend meetings on alternate Wednesdays, but he was so anxious to come, he did not want to come every other Wednesday, he insisted on coming on all the Wednesday but whether it is the Girls Guides or the Boy's Scouts or services clubs in today Parliament are we honestly telling this country that what is nothing more than a debushing service programme merits finding its way into the 2016 Budgetary Proposals. The Minister said this was going to be a Budget for growth and sustainability and those high sounding words which were meant to show Barbadians that our financial affairs and our livelihood would be better very soon but sir something has not warped the psyche of this Government so much so that the ordinary and mediocre appeals to them and find their way into a national programme for country like Barbados. Sir, I am ashamed. I take this opportunity to look through most of Budgetary Proposals that were presented by the Barbados Labour Party between 1994 and 2007. There is no equivalent of such a measure and perhaps, it would be a good place to make the point that I find it very easy to put the Budgetary Proposals into three slots. The first slot is the slot of the trifling. I do not need to define the word trifling for members of this Chamber. The first slot is the trifling one and I have to put the debushing programme into the trifling one. The next slot is the slot of the warmed over because in this Budgetary Proposal there are things that were established by the Barbados Labour Party back in the 90s that have somehow found their way into the 2016 Budget and the Minister wants to tell us they have emerged from his imagination. Sir, then there is the downright harmful. If we classify them in that way I think that they cover all the Budget. There is absolutely nothing of these 17 proposals that is either not trifling nor warmed over nor downright harmful.

Mr. Speaker, let me come back to the \$5 million programme. Now, apart from the fact that it does not merit being in this high statement of political purpose I would like to remind Honourable Members on the other side that under the Barbados Labour Party there was a debushing programme. It was an annual programme, it was not a crash programme. It was repeated every year that we were in Government. We also had a programme call Beautify Barbados. Sir, beautiful Barbados employed 250 Barbadians but, Sir, in his infinite wisdom, the Minister of Finance together with Honourable Members on the other side decided that they would shut down Beautify Barbados, send home 250 individuals, send them home uncereemoniously, send them home without even accrued

vacation pay, up to this day they have not got it but the trade off that the Minister gives us after delivering a dolorous blow on 250 Barbadians is that we are going to have a \$5 million debushing programme.

Mr. Speaker, it is not a sustainable programme. It is lasting five months from September 1, 2016 and will terminate in January of 2017. I do not know, I hear there is election coming so maybe they want..

Asides.

Mr. D. MARSHALL: No. The Minister did not talk about any phase. The Minister said this is the programme, so there is no long-term plan but we are asked, and the Minister who just spoke congratulated the Minister of Finance, so that is what we have come to.

Mr. Speaker, how did it get this way. There are roads in my constituency that individuals can barely walk along far less drive because the Ministry of Public Works has virtually stop doing any debushing at all in rural Barbados. I believe that the the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would agree with this. They have stop doing virtually any debushing, they have fired the people. We have mountain of garbage piled up at every street corner. Sir, this is an old wife's to a large extent but there is Honourable Member who had brought some groceries in here but he wanted to make them documents of the House but we will not do that. Sir, you get need to get to the outskirts of Bridgetown and you will see mountains of garbage, garbage that must not have been collected for weeks and weeks.

Mr. Speaker, why should I come and celebrate a debushing programme. Is the Minister and his colleagues going to go there in hats with cutlasses and try to clean up Barbados. Sir, that is what they should do as an act of penance because having set the House on fire, they want to say here is \$5 million to help to out the fire.

Mr. Speaker, I am amused when I hear the Minister of Finance talk about health. I am so worried about the potential health ramifications of this unsightly accumulation of household garbage, there is no wonder that the rodent population in Barbados has exploded beyond measure.

Mr. Speaker, I have to ask myself what really is the priority of the Government. Sir, among the warmed over is a proposal to appoint public servants. I do not know how that gets to be a Budgetary Proposal. Why is it a Budgetary Proposal for the Democratic Labour Party that they should do what they ought to do. How is it that the carrying out of the day to day duties of the Ministry of the Public Service makes its way into a Budgetary Proposal. Sir, public officers who are acting in posts should be appointed.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what is worse, that the former Prime Minister now deceased David Thompson in October of 2007, speaking at a meeting of Democratic Labour Party members in Toronto promised that he would do just that. I believe that he somehow found out that we had legislation that was far advanced in drafting because by then it was very very far advanced which intended to make sure that public servants who were acting for long periods of time were going to be appointed.

Mr. Speaker, the former Prime Minister promised it. We passed the legislation which mandated it. In fact, the Act said that a certain category of temporary employee, a person who was acting for three years at the date of the Act was entitled to be appointed. Sir, Section 13 (11) of the Act also went on to say that no post in the Public Service could be left vacant for more than a year except it received the fiat of the Governor-General.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Public Service in terms of its ordinary day to day duties is to see to it that the workers of Barbados are treated fairly in accordance with law and that their dreams and aspiration in terms of their employment, job security and job opportunities are realised, that is what the Head of the Civil Service goes to work every day to see to, that is why you have a Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of the Civil Service,

what the head of the Civil Service goes to work every day to see to, that is what you have a Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of the Civil Service, that is what you have a Ministry of the Civil Service to do so to say that you are going to appoint temporary officers, Sir, is like putting the Budgetary Proposals that the Sanitation Authority is going to collect garbage. It means nothing because you have a whole ministry that is established to do it. What next, Sir? In next year's Budget are we going to see a proposal which says that nurses shall give injections? How ridiculous are you going to get, Sir? That is also quite trifling but you know what, Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt in our mind that an election is around the corner.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: I believe that the members of the public have heard the lament because it sounded like a lament to me. I said elections are around the corner and I heard a loud chorus coming from the Government Benches saying, oh Lord, oh Lord, oh Lord. Sir, I know where you can find people who, when I said so, raised up their voices with cheers, jubilation, Sir, because the only people who are lamenting the coming soon of an election is the Democratic Labour Party (DLP). I want to remind the Members of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) that Barbadians mark very hard. In 2008, we brought unemployment down to 6 per cent and the economy was booming. To use the words of a former Prime Minister, we

were firing on all cylinders but Barbadians mark hard and when we could succeed in bringing unemployment down to first world levels and could still lose a Government, if I were the Members of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) I would be afraid to call elections. Do you know what? Elections are coming so it suits the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) to trot out this old promise that was made by David Thompson, I am expecting that they are going to resurrect the promise to give teachers duty free cars and interest free housing loans. That is going to come next, I am sure so as to encourage people to vote for them. Mr. Speaker, Barbadians are not foolish and I do not think that any amount of pretty words and grandstanding by Members of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) in here tonight or in any other night will cause Barbadians to change their minds from the sure and certain course of getting this particular Administration out of power.

Mr. Speaker, a Minister of Finance comes to Parliament and says to the people of Barbados that he is going to impose another tax and this is now a National Social Responsibility Levy. I would like to suggest to the Minister of Finance that the pay cut that they took, I would like to suggest to them, Sir, that they should change their minds about taking it back and consider it a Government National Responsibility Levy. Sir, this Government wants to do a lot of things, they want to undo a lot of things, they want to do a lot of misguided things like push CAHILL down our throats, and now Deltro and the Grotto and all those kind of projects and the Minister of Tourism could actually ...

There are so many things to say. A minister of tourism, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to digress but now that I am on it, let me just mention it quickly. A minister of tourism says, Mr. Speaker, that he had sign an agreement with the parties who are going to be constructing the Hyatt. It is unfortunately that the Minister of Tourism could fall in the exact same trap as the Attorney General. The Attorney General said that a particular individual should be granted bail and two days later, the individual was granted bail.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Sir, I do not drive about anybody's car, hit them and then tell the police do not report it. I do not go to police stations to recover bullets, Sir, and then threaten the police officer, who is now dead, with disciplinary procedures, so I am not worried about that. Mr. Speaker, I would say this, the Minister of Tourism has reflected on the kind of message that he is sending the Town Planning Department. When he signs an agreement with a private company to build a hotel. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Tourism is not responsible for Town Planning that is true but the fact is, when he signs an agreement which appears to give the fiat of the executive for the construction of this 15-storey hotel, what is the Chief Town

Planner and his officers going to do? Is he going to say no, I am not going to give you permission to build it?

Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the tax because at the heart of it all I want to remind the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West and the Minister of Finance that while he can sit in his office and craft what he considers to be Government policy, that there are people out there, Sir, who have to suffer and live under it. I do not think the Minister of Finance is going to suffer under the additional 2 per cent tax burden that he is imposing on citizens and to toss out a little \$2 million as a palliative to Barbadians to say the more vulnerable could get a little welfare assistance. Mr. Speaker, unemployment is high, businesses are shutting down, there is a public sector wage freeze and a day facto private sector wage freeze because private sector businesses are not making any money so they cannot increase salaries but yet still the Minister feels very comfortable in saying that he is going to impose cess of 2 per cent.

Sir, I checked last year's Budget. In last year's Budget delivered in June of 2015 the Minister came here and said, well we are going to have this Health Thrust and we are going to fund it with \$20 million that will come from the Catastrophe Fund and the cess along will continue for another year and all of this money is going to go to the QEH but the Minister has not come to this Parliament to tell us today before he puts another cess on the people, what was the result of that particular initiative that was meant to unburden and unshackle the Hospital. Was it successful? How much money did the cess raise? What has been the impact on the QEH? I know that as I speak, Sir, people have to carry their own toilet paper and bandages to the QEH so what was the point of that cess? But yet still, Sir, without giving a report of what happened as a result of the last Budgetary Proposal he comes in here today and say that there is a 2 per cent cess and because there is a hope that Sanitation will get some trucks and finally be able to collect garbage, Mr. Speaker, Barbadians are supposed to get excited about it?

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes in which to wrap up.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I have constituents who have endured more hardship in the last eight years as Barbadians than at any other time of their life. Their garbage is not collected, their roads have fallen apart, you can hardly drive along a road, in not just St. Joseph but in rural Barbados, without damaging your vehicle. Mr. Speaker, I have a constituent who lives in a place called Bonwell and you know for the scholars, I guess Bonwell would connote something beautiful, Sir, something that is pleasing. This particular individual, Sir, between the month of January and February, was only able to get 1 cubic metre of water from the Water Authority.

Mr. Speaker, a cubic metre is probably less water than the average household would use in a day but for the entire month he was only able to get 1 cubic metre from the Authority. February/March, Sir, his billing again reflected 1 cubic metre, March/April, 0 cubic metres, April/May, April/May 0 cubic metres; May/June 0 cubic metres; and June/July 0 cubic metres. There is another individual, Sir, in Bonwell who has not had running water in his taps since Christmas Eve of 2015. My constituents are hurting but yet still the Minister of Finance wants to tell us about growth. What growth can I expect in St. Joseph or in rural Barbados when businesses have to close because they cannot get water, when small people who sell food cannot get water and hotels have to close because they cannot get water for their guests, and when the Grantley Adams Memorial School, St. Joseph Primary, St. Bernard's Primary and St. Elizabeth Primary have to close on a regular basis because of no water, but yet still my constituents are now burdened.

Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? Notwithstanding that you are not getting any water, every month you got to pay \$30-something for the metre. Now, I have told my constituents to let the Barbados Water Authority come and take off the metre because if it is not registering anything it is not serving any purpose and if it serves no purpose I am just paying for it like a useless appendage so do not just relieve me of water, relieve me of your metre.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Yes, they do need a rebate. Mr. Speaker, what we need is more than a rebate on water bills. The people of Barbados need a rebate from this Administration, that is the best kind of rebate that the people of Barbados could have.

In terms of the..., I really do not have much time but I will just say this, the Minister has said that they are introducing a programme to put \$50 000 in reimbursable funding in the hands of small businesses so that they could meet international standards. This is warm up. We have been there, done that. When the Barbados Labour Party established and ran the Technical Assistance Fund there was no cap on the amount of money you could get but now it is being touted as a wonderful endeavour but there is a cap. Mr. Speaker, when we set up those funds businesses like Hanschell Inniss, Pine Hill Dairy and Harris Paints, and those are the big ones, and the smaller ones as well, the people who sell seasonings, were all able to benefit from it so that they become HACCP and ISO compliant. This is nothing new, it is all there and the funding is still there, so the Minister has come in with his mismatch, his trifling, his ineffective, things that will make no difference in the Barbadian public. Mr. Speaker, the only good thing is that just like his previous Budgets, in six months' time nobody would remember the promises made now simply because they will either not have been carried through or if they

have been followed through on they would have left absolutely no footprint on the lives of Barbadians. There is nothing to praise in this Budget. The Members on the Government side who feel obliged should excuse themselves because it will ring hollow and none of the congratulations would be sincere.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time has expired.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: What they should be offering instead would be apologies to the people of Barbados.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I too rise to speak in this Budgetary measures and to say from the outset that I totally support them. The last speaker who spoke spoke under the impression that we in here have a short memory but he cannot any longer come to this House or his constituents and tell Barbadians that the problem for the shortage of water in St. Joseph has to do with Andrews Sugar Factory. For many years, they used to fool the people and tell the people in St. Joseph that the reason why there was a water shortage was because Andrews Sugar Factory was working. Andrews Sugar Factory is not working anymore and there is a water shortage so it means that what the Honourable Member for St. Joseph has been blaming the present Minister with responsibility for water for cannot be true because it was a problem prior to this particular problem which we are incurring in this country, so the people of St. Joseph have found him short and they have recognised that what was told to them about Andrews Sugar Factory was not true but they always had a water problem in St. Joseph which they blamed on Andrews Sugar Factory.

I also want to say that the reason why the Honourable Members cannot connect to these budgetary proposals is because everything they asked their members to go on the call-in programmes and talk about has been solved in these proposals: the debushing programme, the hospital, the garbage, sanitation trucks, you name it. We have responded not only to the people of Barbados but to the Opposition and that is why they came in here today and spoke and could not connect to the Budget because we answered them and they could not reply to the Budget. For over three hours nobody could tell you any substantial point that they have made that would differ from this Budget.

I am waiting on the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown because I know that this Budget belongs to

him. I am waiting on him because in the Special Development Areas we did not only concentrate on the city in a narrow way but we expanded it to its total constituency and beyond so it means that it was not only for a special group but that we have encompassed everybody as it relates to the city and now what we would be doing is building out the city.

I have said in this House and I will continue to make the point that the city and the urban areas as we knew them before, not as we know them now because there is a difference since this party came to Government in 2008, where the Urban Development Commission was responsible was about consolidation. It is no doubt that this consolidation is going to be in a significant way because not only are you going to expand the Special Development Areas you are also bringing hotels to the city and you are also not only bringing hotels to the city but you are also bringing a programme to match what you have in the hotel sector with the living conditions of the people in the city. I want to tell the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown that for the first time he must have regrets in leaving this party to join that party because he now finds himself on the wrong side of the corridor.

Asides.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Yes, he was over here but he now finds himself on the wrong side of the corridor. No, I remember when we were supporting him to be Brigadier. We canvassed for him for the Brigadier when we were in Opposition and the same person who said he should not be, he joined, I remember that well.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, what we are having here today is a complete proposal that we have canvassed to people in Barbados. During our habitat meetings we went right across Barbados and it was acknowledged during those habitat meeting that from Ragged Point to Harrison's Point or the areas now regarded as the urban areas of Barbados... I want to repeat this. When I say Harrison's Point I do not mean just by Harrison's Point Lighthouse, I am talking about that encompassing area that could stretch up to the imagination of the Cabinet of Barbados, the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister of Barbados wherever they decide because we know, and I have said this in this House all the time, that in order for Barbados to be a developed country St. Lucy must be developed. I will repeat this and I will repeat it all the time because the capital expansion and the growth of this country must be found in the rural areas. That is why if we want to continue to expand tourism in this country we must understand that we cannot expand the numbers without creating the services for them to benefit from. If we do not do that, we will have a stale product and we will have no intention as a Government to have a stale product. As I spoke previously about the urban areas of Barbados, we also have to recognise that from Archers Bay

in St. Lucy, and as it is very significant, to Consett Bay, St. John, is where the national park is found. Sir, once you have the national park and the urban areas it tells you that you have to come up with a plan to build out these areas. Sir, this is where, especially in the national park areas, community tourism must be given the impetus to ensure that we correct the problem for tourism, so that our products would not be stale.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Tourism for ensuring that the Honourable Member is bringing the numbers, but if the Minister of Tourism is bringing the numbers then it is on me as the Minister with responsibility for rural development to ensure that all the coves and bays along the coastline of Barbados are built out and become assessable so that we can have open spaces, public places and other alternatives, so that the people in rural Barbados would not believe that they are only there as numbers but that they too can play a part in ensuring that they have a hand in the development of Barbados and that they can also benefit from the tourism product of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we are not a too-few Government, we are a Government that believes in employing all the people of Barbados, that is why we have brought these 17 proposals because we have listened to what the people of Barbados have been saying and we recognised what we had to do, that is why we have brought these proposals to this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, so good are these proposals that the Leader of the Opposition spoke for three hours and the Honourable Member could not have found any fault in these measures. Furthermore, we were told in here that these were what we had seen before. Sir, if we have seen them before then it means that we are in a better position to implement them and that is exactly what we are going to do, we are going to implement them. Sir, for example, the Honourable Member is saying that when they were in Government they knew the problems in relation to the yachts, yet they did nothing about it, but in one stroke of the pen we came here and ensured that owners of yachts do not have to leave Barbados to go elsewhere because of the charges that were put on them, instead we put a flat charge to keep them in Barbados. This would ensure that they would spend more money in Barbados but that we would also create an industry because of the possibly where there are a number of boats now where some innovative person would understand that these yachts have to be serviced and that the jobs that used to leave Barbados can now remain in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member spoke of this budget not having progress, this is progress.

Asides.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I have heard a lot of talk in his Honourable House as it relates to the Ministry for which I have responsibility. I want to say

this to this Honourable House and to the people of Barbados who have recognised that in a crisis time you cannot continue to do the things that you would have done in normal times. I have responsibility for the National Housing Corporation, I have responsibility for the Rural Development Commission and for the general Ministry of Housing, Lands.

Sir, a lot of people tend to focus only on National Housing Corporation and I have said it over and over that the National Housing Corporation is the commercial arm of the Ministry for which I have responsibility, that the Rural Development Commission is the social arm and also that the most important aspect of it, in my opinion, is that it is the development arm of the Ministry. Mr. Speaker, for years, because the Barbados Labour Party formed the Rural Development Commission and did not understand what it was all about, even though they wrote it as a policy document, as far back as 1995 -- and you can find this in Hansard -- when we debated Rural Development Commission in this Honourable House, I was on that side. I said that because of the Rural Development Commission Speightstown can now expand to Mile-and-a-Quarter. If you go to Hansard you would see that. You can tell me when you go to St. Peter now if what I said is not true. Sir, you now get the Junction Supermarket. Sir, the greatest piece of expansion going on in St. Peter is not in Speightstown, it is in Mile-and-a-Quarter, by Junction Supermarket, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, not only that, we have great demands if we only had space there by All Saints, every week we are getting a different request from different agencies who want to lease land in that particular area because they understand. Sir, the problem in Barbados and in the Barbados Labour Party is that they had to see things in the text books for them to understand, not me. What they should do is that when I speak they should write books. If they used to write books when I speak, they would be able to implement. Sir, unlike the Barbados Labour Party I have a vision and I fight that vision because I implement my vision.

Mr. Speaker, I do not mind these people because when one looks now to see what is happening in the area of Mile-and-a-Quarter, if we could only get back what we had before and put the St. Joseph Hospital...

Mr. Speaker, I am seeking to find an investor to utilise the St. Joseph Hospital. I am also looking for someone to be able to use the land by the District "E" Police Station, to be able to make that natural connection between the junction of Mile-and-a-Quarter and Speightstown so that that area can totally be expanded.

Mr. Speaker, you do not have to worry, the truth is that Speightstown has expanded as far north now as

Harrison's Point because right on that road, if you would follow it, there is a business structure going right to Harrison's Point, even into Crab Hill. Sir, when people say that this Government is not doing anything for the north, they are only joking, they just do not understand development.

Mr. Speaker, with these special development areas, it means that the growth in the north will increase much greater and the attractions will be much greater. Sir, let us imagine what is happening in the north without the special development area. Just imagine what would happen when the special development area is there. Just imagine when the Minister of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation sends the cheque to the Ministry of Housing to pay for the land at Nestfield. Just imagine when that occurs what would happen. You would now have the primary school, the secondary school and a tertiary institution. Further, you would have built on to it what is going on at Colleton, in Colleton Development, in Checker Hall, in Half Moon Fort and at Harrison's Point.

Mr. Speaker, I am telling those persons who are property owners from Crab Hill, St. Lucy right down... I think when we are finished that that border line would have to be moved, even though it has to go in this initial stage to Archers Bay, for the simple reason that from Archers Bay onwards is regarded as the national park of Barbados. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that all of that land inland...

Mr. Speaker, what is foresight is that we have already have a development plan which we put up nearly five years ago and I am sorry that I did not bring it to this Honourable House to show how St. Lucy would be mapped out and how the development would go. I have heard a lot of people badmouthing certain projects in St. Lucy but I am not worried because I heard the same thing about Beachland, about the project at Black Bess, among others. I have been in here long enough to see that Beachland has started and in the same way that Beachland has started there will be many other projects in Barbados that will start too.

Mr. Speaker, I have not given up hope on anything that has to come to St. Lucy, for they will come. Sir, the roads will come, the housing structure will come, because as I speak now, we will ensure that the lots that have to go to Colleton; the land that we have in Cluffs we will build out, and the lands that we are hoping to acquire at Lowlands we will build out too, for the simple reason that the time is ripe for development in the north and in order for Barbados to be developed, St. Lucy along with area in the north must have part of the development so that they can push Barbados forward, because they are green areas.

Mr. Speaker, whenever you take a good project to a green area whatever the Government is prepared to put in,

investors are prepared to put in more. Sir, that is why I have always said that we have to ensure that we spend money on Bridgetown and that the Urban Development Commission must be able to keep Bridgetown alive and ensure that consolidation occurs. The Rural Development Commission (RDC) must create the expansion in the rural areas to ensure that we continue to be described as we are described in the rest of the world. It is only in Barbados that we are badmouthed by the Opposition, but in the rest of the world we are regarded as a city state, because they have recognised that the urban areas sometimes have to catch up with the rural areas. We are probably the only country in the world where the housing stock in the rural areas are better than those in the urban areas, but we get in here and we badmouth our country, because we cannot appreciate these things.

I want to say this because I have heard a lot of talk about shortages of houses in Barbados. We do not have a shortage of houses in Barbados. We have enough building space in Barbados to house everybody, especially in a crisis time. I am told that we have a demand for about 17 000 houses, and in the same breath I am told that we have 15 000 houses unoccupied. This means that we have a deficit of 2 000, according to your calculation, but if you look at the houses that people have in Barbados and you look at the sizes of the houses, you will find two people living in houses that have seven bedrooms. It means that we have a waste of resources, and we need to find a way to show those persons that a house needs to be more than a home but it can also be a business. Some of that space can be rented out to other persons, and ease the demand on the people of Barbados.

Sir, in a time when we have a country where we are told that the unproductive sectors must be fuelled, it would be idiotic of me to put pressure on the Minister of Finance when the Ministries of Tourism, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Business and other things including the service sector are in need of resources. I cannot tell the Minister of Finance do not give them the money but give me to build houses when I would know from my training that in order for me to get money to build houses, there must be a surplus and the productive sectors must be given the necessary resources to generate enough resources so that I can share in those resources. How can I deprive the productive sectors in this country from being able to get a jumpstart? Mr. Speaker, we do not have a problem in this country, as I have been able to outline to you, when it comes to housing. What I will tell you, Sir, is that I just said that we only have a 2 000 deficit when you look at the number of units available. A lot of people believe that when I say we have 15 000 units unoccupied that we are talking about Government units. I am not speaking about Government units. I am talking about what they described as the units as it relates to total Barbados and what belongs to the private sector and so on. Even though we only have 4

000 units belonging to Government, there are people who still believe that the 15 000 belong to Government. Our count was only about 4 000 so the 15 000 cannot belong to the Government, so I do not want anybody to run and go and say that I said that there are 15 000 Government units out there, as I have heard previously.

Sir, what I want to say is that what we are doing at National Housing Corporation, and we have been very creative about it, is that we have ensured that when we have opportunities where we have houses, we allow the future buyers to be able to move in early; and where they are paying \$1 000 a month, we have invited them to move in early and pay only \$500 so that they can go in and do the building out, landscaping, et cetera. That is what we have been able to do at National Housing Corporation. Not only that; we have been able to tell contractors, because of how we manage our cash flow, that we might not have the cash but what they can do is take some land and put in the necessary services so that we can get the lots available. A good example of that is if you go to St. James tonight, you will see massive construction going on. The reason why that can occur is because we were able to swap land for the services provided. We will do that in more developments because what we will do is continue to ensure that we continue developing our land. Even though we might not have the necessary cash, we have an asset. We have an asset that is well sought after by other persons. There is no person I know who has money to whom you can offer land instead of cash and they would not go for the land, because they know that the future value of the land is much greater than the cash. They also know that if we pay them in cash, they might only get one or two per cent, but when they get the land, the value appreciates a lot more.

That is why I am saying that the special development areas that we have that run right along the coastline will attract investors to Barbados. That is why I expect to see some more jetties on the coastline of Barbados, so that the fishing industry can benefit from it and also so that those persons involved in the tourism services will have a benefit. We must ensure that our tourism, agriculture and manufacturing industries are handled in such a way that there is a niche between them, and that the niche is handled in such a way that we empower everybody. Tourism is not for a "too few". Tourism under the Democratic Labour Party is for everyone, and that is why it is very important for us to build out areas. That is why it is also very important for us to ensure that, with the sea which is untapped, we provide resources for those persons who are interested in making \$500 and \$600 a day out fishing. Yes, some people do that; they make that type of money. We must also ensure that we provide the necessary finances at RDC and so on, so that persons who have small holdings of land are prepared to rent them to people who cannot find employment otherwise. We will provide the seed capital so

that they can work the land and employ themselves and make themselves self-sufficient.

Mr. Speaker, this Budget is rather exciting. This Budget is a Budget that will definitely take the country forward, and this is a Budget that the Opposition cannot reply to because it is like spitting up in the air and allowing it to fall back in your face. Mr. Speaker, this proposal for the pensioners is welcome. I have heard them talk about the pensioners getting \$40 a week. That is not true. The pensioners are getting \$43.30 a week, because a month of 4.33 multiplied by ten is 43.30. Yes, that is a fact.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes in which to conclude.

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Yes, Sir. That is a fact, Sir, do not let anybody fool you. I have also heard, Sir, that Barbados needs cleaning up but we have responded. I have also heard it in the constituency which I represent. Yes, we are going to clean up St. Lucy too. We are going to debush it and clean it up, and we will do the roads, but the house spots are coming too and we will seek to build out those coastal areas to create work. St. Lucy has always been the most independent parish and we will ensure that it continues to be the most independent parish. That is why the special development area running from Harrison Point, which I call Crab Hill or near to Archers Bay, straight back to Six Men's, will empower all of those people in that radius, and they will now be able to better appreciate it. One thing I can tell you about the people of St. Lucy: If there is one asset they appreciate a lot, it is the asset of land. If you go into St. Lucy asking about buying land, the older folk always tell you, "We do not sell land, we buy land because we understand the importance of land." They know that if there is one asset that they can afford to leave for their children, it is the asset of a piece of land, because once you leave a piece of land, you know you are leaving empowerment for your children. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that in relation to these Proposals, including the one for the hospital, everybody was in here complaining about the hospital. We solved the problem with the hospital. Sir, do you what is amazing, we are doing this at a time when the economy is supposed to be in a crisis. When the Barbados Labour Party had all the money, they even brought a deposit to this House to borrow money to finance the hospital and they are in here now complaining.

Asides.

Hon. D. KELLMAN: I am speaking about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Do you not know that a Board was set with \$100 million plus the ability to borrow. Do you not know that. I am saying that we are not asking the hospital, what we are doing is giving it the natural resources to ensure because we know that a healthy man is a good working man.

Asides.

Hon. D. KELLMAN: I come from St. Thomas but I do not represent St. Thomas. Sir, the resources that we are putting in the Credit Fund is for the productive sectors and we will ensure that all the productive sectors are empowered because what we have to do is to ensure that the productive are functioning properly and when they are functioning the way we want them to and producing the necessary resources all the other social costs... there are some essential social costs that we cannot afford to neglect and health is one, sir. Sir, that is why we are ensuring these social costs are being matched with the necessary revenue.

Mr. Speaker, to the people of Barbados I say to them that it has been difficult but we have kept our hands on the plough, we have turned the land and now we are giving you the resources that the land has been able to produce. We are in here today, Sir, because we are the Government that cares. We have never done anything to bad-mouth this country. We have not gone overseas and tell people not to invest in the country, what we have done is to ask and invite people to come to this country. Sir, my biggest fear is that after we have done all these things and the Opposition have encourage people to keep their money in the bank, now the money they have kept in the bank, they are only one per cent and two per cent when we have been beseeching them not to keep the money in the banks but to invest it in project but the Opposition went all over Barbados telling people not to invest in this Party, to keep it until they get into Government and now most of them have lost their money because they are following the Barbados Labour Party with their advice and now we have a situation where they are not getting back the returns they have expected. Sir, now you are hearing the Barbados Labour Party saying that we are luring foreigners to come and invest in the country. Sir, that opportunities was given to the people of Barbados and the Barbados Labour Party advised them not to invest in the economy and now people have invested in the economy, getting the benefits and every day the Barbados Labour Party comes in here to curse them.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to you and while they continue bad-mouthing Barbados, we will continue to develop it. Sir, I thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. G. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, there is famous quotation, "The king is dead. Long live the King". Sir, that quotation for years have been repeated after the death of a monarch. I think that one of the problems of the Democratic Labour Party after reflecting on their history that they do not believe that the king is dead and, therefore, the measures they have introduced over the past eight years

have been patchwork and I can see for the very first time in eight years, the hands of the Prime Minister in these proposals. Therefore, I believe that eight years after the death of a Prime Minister the Democratic Labour Party has now come to the realisation that the Prime Minister is dead but long live the Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, these measures are indeed important but it is a bit bewildering to the Frontbench because they do not understand that the king is dead. Sir, for the very first time according to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, this represent a patchwork of a group of policies from as far back as Tom Adams. They have implemented some of the Barbados Labour Party's proposals in 2007 and they have now come to the realisation that the policies of the Honourable Member for St. Philip West's policies will work. Therefore, the measures of taxation 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015, all tried to raise revenue and for the very first time in eight years we can see a Budget that have some measures of re financing the debt even though we are in a deep, deep hole. Mr. Speaker, the measures introduced will only get us so far but you do not have the time. Sir, I will show in my presentation that time is of the essence and only the Prime Minister knows when but most of these measures will not bear fruit.

Mr. Speaker, I am not fascinated with the elections but I am fascinated to the point that some of the measures introduced here... I think the Honourable Member for St. Philip West ought to open a school for the Government because he has been saying this over and over again that you need to refinance the deficit, you knew to refurbish your institutions, you need to control your debt and we see some elements of this happening today but we do not know how far it will Government because the Government has not even shown us what will happen and if the new measures will become a reality.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at some of the measures we see the one to create the special development areas but we have looked at that since 2008 but we have now come to it in 2016. Sir, that was to be done, amendment to the Tourism Development Act was to be done, you talk about workers who are temporary, that was supposed to be put in place since 2007 so it is now coming to fruition. Sir, these measures were supposed to be done a long time ago.

Mr. Speaker, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital programme that you are trying to implement and putting taxes in place for import is something that needs to be explained as to how it is to be done because the measures that have been introduced, it has not been thought out how these measures will be introduced. For example, when you say to us that you are going to increase a levy by two per cent, what is happening here. Is it going to be done before the VAT on import of goods. If it is done after will it still

be the same? I am saying that the increase would cause a problem and I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the Member has not properly thought out how this measure would impact imports. He has to show if the 2 per cent would be before VAT or after the VAT that is why we are asking what will happen. Of course, Mr. Speaker, whatever is the position it will cause an increase in the cost of living across Barbados. Mr. Speaker, we have problems here when we look at the level of unemployment. The Minister has not shown what will happened if there will be an increase in unemployment because I noticed that he has not tackled the question of unemployment versus employment so we need to look at that very carefully. Mr. Speaker, the Minister must tell us what will happen over the course of the next two years. Mr. Speaker, what will happen to the level of unemployment in this country? We have seen over the past years that the unemployment figures in this country have moved from 7 per cent to 11 per cent. What will cause this country to have employment creation?

This Budget has not sought to increase employment generation in this country. It will cause severe hardship. When you look at the various measures, the duty free zones which may be very popular to many of the business sector but will it help in terms of putting US dollars in place vis-à-vis Barbadian dollars. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we need to look at that very carefully especially in light of the fact that a currency which is not Barbadian we cannot have any control over so we have to look at that duty free concession that is being implemented.

Mr. Speaker, there is one area that I believe that Government has spent some time on and I believe that Leader of the Opposition has spoken about the increase in bank asset tax from 0.2 per cent to 0.35 per cent is one that needs to be looked at very carefully. Banks and credit unions, I believe, which extend financing to Barbadians who are suffering because they cannot pay their mortgages, we have to look at that. I believe that a tax on the bank assets and credit unions assets we need careful regulations. We need to look very carefully at how it is going to be applied. When banks give credit in terms of mortgages, when they give loans, either to householders or businesses, then we need to help that bank that is helping but, of course, those banks that are not helping the situation because in recent times, Mr. Speaker, a number of financial institutions have not been helping ordinary Barbadians especially in their mortgages so we need to look at this. Those financial institutions that are willing to help Barbadians get over this difficult period, I believe, that some rebate should be given to those institutions but, of course, those financial institutions, banks and credit unions and insurance companies that are not helping businesses or ordinary Barbadians at this time, we need to penalise or put heavier fines on those assets.

Then it comes to regulations, we have seen, Mr. Speaker, what happens in some jurisdictions. We have seen what happens in North America. Tighter regulations have been put on insurance companies and, of course, on banks and I am saying that heavier regulations need to be enforced by the Central Bank of Barbados especially for those institutions that are not helping the business sector at all.

Over the past year or so, there are a number of small businesses and a number of people in my constituency who have been laid off and who could not pay their mortgages but, of course, the financial institutions have not helped them at all and we have seen a number of persons losing their homes, their only investment because the financial institutions were not prepared to help them. A lady from St. Philip South came to me two years ago and she cried because she could not get help and it is not because the Member of Parliament did not help but because of the situation. I am saying that the financial institution did not listen to that lady and the house was not sold, the house became derelict. Mr. Speaker, we have across Barbados a number of derelict properties because the financial institutions do not understand what is happening. If because a person is laid off and you are going to sell that house because they cannot pay after that person has paid the mortgage interest for all of those years, it is unfair and we need to look at that. I am of the view that since there is a new direction and since the hands of a new leader has immersed the Government needs to look at the Catastrophe Fund to put in place for those persons who are losing their homes. The Catastrophe Fund, by nature, was designed to help people. If you have a situation where a person is laid off because of ... Government has to govern, therefore, if a person is laid off and nobody in the house is work, Mr. Speaker, why can you not use the Catastrophe Fund to ensure that person does not lose his only investment? I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that you cannot turn to the National Housing Corporation. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy who just sat down talked about the Habitat Programme and Habitat meetings, he has been all over the world talking about Habitat and housing programme.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: You said that the Fund has about \$35 million, can it not be used to help cushion all these Barbadians? You have all these Barbadians who are on the street. I have an ex-policeman in my area tonight who is on the street because nobody in the house was working. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that we could use this Fund to help ordinary Barbadians to get over and get through this period and time. No help from the credit unions, the banking institutions or Government, where can we turn? The Government is supposed to set the tune. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that the time has time for this Government to look at new ideas to push Barbados forward

and to grow this economy. Conservative measures of taxation upon taxation will not help. Mr. Speaker, I have said from the outline that there is a new direction which as come too late. The Government needs to implement new programmes and to ensure that Barbadians who are suffering because of the economic situation that has been placed on them, by either the international agencies or this Government. We need to help those ordinary Barbadians. We need to understand that taxation is not the only way. We have to induce spending in order to save this economy. When we came to office, one of the things that we did was to stop ordinary Barbadians, the poor people from being poor, that was our mandate. Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that this continue.

Mr. Speaker, in this Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016, we talked about the debushing programme, every year from 1994 to 2007 a debushing programme was held in Barbados and we did it in order to ensure that the country looks well and to ensure that some Barbadians got jobs, at least between the months of November and February.

Mr. Speaker, if this is done across the country it will help to eliminate the problems with regarding to health that the Minister of Health talks about; it will help to create employment; and it will help to generate growth in our economy. Mr. Speaker, it is time that we understand that not only is this debushing programme important but that it helps with providing agricultural workers with some form of employment. When you debush the area then you have to be able to go beyond debushing, you have to be able to provide crops and other incentives for farming and so on.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this will go far but as I said before, it is too late. Mr. Speaker, you cannot come in 2016 hoping that you would generate employment or 1 per cent growth in the period 2016-2017. This would not happen within a two-year period and so you would have to wait maybe a little longer in order to generate any form of growth in this economy.

Mr. Speaker, it is important for us also to look not only at debushing, we talked about the various incentives under the Income Tax Act. Sir, since 2007 we have seen that the Government have been using the Income Tax Act not to help ordinary Barbadians. Sir, for example, today you cannot claim for repairs on your home, you cannot claim interest on retirement savings or on mortgage interest. These are things that used to happen in the past. I believe it helped also to provide some form of growth in our economy. Therefore the Government needs to look carefully at what they are doing in terms of not helping ordinary Barbadians in terms of their rebates when making claims.

Mr. Speaker, today there are people who can only claim for two children and that is something to which the Government needs to look. I think Government needs to look at that very, very carefully in the future because to my mind this is a backward step.

Mr. Speaker, the Government needs to go forward in a positive way to believe that the conservative method of taxing your way out of a hole is the only way has proven wrong for this Government in the past eight years. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am of the view that if the Government uses different methods in order to grow this economy to increase savings, because we have seen a situation where there are negative savings in today's society. Mr. Speaker, people are no longer saving, people cannot afford to save anymore and this is unfortunate. Sir, this is a country that has over the past 50 years and of course as Government goes forward in this 50th year we talk about what happened from 1966 to today. Mr. Speaker, people are not saving, people can no longer afford to save. Mr. Speaker, what is the cause of this? Is it because you have not increased salaries over the past eight years? Is it the cost of living?

Mr. Speaker, I am of the view that when you allow people to produce more, when you allow people to do more for themselves, when you allow people to spend more of their earnings on themselves, their families and in the society this will also help the country.

Mr. Speaker, I also feel that the time has come for Government to ensure that the industrial climate in Barbados is right. Sir, 50 years ago we had a strong manufacturing climate. Today what has happened to the manufacturing sector? I am saying that we have to be able to push our rum production. We have seen a situation where most of our rum producers must import most of their byproducts or inputs. It is unfortunate that we do not produce as much molasses as we did before. We have to go back to a position where we improve our sugar plants. There has been an attempt to refurbish our sugar factor at Andrews Factor, which is a good start, but where are we on it tonight? Where are we on this? We need to see a situation where not only our sugar factory is refurbished and modernised, but there is also a need to enhance our sugar production by using different techniques in terms of producing sugar. Let us look at what is happening in Mauritius, even Cuba has undergone severe technology transformation and so we have to do that in terms of pushing our country forward.

Mr. Speaker, another area that has caused us some form of concern is the fact that we are not producing enough, not only talented people in our country and pushing them forward, I believe that the time has come for us to now recognise those persons who have done well, but of course in order to push forth in our 50th year, those

persons who have done well across the sector, whether in sports, agriculture, tourism, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, the Government planned a couple of years ago to implement a new Praedial Larceny Bill. Where are we on that? Again we are hearing farmers crying out that there is a need for not only the policing to ensure that people who have spent long hours both day and night while doing farming that these people can get the fruits of their rewards but we have seen what is happening to this. I believe that the time has come for us to put this in place as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, another area that people have complained about to us, and only recently the people especially in the St. Philip area have been asking us to lift the ban on sea eggs. Again, I guess that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North will be able to tell us what is happening there. I understand that there are still some people who are reaping the sea eggs, though I do not understand how you can imprison a man for diving for sea eggs. Sir, this is a very serious thing.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I have said before the King is dead, long live the king, you need to stop that nonsensical thing of putting a man in prison for diving for a few sea eggs. Sir, it is important for us to look at that ban. I hope that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West would speak on that matter when the Honourable Member gets up to speak. Why are we still continuing this ban on sea eggs? I believe it has been banned for the last 10 years or so or maybe more than that and so I believe that we need to lift that ban.

Mr. Speaker, we have asked the question, the production of rum is important to Barbados, our manufacturing industry needs to be revitalized. The Government needs to spend more money in the byproducts or the input cost of rum, so that in the final analysis these are the areas that will help not only to promote growth in our economy, because it is one area in which we have seen some growth over the past two years in terms rum output.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five minutes left in which to conclude.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I also believe that there is a need to not only concentrate on our rum production but that we need to bring it into the 21st century. The technology that is being used today in the production of rum across the world has changed. We have seen some changes in our production here in Mount Gay Rum and to some extent, Cockspur, but we definitely need to see a need for improved technology.

Mr. Speaker, since the Minister is putting on 2 per cent on imports, rum should be something of choice and

more rum should be used in our hotel industry today and for export than we did before. I am calling for special incentives for the production of rum and the exportation of rum across the world. Mr. Speaker, since the Minister is putting on a 2 per cent on imports, rum should be something of choice, more rum should be used in our hotel industry today and for export more so than we did before. Mr. Speaker, I am calling for a special incentive to be given for the production and exportation of rum across the world. Madam President, indeed, this would not only help to see our economy grow, as was mentioned by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, for years it has been one of the areas that has shown some form of growth. Mr. Speaker, we can ensure that this happens at this time.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I would say that this budget can therefore go very far if a number measures are outlined and a number of refinements be done. Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the Special Development areas that needs to be defined. Even though it has been mentioned here, there is no clarity of what development ought to take in these various areas and that we need to see.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the cutting in certain ministries is a backward step, I do not believe that any ministry can afford a cut at this time. I do not believe that any ministry can take any cut, in fact, most ministries would tell you that they need more money in order to get their programmes going forward.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital there is a need to put more money there and I do support the idea of putting most of the money into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Mr. Speaker, of course, we need to see this dedicated fund for health, if it is to go to the various health services then we need to see it done, because there is definitely a need at this time to shore up our health services and to help Barbadians get through this period that they are under. Mr. Speaker, I cannot but tell you about the problems that I am hearing from my constituents and from visiting the hospital myself, that they need to do more, people mean well, they have been doing a good service there but of course we need to give them more resources in order that they can do better.

Mr. Speaker, ordinary Barbadians have been suffering over the past eight years, we want to see them at this time doing better. Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to ensure that ordinary Barbadians can not only eat better or do better in terms of providing for themselves and for their families but of course we want to see more businesses generating employment opportunities in this country. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we all owe it at this time to ensure that ordinary Barbadians can get through this period with some degree of satisfaction, with some degree of humanity and therefore I call on the Government to put in

place programmes based on what is happening here and on what can be done within this budget to help the ordinary Barbadians to be able to get through this period. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of Government Business.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I now beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended until 9.00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question was put to the Honourable the House and resolved in the affirmative, without division and Mr. Speaker suspended the Sitting accordingly.

CONTENTS

RESUMPTION (SEQ 1)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY 1

INSERT S7 CHRIS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY 7

Hon. R. L. Sealy, 21, 22, 23, 25.

SEQ 22 BLANK

RESUMPTION

Mr. D. D. Marshall, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30; Hon. D. St.E.
Kellman, 30, 31, 34; Mr. G. A. Clarke, 34, 36, 37.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BOYCE, Hon. J.D.E. (Christ Church South)

BRATHWAITE, Hon. A. D. (St. Philip South)

CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)

JONES, Hon. R.D. (Christ Church East Central)

KELLMAN, Hon. D. St.E. (St. Lucy)

MARSHALL, Mr. D. D. (St. Joseph)

MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)

SEALY, Hon. R. L. (St. Michael South Central)

DISCLAIMER. *This transcript was prepared with the assistance of artificial intelligence tools and is provided for reference only. It has not been reviewed, verified or approved by the Hansard Department of the Parliament of Barbados and does not constitute an official parliamentary record. It may contain errors or omissions, including inaccuracies in wording or speaker identification. For authoritative quotations or confirmation of proceedings, consult the official Hansard record when available.*

EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while preparing this report from the edited transcript. The text has not been altered except where stated.

Q1. Masthead and date. The convening sentence in the source gives the date as Friday, December 13, 2013, but the heading and file name give Wednesday, August 17, 2016, which is used. Please confirm.

Q2. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q3. Opening. The source opens with the heading ‘RESUMPTION (SEQ 1)’ and the Speaker’s call to the Member for St. Michael North East; there is no convening sentence, PRESENT list, prayers or Order Paper heading. The Speaker later refers to the debate as Order No. 21.

Q4. Speech of Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, take-slip about 4.53 p.m.. The source carries the reporters’ notes ‘INSERT S6 chris’ and ‘INSERT S7 CHRIS’, and the next passage opens ‘(Seq 8)’ and ‘... the Government well knows’. The text of Sequences 6 and 7 appears to be missing. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Dinner suspension, about 7.38 p.m.. Between the suspension and the resumption the source has the notes ‘SEQ 22 BLANK’ and ‘S23 BLANK’ and a broken take-slip (‘No.C38B (21)7’ / ‘38 p.m.’). Printed as in the source.

Q6. Call to Mr. G. A. Clarke. The Speaker calls ‘The Honourable Member for St. James North’, but the next speech is labelled ‘Mr. G. CLARKE’ (later ‘Mr. G. A. CLARKE’). Printed as in the source.

Q7. Speech labels. Mr. D. D. Marshall is also labelled ‘Mr. D.D MARSHALL’ and ‘Mr. D. MARSHALL’, and Hon. D. St.E. Kellman ‘Hon. D. KELLMAN’. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed on Wednesday, 17th August, 2016 its debate on the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016, presented the previous day; the Speaker presided and referred to the business as Order No. 21. He called the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, Member for St. Michael North East, allowing her two hours and forty-five minutes; she began by offering him her sympathy on the passing of his sister.

Miss Mottley said the Minister of Finance was ‘at war with himself’, torn between the technocrats, the international community and electoral politics. She argued that the measures, some \$140 million in new taxes and \$160 million overall, were driven by the International Monetary Fund, whose Board was to meet on the draft Article IV Report the Government had not released, and that the last eight years would be remembered as ‘the lost years’. She cited Caribbean Development Bank data putting debt at 131 per cent of GDP, spoke of VAT refunds owed to businesses, called the increase in pensions of \$1.42 a day inadequate, and questioned the treatment of the reserves, noting \$182 million in special drawing rights and \$322 million in the Government Sinking Fund for foreign debt within the \$883 million stated. She also criticised the concessions to Sandals, the \$50 million expenditure cuts, retroactive taxation and the ease of doing business, while supporting the \$50 000 reimbursement grant for local companies.

Hon. R. L. Sealy, Member for St. Michael South Central, congratulated the Minister and replied on planning and tourism development, stating that Sam Lord’s Castle had town planning permission and represented US\$250 million of close to \$1 billion of investment in tourism; Miss Mottley rose on a point of order to deny any responsibility for GEMS. He commended the Member for St. Michael North West for meeting the twin challenges of growth and social development. The House was then suspended for dinner until 8.30 p.m.

On resumption Mr. D. D. Marshall, Member for St. Joseph, called the annual Budget exercise ‘a mockery, a sham’, ‘a thing writ in water’, saying that his constituents had endured more hardship in the last eight years than at any other time and that the Government should offer apologies rather than rebates on water bills.

Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, Member for St. Lucy, supported the measures and replied to criticism of his Ministry, saying that the National Housing Corporation was only its commercial arm, and spoke of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and of resources for credit. Mr. G. A. Clarke described the measures as a patchwork of Barbados Labour Party proposals dating from 2007 and earlier, asked whether a fund of about \$35 million could cushion Barbadians, and spoke of the debushing programme and rum production.

On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, seconded by Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, the Sitting was suspended until 9.00 a.m. the next morning.

|