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Thursday, August 18, 2016

House C 38C Seq 1 9.13 a.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Good morning, Honourable Members. This Sitting is resumed. Honourable Members, when the suspension was taken last evening we were on Order No. 21 and to that we shall revert. The Honourable Member for St. John.

Her Hon. Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the occasion of this Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposal 2016/2017 to lend support to the measures as announced by our Minister of Finance but let me start out by thanking the good people of St. John for the support that they continue to give to me as their Parliamentary Representative and by extension to this Government as well. Let me also commend the Minister of Finance who continues to press against the critics on the Other Side and the army of political operatives located in public spaces masquerading as independent commentators.

Mr. Speaker, I sat and listened to the Leader of the Opposition who continues to adopt a style of politics which could best be described as “Trumpism”. “Trumpism” simply refers to the view that everything must be seen as gloom and doom. The evidence in Barbados on which to form such an opinion is virtually absent. An attempt was made by the Leader of the Opposition to first win the support of her dissenting parliamentary colleagues as her timeline as leader comes to an end.

I recently read in a section of the Press that the Opposition was reported to be calling for us to put our heads together for a joint think tank. This year’s Budget demonstrates that we do not need to put our heads together with the Opposition as this Cabinet, which I give my full

support this morning, continues to demonstrate its capacity to manage the affairs of this country responsibly. I cannot but highlight the irony of the offer to help manage the country when it is evident from those on the other side that they have great difficulty in managing their own affairs at Roebuck Street but that is a matter, I know, will come to the public’s attention in red October when the team from the east takes charge of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP).

Mr. Speaker, this Budget, according to some press reports that I read, gets the thumbs up. According to the executive director of the Barbados Chamber of Commerce, Lisa Gayle, in response to the announced duty free zones: “This Administration had been very poor duty free shopping for locals.” Then there was the Chief Executive Officer of the Small Business Association, Ms. Lynette Holder who in response to the measures that they expect would impact small business development said: “Overall, I thought it was a presentation that had small business in mind.” Then we heard from the union bosses singing from the same hymn sheets in the same chorus, “success as last”. We have on public record, views from various stakeholders their responses to the Budgetary Proposals. We accept that the Budget is not a panacea to cure all ills but it forms part of the overall macro-economic agenda of reform in our country.

A couple nights ago at the opening of the Democratic Labour Party’s 61st Annual Conference, the Prime Minister the Right Honourable Freundel Stuart, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, reminded Barbados that “we must do everything to protect society from threats that do harm to society’s existence and that one way was to ensure that politics be so organised that the effects of the decision-making touch as many lives as possible.” We can say that on This Side that we witness a total disregard for touching lives as ministers of health, one after the other, poured political scorn on the people of St. John by ensuring not one cent of taxpayers’ money was to be spent on the now completed David Thompson Health and Social Services Complex. Once again, on the behalf of

the people of St. John, I commend this Government for bringing that project to life and I thank the Government on their behalf.

There is no doubt that our party leader Right Honourable Freundel Stuart's focus on people and society was reflected in the theme that came out in the Budget. This theme of society and people is in keeping with our founder member and national hero, the Right Excellent Errol Barrow whose motivation was the creation of a just society. Barrow once said that "social justice cannot be achieved in a society where there is inequality and discrimination either at the workplace or outside of it." These views are reflective of the Democratic Labour Party's devotion to the healthcare sector, education sector and the welfare needs of this country. It is no secret that our healthcare sector has needs as we try to respond to the booming Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). We have heard the data coming from the Hospital's administrators on the high percentage of surgical operations that take place annually as a result of NCDs and the attendant costs to maintain the health of these persons. In 2012/2013, it was noted that our healthcare costs stood at BDS\$732.7 million. At that time in 2012/2013, Barbados' life expectancy at birth was 75.2 years for males and 80.9 years for female with an overall of 78.1 years, while at independence 1966 our life expectancy was 63.4 so one can see that over the last five decades our life expectancy has increased by 15 years. A glance at the most recent World Health Report on Aging and Health indicated that for the first time in history most people can expect to live into their 60s and beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I shared this data, not to get members of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) concerned or begin to worry about how long the Leader of the Opposition would be around but to make the point that any Government in Barbados will have a massive bill in the area of healthcare and that we cannot play politics with healthcare. I therefore commend the idea of the levy, the National Social Responsibility Levy, as it is called with a caveat that we encourage the healthcare administrators to explore a policy of insisting on cost recovery from those persons who have healthcare insurance coverage. Why should private practitioners benefit and not the State. One can clearly see that the levy reflects the times and circumstances. Within this context, we cannot deny that good governance would dictate that we review our social policy agenda from time to time, and this is what we are doing in this Budget. Day after day, this Government and the good name of the Democratic Labour Party are placed on trial by Opposition operatives about the inconsiderate nature of a Government. I have seen the crocodile tears on the one hand and heard the threats of the Leader of the Opposition about who cares for this society and environment, but we have seen these political tactics, that is nothing new, coming from the Opposition.

I want to quote from the Democratic Labour Party 61st Annual Conference Booklet here on page 70. It says that by the beginning of 1965, the Barbados Labour Party has sufficiently recovered from its 1961 defeat to apply frustrations to this issue. The beckoning general elections of 1966 indicated that they might reap some electoral advantage not on the domestic scene where the achievements of the Democratic Labour Party was self-evident but from the little understood argument about the viability of the proposed federation. They had succeeded in early 1964 in confusing the country's politics. Since the Democratic Labour Party was committed to the independence of Barbados, the Barbados Labour Party sought to confuse the issue by arguing that Barbados could become independent within a federation which was itself to be only a Crown colony. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to make this document a document of the House. Frankly, I commend it to all for reading.

Mr. Speaker, this is the very same tactic that is being employed today, 50 years later. The policy initiatives which the Opposition believes will be inimical to their perceived success at the next polls will be aggressively attacked and not supported just as they did with the independence initiative, so I am not surprised at their position on tourism development initiatives as outlined in the Budget or the way the Opposition has frowned on the measures to support healthcare in this country. This Freundel Stuart led Government is doing more for people with a lot less. That is what separates us from the other side. The fact is the DEMS are delivering, and I shall refer to my notes.

I heard the Honourable Leader of the Opposition ranting on about where in St. John lacked water. Mr. Speaker, I admit that the water situation in St. John was horrific, there is no doubt about that. I was on the phone to the Barbados Water Authority asking for tankers to come out to relieve people. I was receiving phone calls and WhatsApp's messages. It was downright unpleasant, but what was the reason for all of this difficulty. We have to look at what the eventual outcome was supposed to be or is supposed to be. After all that misery, hardship, inconvenience, frustration and political posturing, areas will now be furnished with new water mains and I assume with water flowing through them. We are delivering in the area of water works as can be seen with the delivery of the new water mains project in the country. The regret is that where improved quality of life is coming for residents the Opposition Members feel that they are to score points. There can be no denying that there was discomfort in St. John and St. Joseph but rest assured I do not believe that there was any victimization that was taking place. I do not understand how someone could be a victim when their lot in life is being improved. Enough of that.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of tourism we have heard of the Sandals extension at Casuarina, the redevelopment of Sam Lord's Castle to boost tourism capacity, the construction of new berths and an increase in tourist arrivals. All of these are occurring within the gloom and doom as preached by the Opposition. We just concluded a season of Crop Over. At the start of the season I read in the local media that rental car operators were fully booked and that tickets for Crop Over activities were sold out even before the event organisers had time to put out the promos, yet again, according to the Opposition, the problem with Crop Over this year was that patrons were not spending so one is left to assume then that the visitors who came here sneaked past immigration, the patrons who attended the fetes issued promissory notes at the door and all who jumped on Kadooment Day made their own costumes and just turned up to jump. Please, give credit where credit is due. The DEMS are delivering.

In education, our Minister was seen signing an Agreement with the People's Republic of China to establish a school of agriculture. I recently passed and saw the work of the Maria Holder Memorial Trust with the nurseries that are being constructed, and the one in Christ Church is soon to be completed. Yes, we would love to have one in St. John.

I am sure that the proposal as delivered by our Minister of Finance will not sit well with the Opposition because once it is good for the country, it is not good for the Democratic Labour Party. This template of politics came home very real to me in the last attempt that was made by us on this side to get support for two key posts to have the tenure of the office holders extended in line with others. The net result is known to the public.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that this year's Budget will not solve the problems inherited from the last Barbados Labour Party Administration. We do not pretend that the solutions are all on this side but the ideas that we have advanced have made a difference to the lives of Barbadians, and I am assured or convinced that they will repose confidence in this Democratic Labour Party. The Democratic Labour Party is better for Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged. Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, just let me take this opportunity to remind you about the reference to persons by name. I know there is no specific rule which forbids a Honourable Member from calling names, we know that, however, I realise that I started yesterday and the fear is that once you start calling names then you may say something which amounts to an attack on that person and so on, and there is a specific rule with respect to attacks on people in their professional capacity, and that is the only way you are allowed to call their names, so I want

to dissuade Honourable Members from calling person's name during the debate. Fine. Yes, next. The Honourable Member for St. George South.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my contribution to the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals 2016 that were laid in this Honourable House on Tuesday, but first let me thank the good people of St. George South, of which I am a son of the soil, for offering me this humbling opportunity to speak on their behalf in this Honourable House. I also wish at the outset to congratulate Honourable Members on this side, especially the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, who delivered, in my view, an excellent presentation. I am sure that all Honourable Members on this side would agree with me.

Mr. Speaker, as I listened to the budgetary proposals on Tuesday and as I reflected on the journey of the Democratic Labour Party to this point, particularly their case for reelection in the 2013 General Elections, I am mindful of a principle in which I was trained while coming up in the churches in Ellerton, whether it was the Pentecostal Church at Farm Road, whether it was the Advent Gospel Hall or whether it was the Pilgrim Holiness Church, these principles that learned stayed with me. Sir, I would want to use this principle to form the basis of my presentation this morning. Sir, that principle asks, for what it shall profit a man if he should gain the whole world and loses his soul.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt if each and every one of us had been connected to the constituencies for which we represent, like I have been representing St. George South. Sir, even if you refused to listen to the Barbados Labour Party and judge the Democratic Labour Party by its own promises and pronouncements, by its own fiscal policies and budgetary proposals, you would recognise that the Democratic Labour Party has lost its soul at the altar of political expediency.

Mr. Speaker, why I say that is that when we look at the budgetary proposals they show a lack of care for the people of this country; they show a lack of prudence; they show a lack of sensitivity and last but by no least, these proposals show a lack of discipline on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party. Mr. Speaker, the people of St. George South are tired of the gainsmanship of this Government, they are living from pay cheque to pay cheque and we cannot see any light at the end of the tunnel under this Democratic Labour Party. Mr. Speaker, we are on the eve of our 50th Anniversary and we have a Government who has lost its soul and who has lost its way and no amount of appeal to the people of this country referencing the past glory days of the Democratic Labour Party, you can assure yourself of the reality that this Government has broken the past legacy of the Democratic

Labour Party and now it is struggling. Mr. Speaker, it is struggling under one common person, the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, the ceremonial leader.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to spend the next 25 or so minutes in looking at a few areas. I want to begin with the Employment Rights Tribunal. Sir, you would know that a Government would have lost its soul when a Minister could see it fit to celebrate the success of a Tribunal and this Government has failed to sympathise or to apologise to the workers of the National Conservation Commission who were sent home. There were no apologies from the Minister of Labour or from the ceremonial leader the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, yet this Government is celebrating the success of an Employment Rights Tribunal.

Mr. Speaker, let me pick this apart, the verdict on the workers of the National Conservation Commission were laid down by the Tribunal some weeks ago. Mr. Speaker, when I read the decision in the document, it spoke to reinstatement of the entire workers. Mr. Speaker, I would the Members of this Democratic Labour Party and the public of Barbados to get a copy and read that verdict that was handed down by the Employment Right Tribunal on the workers of the National Conservation Commission.

Mr. Speaker, it gets worse, having made the decision for the reinstatement of the workers of the National Conservation Commission the Employment Right Tribunal went on to say that reinstatement at this stage is nugatory. Sir, I looked in the dictionary for the word, which means trivial, useless, insignificant, and unimportant. Sir, the decision is on page 35 of the document, having spoken to reinstatement, then you can come and say the reinstatement of the workers of the National Conservation Commission would be nugatory at this stage.

Mr. Speaker, there are two things, the Employment Right Tribunal's role was not to pass any political judgment in the case, its role was to hear the case and to be fair, not to recommend reinstatement. Mr. Speaker, according to the Employment Rights Act, there is a section that speaks to the Tribunal handing down a verdict and then Government deciding whether the reinstatement should be implemented or not, but the Tribunal saw it fit to do everything. Mr. Speaker, they argued reinstatement, then went on to say that reinstatement is nugatory at this stage.

Mr. Speaker, we recognised that the decision of the Tribunal was a political decision and not a judicial one, it was in favour of the Democratic Labour Party, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, those National Conservation Commission workers under the Employment Rights Act will not be eligible for the 106 weeks of compensation because at the end of the Tribunal...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, one minute please.

Honourable Member, let me refer to the Rule, Standing Order 28 (9), which says that the conduct of Her Majesty the Queen, Members of the Royal Family, His Excellency the Governor General, Members of either House of Parliament, judges, or the performance of judicial functions by any person, may not be referred to except upon a substantive motion. Then it goes on talk about the attack on the character or persons, and that you are not allowed to do it except in the official capacity, in which case you have to give notice. I stopped you, because you may feel strongly about it, but whether or not you like it, that Tribunal, which is constituted by the laws of this land, performed a judicial function and made a certain ruling. I am not going to permit the Record to stand with you accusing the Tribunal of what you have accused it of. I want to caution you as you go forward, and if you persist, I will have no choice but to direct you to discontinue your speech and take your seat. I want you to withdraw the comments with respect to that Tribunal, and they will be struck from the Record.

Mr. D.G. SUTHERLAND: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I withdraw the comment and I will move on.

MR. SPEAKER: It is struck from the Record.

Mr. D.G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker, I am moving onto another point related to the Employment Rights Tribunal, and recently the Minister of Labour has shown a lack of respect for the trade unions in this country. Having already destroyed the Social Partnership, and having already destroyed the first Employment Rights Tribunal, the Minister of Labour sees it fit now to appoint someone who has not been recommended by the union to sit on the Severance Payments Tribunal. I wish to refer to a letter to the General Secretary of the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW) regarding representation on the Severance Payments Tribunal, and it says:

"I acknowledge receipt of your correspondence...."

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please quote the letter specifically, the date and so on, and let us know who it was signed by.

MR. D.G. SUTHERLAND: Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development, dated August 15, 2016.

MR. SPEAKER: Who is it addressed to?

MR. D.G. SUTHERLAND: It is addressed to the General Secretary of the National Union of Public Workers, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Very well. Good.

MR. D.G. SUTHERLAND: I said that earlier, Mr. Speaker. It is in regard to representation on the Severance Payments Tribunal, and this letter says:

“I acknowledge receipt of your correspondence dated August 10, 2016 on the abovementioned subject. The Minister sincerely apologises for the error which was made in appointing Mr. Walter Maloney, former President of the NUPW, as the workers’ representative on the Severance Payments Tribunal. In this regard, it is noted that Mr. Akanni McDowall, the current President of the NUPW, has been nominated to serve on the aforementioned Tribunal in an effort to correct this error and in accordance with Paragraph 4 of the Sixth Schedule of the Severance Payments Act, CAP 355A. A letter of resignation will be required from Mr. Maloney. The Ministry therefore seeks your assistance in securing this said letter. Yours faithfully.” It is copied to the Director of National Insurance.

Mr. Speaker, this letter clearly says that it was an error but when you could make such an error and you continue to bungle, because you have made several errors, Mr. Speaker

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: On a Point of Order.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: The Honourable Member is misleading the House and in so doing, is misleading himself. First thing, Sir, he is confusing the Employment Rights Tribunal with the Severance Payments Tribunal. That is the first error that he has made. The second thing, Sir, is that the Honourable Member knows that in fact all that took place was indeed a clerical error, which is acknowledged by the Minister. There is nothing untoward about it, but the point, though, is that there has been no destruction of the first Employment Rights Tribunal that he alluded to, and indeed what he is reading about is the Severance Payments Tribunal.

MR. SPEAKER: Thanks for the elucidation. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. D.G. SUTHERLAND: I am sure I said representation on Severance Payments Tribunal. Mr. Speaker, this Government continues to make errors on top of errors that continue to affect the people of this country. When you can throw the clerk under the bus, for example. Mr. Speaker, any Minister that is credible would not come to the fore and say it is a clerical error. Accept responsibility for the error. Do not throw the clerk under the bus, Mr. Speaker.

Aside.

Mr. D.G. SUTHERLAND: I am saying to you this Government has made errors on top of errors, and who is at the head of these errors, Mr. Speaker? The Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, Mr. Speaker. I can list a number of issues as it relates to the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South, Mr. Speaker. I can list five right now. I am a student of management, and I believe that leadership matters, and when you at the head make errors and you yourself do not correct your errors, then when errors are made by your subordinates, we as a people do not expect you are going to correct the subordinates’ errors. These are some of the errors. In February 2013 the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South came to this country and told the public that no-one would go home, and after the Election, come December 2013, people went home. Thousands went home, but that is not all. At the 38th Barbados Community College’s graduation ceremony, the Right Honourable Member said that tertiary education in Barbados would remain free across the board and to charge tuition fees would be a retrograde step, Mr. Speaker. The Right Honourable for St. Michael South said that. Tuition fees have been charged. That was November 2011.

There was also the Cahill agreement that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East spoke about. In 2010, the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South said to this country that all and sundry recognised that the world was in a recession from 2007. It was common knowledge, but yet the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South offered the civil servants “manna from Heaven”; that was what he called it. He offered the civil servants “manna from Heaven”: importation of duty-free cars just to win the 2013 Election. Mr. Speaker, in those days he was the paragon of piety, of piousness. He was it then, Mr. Speaker, but now he is the bane of our lives because the people of this country recognise that the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South has made errors on top of errors and has promised the people so many things, and has failed to deliver. That is why the Minister of Finance in these Budgetary Proposals promised so many things to this country, but yet implementation delivery is farfetched.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn my attention to a very important aspect of the Budgetary presentation which is the whole aspect of the Public Service because in this Honourable House I sit and I observe and during the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East presentation when she said there was law back in 2007 in the Public Service Act people said no but I have it here and this Government has treated the public servants with scant disrespect. I have Public Service Act here.

Hon. F.J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, on a point of elucidation. The Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. Sir, scant disrespect means that we treat them with very great respect. He does not mean that, I am sure.

Mr. D. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker, that is what the Prime Minister strive on, triviality. This Government has treated the public servants with blatant disregard. I am saying that Minister of Finance had a plan to cut jobs in the Public Service. I am saying that the Public Service Act, if we look at Section 13(5) of the Act, it speaks to all temporary posts that were created prior to December 2007 and had been in existence for more than three years are hereby established. Sir, that is the first part of the Act, which is Section 13(5).

Sir, then at Section 37, it goes further and it says that any person in 2007 that was not appointed but was in an established post for no less than three years and have the necessary qualifications was entitled to be appointed to a post with effect December 2007. Again, the Democratic Labour Party slept on the rights of the workers every since they became Government and the Barbados Labour Party nine years ago, provided the legal basis for temporary workers to be given security of tenures after three years in the Public Service and the Democratic Labour Party did nothing for eight years and now we are approaching elections and they are currying favour with every person in the Civil Service speaking about all temporary posts appointment. You cannot be law makers and law breakers at the same time. There was legislation for you to follow. We had persons in the Public Service prior to 2010 who should have been appointed but it was said that there were no established posts. These were persons who were eligible for appointments and I believe that you are a little too late, Mr. Speaker. We welcome the appointments in the Civil Service that was our intention when this law was enacted, that was the intention of the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, we have more temporary workers than established posts in the Civil Service and the Right Honourable member and his team have given the IMF the assurance that they will not increase the numbers in the Civil Service so I am yet to see how this will be done, how all of these posts will be appointed having said that you would not be increasing in the Civil Service.

Mr. Speaker, a prime example is in the Statistical Department where you have 23 clerical officers and the restructuring study would have shown that you need only 10 clerical officers so are you going to appoint the other 13 clerical officers? Sir, this is a problem. I am yet to see how it will be done. I am one who will support the appointments but I think that the Democratic Labour Party having failed to address this back in 2010, they have now compounded the problem and we as the Barbados Labour Party are watching the Democratic Labour Party like a hawk because

we hope that these appointments are not engineered to only appoint Democratic Labour Party supporters. We hope that fairness and justness will be served with these appointments.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move on to the Unemployment Training Fund. Sir, when we look at the Budgetary Proposals, the Democratic Labour Party in its Budgetary Proposals they have articulated nothing as it relates to the jobless people in the country. This Government has not gone on the attach to address the unemployment problem rather than that they have taxed the poor people of this country more and more. We are talking about duty free zones and extending geographical special development area.

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

Mr. D. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker, I have not heard anything in the Budgetary Proposals to address unemployment among the youth in the country. Where are the employment opportunities for the young people who are leaving the University of the West Indies, who are leaving Barbados Community College and who are leaving Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic? Where are the employment opportunities in these Budgetary Proposals to address this.

Mr. Speaker, why are we not building out the Vocational Training Board capacity and capabilities. These are things that would attract young people. We are not hearing about a silicone valley and IT hub but yet we have Budgetary Proposals here that are not conducive for creating employment in the country.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to speak to the whole aspect of the Retooling Fund. The Democratic Labour Party sent home 3 000 workers and there was a retooling or retraining fund that allocated \$10 million and they spend \$550 odd thousands, so the balance in this Fund is \$9.54 million, which they have now turned over to the Student Revolving Loan Fund Scheme to cater to loans for students. Sir, just a few things. Firstly, this \$5 million may be insufficient to address the demands of the Student Revolving Loan Fund Scheme. In addition to that, you are now taking money from persons who would have made a meaningful contribution to the Social Security Fund and you are transferring the funds to the Student Revolving Loan Fund Scheme to people who have not made a contribution to the Social Security Fund. I am asking if this is right. You can just take up the National Insurance Scheme money and you can move from the Retooling Fund to the Student Revolving Loan Fund Scheme. Is this right, Mr. Speaker? These are the questions that the Right Honourable for St. Michael South and his team must answer. Sir, we have to recognise that this money is not cash money because while

we say that it is \$9.54 million, it is Treasury Bills and if you cash them in early, they will be discounted. Sir, these are some of the issues with this Fund.

Mr. Speaker, while I would like to see the Student Revolving Loan Fund Scheme health, we have to recognise that when we do things it must be just, fair and it must withstand the scrutiny of any...

Sequence 5

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Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: ... is going to be around the corner but I want to say to the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) and I want the people of Barbados to hear this, Mr. Speaker, that divine providence is not on the side of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) it is now a fait accompli as far as they are concerned but I will rest that there.

Mr. Speaker, this present Barbados Labour Party (BLP) as a political party, to my mind, at this time, is a sorry, lame-duck skeleton, a shadow of the Grantley Adams party of the 1940s. It is now an empty, washed-up, rudderless institution, no leadership whatsoever, Mr. Speaker, one that now participate in what I call circus and coney island politics operating under a big tent. It is now a party, Mr. Speaker, that has enrolled into its ranks David Copperfields and Bargain Baileys to enhance their act and they have not only settled for their current crop within these four walls in this Honourable House, they have now launched out and included other actors. It is now a party of pathetic, sorry sideshows and comedy acts, rubbing shoulders, people assemblies, white clothes marches, signature collections, covenants of hopelessness, walkabouts, interrupting people from watching Lifetime TV, that is all they are doing, knocking on people's door. It is out of the election season, let the people of Barbados settle down and enjoy life a little bit and stop interrupting people when they are watching Lifetime TV and the other things, knocking on doors and confusing people, a new circus act almost every single month. The people cannot get rest for the Barbados Labour Party (BLP). If you have ever heard of a nuisance party, the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) is a nuisance party. Every single month with the ringmaster cracking the whip for the invertebrate circus actions, Mr. Speaker, to perform and jump through the hopes and rings, swing from the political trapeze, skin cuffs and do somersaults, dance and sometimes strip off everything and pelt it way.

Asides.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: I tell you, you have shed yourself of commonsense man. Grantley Adams must be rolling in his grave, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the measures that were given to this House on Tuesday was intended to bring some stimulus and growth to the economy. It wanted to grow the foreign reserves and to bring some stability to the public service, Mr. Speaker. Have you heard the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) on the appointment of temporary officers? They are saying that it is no big thing and the Honourable Member for St. George South just said that we are currying favour with the public servants. We gave \$2 million to the Welfare Department they said it would make absolutely no difference, the people have suffered already. We gave \$50 million to the small business, they said, it is not enough, it is just a drop in the bucket. Now duty-free zones they say that we would shut down other businesses outside of the duty free zones. We developed and expanded the specially developing areas and they say that they should be expanded even more, maybe into the sea as far as they are concerned. Every single proposal in this Budget on Tuesday, the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) has criticised.

Mr. Speaker, despite what the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) says this is not really a back water country. This country of ours is no back water country, no kind of failed State or society, most of our government institutions work and work efficiently, Mr. Speaker. We have a public service that is second to none, populated by public servants that are exemplary and professional for the most part. This is a country that is the envy of our neighbours in the Caribbean and one that continues to be attractive to our visitors outside the region who come in droves and sometimes choose to live, invest and buy homes here in this country. Mr. Speaker, we have a good country here in Barbados, and a strong and resilient nation. We can achieve most things with the Almighty's help using as our compass and the road map the accepted mantra of this Administration that Barbados is socially balanced, economically sound and characterised by good governance despite what the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) has to say.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Ministry of Social Care have accepted our role in ensuring this model of governance is achieved by and large though our policies in that Ministry. There are the programmes and the projects specially in the area of socially balancing this country. Mr. Speaker, we have undertaken through the 12 agencies, departments and statutory boards to deliver almost 60 per cent of the social services available to the citizens of this country. We set about this, Mr. Speaker, but first of all planning for the individual demography spread of the persons who present to our agencies on a daily basis and this planning is informed by a deliberate focus on Barbados as a society

simultaneous with being an economy. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this is borne out in the Ministry of Social Care where we first of all looked at the National Assistance Board (NAB) and the services offered there and we found that those services, Mr. Speaker, were delivered adequately in the dispensing of our homecare service. We now have on board, Mr. Speaker, 1 050 homecare clients which we administer on a daily base.

In terms of our community nursing, we also have about 308 clients that we attended to. At our 34-bed facility at our Clyde Gollop's Centre for Homeless Men we facilitate and average on 26 men there on a nightly basis. They will be provided with a meal and when they come they can shower have a rest and then leave in the morning.

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

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Speaker, five minutes?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, five.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Oh we got there fast enough. Alright, Mr. Speaker. I will use this time to concentrate on the Child Care Board because I want to just say a few things about the Child Care Board.

My ministry continues, Mr. Speaker, to exploit every avenue to make the lives of our children better but most means necessary, let us put it that way. As Minister I am aware that our children's welfare, protection and care have to be paramount if our mandate is to ensure that Barbados is a first rate, civilised and caring society that that exist. In the wake of certain events which may occur under the Child Care Board I have given the Board certain instructions which I am comfortable to date, have been bearing a measure of fruit. If this course of action is persuaded to its conclusion, I am sure, as Minister, that at the end of the process we will have a far better institution that it is today.

I want first of all to give my support to the management and staff of Board to continue improving the systems the processes and the procedures of the Board and as far as financially and humanly possible I will ensure that my ministry allocates the requisite resources to get the job done for our precious little children in this country. It is with this commitment firmly before us, Mr. Speaker, that facilitates our planning and our strategic repositioning of the Board and the building out of the facilities across Barbados.

First of all, when it comes to the structure of the Board, I am just restructured the directorship to infuse it with persons of some specialised skillset to better equip the Board to undertaken the task that is before them in a

changing Barbados. Mr. Speaker, a Barbados that is asking and expecting more of that State agency in terms of acting swiftly and effectively in arresting any signs of maltreatment of this country's children and prescribing the corrective action in a timely manner. Outside of the improved skill sets on the Board, we have taken some other actions to ensure that the Child Care Board is better positioned than it was previously. We have established a Memorandum of Understanding with the Royal Barbados Police Force to ensure effective responses to children who are believed to be suffering abuse and we have undertaken a comprehensive review of our information management system that was woefully in need of an upgrade and that would also lighten the workload of our officers. As I speak, the Board has commenced the procurement of these upgrades. We have also reached out to UNICEF who acceded to our request for short-term institutional strengthening by contracting a consultant to the Board for a six-month period. His work has been completed and is now being analysed for possible implementation, and we have also engaged the services of Ms. Faith Marshall-Harris to develop a comprehensive child protection policy and the revamping of the associated legislation and also the establishment of a mandatory reporting protocol. All of this, Mr. Speaker, is further enhanced by the recent amendments to the Domestic Violence Act which spoke to the mandatory reporting of child abuse to the police. These are the actions we have taken to-date to better equip the Board and its work.

While improving institutional quality, Mr. Speaker, I want to go further by saying that we have not neglected the physical accommodation of the day nurseries or the residential care. The Board is currently, in collaboration with the Barbados Children's Trust, adding finishing touches to two brand-new buildings at the Nightengale Compound to house all of the babies at Campwood Children's Home and all of the older children from the Sayers Court Home. These two homes would be closed, that is, Campwood and Sayers Court, reducing the Board's existing homes to six from eight but this would not diminish in any way the carrying capacity of our residential accommodation because the Nightengale Home will now be expanded and established as a children's village concept. I am coming home, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, again I want to congratulate the management and staff over there and we will continue to make the lot of our children better.

Mr. Speaker, the Government's role is to create an environment where society and economy coexist, and this Government over the last eight years has done just that. For most of these years I have given the responsibility of being the ministry responsible for Social Care that administers the agencies...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I will give you one minute in which to wind up.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank each and every one of my officers in the 12 agencies for being there for the clients that present every single day for the services we offer through the social service net that has been developed, one that is second to none. Mr. Speaker, I make this pledge today with my departmental heads and our officers to ensure that our ministry remains in the vanguard of ensuring that our citizens are well taken care of in most respect.

Mr. Speaker, this Resolution has my solid and unswerving support because my constituents can find some comfort from the measures introduced in this Budget for this year. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I rise to make my contribution to this most important debate let me begin first of all by saying good morning to all those who are listening to this coverage particularly those who reside in The City of Bridgetown. Let me also thank the Honourable Leader of the Opposition for her very spirited and comprehensive reply yesterday afternoon as well as the contributions made by all those Honourable Members of this side who have already spoken.

Mr. Speaker, I know we are having this debate at the end of the Crop Over Season and so there is a refrain that has been on my mind for the last few days, I think it has to do with a song by Lil Rick, a hit after hit after hit after hit, the only thing is that that refrain from me on Tuesday was tax after tax after tax after tax and that has been last year, the year before, and the year before. When I listened to the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs as it relates to The City of Bridgetown and also the Honourable Member for St. Lucy all I could hear was promise after promise after promise after promise. The question therefore is: Which of the two Honourable Members will be crowned the Parliament's monarch? We have moved on to the Olympics where records are tumbling and if in an effort not to be outdone the Honourable Member for St. Lucy seems destined to establish a new national record of being the most unsuccessful Minister of Housing in the history of this country. Mr. Speaker, I hope to get to aspects of housing before I conclude my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I have spent a long time in another life enduring hardships, lack of sleep and sometimes lack of water operating in conditions here and abroad in the service of Barbados where significant challenges confronted me, but I must say, Mr. Speaker, that having been elected to

this Honourable Chamber to represent the good people of The City of Bridgetown I do not think I have ever experienced anything that has caused me the number of sleepless nights that I have had as a result of trying to find ways and means to assist the several people who call on me on a daily basis especially when I know that I do not have the resources to be able to help these people, and so for me I do not consider this to be a speech today, I do not even consider this to be a presentation, what I am doing today, Mr. Speaker, is really expressing the outward manifestation of the innermost feelings of this being called Jeffrey Bostic because the more and more I participate in debates in this Honourable Chamber I ask myself each and every time when are we all going to reach the level of political maturity and real serious national consciousness that would allow us to do what is right to make a better life for the people in this country who are enduring serious hardships, that is it.

I begin my remarks by saying that we can no longer continue to do the same things the same way and expect not to get the same results. In order to dig ourselves out of the bottomless or seemingly bottomless economic pit that we are in now we need to demonstrate a level of innovation in our budgetary presentations and in our strategic planning, that is what we need to do, and our economic policies must relate directly to our national strategic objectives. I remember the Honourable Member for St. Peter once saying to me some time last year that in order for societies to really develop we must keep opening up new frontiers. What are the new frontiers of development that have been offered in the 2016 Budget? I refer to the Country Strategy Paper for Barbados 2015-2018 prepared and issued by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) which posits the view that the key developmental priorities for Barbados are transformative shifts in policies, practices and institutions that are required to underpin a new developmental paradigm, a paradigm according to the CBD's Report that among other things would contribute to the delivery of higher more inclusive job-led growth and competitiveness. The question therefore is: Does this Budget satisfy those requirement?

Mr. Speaker, I am going to deviate to some extent from the norm, in that colleagues on my side would have already started to deal with all of the issues relating to the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016, but I would like to posit the view that my disappointment in this particular budget is more to do with the unseen or what I expected to be included in this budget to take Barbados forward, rather than those issues that we are grappling with in terms of what was presented in the budget.

Mr. Speaker, let me give an example of what I mean. Last year a sweet drinks tax was introduced, that tax was touted to be one of the things that we were going to follow in terms of reducing incidents of chronic non-

communicable diseases. That was said but what that tax really did was that it put additional burdens on the working class people in this country who drink soft drinks, not because they really want to but that that is what they can only afford.

Mr. Speaker, the real truth is that that was known by the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs because the Honourable Member did not anticipate a reduction in the consumption of soft drinks because the estimated revenue from that measure alone was \$10 million. Therefore if we are serious reducing incidents of chronic non-communicable diseases then I would have expected that the 2016 Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, as a follow up to the 2015 budget to include some measures to reduce the cost of those items that we need to utilise in order to transform to healthy lifestyles, but that did not happen. Mr. Speaker, we keep talking about chronic non-communicable diseases but not the real serious effective measures required in order to combat this problem.

Mr. Speaker, I refer to those items that I would have expected to see in the budget in terms of taking the country forward, especially for me those transformational policies that the Caribbean Development Bank spoke of, the opening up of those new frontiers that the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter spoke to me about.

Mr. Speaker, for example, in 2015 we passed the Cultural Industries Act in this Parliament. I remember the day because the Chamber was full with the cultural icons of this country and the Barbados Labour Party supported that Bill. Sir, I was really excited when the Act was passed because while doing my research to participate in that particular debate, I discovered some things that really excited me. I saw the opening up of a new frontier for Barbados in order to take the economy forward.

Mr. Speaker, I learnt, for example, that the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CSAC) had conducted a study analysing the level, cultural and creative industry sectors. They determined a few things:

1. That cultural and creative contents drive the digital economy.

Sir, that should raise something for Barbados because we have a lot of creative young people when it comes to digital and technology;

2. Cultural production is young, inclusive and entrepreneurial.
3. Culture boosts cities attractiveness.

Mr. Speaker, that study also goes on to say that global revenue from the cultural industry stood at about US\$2.25 billion and contributed 3 per cent to the world's

Gross Domestic Product. It also exceeded Telecom Service revenues which stood at US\$1.5 billion and that that industry provides up to about 29.5 million jobs worldwide. Therefore having passed the Cultural Industries Act, I expected to see some follow up initiatives in this budget that would really build the capacity in this new area, so to speak, in terms of our economic development but I have not seen those in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious omission, I believe, on the part of the Government and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. Sir, you cannot put everything in a budget but at a time when you need to be innovative and transformational it is a must that you put those things that can produce those results. Cropover is but one part of the cultural and creative industries and if you pin everything on Cropover then you are missing the boat. Mr. Speaker, this is an initiative that ought to have been pursued with greater vigour on the part of the Government.

Mr. Speaker, I also learned that about 80 per cent of adult travellers around the world include at least one historic or cultural activity while travelling. Sir, heritage tourism is another area that I expected to have been built our more in this Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016, I really do. Heritage tourism is the highest income earning sector in the international tourist industry because heritage tourists spend more.

Mr. Speaker, we have had the designation of Bridgetown and Its Historic Garrison as a UNESCO World Heritage Site back in 2011, but what significant contributions have been made towards the economy of Barbados since that designation?

Mr. Speaker, I know I am going to hear that there are piece of this and piece of that but I say no, it is time that we have a comprehensive and cohesive strategy to maximise the benefits of being designated as a World Heritage Site. Mr. Speaker, we are not doing that, we have not been doing that.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot leave a new industry or initiative to the whims and fancies of a few, it has to be something that is all-inclusive but embraces all Barbadians and that all Barbadians can benefit from and can participate in. we need to do something about heritage tourism.

Mr. Speaker, why have we not learned about heritage from places such as Pennsylvania or cultural economy cities like New Orleans, Louisiana? Creative industries are fuelling economies throughout this world. Why are we not capitalising on that, especially in an area where we have a competitive advantage? I am saying that I expect in budgets now and going forward that we would see issues relating to heritage tourism that will provide a meaningful policy framework for both the restoration and

operation of places like the Empire Theatre, Queen's Park, the Daphne Joseph Hackett Theatre, the revitalisation and resurgence of Baxters Road, Nelson Street, Pelican Village and areas of that nature. Those are critical to our World Heritage Site and heritage tourism, they are very, very critical. Mr. Speaker, we are operating piecemeal, piecemeal but there is no real comprehensive and cohesive plan and strategy. That is something I expected to see in a 2016 budget.

Mr. Speaker, while we at it, in terms of developing heritage tourism and acknowledging that we have the designation of a World Heritage Site, let us not forget the role of the local village rum shop in this process. Instead of killing that industry, please, Mr. Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, do whatever is required to remove some of the hardships that are being experienced because that is a critical part of our history and development. Sir, long before we had the plethora of mini marts and supermarkets the village rum shop provided for the average Barbadian citizen and we must incorporate them in anything that we do going forward in terms heritage tourism.

Mr. Speaker, we amended the Electric Light and Power Act, I believe, in this Chamber in 2015, and that was in order to give impetus to the Green Economy by way of seeking alternative forms of energy. This again for me was a disappointment in the 2016 Budget, because I cannot believe that we would drop the ball a second time, having dropped it decades ago when Barbados was the leading nation when it came to solar technology and solar energy. We dropped it because we did nothing with that ball, and now that we have passed the Amendment we have not done enough in terms of building out the capacity for this. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that there must be things in Budgets going forward to ensure that we maximise on this. At the technical level, for example, whatever is required in terms of the manufacturing of solar panels, photovoltaics, whatever you want to call them, it should be reflected at the level of the technical institutes that we have, and not be operating in a piecemeal fashion. It was a good initiative that we supported in here but it needs to be taken to a higher level for the benefit of this country and the citizens of this country.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just a minute. Please refrain from shouting across the Floor at the Member. You all have your respective times to speak. Let the Member utilise his half-hour. Thank you very much. Honourable Member, please continue.

Lt. COL. J.D. BOSTIC: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know you are attempting to save me but I can handle him. Mr. Speaker, we are going to wait until people come from far and wide to invest in that industry to then realise that we have not really done enough to ensure that Barbadians maximise on this. That is what will happen. If we are going

to be innovative or transformational in charting the way forward to developing a sustainable economy, then our Budgetary Proposals must reflect change and technology must be at the forefront of that change, Mr. Speaker.

At this stage, let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Director of the National Training Board, because I believe that institution is doing some excellent work and I have been able to get a number of my people in the City of Bridgetown to attend that institution and to learn some skills. It is very good indeed. I want to compliment him. Seriously speaking, however, we have to go in other directions, and I believe that an institution like the National Training Board needs to be upgraded and given the resources to provide even a higher level of technical and vocational training to the people of this country. It must also be fully integrated into the system because technology is what is going to help us in a large way to transform this economy.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at an aspect of the Budget, a Budget that is characterised by the ordinary man and woman in the street as the two per cent Budget. I am referring to the National Social Responsibility Levy. Put in another way, you could say the 20 per cent Value Added Tax on the items that it affects. I understand the need to take hard decisions; I understand that, and in life you cannot avoid taking hard decisions, but this is one decision whose impact I think is going to be greater than the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has anticipated. I am saying that because obviously this will carry up the cost of food. It will increase the cost of food, and those small micro institutions within Bridgetown and other places that depend on selling food for a living are struggling right now because the majority of their clientele do not have the money to buy the food as they usually did at lunchtime. This is going to make it much more difficult, and I really wish that there was some alternative rather than to be putting this tax, especially on unemployed persons. We have a lot of unemployed persons who have to eat; that is a necessity, so I am not sure that enough consideration has been given to that.

The proposal to extend the special incentives area to include Greater Bridgetown is a good initiative, and I support that. Mr. Speaker, ordinarily I would have been very excited by this but after the promised new cruise terminal that has not materialised, the Marriott's where nothing is happening as far as I am aware, Four Seasons and others, I cannot rejoice. After a UNESCO designation that does not benefit the residents of the City of Bridgetown, I cannot rejoice. After an Inter-American Development Bank-funded Neighbourhood Upgrade Programme that did not benefit the people of Bridgetown, I cannot rejoice. With an Urban Development Commission that has not been benefiting the residents of the City of Bridgetown, I cannot rejoice.

Aside.

Lt. Col. J.D. BOSTIC: These are things designed to benefit other people but not my people, Mr. Speaker. When I see full disclosure on these projects and when I am invited to discussions as the parliamentary representative for the City of Bridgetown, then all of this long talk about these things happening in the City of Bridgetown I will perhaps start to believe.

Now let me come to the question or the issue of the Hyatt Hotel. Let me say this, Mr. Speaker: I try very hard not to be hypocritical and to be true to myself. I spent a lot of time in here during Debates asking for things to revitalise the City of Bridgetown. I have asked for a hotel to be located in the City of Bridgetown, because I think that it is a good thing and that it is necessary. That is the truth. I am not going to come at this point in time and say that we do not need the Hyatt or that we do not need a hotel. I, Jeffrey Bostic, Member of Parliament for the City of Bridgetown, welcome and support development within the City of Bridgetown. Mr. Speaker, I also have to say that I know that development comes at a cost.

MR. SPEAKER: The Member has five minutes in which to conclude.

Lt. Col. J.D. BOSTIC: I also know that development must not come at any and all costs. There were several things associated with this project that I did not know. I was following the media and following one of the advocates against this project. I personally like to have facts before I get involved in discussions, and I have tried as much as possible to get to the facts in relation to the proposed construction of the Hyatt Hotel. In trying to ascertain what fact from fiction is, I learned that no application was made to the Chief Town Planner and no proposal was made regarding an environmental impact assessment (EIA).

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: On a Point of Order, Mr. Speaker. While I do not want to interrupt the Honourable Member from speaking, I think that we ought not to put ourselves in a position where, because of lack of information, we mislead the Honourable Chamber, as the Honourable Member is clearly doing. It is not true to say that the proposed investors in the proposed Hyatt have not submitted application to the Chief Town Planner, have not been required to and have not done the various assessments that have to be done, including the EIA.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: On a point of order ... I have not been required to and done the various assessments that have to be done including...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, thanks for your elucidation. He said that is what he understand but thanks for your elucidation. Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: It is not accurate to say so and it has gone to the appeal and all of that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Lt. Col. J.D. BOSTIC: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I said that is the information that I was able to obtain. I am not and I will never attempt to mislead this Honourable House and if I stand corrected, I have no issue with that. If I am wrong, I will apologise on that score.

Mr. Speaker, I reiterate that I have nothing against the development but there are some issues that we ought to be concerned about and some discussions ought to obtain. Sir, I am not an engineer but I do not know for example, what the impact of pile driving for a 15-storey hotel would be on the structures in the area. I do not know. Sir, places like Bethel Church, like the Empire Theater, like the London Bourne Towers that I am advised was built on swampy ground and really has some foundational issues when that was constructed. I do not know, I am just asking and I am just urging the Honourable Chamber to consider these things. What would be the impact on sewerage and our sewerage system especially with the hotel being located in an area that is already overloaded. Sir, those are issues that we think we need to look at. Sir, not only an environmental impact assessment but a social impact assessment as well. We also have to take into consideration the impact of climate change and sea level rise in terms of any coastal developments go forward because this is a serious things.

Mr. Speaker, the mere fact that i am asking these questions substantiate the point I made earlier that I believe that in good faith as the Member of Parliament for the in the City of Bridgetown that I should be involved in some of the discussions and then I would not have to asking these things inside of this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, let me say that I deal with 2016 since I was not in this Parliament before but I would say that in my view in terms of this economy being turned around, in terms of economic development and transformation and revitalisation of this economy I am not going to accept that anything is happening until I have seen some areas where transformation is really taking place. For example, when we reach the point where we have a national scholar that holds a City and Guilds advanced diploma, until children in the country having graduated from primary school when they have the list of school that there is some technical college or institution along with the

normal secondary schools that could help to push some of our children into areas of economic development, I would believe then that we are making true progress at transforming this economy when we realign our educational system at all levels to be in synch with the demands and the realities of the labour market and in concert with a comprehensive and transformational national strategic plan so that we do not continue graduating scores and scores of children who leave school without anything at all and then we become very surprised after a prolong period of time that we have social issues that we have to content with.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yess, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. J.D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to participate in the debate and, of course, to represent the interest of the constituents of St. Michael West Central because we have to recognise that again this Government is doing its best under strained circumstances to ensure that this economy continues to serve the interest of Barbadians from all walks of life. Sir, certainly we have to recognise that when we look at some of the objectives and the priorities outlined by the Minister of Finance in terms of the three year planning period 2016 to 2018 there are a number of them and I just want to look at some of them which includes improving the foreign reserves position, accleg GDP growth, trying to reduce the fiscal deficit. Sir, these are some of the priorities that have been identified and certainly when one looks at the measures that are contained in the Budget one can say there has been some attempt made by the Minister of Finance to try to address these issues. I really think that we have to agree that while you may not be able to address all we think that some attempt has been made to address it. I really also think, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that to say that the situation has not improved under this Government that we are not examining the evidence that is presented to us on the ground that clearly indicates that there are areas in which we are seeing improvements and that we have to work towards ensuring that we continue our efforts as far as trying to ensure that we are able to bring this economy back to the levels that it should be. Sir, let us also recognise that the Opposition must also claim responsibility for the current state of the economy. Sir, in truth and in fact many of the prescriptions that you hear coming from the Opposition, in fact, you do not hear any perscriptions, what you hear really are criticisms.

Mr. Speaker, one thing that we heard from this constantly is in the area of controlling Government expenditure. Sir, in that regard they have constantly called for the Government to be cutting expenditure and cutting expenditure. The Government has to be complimented for the fact that it has been able to maintain employment levels

within our civil service despite the trying economic circumstances and if we had actually followed the lead of the Opposition in terms of trying to address the issues that the economy faces, that Barbadians would have been faced with considerable hardship that would have been inflicted upon them.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition needs to be much more frank, understand and be honest and admit that the Government is doing as much as it can do in terms of addressing the issues here.

Mr. Speaker, I want to look at one of the measures that is being proposed in the Budget and that is maintaining the export competitiveness within the context of national quality infrastructure. Sir, we all know that unless our productive sectors are able to be competitive in the production of goods and services they will not be able to save foreign exchange or earn foreign exchange to the levels that the economy requires them to and the initiative here that is outlined in the Budget where Government is seeking to help the producers of goods and services in this country to meet international standards and remain competitive within national and export markets is something surely, Sir, that we should applaud. There are different quality standards as we know that applies to manufacturing operations and that our local producers of goods especially, need to meet. One of these is that of attaining ISO certification and these standards change from year to year.

One of the issues that many of our producers have is that it is costly to attain those standards so, for instance, you have situations where our food producers sometimes have to meet what we would call hazard requirements. This is essential, but the cost of meeting those requirements are prohibitive for some of our producers and the fact that is responsibility for industry will be seeking to craft a proposal for the development of a quality incentive scheme which would take the form of a reimbursable grant of up to \$50 000 is something that we should not dismiss. Here on the one hand, we are claiming that the Government is not doing enough to create jobs when, on the other hand, we see an initiative happening on the part of the Government that first of all seeks to enable existing producers/manufacturers to be able to compete more effectively in the marketplace and when they do that, what will happen is that they are actually making the products more marketable. When we also take into consideration the fact that we are seeking to attract hotels which will demand a certain quality of produce that would also demand a measure of certification for producers of goods and services in Barbados what we are seeing is that we are increasing the capacity of our local producers by this measure to be able to meet those standards. In other words, what we have then is the hoteliers who demand produce of a certain quality will therefore have a good reason to be

able to purchase goods that are produced in Barbados. I really think that sometimes we are missing the good things that are in the Budget that affords growth in some areas.

The other point I wish to make in terms of the whole question of small business. It is clear that many economists around the world have indicated that the growth in many economies will come from small businesses and that if we do not have a consistent policy where we encourage the growth of those small businesses a lot of the new employment opportunities that are going to arise we are not going to be able to benefit from those employment opportunities because clearly we recognise that unless we encourage new players in the area of business we will not be able to create the type of jobs that will help to sustain us as we move forward.

One of the things that we do recognise is that it is a matter of life in the business world that firms come and firms go, that the way we keep on driving business is by new business ideas coming up and new players trying new things. Sometimes we also forget that it is those small players in the economy that also provide additional jobs for persons who cannot find placements in the large firms. I think that emphasis that is being placed on the part of Government in this area is something that we cannot overlook because of its importance in terms of that initiative. What we need to see is that we need to encourage our population, those persons who have these business ideas, they need some form of support and what we need to see is that at least some opportunities being given to them. That is what the Government is trying to do by looking at the capitalisation of this Fund to the tune of \$50 million. I want to emphasise that is the area that we need to have action being taken because once you can do that, we therefore have a whole new world of opportunities created in the area of small business and we are talking about both manufacturing and agricultural enterprises because it would surprise many of us sometimes when we see that because of the situation that we find ourselves in, that there are a number of people who are actually creating new employment opportunities for themselves in their homes. They are creating and in collaboration with their families they are actually starting businesses. Sometimes we do not understand the way in which small businesses start. Usually, people who might not be able to work in Government or in an established firm, they sit down and they think of ideas and sometimes the whole issue of capital comes into play because usually most businesses, in terms of start-up, they either have to look for their own funds or they have to rely on their family's savings in order to provide them with those funds, these are substantial things. If we can find a way or provide additional funds for those persons who have those type of business ideas and some of them in some cases could be extremely innovative, this is a way of at least increasing employment opportunities. One of the things I think we need to impress

on the minds of Barbadians is that sometimes we have situations where unless a person is working for a recognised firm somewhere in Bridgetown we tend to diminish the importance of the activity that the person is doing. I think that we need to move to the point in this country where we ask persons to appreciate that despite the contribution might seem small it is the sum total of those business activities which make a difference to the economic activity that we have in this country. That is why I believe the importance of the fund of \$50 million which will be capitalised by this Government is going to be integral in terms of helping to stimulate new business ideas. There are a number of persons who have new business ideas which, I am sure, we will see would be able to create employment opportunities, not only for themselves, but also for others.

I also want to look at the fact that if we can do this, what we will see is a lot of downstream activities being created because what we do not appreciate is that in order for a business to survive it demands a certain level of services also to be provided to it so there is a multiplying pact where other persons who might not be connected with the business also are able to get take advantage of employment opportunities as a result of that type of activity. I think we need to recognise that there is an opportunity for the creation of additional employment opportunities as the result of the specific policy tool that we see in this particular budget.

On the question of standards and I think that is an issue that we need to also address within the area of the economy. We see very often many products that are produced by small businesses and one of the issues that they face is the question of, not only certification but also in relation to standards. I think that the fact that we are creating funds by which producers of goods in this country can actually be able to access them in order to improve the standard of the product is a step in the right direction. I think, again, that the Minister of Finance has to be complimented for that because certainly, if we can improve the quality of the goods that are produced but, at the same time, they are able to meet to the transparent standard regulations that are put there, it increases the competitiveness of the product. It would also enable the product that is being produced to be able to get into markets which otherwise it would not be able to get into because sometimes we have this view of competitiveness where we only think of it in terms of the price of the product which is sometimes wrong because one of the things that we do not even recognise is that in many cases we are now producing a type of consumer who who is prepared to pay for the product once it meets a certain quality standard and that can be assured that it meets that particular standard. That is where I believe that this particular measure in terms of helping businesses meet certain quality standards will pay great dividend. The fact

that we are involving the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation (BIDC) under a special technical assistance programme is something that we need to move to very quickly in terms of ensuring that we are able to provide that type of service to the companies, small businesses in general, that will want to take advantage of it.

One of the points I want to make when we talk about small businesses is that we also need to recognise in the context of production around the world in general is that many of the companies we have in Barbados are really considered to be small companies and one of the points that I think we have to address is the fact that very often we have established businesses in this country that come up sometimes with very good ideas but sometimes might need additional support in order to carry them further.

In the area of renewable energy, what we have seen is that Government has been able to get access to funds which really have made Barbados the number one renewable energy country when it comes to the Caribbean as far as I am concerned because nowhere else in the Caribbean can you travel and see the type of penetration of renewable energy generation as you would see in Barbados. This says to us therefore that we have taken the lead in that particular area but the methodology for us achieving that is based upon the fact that we have allowed all businesses in this country to be able to take advantage of the renewable energy policy as we have it stated in this country, and I think that Government has to be complimented for that. One of the things that we do not again understand is that at the time when we did it world oil prices were extremely high. They have moderated a bit now but we do not know when the world come out of the current recession that it is still in where they would go. The fact that this Government has had the foresight to invest in renewable energy generation in the way in which it has for Barbados to become the leader as far as that is concerned in the region not only shows you that there is some foresight on the part of the this Government but it also says that the type of companies that were able to access the resources available for that type of development were not just limited to small companies, that in general all businesses in this country that wanted to get access to it were able to get access to it, and I think that is extremely important.

Mr. Speaker, going back to the point I am trying to make in relation to the question of the quality incentive scheme, I would also want to think that the same approach should also be adopted in relation to standards because generally any product that we can produce in this country we should do our best to assist any business once they improve the standard of that product because at the end of it, it comes to the benefit of the economy when that particular product is able to penetrate any market that it needs to.

We have signed a number of trade agreements that we need to take advantage of more. You have, for instance, the European Partnership Agreement that has been signed but yet we find that a lot of our manufacturing businesses and agricultural businesses have difficulty accessing those markets because of the fact that in many cases we are not able to meet the standards that are imposed by the countries to which we hope to export. In many cases the reason for that is that we do not have the level of technical competence here in order to do so and even when we have to do this the cost of actually doing it means then that we have to ask ourselves: Does it make sense to export a commodity that at the end of it when you look at the price, you have to consider this a business decision, we can sell the same commodity on the local market without any trouble.

The problem that we face at the end of the day is that Barbados needs foreign exchange. Barbados needs to be able to export products in order to earn foreign exchange. One of the things that I think that we should say to Barbadians, and very often we do not seem to tie this in, is that we do not pay for the goods we buy from overseas in Barbados dollars, we pay for them in US dollars.

One of the points that sometimes does not seem to come home to people is that... I hear the Opposition speak a lot about their time when they were in power but they did not say to Barbadians that to a large extent many of the goods and services that were made available during that so-called time of plenty was money that they borrowed and provided to businesses in order to go and then pay for the goods and services that were actually imported into this country. Unless we change that dynamic in order to buy goods and services that we actually can say that we have done it not by going and borrowing Government money as they would want us to do because when I listen to the Honourable Members of the Opposition they seem to think that they are living in a world where they think that people would just give us the money... What we need to be doing is strengthening our productive sectors to be able to earn foreign exchange.

Mr. Speaker, that is why in a sense the expansion in the tourism sector offers us an opportunity to do that and that is why I would say that we need to be unrepentant when we insist that persons within the tourism sector must see it as part of their national responsibility to support our local productive sectors because we must be able to reverse the dynamics where it seems as if sometimes a higher percentage of every tourist dollar that we earn is going back outside. We cannot just be a pass through country where foreign exchange comes in and at the same time it goes back out because of the fact that too few of the goods and services that are purchased by hotels come from outside rather than inside and we just come here as far as the cash flow is concerned. Mr. Speaker, that is an issue

that we need to address and to deal with but we can only do it if at the same time we strengthen the capacity of our local producers to be able to sell goods to the hotels that are being established here. For instance, with the Hyatt Hotel which is supposed to be coming here we need to be able to ensure that our local producers - and I do not make any apologies about this - will be placed in a position to be able to supply goods and services to that hotel. When Sandals Hotel came here, there was a measure of concern on the part of our local producers and justifiably so because when we look at the behaviour of many of our hotels in the past we thought that they did not show enough support for local productive sectors.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have three minutes in which to conclude.

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

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, we can now say that based on the track record and the experience to date, and we hope that that continues, what we have seen is that there have turned out to be good supporters of our local productive sectors. In other words, the poultry industry is able to get its products into that hotel, we have seen our local dairy plant being able to get its products into Sandals. This important because what Barbados needs to understand is that when we can do this that we are saving on hard foreign exchange that we would have to go buy that goods and service. Mr. Speaker, the benefit of the hotel and tourism sector will also increase.

Mr. Speaker, what we want to see as we go forward in this regard is a greater attempt being made by all hotels in general, all of those persons involved in the hospitality sector to work more closely with our productive sector. Sir, we like to coin these phrases constantly. We talk about the question of agrotourism over the years but we have not seen that type of meaning being given to it. Mr. Speaker, we now have an opportunity to do so, not because of the fact that it is convenient but that it is a matter of necessity that we do it.

Mr. Speaker, if we are to be able to deliver the goods in terms of employment in this country, to deliver the goods in terms of the whole question of earning the type of foreign exchange that we require to be able to provide those goods and services and to prevent us from borrowing in the way that the previous Administration had done in the past that has caused us to be in the position in which we are today, we have to reorient the way we do business and that is essential. We certainly cannot dispute that.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to think that the Barbados Labour Party keeps saying that it wants to join us, but recently I saw a very interesting article in the Washington

Post where it says that rat meat out of China was being sold as chicken wings in the United States of America and that the United States of America had to send back those containers to China. Sir, we have to understand that our local industry deserves every level of assistance that can be given to it by the Government and so it needs to be commended.

Mr. Speaker, when I hear persons, especially from the other sectors, especially the tourism sector who talk about the need to import, sometimes we do not understand the dangers that we put not only on ourselves but on the reputation of Barbados. Sir, we can actually certify what we have here but when we have to rely on a third party to do it, we cannot certify that.

Mr. Speaker, I want therefore to compliment the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs for the steps that are being taken in relation to this particular budget, the fact that the Honourable Member has shown that he is in support of the local productive sectors. We want that also to continue because unless we do that, the problems that we experience today as a county would not be solved. I think that we need to remind the Opposition at the same time that the strategy is there and that they also need to come on board with us, not just talk about things. Maybe in that way we would be able to see much better results as we move forward. With that, Sir, I thank you very much.

Mr. SPEAKER VACATED THE CHAIR. Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER ASSUMED THE CHAIR.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to express, first of all, my appreciation to the people of Christ Church South for the confidence that they continue to repose in me as their Parliamentary representative. I try in everything I do to bear in mind the special needs of our people and the need, although frequently, we are not able necessarily to satisfy every need, the ability to achieve some of these is extremely important.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have come to a juncture in this year's budget debate where the contributions of the Members of the Honourable Chamber are supposed to bolster and support the main presentations that we have heard so far. Madam Deputy Speaker, I want therefore to accord to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, my sincere congratulations at the efforts that the Honourable Member continues to make.

Asides.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Madam Deputy Speaker, if you could get 'radio St. Thomas' to turn down their tone, I would really appreciate it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the contributions that the Honourable Member continues to make in respect of managing the finances. I do not take my position on the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016, based on what the Opposition says. It would be foolhardy of any Government to take its position or to look for any great support from the Opposition Benches. As a matter of fact, they often want to say as they stand how they support the budget generally and then proceed to criticise every item that is raised in the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I take comfort, though, in commentary of members of the public and one of the contributors on this side, I believe it was you, Madam Deputy Speaker, when you spoke this morning, you spoke to the fact that leaders in our private sector have been, to a man and woman, supportive of the budget presentations by the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs on Tuesday evening. Madam Deputy Speaker, they recognised that Barbados has begun to turn direction in respect to improvements in their finances. This is now the fiscal position.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we all recognised that this process will not occur overnight. If we attempt to juggle a situation and to rest it into that kind of dramatic change, then the consequences would be dire. As a matter of fact, I dare say it would be impossible, there will be no support for that kind of action, so that even as we grapple with what continues from time to time to be a challenging foreign exchange position, the truth is that our revenues and expenditure are trending in directions which tell the country and the people of Barbados that if we continue to hold steadfast, then we can expect certain positive growth figures or more positive growth figures. I think we anticipate something like 1.3 per cent of growth in this financial year and we can look forward to growth in the order of 2, 3 or even 4 per cent as we put our projects in place.

Sir, this is a very important point on which I must spend a few moments. Sir, one of the things that the private sector says and one of the things that this Administration with which I am familiar working says, is that, Madam Deputy Speaker, we need to pay some serious attention to implementation. Madam Deputy Speaker, implementation does not mean that we throw our standards away, nobody is talking about throwing out standards, but of course we must conform to regulations, to developmental specifics that are part of the culture of Barbados, Madam Deputy Speaker. We must be wary of those investors who really are not in this thing to stay, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Unfortunately the reality is that there are those kinds of investors too, so we need to protect the country and we need to protect our future from this kind of possibility. Certainly in observing and contributing to the discussions at our weekly Cabinet meetings, I am satisfied that this matter is of burning urgency to the Right Honourable Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the entire team in the Cabinet of Barbados. We do not disregard the rights of people. We do not disregard the rights of our society. We do not disregard the rights of our infrastructural development.

Even as I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East mouth about the proposed Hyatt building, I also heard the Honourable Member for the City express some reservations, but in very different tones, Madam Deputy Speaker; in very different tones, because I think deep down the Honourable Member for the City recognises that this is a tremendous opportunity for the continued development of Bridgetown. Yes, there is no-one to whom heritage is closer than myself. I love to visit our old buildings. I love to visit our old churches. I have a good friend and often we take time off, we drive to St. Peter where I come from, as you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, and we spend time at Boscobel graveyard, for instance. We spend hours, and as you walk through and read the history of Barbados, the great people, men and women, our fathers and mothers who built this great country, it means something, and it is something we have to preserve.

Madam Deputy Speaker, even in Britain - and I have had the opportunity to visit London on a couple of occasions -- which for us is one of the more familiar heritage cities in the world, the built heritage of London has not been allowed to destroy or to eliminate the potential of the further development of that wonderful city. There are juxtaposed to the Parliament of London, to the great Tower of London - I said the House of Commons already - a myriad of large buildings. Madam Deputy Speaker, it is difficult sometimes when you want to remember all the sites, but juxtaposed to all of them are skyscrapers and glass towers which represent this culture, this heritage, and the modern heritage which also has a place, which must have a place as we continue to build the heritage. Are we to tell our children and our children's children, "In 2005 we passed a National Heritage Bill and ever since then no new construction has occurred, no new managed development has occurred?" I do not support that approach, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I believe that with the correct inputs from the regulatory bodies in Barbados, including the Environmental Protection Department, the Coastal Zone Management Unit and, most importantly, the Town Planning Department, the correct conversations will see that Hyatt building rise like a Sphinx in Greater Bridgetown and allow us to put on the infrastructural map of Barbados another character building which we can look back at for many, many years to come.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we did it with Hilton Hotel. The Hilton Hotel was an iconic building but about ten years ago, Barbados decided it had to be replaced. It was old, archaic and unmanageable, so that wonderful architecture of the 1960s was replaced by modern architecture and it is a facility which plays a vital role in the continued development of our tourism culture right next to the historic fort and right next to the Military Cemetery of Barbados. We built Kensington Oval. We have taken the iconic statue of the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers and moved it as we should have done to a place at Kensington Oval, at the entrance to the pavilion of Kensington Oval. Thank God we have persuaded the advertisers to move their cars just a little distance away from Sir Garry's statue so that there would be that separation for all to see.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is important that Barbados hears this side of the argument. When I speak in this Honourable Chamber, I always refer myself to the warnings of our Right Honourable Prime Minister that we are not speaking to the Members on that side. We must not lose sight of the fact that we are not speaking to the Members on that side but we are speaking to Barbados, we are speaking to our constituents, and we must convince Barbadians of the kind of development role that we intend for them to play. Madam Deputy Speaker, I therefore think that this Budget carries that trademark. It says "Barbados, here we have a problem. Here we have a problem, so we need your assistance. We are going to offer a tax amnesty." The private sector of Barbados says, "Well done. That is important." I think the Minister referred to some \$20 million that can be gained from that. It is not a wash pan of money, as they say, but it is important money owed to the Treasury of Barbados, to the Consolidated Fund that we run things with. That amnesty will go into operation.

We are going to expand the Special Development Areas Act. What on earth could be wrong with that? What is wrong in allowing developers greater choices and allowing them to take advantage of the concessions which are made available under these special arrangements? The Special Development Areas Act and the Tourism Development Act are designed to continue the important development in Barbados. They want to beat up on Sandals. Every time they get up it is Sandals this and special this and Sandals is a special hotel. The Minister of Tourism alluded to the Gems project, and he asked the question; he did not say it was a special project in their day. He asked the question: "Was it a special project in their day?" and I ask the public of Barbados to examine closely the characteristics and the players associated with the Gems project and then we can carry on the discussion. The Member for St. Michael North East comes in here and pretends that she is now washed, as they say, in the proverbial blood and all of that. The Member for St. Peter has a different story to tell. The Member for St. Andrew has another story to tell. He has gone so far as to lodge his

story in the High Courts of Barbados. If I could ask the Attorney General to intervene and get a matter dealt with, I would like him to get that one dealt with so we can recognise as Barbadians who is the crook in the Barbados Labour Party. Both those affidavits so far are claiming that one of the thieves is bigger than the other one.

Madam Deputy Speaker, if there is anything that the Attorney-General can do for Barbadian in that regard is to hurry that case forward so we can have it dealt with.

Madam, the special development areas are there for all to see, a map of Barbados is accompanied in the notes to the Budget Statement. Sir, I want to commend this document to the reading of Barbadians. It is the Summary Document of the KPMG Group, who spoke to the question... I do not believe that KPMG is the only private sector voice in this business but it is a good summary document. It is easy reading, it is quick reading and it illustrate the points very well. Sir, we see those special development areas and we see the direction in which they are changing.

Mr. Speaker, we talked about tourism and we talk about yachting and I want to join in congratulating the yachting community of Barbados and indeed our non-appointed ambassador for yachting is Mr. Peter Gilkes. I have his permission to call his name. I think that he would be disappointed if I did not call his name. Sir, Mr. Gilkes and his team has done very well in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition does not particularly like the tax on bank assets but I do not believe anybody would like it but I believe that you have to get funds from time to time from somewhere and again this is a tax which the Honourable Minister has explained is designed to achieve certain objectives in the banking sector.

Mr. Speaker, I am not one of those fellows with kind of discretionary spending ability that I even get involved in these matters too much because my choices are very limited when it comes to banking decisions.

Mr. Speaker, there is the national social responsibility levy but I need to leave that towards the end of my presentation because it impacts so seamlessly on the whole health programme so I will get back to that. Sir, only to say that in the comment about the levy they make this point, just like in the banks asset tax. They make this point about the national social responsibility levy:

"While this measure is most likely to be unpopular, its imposition may be justified to address important social objectives".

Madam, that for me is instructive. I think it demonstrates the level of understanding to which

Barbadians are now tending in respect to our social responsibility and it really speaks to the success of the engagement of the people of Barbados on the entire question of health finance, so while the The Honourable Member for St. George North talks a lot of nonsense about what was being done and how it takes sometimes you take time doing these things so that you can get it right.

Mr. Speaker, the point is being made that even as we contemplate a permanent solution...(4:10) by way of a health insurance fund, or whatever we call it. Sir, the point is that this is the figure which we want to use as a starting point because it allows that extra injection of capital directly into the health care sector but also importantly into the social programmes of Barbados into our sanitation department in Barbados and it allows us to have those extra resources to deal with them, and I will get back to health, as I have said before.

Mr. Speaker, establishment of a duty free zone: When that measure was announced I am sure that I saw one who would have in the past been representing the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and the gentleman could hardly stay in his seat. He shook in joy and almost fell off his chair when he heard about it. Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not know if you were in the Chair at the time or if Mr. Speaker was in the Chair but he nearly broke the rules of the Chamber by joining in some tremendous applaud about the venture. Madam, this is something after all that the private sector and the Bridgetown store owners have been asking our Government to look at for a long time, so we get the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East coming in here and saying it means Courts will not sell any more stoves or fridges because of X, Y, Z. Madam, come on man, you designed the duty-free zone, this is basis but this shows the depth to which they will go. Madam, about an hour into her speech the Honourable Member was largely complete and she then spent an hour on some letters that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West would have written three years ago but she quotes these letter every year. I wonderful sometimes where the meat of her presentation would come from if she did not have these letters in here possession to refer to every year. It is becoming boring to hear the Honourable Member constantly have to refer to them as her only walking stick so to speak as she deals with the whole question of our fiscal position.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is easy to get up on the other side and say these things. There is a gentleman in the United States of America now running for the Presidency and he has that kind of approach too. He says that America is bad. They ask him what are you going to do about it. He says, we are going to fix. They probed a little bit further and asked when are you going to fix it Sir. He says that he I will fix it soon. He says there is too much crime in the black communities in America and that he is going to change it.

Sir, that is the kind of commentary that you hear in the United States of America and I am afraid in large measure that it is the same kind of refrain that comes from the Honourable Members on the other side as they get up to speak.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to have the duty-free zone and it will take time to set up. The Honourable Minister of Finance never said it is going to happen overnight. It will take time to set up. It will have from time to time to be tweaked and changes may have to be made to make sure it serves the Barbadian purpose, so what is wrong with that.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to increase old age pension by something like \$10 a week and as the The Honourable Member for St. Lucy was careful to work out, that works out to \$43.30 per month. It may not as I have said be a wash pan of money but it will help, Madam Deputy Speaker, you spoke to it this morning when you referred to some of your constituents and I can support that point. It will help somebody along the way and it is something which Ministers of Finance have always taken pleasure and I want to take the pleasure in joining the Minister of Finance today in his implementation of that relief measure to the old age pensioners of Barbados, may it serve them well. they deserve every penny they can get.

Mr. Speaker, we speak to the midterm financial review. There is something wrong with that, we are going to take money from the State enterprises. Sir, all the Minister has said is that we have budgeted X dollars for the entire year. As usual, in this Estimates process there are monies that would be allocated that may not now be required. You may have changed your mind, you have been a little bit slow in developing the project, let us have a look at it. he has indicated that he wants to involve the Opposition in that discussion well, good luck to him. I will be there to see it played it out because I tried

to involve the opposition in that discussion well good luck to him. I will be there to see it played out because I tried to involve them in the discussion in healthcare finance too and the truth is, with the exception of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, I did not see a soul. As a matter of fact, when they expelled the Honourable Member for Christ Church West that was the end of their participation in the healthcare financing discussion. They were invited and they will continue to be invited but you see, they talk about participation in here to sound good but we know what kind of participation thereafter, one in which they are running things and when they are running things look back, ladies and gentlemen, at the number of occasion that any Opposition, to them, has been included in discussions about development in Barbados. You cannot bring one record to this Honourable Chamber to demonstrate where the Barbados Labour Party (BLP). You used to taunt this Opposition rather than

cooperate with them or attempt to hear any of their suggestions so do not come in here with no new found love for participatory democracy, et cetera. Madam Deputy Speaker, we need to be aware of these things.

The efforts for small business things that is something that goes without saying, to make \$50 million available for small business people cannot be criticised. It is so idiotic it boggles the mind and I say to the people of Barbados, are we to be led by that kind of infantile response to responsible, progressive actions? It is not good enough and I suffered last night with the Honourable Member for St. George North because I could see that he was thrown in at the deep end of this debate because the Honourable Member normally relaxes and takes his time. He listens to a couple of contributions on This Side and then he comes and he generally supports the Budget of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) and he leaves them out there on their own, but last night he came so early in the thing that he got himself all confused and unaccustomed to role that he was forced to play.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: That kind of thing. The King is dead long time. I do not know where the connection was. It was like the reference to the guy on the hill with the three balls of cheese, I feel that story still is not finished because you cannot sit down on a hill, three balls of cheese rolled away from you and nothing else. Come on man, the Honourable Members, on That Side have to take Barbadians more serious. The Honourable Member for St. George South this morning said that he had five points that he wanted to show where the Right Honourable Prime Minister had said one thing and done another -- he did not put it as kindly as that -- but that is what he meant. He said one, he said two, and he stopped. I asked, where are the other three? What kind of tomfoolery are we really engaging in, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I am over with health. I thought it was unfortunately that the Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown got himself trapped in criticising the 10 per cent sugar tax because, I will tell you, that has caused me so much responsibility worldwide in trying to demonstrate how Barbados is setting the trends for the entire world at the level of the World Health Organisation (WHO) next month at the Directing Council of the Pan-American Health Organisation and they now want us to come to China to the general assembly on health to again present the Barbados position. How have we been able to introduce the 10 per cent tax on sugar sweetened beverages so smoothly and so seemingly. It is being assessed in the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health as to its success. The truth is that in many cases there has been an absorption of that tax by a number of factors, but I think, the impact is still there. It is just like any other tax as we know in that it can be either increased, it can be moved around, and it can be tweaked.

The point is, it sends that very important message to Barbadians that we need wherever possible to reduce our intake of salts and sugars. We are going to move to trans fats next but this introduces a much broader question which I hope my colleague, the Minister of Industry and Commerce will allude to the fact that we now have to go to the question of labelling and have clearly visible labels and easily understandable labels that the public of Barbados when they pick up a product in our supermarkets shelves can immediately tell what the constituents are and the potential value for them on consumption.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we move to the question of non-communicable diseases and moneys for the hospital. I had an opportunity on Sunday to share with the people of Barbados and I believe that we got our message over, to some extent again, and really it was very important hearing some of the views of the public in this regard. We hear them every day but it is good to be able to respond in a one-time arrangement with them. All I would like to say to my colleague, Dr. James and the team at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) is that to whom much is given, much is expected. In truth, although there are many aspects of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) that have seen tremendous improvements over the last eight years or so we also have that important area where there are constant complaints about the quality of service and we need to go in the direction of correcting that too. I must say that having now signed on to an accreditation programme for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) that improvement is on the way and it is being seen every day in the hospital. I really want to urge Barbadians to support this venture in respect of healthcare recognising that we all need to contribute to this fact.

Healthcare cost is increasing, the way that we do healthcare now is different to how we did it in the 1950s and before. We need to have a level of intervention with highly skilled technical personnel and high technical equipment, costly equipment in order to carry out nearly every procedure contemplated. No longer will our medical practitioners be prepared to resort to the methods of yore in terms of how we treat our patients so Barbados and our Barbados healthcare systems has to be able to respond to that reality. We need to have moneys to buy the equipment, we need to have money train our staff in the areas that are needed and are important so that healthcare performance can remain on the cutting edge. We have done well, Madam Deputy Speaker, there is room for improvement and recognition of those factors are part of the business of developing and going forward. It is part of the business of having confidence as we tackle non-communicable diseases. Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central made the point in terms of the contribution of our elderly, those are the ones who are most affected by non-communicable diseases, those are the ones who are leading the charge in terms of healthy lifestyles and the fact that we

need to exercise regularly. Madam Deputy Speaker, I need to inform this Honourable Chamber and the nation, yes I have now joined a programme of regular exercise too. I believe the Honourable Member for St. Thomas can see it shining through and this is important. It is not a guarantee to living longer, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is about living healthier while we are here. You spoke to the fact of the life expectancy of Barbadians being now in the area of some 78 years as against some 65 years back around our independence. We are going somewhere and we are going somewhere very quickly.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Permit the Speaker to return please.

Mr. Speaker, resumed the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I thought your time had expired but I am advised that you have two more minutes.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Two more minutes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Two more minutes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will use those minutes to continue on the topic of healthcare and that important relationship between healthcare and the people like our colleagues in the Environmental Protection Department and the need for us to work with them in the whole question of garbage collection, et cetera and treating against the Aedes Egypti Mosquito which of course is the vector associated with all of these diseases, Dengue, Chikungunya and now Zika. Certainly, we in the Ministry of Health are making sure that no stone is left unturned in respect of this battle. Our fogging programme, which is the most visible programme which is associated with the fight against the Dengue mosquito, continues and we continue to publish in our daily newspapers the advertisements which speak to the areas and the ways in which the public must treat this fogging because it has to be carefully managed.

I need to report to the Chamber too that we are extremely appreciative of the private sector participation in this regard because increasingly citizens in Barbados are taking it upon themselves and business communities in Barbados are hiring private fogging services to assist them in the need to manage this disease.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as we continue to seek to improve our healthcare, I want to assure the people of Barbados that the moneys which we expect from this measure, this 2 per cent levy, will be carefully utilised to make sure that we keep our Queen Elizabeth Hospital, our flagship institution, in a condition that it can deliver quality service to Barbadians and that we continue in our primary healthcare system, in our polyclinics, to ensure that intervention is

available for the public of Barbados in a way that allows them to be assured of maintaining or even increasing that life expectancy referred to.

Sir, with that, I want to again repeat my support for the measures included in this document, the 2016 Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, and to assure the Honourable Minister of my unswerving support for this measure.

I am obliged to you, Sir. Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I sat and listened with rapt attention to some of the presentations by Honourable Members of the other side and the one that struck me most has to do with the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central and Honourable Minister of Social Care who spoke about not seeing these things that we are mentioning where people are so poor and they are hungry and are suffering and so on. The Honourable Member needs to remember that this document was laid in this Honourable Chamber by him and when one reads the contents of it since 2010 it was a totally different picture among people living in Barbados between 2008 and then in 2010 people's standard of living had dropped to a level and the Honourable Member knows it because he is the Minister of Social Care. I will not criticise him because I find that he is more amenable to want to listen and to want to assist because in his heart he understands what is happening with the plight of the people but I believe publicly he does not want to say it because he does not want to be pilloried by his honourable friends on the other side.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to remind Honourable Members in this Chamber that Barbados signed on to the Millennium Development Goals, and I really want to emphasize two: The first one is to eradicate extreme poverty and the seventh one to ensure environmental sustainability. This should have been achieved by 2015. We know we have made some strides in education, in health and in other areas but these for me, Mr. Speaker, are so far away from us achieving them and having to achieve them by 2015 last year.

Sir, I want to indicate how indeed happy I was yesterday to have listened to the discourse from the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, my leader in the Barbados Labour Party, and indeed the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. I believe, and so does the public, Mr. Speaker, that she was her brilliant self, well-researched and the public received the messages because they are out there feeling them and reeling under the pressure that has been imposed by this Government over the last eight years.

Mr. Speaker, I have tremendous difficulty in understanding what the Democratic Labour Party does if they do not walk about because the “Rubbing Shoulders Project” and all of the other things that the Barbados Labour Party do in canvassing, in reaching out to people, attending to situations where they have their problems, there are challenges, house fires, slippages, damage to roads, trees falling into their houses and so, so we hear their plight... If you step into the church, Mr. Speaker, people pull you back. I hope to go to a funeral in another few minutes, Sir, and I know that I am not going to be able to get away in the way I would like because everybody ask when will we get a ease, we are not coping and our houses are up for sale. You can see it in every day in the newspapers, Mr. Speaker, but particularly on a Sunday, it is even more than a page of houses up for sale for persons who have lost their work or have fallen ill and can no longer pay their bills and so I wonder where the Democratic Labour Party Members who sit in this Honourable Chamber go that they do not see and feel what is going on.

I read the section again and I have been reading it for a while of the Democratic Labour Party Manifesto of 2008 which speaks about the dream of Barbadians and they wanting to own a piece of the rock which is everybody’s desire, Mr. Speaker, and I cringed when I heard the Honourable Minister for Housing and Lands, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, spoke two weeks ago on the radio about overseas investors are looking to purchase the Louis Lynch School. We have so many challenges in Barbados and there are so many recommendations for the use of that facility and others, and we hear the Honourable Member for St. Peter wanted to sell off everything to foreign investors, and I would like to know about that.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what has me most concerned is that night before I passed up Greenwich Village coming from St. James with my granddaughter who is qualified to work with certificates whose only form of employment today is to sell ice cream in a parlour because there is no avenue in this Barbados... There are so many others who have their Masters and their Doctorates and they are sending Curriculum Vitae by the fours and fives and they cannot find any work in Barbados. Where is the hope for young people? Mr. Speaker, I told her to go and sell the ice cream because when she gets the money in her hand it will not have on sugar or cream or gold it would have on the heads of former leaders of this country and distinguished pioneers in our history. Mr. Speaker, when I was on the way through Greenwich Village and I got to the junction to Lancaster I saw a sign that almost took my heart apart. A big business entity that has sold a property on Holetown for millions of dollars has now got an opportunity through this Government to set up a commercial entity on the same area where the Lancaster

people have got their houses, nearest to where the School Meals Centre is and

Mr. Speaker, the impression I got - and perhaps the Honourable Member for St. George North may be able to tell me what the concept was for that area when we acquired that land at Lancaster because I thought it was for housing... Almost every day when we have our constituency clinics and wherever we go people say I have applied to get a spot.

Mr. Speaker, I support the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in that respect that people want to build their own houses sometimes because they can build from the back and come forward and the whole community spirit could make a difference. Mr. Speaker, Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not knocking big businesses, but for me those spots could have brought communities together where people who had applied, those who had the funding and those who could have access to it because of security of tenure would have been able to perhaps buy another 25 of those spots there. Mr. Speaker, I hurt even more when I see that development...

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy cannot even say anything either because when the Honourable Member sold St. Elmo from down in the Garden by the Church of St. Frances of Assisi the Honourable Member sold it for millions but comes in here and criticizes the things that the Barbados Labour Party puts forward that makes sense, that touch lives and turn them around. Mr. Speaker, I hurt because I see houses in the new Lancaster where they have been built in such small sizes, Mr. Speaker, if you pass there anytime you will see houses with washing machines and dryers on the outside. Had those hoses been given a few more square feet, then those persons would have been able to have those machines on the inside because we know what the sea spurs will do on impacting on the material.

Mr. Speaker, to give away, to sell or to lease...

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. What the Honourable Member is not telling this Honourable House is that there are also persons who have built on...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, is this with respect to something that transpired while you were in the House, just a minute ago?

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Yes, please. As the Honourable Member was about to sit the Honourable Member was speaking about it. Mr. Speaker, if I was not in the House then I could not have heard it, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, let us here it because if it was something that transpired while you were outside the House I am not going to allow it since you could not possibly know it.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the mere fact that I am speaking to it means that I heard it, Sir. What you would agree with is that when you pass there now you would see that the same spots that people are actually adding on rooms and are even building on top. Sir, therefore any person who has a washing machine outside their house is their choice.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged to you, Sir.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Asides.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: I do not have a big gut like you, though. Mr. Speaker, on the eve of our 50th Anniversary Independence -- and I am not an Independence baby, I am so much older. The Right Honourable Prime Minister perhaps might have a few months on me. Mr. Speaker, on the eve of the 50th Anniversary celebrations of Independence, I like many thousands of Barbadians am saddened at the state of the affairs of Barbados under the Democratic Labour Party. I know that the vision that the Right Excellent former leader of the Democratic Labour Party had for Barbados he would have never -- may the Lord bless him wherever he is -- would have never wanted to see Barbados at the level at which it is today under persons who should have been emulating him and looking at the ideology and philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party to bring people along, to handhold them, to lift them up and to empower them. Sir, that Honourable Member would have been dismissive of the actions of this Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, in the 2008 Manifesto at page 4 we heard about 300 years of injustice, the Democratic Labour Party pledge to create a Barbados that is just in freedom, just in the sight of the law, just in equal opportunities, just in social relations. I cannot say, Sir, that we have achieved these at all under this Democratic Labour Party, for over the last 8½ years this Government has pressed Barbadians to the bone with the draconian measures that they have introduced in this country that have people who once had their pride, joy and interest in wanting to work and to work honestly to achieve instead of getting handouts, those people have now been reduced in large numbers to becoming mendicant under this Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, we must not forget that a previous Democratic Labour Party would have indicated that a Manifesto is not a social contract and so they would have put all kinds of fancy things in the Manifesto and then not

fulfill those promises and therefore when people raise issues about them they then become offended. Sir, we know of the 8 per cent cut in 1991 and the hardship that Barbadians, including me, felt because I was a single mother and civil servant. We know that the Democratic Labour Party of that time would have raised their own salaries and then put the 8 per cent cut into operation, so that they would not have felt the impact.

Mr. Speaker, it does not surprise me that the Honourable Members on the other side would now want to get their 10 per cent increase, with the Resolution still here to be discussed. The Honourable Members on this Democratic Labour Party are self-righteous, they are looking at themselves and are 'bigging' up themselves while the ordinary man in the street who has helped to build this country is out there reeling under the pressure of what has been foisted on them through a party that said they love Barbadians. Sir, you do not love people and treat them like that, but some men and perhaps some women do but when you love people you will embrace them, uplift them and cherish the relationship.

Mr. Speaker, that has not been the case with this Democratic Labour Party. They promised the teachers, police officers and others in 2008 duty-free cars. I know of a Member on the Democratic Labour Party side, a prominent person who behaves very badly all over the place, whose sister came in here three years ago, bought him a duty-free car, a Suzuki jeep and travelled a few days later. The Honourable Member boasted about it. I thought that duty---free cars were for a special entity or individual.

Mr. Speaker, how can that happened when we are talking about fairness, about conforming with the law, doing what is right in the eyes of the public because we cannot be lawmakers and lawbreakers too. Mr. Speaker, it does not end there if you are talking about integrity and about conforming with the law, Sir, another Member of the Democratic Labour Party who is not here, has not filed income tax for five consecutive years and is saying that somebody else had his identification number. Mr. Speaker, we are breaching the law, that is why a lot of people cannot have income tax returns because people who can do better have not been conforming with the law.

Mr. Speaker, if the other Honourable Members on this side were to ever get caught up in anything that is negative, I shall condemn them in the same way because I am consistent with anything I say or do. Sir, I thank my constituents, I thank them for the privilege to be here to represent their interest but I challenge them that anytime they were to hear that I have received a vehicle from any business person or that I received money from any individual, corporation or institution take me and shoot me. I am advising that because I believe in integrity and in conforming to standards because at the end of the day

politicians are seen as the upstanding leaders in any society and both the young and old would want to emulate them when they do good. I have a difficulty with a lot of what I hear and see that is only lip service because it is saying to do as I say but not as I do.

Mr. Speaker, I have worked with children for too many years not to know what is right or wrong and to follow the straight and narrow. I would not tell you that we would not make mistakes, as we are human beings but I have a tremendous difficulty in hearing some of the comments that came from the other side over the last two days to indicate to us that the Barbados Labour Party is the scum of the earth. Mr. Speaker, I have a difficulty with that because we in this Barbados Labour Party would have served this country 24 out of the 50 years of celebration of Independence and we lived up to the standards between 1994 and 2008, the Barbados Labour Party lifted the people of Barbados and the economy to a level where we have now reached the stage of being a developed country.

Mr. Speaker, the policies and programme that were put in place with the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter being the leader but we had a group of individuals surrounding him who had the vision, who understood what it was like to empower people and who had the common touch to be able to embrace and touch them. Mr. Speaker that is still going on, despite the fact that the Honourable Member has gone his way.

Mr. Speaker, we are only here today and gone tomorrow but when people do good well we will praise them. On the other hand when they do things that are not good we will criticise them as they so desire. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to deal with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in light of the fact that I want to touch on some of the things of the Budget, but if the Honourable Member for St. Lucy wants to really hear what is happening, he must tell the public of Barbados that the Rural Development Commission (RDC) owes the Light & Power \$300 000 for the Rural Electrification Board. Sir, if it is paid, he can get up and say so now and I will sit. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy would not fix roads in rural Barbados unless there are in St. Lucy, Sir. The bulk of the few streetlights that have been put up have gone down to St. Lucy, Sir. It is selfishness, Mr. Speaker. Rural Barbados is big, and I believe that we should continue to share. When the Barbados Labour Party was the Government, it shared the resources. The policies and programmes stretched far and wide. There was not that kind of segregation and that lack of equity that we see today. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy should tell the people of Barbados if Rockhampton Road has been paved. It only needed the bitumen, or the hot mix as it is called, in order for that road to be finished with hundreds of residents in Rockhampton Road in Jackson, St. Michael. I will take my seat, Mr. Speaker, but the Honourable Member has come

back in here to criticise. He has not disputed that he sold St. Elmo's for millions, but he comes to criticise what I have said. I have no problem with that but, Mr. Speaker, let me get to the elderly and the Budget.

Sir, I know that the elderly would have been offered \$10 per week or \$40 per month as an extension of the pension they receive. It used to happen before every year, Mr. Speaker, so the \$10 is welcome. The Member for St. James South cannot speak for me; speak to the people in Haynesville and leave me alone. Mr. Speaker, the \$10 that has been offered to these persons who have worked so hard in the sugar industry, like my parents, Sir, and maybe other persons across the length and breadth of Barbados, they had pride in doing what they had to do to earn honestly. The elderly who are now in their twilight years, what can they do with \$10 per month, Mr. Speaker? That two per cent expenditure that has been added on is going to come across all food items and everything else. The elderly will not be excluded when they go to shop, Mr. Speaker. They now have to pay a \$5 handling fee per prescription at the private institutions because the hospital does not supply the necessary drugs for them, or they keep changing them so fast that the seniors cannot get comfortable with what is being offered, because they are set in their ways like I am, and like the Right Honourable Prime Minister is. When we are getting to that stage of life, we are set in our ways, we are accustomed to what we do, and we prefer what we have been using all the time. We do not like the changes like the young people. We are accustomed to dressing well, and we are not going to change and dress nippy. We are accustomed to standards. The Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South understands what I am saying. Some of them worked in manufacturing for next kin to nothing, Mr. Speaker. They worked in tourism and in construction for all the years, and they should be celebrated for the Independence, but when I look at the \$10 increase for that senior citizen, I reduced it to \$1.43 a day, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: On a Point of Order. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas may have misled this House by stating that RDC owes the Barbados Light & Power over \$300 000. I think if the Honourable Member cannot produce the facts, the Honourable Member would need to withdraw that. The evidence that I have in front of me shows that it is not so.

MR. SPEAKER: I cannot resolve that one.

Asides.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes left.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Yes, Sir. Mr. Speaker, I am not even going to dwell on the Stroud Bay road that is \$100 000 and the wall house that has gone into cost overruns and so on under the Honourable Member. Let me say that I believe that the \$10 would still buy two carrots, a cucumber, an orange and possibly two plantains. By the time that two per cent is put on the imports, it will create some big problems. Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that the folks out there in Barbados are asking, "Why could not we the contributory pensioners get a little something too? Because the Government took away from some of us the second pension that we received so we are now in a tizzy when it comes to paying our Land Tax bill, paying our house insurance and so on, but we would like to be recognised because they are saying that we have contributed to the Government's purse." I am happy that the non-contributory pensioners are getting something, because some of them would have worked in the homes where they lived to help out, but the contributory pensioners want to know what they will get.

I want to know why the Government will not include some zero-rated goods again in the Basket of Goods in order to be able to ease the plight of people. Mr. Speaker, I witnessed parents all over Bridgetown shopping for books and school clothes. Many of them are getting help from agencies because a lot of good agencies have come on board acknowledging the challenges, and we have Barbadian parents who will still take used clothing for their children because the situation is so dire under this clueless, visionless Government. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, they are all over town buying. I want to ask and suggest that it would have been a wonderful thing if textbooks were offered to the children at primary level, because when they do not have the books they are ignored in some classrooms. We are grappling with a lot of challenges with our children at that level who are unable to read and write well, and so on, and I believe that if the secondary children are having textbooks, the primary children could at this time with all of these challenges that we are having. When you look at it, some of the books are not even written in but they are sent home, and parents are spending \$250 and so on for each child at this time of the year to get them into school.

Mr. Speaker, I thought that with the challenges with water, the Honourable Minister of Finance would have at least put in some kind of concession for the people in Barbados who have to buy a water tank and a water pump to get water. The Honourable Minister of Health needs to know this: The standpipes and the few that are still in existence in St. Thomas and the north are in a poor, unhealthy, unsanitary state. If the Honourable Minister had put in water tanks, we the people of the north would have been happy to get those incentives so that we could outfit our properties, because on Christmas Day there was no water, Easter no water, Valentine's Day no water, Father's and Mother's Day no water, Mr. Speaker. Even Kadooment

Day no water. Emancipation Day no water, Mr. Speaker. Where are we going? You cannot get a proper word out of the people at the Water Authority as regards to what is happening. I have constituents who came to my door yesterday morning and said, "The water I caught in my pipe this morning in Welchman Hall tasted salty." Some others said, "I washed my clothes in the machine and the water is dirty every day." They cannot buy a filter because they lost their work under this Government; some of them. Some of them are outside in the yard cooking, Mr. Speaker. I speak to you from my heart with truth, and I am hurting because too many Barbadians are left suffering and this Democratic Labour Party seems to feel happy that people congregate by the Cenotaph in Heroes Square, of all places, to receive food on evenings. They are not doing it because they want to; they are doing it because they have to, Mr. Speaker.

Finally, Sir, I thank the Honourable Minister for bringing the debushing programme. All I want to caution the Democratic Labour Party about is not to let it now be for friends and families alone. The nepotism in the Democratic Labour Party is too rife. I want to recommend that those people from Beautify Barbados, National Conservation Commission, the Drainage Unit and other agencies who know how to do it, and who are suffering now because they are not getting any money, be given the first option to assist in cleaning up Barbados. The place is dirty. Barbados is dirty, Mr. Speaker, and St. Thomas in particular. There is dumping illegal and there is grass all over the place when we were told by the Democratic Labour Party that flooding would be a thing of the past. They have developed a unit and then the unit crashed. There is nothing happening with the roads in Barbados. The roads, Mr. Ministry of Transport and Works are to the worse level. Have you, Sir, through the Honourable Speaker found that bobcat that was stolen from Chance Hall, that is where the Government's money is going.

Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable Member and Minister of Education where are the \$16 000 that were written in a cheque by a member of staff for chickens for the canteen at the Ministry of Education.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please wind up.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Yes, Sir. We are in this dire strait today because the management coming through from the Democratic Labour Party is lacking, governance is poor but when we study it, we would like for the people of Barbados to get a better deal because they are reeling under the pressure and there is really need for the Honourable Member for St. John, who was the person identified for the national exercise programme to help them out, so that they could eat a better meal, they can exercise and at least

minimise the contracting of the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) that many of us are suffering from.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank you and trust that the few comments made would be adhered to in some way that we can get a measure of comfort as people of Barbados to be able to make a change in the governance of the Democratic Labour Party and for the Right Honourable Prime Minister to take the lead as leader and control his Ministers who seem to be loose cannons when it comes to the management of the financial affairs of their Ministries.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended for lunch until 1.45 p.m.

Hon. R. JONES: I beg to second that.

The question that the House be suspended for lunch until 1.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker

RESUMPTION

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: When the suspension was taken we were on Order No. 21 and to that we shall revert. The Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise, of course, to give support to this Resolution before us which have flowed from the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposal 2016 as so eloquently delivered by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West on Tuesday.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposal must be taken as a serious point of discussion within the Parliament of Barbados. It is really where we capture succinctly the state of the finances of the country at the point and time and indicate measures that the Government proposes to embark upon, as in most cases, add some grow and further development to the economy. I think quite often, a lot of emphasis is placed on the budgetary aspect of it and perhaps a little bit too little on the financial statement component of it. I thought the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, as usual, really did spend quite a bit of time explaining the state of the public finances and then, of course, going on to the measures the Government proposes to take to address whatever challenges we know exist within the economy.

It is rather unfortunately, and I say this with all levels of sincerity, that the Opposition Benches ought to just, as per usual, criticise the State without offering any solutions. In other words, as I sit and listen to the Opposition Members speak to this issue, I ask one simple question all the time: If you were the Minister of Finance today, what would you do that is different from what the Government of today has proposed? Instead of answering that question, not for my benefit as a Member of Parliament, not for the sake of the 30 of us who sit in here, but for the benefit of the 276,359 people in this country. That was the size of the Barbados population as at December 2015 according to the socio-economic report laid in Parliament recently. It is for the entire country who listen not just to the Minister of Finance but all of us so the Government has made it abundantly clear that these are the challenges we face and these are the things we are proposing to do to add more life and excitement into the economy. Instead of saying, well if we were in your position, these are the things we would do, you get a menu of all sort of accusations and wishy-washy statements and innuendos and such like that really and truly add no value national debate and national development. You got in here and talked about somebody bought \$16 000 in chickens for the Ministry of Education and this body missing a tractor, and then all sort of attacks on family members of Members of Parliament that really and truly have no place. Perhaps that is the mind-set because there is this perception that this was some election budget which I really do not understand because for the last four or five years you are being told the economy is so bad, you cannot do anything, this is wrong, this is not good, call elections and now it seems as though the Minister of Finance and the Government has brought a Budget that obviously appeals to a wide cross-section of the population, including Members of the Opposition Benches, that all of a sudden now they say that it is an election Budget. You really cannot please them so, Madam Deputy Speaker, we ought therefore to focus on continuing to explain what we are offering to the country and why we are offering it and not to make any false promises.

I draw my sustenance in Parliament and certainly speak to the issues based on consultations with those who are residents of the Constituency of St. James South and I want to thank them all, as I do all the time, for their support and their encouragement. I say that, Madam Deputy Speaker, not to belie the fact that I have constituents who still complain about not having jobs, not finding the jobs they want and there are constituents of mind, whether they are in West Terrace Gardens, Husbands, Haynesville, Oxnards, Warrens Park North, Glydor Gardens, Crystal Heights, wherever, who would tell me of challenges they have in terms of meeting their monthly expenses, challenges they have in terms of the children's education, sometimes in terms of healthcare and I do not bury my head in the sand that my constituents or everybody else's constituents do not have challenges but we cannot therefore

throw our hands in the air and say look, there is nothing we can do. We listen and we listen well and then we put our heads together with our constituents, advisors and our colleagues and say what it is that we can do in the final solution.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Budget, to my mind, really and truly has announced quite a few measures that are quite practical that would do more harm to the economy but would certainly help to put us or continue us on a trajectory for building a more resilient and sustainable economy and society in Barbados.

I am going to speak, if time permits, to some of the issues that relate to the ministry I have responsibility for the time being, particularly the small business sector that has not been discussed in great detail in Parliament for quite a few years or sessions perhaps. I am very grateful for what the Minister of Finance has been able to put together and announce here this week and that certainly has the full support of my ministry and myself as we go forward and if I do not get the chance to delve into a lot of details in terms of the time allocated rest assure that I will continue the conversation outside of Parliament because I firmly believe that we are on the right track when it comes to what was announced here today.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as a Government you try your best to get out there and bring the right policies and programmes and do the necessary reforms but what troubles me all the time is you hear on one hand about the state of the foreign reserves in the country and this was really stress on a lot yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition and I do not doubt the figures that she presented. The Minister of Finance presented similar figures in terms of the decline in the foreign reserves in the country but it is not in such a dangerous position as to seek to create a lot of panic in the society, but even as the Minister of Finance and the Government does its utmost best to attract foreign direct investment you have members of the Opposition who are out there doing everything possible to scare off domestic regional and foreign investors in Barbados. That, to my mind, Madam Deputy Speaker, is quite unpatriotic. At the end of the day, whether you are a "Dee" or a "Bee" you have to live in this society and you really cannot adopt an attitude, almost a scorch earth mentality and behaviour that as we seek to bring the kind of programmes and attract domestic, regional and foreign investors to Barbados you have Opposition politicians and their lackeys - many who could not get clean Police Certificate of Character - walking around this country, going on social media and saying all manner of untruths.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I listened well to my friend who is the Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown and I empathise with him because he did not

have his facts but he was led in this particular discussion by what perhaps emanated from the leadership of his party as well. I cannot, Madam Deputy Speaker, refer to any Honourable Member of this House as a liar so therefore I would be very cautious and say that they have been perpetrators of thermological in exactitudes when they speak, for example, of the Hyatt project. I heard the Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown get up and said today that the Hyatt project did not have Town Planning permission and, Madam Deputy Speaker, if we on the Government's side do not stop these mistruths in their tracks they would go out there and not only domestic investors but regional and international investors ask: what kind of society are we running in Barbados? How can anybody go and start to announce a 15-storey building in Bay Street without even applying to Town Planning. Madam Deputy Speaker, let me tell you this which is the facts, that particular project that we call the Hyatt project did have an application before the Town and Country Planning Department. It was approved with conditions and I believe that they have appealed some of the conditions and that matter is also being addressed at the highest level, but the decision has been made.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown saying, mistakenly because I know him to be a man of strong character, he was misinformed by others around him including the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, that there was no Environmental Impact Study. Let me tell you this, Madam Deputy Speaker. No other physical development project in Barbados has had as many studies undertaken by the applicant as has been done for what we call the Hyatt project. They had a Heritage Impact Study done which looks at what is taking place within the physical environs in terms of its impact upon the heritage situation given the fact that we have an UNESCO qualification. That was done, so who says that has not been done is totally misguided, including a former Democratic Labour Party member, a Barbados Labour Party member and PEP member who, only when he graduated from law school, realised he was black but when he was at Harrison College he was a white boy. It is only since he graduated from law school, Comissioning or whoever, that he now recognises that he is black and all of a sudden he talks things about heritage studies and what not.

The Hyatt project was also subject to an environmental impact assessment study which was done as well. A traffic study was done. A geotechnical survey was done. A marine survey was done and a geophysical survey was done. Six studies were done. Do you really believe that the state would be so irresponsible as to go and grant permission to anyone to construct a project of that size without having appropriate surveys done? We must have more faith in ourselves. When you go out there and give that impression and say these things happened you are wrong and misleading.

This is not just politics. The reality about it is that these reckless statements go abroad and they give the impression that Barbados is some kind of banana republic and they scare investors off. I know from where I sit as Minister responsible for international business and commerce that there were potential investors who would invest in Barbados but when they read and heard these kinds of comments they said this is not the place they should come, so do not come with these things.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I go a step further. I hold no racist bone in my body. I am not bothered about the colour of anybody skin but you see who they are attacking in terms of that chap Mr. Maloney and some other white people in this country, let me make it clear right, they are investors and when you pursue them like that so vehemently and so erroneously you are also scaring off black investors as well, Indian investors and Chinese investors because you are giving the impression that Barbados is not a society that welcome investment, domestic, regional or international.

I have seen a vicious attack launched also in the entity called Deltro with very misleading, very wicked and uncharitable comments which are totally unfounded talking about threats to water supply from batteries. Nobody is disposing of batteries in The Belle area. Madam Deputy Speaker, we either want investment, domestic, regional or international or we do not. We must stop this scorch earth mentality as though you would destroy everything possible and when you walk in there as the Government of the day you wave a magic wand and everything turns around possibly overnight.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I go a step further. You see that Hyatt project. When that project gets started hopefully within six weeks' time it means that at least 500 Barbadians will gain employment in this country between now and January, that is what it means. The same poor working class families that you get out here and keep so much noise about and say that they are being downtrodden and do not have a chance to move up the food line are the ones who will gain employment, masons, carpenters, all of the artisans, and you see the lady who goes and by a van from the used car dealer she will sell food from the back of the van to those workers who work on those projects and that is how we stimulate an economy. As you curse and attack the big white fellows or the business people in this country or the potential foreign investors, whether it be Deltro, the Maloney group, the Bjerkhamn group or the Williams group, understand that you are depriving your same black brothers and sisters and who you consider the working class constituents of a chance to move themselves up the food chain. That is the recklessness of the statements that we read around here all the time.

I am very satisfied, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this Budget has done what is necessary to really spur further growth in the development of this country. I am not distracted by the analyses given, Straughn or whoever, because I too would have studied a bit of economics and public finance in particular. I know it has been considered a dismal science. I know that people sometimes also have a way of manipulating their interpretation of the data to arrive at what they want to arrive. This economy remains still so fragile that we cannot as politicians be so reckless in our statements because they go far and wide, so we, Madam Deputy Speaker, really and truly needs to get back on track.

This Budget certainly to my mind, as I said, addressed several of the business issues, and I am going to tell you why you must fully support them as they seek to bring to the fore a lot of what we really need to address. Madam Deputy Speaker, we say on the one hand that the economy is in trouble, this is from the Opposition Bench, we cannot borrow much, we cannot do this and do that for the people, you are being told that the foreign reserves are precarious, you are being told that the Government is not paying its bills and not giving refunds and then you hear at the end of a speech but we will grant free university education to all Barbadians. Now, I ask one simple question on behalf of my constituents in St. James South: Where will the money come from? We have to be very practical and very realistic. I know people, constituents of mine, who have applied to the Students Revolving Loan Fund and they deserve it. Their lives somewhat feel put on hold because they have not been approved or if they have been approved they have been told they have not got any funds available to disburse to them.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what troubles me when I hear Members of the Opposition Bench get up in here and talk about those people who are in that position is that some of their strongest supporters have not paid one cent back to the Students Revolving Loan Fund and are gainfully employed in this country and abroad, so while I support getting the funds out of the schemes that the Honourable Minister of Finance has announced and certainly getting more money from the Caribbean Development Bank, I want to implore Barbadians who have borrowed money from the Students Revolving Loan Fund who are gainfully employed to please pay their loans back to that fund. It is a revolving loan meaning that you are supposed to pay your part back so that the state is in a position to lend to those who wish to come and borrow. We cannot keep borrowing from others to replenish the fund when there are those out there who are not making an effort. Of course, on the other hand if you borrowed and you have not been in a position yet to find meaningful employment or there are other circumstances, health conditions, family circumstance or whatever they are, please at least make an effort to go and sit with the fund,

have a conversation and explain the position to them, and if the members of staff in that department are hostile and not accommodating well then you have to kick it to a different level.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am concerned that with a 40-something percent delinquency rate, there must be a number of people who have borrowed from the fund and who have taken an attitude that it is Government and therefore they do not have to pay back the money. Madam Deputy Speaker, that has to change because that same attitude that it is Government and therefore you do not have to pay is the same anti-grouping who takes the same attitude that it is Government and therefore you have to get everything free. Nothing is free in this country. It was not so under the Barbados Labour Party and it is not so under the Democratic Labour Party, somebody has to pay, the money has to come from somewhere.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this Budget therefore, to my mind, continues that discourse where we are seeking to bring the country to a level of reality in terms of what we really can or cannot afford. It has been a difficult period of adjustment. I do not bury my head in the sand about that. I am a parliamentarian. I represent a constituency that stretches between the working class and the upper income class in Barbados, so I cover the entire spectrum.

CONTINUE MERGING FRM HERE

House C38C Sequence 24

2.08 p.m.

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Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not bury my head in the sand about that, I am a Parliamentarian, I represent the constituency that stretches between the working class and the upper income in Barbados and so I cover the entire specter and I know that it has been a difficult period but as an economy and as a nation we have to work together. We cannot come here and make any false promises.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there have been challenges in the healthcare system and one of the announcements in this budget speak to the 2 per cent tax that will go on goods coming into the island and it is certainly a social responsibility levy that will help not just the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I want to make that abundantly clear because there are those who are now going to feel that a whole wash pan of money is going to go into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is going to get a whole set of money to solve all of its issues. Madam Deputy Speaker, no, I believe that it

certainly helps with the cash flow challenges that the hospital has been having.

Mr. Speaker, we have to make the country realise that the State can no longer provide everything to every one and that is a conversation that has to continue not only inside here but outside of here. What we also have to do is to make it abundantly clear as to what the State can and cannot afford. We cannot bury our heads in the sand, as a politician I am not going to go out there and tell my constituents that in five-year's time that the State would once again be paying all the expenses at the University of the West Indies for their children. I am not going to do that, it will be the epitome of irresponsibility for me to do it. I will be a liar. That is one thing you cannot call me, you can call me anything in the world but you cannot call me that and get away with it because it is not true.

Mr. Speaker, we have to help face these realities and I invite my colleagues on the Opposition Benches to have those conversations and to be honest with their constituents because those days are not going to happen again, that is why when we put incentives in place that allow people to create businesses, to diversify the economy, to create jobs and to invest in these kinds of instruments towards the future these must be taken seriously and come on board.

Mr. Speaker, it is a period where we have to all find a level of adjustment until we find a new norm and despite all that the people say the State is still providing the fundamental services; our children are still going to safe schools each day; they are still having lunch at the primary school level; they are still riding free on the school bus; they are still being taught by well-trained teachers; law and order still functions well in Barbados; our healthcare system is still the best in the Caribbean. I do not care what anybody says, Barbados still has the best healthcare system in the Caribbean, and it is assessable to all. Madam Deputy Speaker, we really and truly, must get real with these matters.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I now turn my attention to the part of the budget that spoke to the issue of support for the business sector, particularly the micro, small and medium enterprise sectors. Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to say that I give great credit to the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Chairman of the of the Cabinet of Barbados, for ensuring as the Honourable Member usually does, but perhaps I will say with a greater level of drive this year, to ensure that all Ministries weigh in heavily on the budget.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is not Chris Sinckler's budget, it is not the budget of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, this is the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016, of the Government of the day and all of our Ministries have provided guidance and

specific suggestions to the Ministry and to the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs in terms of what we would like to see happening. Madam Deputy Speaker, the Ministry of Commerce, Small Business Development, Industry and International Business did sit with their stakeholders over the last year or so and had conversations about where we are with the various sectors within our Ministry.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the budget this time focuses quite a bit on the Small Business Sector but it does not mean that the rest has been ignored, the budget cannot capture everything. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am particularly grateful and very excited about the focus on the small business and the microenterprise sector in Barbados because we constantly have been saying as a Government that this is the sector that is really going to put Barbados on a sustainable path of growth and economic development. It is the sector that will ensure that the socioeconomic circumstance in Barbados is improved for so many people. It is the sector that will bring and maintain the level of stability in everything that we want. It is the sector that certainly is going to maintain and develop our cultural aspect as well and therefore no one can ignore it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I cast my mind back to the enterprise survey for Barbados back in 2010 and was conducted by the World Bank. At that survey out of all the issues that was thought to affect businesses 27 per cent stated that access to finance was the biggest obstacle, followed by 23 per cent which felt that electricity cost was another major hurdle and inadequately educated workforce was also deemed a major constraint. Overall, 41 per cent of firm identified access to finance as a major constraint, with 45 per cent of the small firms, those with between five and 19 employees indicating that access to finance was a major issue.

Madam Deputy Speaker, therefore armed with that kind of survey and analysis the State is duly bound to find solutions. It is not that we have not been doing anything within the intervening period, FUNDACCESS, the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation, among others, have been all playing a very critical role in helping this sector to grow out and to find its way as we go forward.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we certainly have been firing on all cylinders but I am grateful that today the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has been able to bring some incentives that will certainly help us to grow this sector forward. Therefore, when you look at the fact that this survey identifies access to finance, electricity charges and such like as a big issue we then ask what has the Government done in terms of electricity charges, for example, Madam Deputy Speaker?

Madam Deputy Speaker, the falling world price of oil has certainly helped us in terms of addressing the foreign exchange expenditure on fossil fuel and the attendant cost to the end user. Madam Deputy Speaker, but as a State we have gone further, when we did the Electric Light and Power Act it was not just an Act that addressed the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited and their situation here, as a State we said that Barbados must move away from its dependency on fossil fuel and should be more involved in renewable energy sector and no Government in the entire Caribbean has done as much to facilitate the growth and development of the renewable energy sector than this Democratic Labour Party Government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, no Government has done as much in terms of legislative reforms, in terms of administrative structure or in terms of all of the things that are necessary to create the right ecosystem for a renewable energy sector to take place in Barbados. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is why I cry shame when you have foreign investors who would want to invest in this sector in Barbados and people would want to put all sorts of obstacles in their way.

Madam Deputy Speaker, nobody is stopping any local investor from investing in the renewable energy sector, there is room for all but I seriously would have to question those Barbadians who say to reserve it for Barbadians only. Why must there be only certain types of Barbadians? Madam Deputy Speaker, not with me, there is room for all, there is room for those who would come and design renewable energy systems for residences; there are those who would come and design them for commercial enterprises; there are those who would come and do the installation; there are those who would come and do testing; there are those who would come and design technologies around it; there are those who would come and establish photovoltaic manufacturing facilities in Barbados and there are those who would come and do solar farms.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not think that we ought to be such an unwelcoming society, because when you stop the white Canadians from coming, the next step might be that you might stop black Barbadians from getting piece too. Let us be brutally frank about some of these things, there is room for all.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I go a step further, we need to stop being myopic and think that the world exists just in Barbados. I want to see Barbadian entrepreneurs who are involved in the renewable energy sector getting up and going into the Eastern Caribbean and plying their business as well. I want them to stop feeling that their duty is to sit here and block others from coming here and getting a share of the pie. I want them to get up and get out into the rest of

the Caribbean and do business and grow from there. Madam Deputy Speaker, the State has the facilities and incentives in place whereby they can get out there and do it. We have totally incentivised the renewable energy sector that Barbados must be the leader in the entire region, therefore, Barbadians must stop being myopic and thinking that Barbados is your sole oyster, but that the world is your oyster.

No.C38C (25)

Thursday, AUGUST 18, 2016

Seq. 26

Hon. D.O’N. INNISS: ... Stop being myopic and thinking that Barbados is your sole oyster; the world is your oyster. Madam Deputy Speaker, in respect of the assistance to be granted to the small, micro and medium enterprise sector, as I said the Ministry has consulted far and wide with our stakeholders. We put together a team that included the Small Business Association, the University of the West Indies, the various Ministries, other departments of Government, civil society, non-Governmental organisations. The whole gamut of them have been involved in putting together a national policy framework for the development of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in Barbados. Madam Deputy Speaker, we have certainly made it abundantly clear as to what it is we wish to achieve in doing such. Our vision is to be a globally competitive, technologically driven micro, small and medium enterprise sector contributing to the sustainable socio-economic development of Barbados. Those few words mean a lot, Madam Deputy Speaker, and they really capture well where this Government wants to take that sector. We want it to be globally competitive. It means that it is not just about doing small and micro business for Barbados alone, but those that can really go outside of Barbados and compete; that is what has been missing. When politicians in this country talk about the small business sector, it is about a sector that they seem to believe can only operate within Barbados. They cannot see the world as their oyster, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I know the time is coming along. We will increase the number of viable and sustainable entities in this one to enhance the market opportunities. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am grateful that the Minister of Finance has been able to work with my Ministry and the Central Bank and others to identify \$50 million to advance toward soft loans and grant financing. I have received at least 27 calls already between last night and this morning about accessing the money. I said, “Hold on a minute. We are going to do it but we have to put systems in place because we are not just going to go out there and start writing cheques and giving people just so. That would be the height of irresponsibility.” Fund Access is being restructured as we speak, Madam Deputy

Speaker. It has to be in order to meet the demands that will come upon it. We cannot be irresponsible and say, “Just get out there with the systems we have now and make it work.” The Barbados Investment Development Corporation (BIDC) similarly will have to be equipped. No, we cannot just say it is about financing alone. All the business support systems and services have to be in place to help them to grow up. We are committed to it, and I know the Opposition has fear that this money is going to be unleashed in the economy and it is going to help the Government win the Election, et cetera. We are far more interested in having a small business sector that is going to create more jobs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I come down the line let me just share with you some information.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time is up, Honourable Member.

Hon. D.O’N. INNISS: Okay. If I do not share it here, I will share it elsewhere, but Madam Deputy Speaker, let me just emphasise that this is a Budget that ought to allow all of us to take off our political blinkers, avoid the political divide, and say, “Look, Barbados has reached a junction in its journey where it must be all hands on deck.” We cannot be reckless, we have started to grow the economy a bit, and we cannot, simply put, be reckless, Madam Deputy Speaker. We have to really and truly grow from there, and I invite those in the private sector to come fully on board and let us get this economy growing. I am obliged to you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hold on, Honourable Member, the Speaker is returning.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Members. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me put the caveat in early that I am not an Uncle Tom, I do not sleep in cufflinks, I do not sleep in bowties, I am an ordinary Barbadian and I was sent to Parliament by the people of St. Michael East to do a job. When I feel passionate about anything in my political life, it is because I am reflecting that assignment as the parliamentary representative. I cannot say that for everybody, and I did not want to go down the line dealing with ethnocentric issues, but ethnocentric issues is a reality, and if you are going to make a genuine analysis of the society, there are non-economic factors that we keep avoiding over and over again when we know that the society itself is bitter over these particular issues. I might be this way because I am a student of the history of the first half of the 20th Century. It is the greatest period in the history of the Western world for all black Barbadians. It has given rise to what we celebrate in the second half of the century in 1966. You do

not get Independence without a serious struggle, and without the concepts and the vision of those who preceded the actual date in 1966. I am still probably very much captive within that framework. When I listen to the news, Sir, I see the great people of South Africa facing the same challenges that are ethnocentric, and we do not want to hide it. When people make reference to the Prime Minister in this country -- certain people of a certain social type -- the ethnocentric phobia goes to the front, and nobody wants to represent it because you fear that you are being charged for racism in Barbados. When I go to the Mental Hospital and I examine who I see there, I know what I see. If you do not know, I am sorry for you, and if that is supposed to be having on blinkers, I have got a different perception of the world.

Let me make the argument stronger for you, because you are going to say we have 90-something per cent black population. I will make the argument stronger for you, because the 90-something per cent black population owns less than five per cent of the wealth of this country. Take that. If you go to the United States of America (USA), the issue of the highest percentage is now one of the major social issues on the agenda there. The percentage of Blacks, although they are minority, is so disproportionate that it has led to the tensions in the USA. These are contemporary issues. Amid all the issues in the States is a major debate and public discussion now on the amount of Blacks in the prisons in the system. Do you listen to the news?

Aside.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: You are saying that the majority has to be black because they are Barbadians. I am saying that the majority is black, but I know it is black working class. If we do not examine these issues, because that relates to housing too, it relates to the men I see out there at Trafalgar Square eating food every day, and I have never heard anybody feeling the passion and sensitivity that is so necessary and that is an imperative.

2.36 p.m.

Thursday, August 18, 2016

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: (Seq 27)

I have never heard anybody feeling the passion and the sensitivity that is so necessary, that is an imperative. When I hear the acid and the passion, putting up a defence for why investors in Barbados, as though we as parliamentarians we must acquiesce ...

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: You made reference to specific areas of development.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please let the member make his contribution.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, let him intervene when he gets a little more civil, I will continue to speak. Sir, we have to practical. If investors are coming to this country people vest us with the authority to determine if the project is appropriate and if the character of the people who are investing is credible. I think that is very important. Nobody is not saying that you do not like anybody because they have a Caucasion pigmentation, nobody says that, that is foolishness, nobody hate people because they belong to any specific religion, I do not know those people but we face the realities in the society and when you begin to even talk about a Budget, as I bring it back to the present Budget because that is the failure and mistake we have been making over and over again. You cannot just think about the economic issues, there are non-economic issues modern thinkers, are now tapping into socio-cultural elements in decision-making, anthropology as well, when they are making assessment of certain programmes and that is why you have a social investigation. How does a project however structurally sound it is, the amount of money you make from the project, you cannot exclude the fundamental and I am going to make that point even stronger to you now because I wrote it when you were speaking.

Mr. Speaker, in your Manifesto "Pathways to Progress", the late Prime Minister Errol Walton Barrow, a man who I respect because he is the first man that has given me an opportunity to be in the Upper House of Barbados to defend the interest of the Democratic Labour Party. I am not a dishonest man. I do not know if I would have had the opportunity to be here if that opportunity was not made available to me earlier. He said:

"To participate meaningfully and productively in the major institutions of the society people have to be empowered. It is the completion of this progress of politics, political, education, social and economic empowerment that would enable the hewers of wood and the drawers of water to become the true craftsmen of their faith and real participants in the progress of social economic progress".

Mr. Speaker, that is Errol Walton Barrow, so do not tell me that we do not have a responsibility to empower our people. You do not want to be empowered exclusively by a welfare grant or when you die somebody gives you a pauper burial. Is that empowerment?

Mr. Speaker, why I have said the 20th Century first half is so important to me is that the men in the 20th Century was absolutely clear on what they did. Sir, most of them did not come to Parliament but read the writings of

Wickham, go back and look at the work of Duncan O'Neale, go back and look at the child labour when were working in the cane fields up to 12 years old. These men had visions, they wanted to transform the lives of our people.

Mr. Speaker, when I make a contribution in here it has nothing to do with malice. I am concerned about engaging in a serious analysis not just calling out figures and saying \$160 million would derive as a consequence of the levy and believe that makes me bright. I want a surgical analysis of where we are and if I voice an opinion with the hope that the Minister of Finance or the Prime Minister or some other Minister on that side would hear something of value in it, however limited my ability might be in these matter but I certainly know that it is much bigger and greater than theirs. We have a serious issue where we are at present with all that is happening around the world. It is a challenge to small Governments. I got up this morning and I heard a Minister who is responsible for the social services poisonous by implementation and probably spend 29 minutes out of the half hour attacking an institution and the founders of that institution were born within that institution. There will become a time when you will have to defend a lot of things that you are saying in here and, bet your life, I will be in Station Hill and I will down in Deane's Village for you and you are going to answer some serious questions.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: I went in there already more than once. Your Party caused me to be in there and your Party caused me to stand up in the docks in the Magistrate's Court. I know all of that.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: No, the Leader of the Opposition came to my rescue. Sir, we have some important issues. I have said this more than once in here because I would like to see us reach a stage where we can begin to examine these important issues in Barbados without believing that there is any personal attack on any person. I do not have to become involved in any theatre. When I leave here and I go outside I talk to everybody. If I want a drop home, I can ask anybody and they are likely to drop my home because I live that way but if I have an idea or a body of ideas that I want to put on the table especially in this Chamber, I believe that as long as I operate within the framework of the rules and regulations of this Chamber I will not allow any form of restrain, constraint or anything to stop me from expressing my view.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have to be vulgar. I do not have to tell you that the Democratic Labour Party is worse

Party in the history of Barbados, I will do that when the time comes but not in here. I could not do it in here.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: It is also a credibility issue too. Sir, when people make commitments and vague promises in here the reason why some people hold reservations is because we have heard....

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Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: ... vague promises in here. The reason why some people hold reservations is because we have heard some sincere tones and words already in and out of Parliament. I have here one or two quotes of people giving special commitments. We know people felt passionate that they should not reduce the number of students within the University of the West Indies (UWI). They gave commitments that there will be no reduction in the numbers in Barbados and that everybody should have access to free tertiary education and the people believed it and then what occurred? When people lay doubts you do not get angry. If you know that you did something sincere in your heart you come back and explain that at the specific time, I said this because such and such was the case. You did it with the workers at NCC and they had to end up fighting it in a tribunal and all like now the problems are still the same. It happened during the General Elections when you said that the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) wanted to put the Barbados Transport Board in the hands of private ownership and the people believe you but if eight years elapse and everything that you said with conviction and sincerity at that moment in history turned out to be the very opposite to what you said then you cannot expect the society not to have reservations and to question your credibility. Although at that specific time in history you could hold a view, you are only human, you will hold a view because the dynamics around you at the specific time were favourable to those views. Some people expressed them but do not believe them but we believe them so what I am saying to you, do not have doubts about the judgment of ordinary people because you will pay for it.

I was saying in South Africa today, the ANC finds itself on the realm although still very popular after breaking away from the apartheid system, a party led by Nelson Mandela, finds itself in the Municipal Election fighting against the people coming up against the ANC. Do you know why? Because when they receive the liberation under Mandela they expectation were high. They thought there would have been significant economic transformation in the lives of the country.

When the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) came to office and power, for me, in 2008 the expectations of the people were high. Nobody expected that we would have been in this state that we are in now so you have to explain it you cannot get so arrogant to tell me, the one person that represent the 19 000 to 20 000 people in my constituency that I cannot express a view about investment in this country. I am the voice of these people and these people will always speak, and they speak through me. I have issues that and want to hear what is happening and nobody is speaking on them. I have issues in my constituency and I want to hear the voices of the Minister because I am terrorised and the people are terrorised by public servants saying that they must be moved. They did not have enough money to build a good house, never owned a piece of land in their life before and now that they have built the little houses in The Belle the Town and Country Planning Department says they have to move. This perception of absolute power and abuse at the highest level. The Town and Country Planning Department people need to know or rather the people need to know - because I believe in the synthesis of Government and people not the synthesis of Government and corporate Barbados, I do not belong to that school of thought. It is Government and the people. You cannot go wrong and that is what Mr. Barrow was saying there, you cannot go wrong as long as you establish that relationship with the people and be guided by the concerns of the people and that is why I said the first half of the 20th century is so important. I have been discussing this matter over and over and I just asked for a public statement, whatever the view are, even though you told me about the views behind closed doors, I do not want any secrets, talk to the people.

I want to know if a reverse osmosis plant will be made available to us in St. Michael East that is what I want to hear about. My politics is Government and people. Probably one of the most densely populated areas in the urban community is Licorish Village. Certainly, you just have to go in at the Welfare Department and you would just see Licorish Village, Belle Gully, My Lord's Hill, all around there, the same area, people cannot have access to water. I must thank the Minister in recent times for making available at two strategic points, two standpipes. I asked for it when I was in here and I went with a Minister walking. I took me walking all around the place and then he began to question people about why they put their houses here and there and all of that. The Minister of the Government placed two standpipes, one to the eastern side and one to the western side because he is aware that if you do not study these dynamics people end up with all types of diseases, including Salmonella because it is not enough water to bathe, cook and to wash your hands on a regular basis and he understood that.

I need to know something now about the sewerage plant. I have been told that you cannot just put in the

reverse osmosis plant without putting in a sewerage plant as well because one must compliment the other. I am not versed in the technical and scientific knowledge to understand it clearly. All I want to do is to make sure you get the contamination or the bacteria out of the water and allow people to be able to sleep at night comfortably. I have heard all kinds of stories about land available at \$5.00 per square foot. I am sending people down to National Housing Corporation and they do not have any land. Nobody can get a word. I have land available and I hear that they are giving Chefette land and all these things going on but they have no land for my people, but people threatening them all the time with bulldozers. They did it to you but it is just that you do not have a memory that precedes ...

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Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: ...threatened them with bulldozers. They did it to you. It is just that you do not have a memory that precedes 2008, but in Station Hill it is called Bellevue, it was once called Waterford Estates.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: I said it was wrong then and it is wrong now. I do not care who is the Government, who is the Prime Minister or who is the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, it is wrong and I am not going to entertain anybody including the Town Planner coming in my constituency and treating the people that I represent in that manner.

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

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: It is not just water, Sir, it is about not having access to loans. They cannot qualify. They do not own the land, they do not have any money, they do not have any jobs and there is no hope in sight in the circumstances.

I heard a lot of talk earlier about small businesses. I heard the last Minister who proceeded me talking about small business. If you walk down to Pelican Village now you would see a ghost town.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: I do not like that bogus logic. The people cannot pay the Barbados Industrial Development Corporation (BIDC) their rent, but I expect you, through you Sir to apply yourself in a meaningful way to the synthesis that I talked about just now, not you and business, not how much money you are going to make

available to the selected few or not ten dollars for pensioners. Do you really believe that pensioners that worked so hard in a country like this at this point in our history deserves to get a \$10 increment? Everybody is silent on it and everybody is conforming to a conventional approach to a minor increase in pensions of \$10. I will compromise at \$20.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: At that time the cost of living was not running away and he was able to manage the economy not like how you are handling it and they still had access to the hospital and the University of the West Indies for their children. We have to treat people in a positive way. Are you going to use that as an excuse all your life for all of the things you are doing? You do not even want to pay UCAL but you are paying Simpson Motors. I took up the trajectory. I pick it up all the time. I do not know, that is because of my perception. You are paying Simpson Motors. You are bringing in four and five mechanics out of Trinidad to work at Mangrove. You say that they do not have any mechanics in Barbados competent enough to do the work that these men came in to do and these men have not fixed one bus yet. I could give you 20 mechanics tomorrow morning. I got a whole set of people in The Ivy that can fix diesel, kerosene oil, gasoline, whatever you want.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Anything you bring. Electrical, anything, you can have done. You now have Jada - I got the trajectory, I picking you all up - going down to the Immigration Department saying that he cannot get access to competent carpenters in Barbados. Man, we have competent carpenters that go all the way back to Hurricane Janet.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: We have competent carpenters around here. Sir, we have the Vocational Training Board and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, so something would have to be wrong with the skills of the people who are imparting these skills to the students at these institutions that they cannot fix a bus that is over 10 years old with no special contemporary technology being available. It is an old bus. We have to apply ourselves. If you keep on track, respect philosophical guidance... You see this top-down thing that everybody wants to run in Barbados and called themselves the brightest people in Barbados because they got a Degree in Economics and talking a lot of foolishness...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time has expired but I will give you one minute to wrap up.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Okay, Sir. Sir, that is why I probably speak about the first half of the 20th Century because individuals of that time had a connection with the people and understood what where the issues that we needed to address. You can talk about all of the other things but you cannot have a Budget where you exclude these concerns or where you exclude the concerns of the small business people in a meaningful way. Do not tell me \$50 million is available. I see all of these with FundAccess and all of these institutions already and people cannot get a cent. The bureaucracy is so complex in those institutions, people could not get a cent. It serves no use in the system. I would love Sir, if you would give me 10 more minutes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Not today, sorry.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, I want to thank all Honourable Members of Parliament for at least allowing me to express my views with a certain amount of freedom. I expected the reactions on occasions. I also want to thank you, Sir, for obliging me with the opportunity to speak to you. Thank you very much.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this Resolution presently being debated as we continue to grow the Barbados economy while trying to address certain social and other related issues in this country. The last few years have not been the easiest as we very well know. We have called upon Barbadians to make certain sacrifices because we were under severe economic stress as a country, but contrary to popular belief on the other side that in fact that the troubles that we face as a country did not start in 2008... You will hear Opposition Barbados Labour Party members say that in 2007/2008 unemployment was in single digit figures, but what was the real story. The real story, Mr. Speaker, is that leading up to Cricket World Cup in 2007 there were massive construction projects across Barbados and much of the jobs were in fact transient and when that event was completed there was a dearth of work for many of the construction workers who were around. Indeed, Sir, if the Honourable Member for St. Peter is to be believed, and I have no reason not to believe that Honourable Member, one of the challenges that he faced as Prime Minister was that many of his ministers padded Government agencies and ministries, whether there were posts available or not, with supporters particularly leading up to the 2003 and 2008 general elections

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3.08 p.m.

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Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, we had a situation where on the one hand there is this much touted single digit figure did not reflect job in terms of its established job for individuals while on the other hand the fact that we had an inflated public service. Indeed, according to Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, to rein in his Ministers the Honourable Member actually mandated that no hiring will take place unless a post was created and unless the Honourable Member himself as Minister with responsibility for this Ministry was aware of the post, but the free for all continued.

Mr. Speaker, what happened then with our fiscal challenges that we encountered in 2008, we had across Barbados in the public service and in related Government agencies inflated employment rates. Yes we had to take the tough decision of asking 1 700 people, the number that was relayed to us by the Permanent Secretary with responsibility, whom we unfortunately had to make the tough decision and sever their employment.

Mr. Speaker, that was also because we had an economy that was imbalanced. It was too heavily dependent on tourism and international business and with respect to its tourism dependency it was too heavily dependent on one geographic space in particular. We have been over the last couple of years trying to do our best to ensure that we can transform the Barbados economy because we do not wish that successive Governments would have to grapple with the huge difficulties that we have had because in truth and fact, we all accept that there be future recessions.

Mr. Speaker, our task therefore as we see it is not only to manage the recession that we encountered in 2008 but that we ensure that the Barbados economy was stronger, so that when the next recession comes we would not have to deal with the myriad of problems and in particular we would not have to take the tough decision of having to sever the employment of so many of our brothers and sisters.

Mr. Speaker, we have set about trying to transform this economy. Therefore I find it passing strange that the Members of the Barbados Labour Party can complain about every initiative that we have taken that will generate employment, particularly to generate employment within the private sector. Sir, one of the problems that we have in a small economy like ours is that in fact, without doubt we need to increase the employment opportunities in the private sector as opposed to the public sector, and you hear this every day.

Mr. Speaker, every day you hear the fact that the public sector is too large, so that as politicians I would like to believe that you would then want to support any initiatives that would create additional sustainable

employment in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, I find it strange that you can hear criticism of the rebuilding of the Sam Lord's Castle project which would create hundreds of jobs. I find it very strange, Mr. Speaker, that you can have complaints and misleading information being put into the public space about the proposed Hyatt hotel property, which again would create hundreds of jobs. I find it passingly strange that you would criticise Sandals all the time, again which employ hundreds of jobs. I find it strange that every time you hear about Four Seasons that you hear about negative connotations, again a project that will bring hundreds of jobs.

Mr. Speaker, all of these projects that somewhere along the line Members of the other side seem to be complaining about, the one thing that they all have in common is that they are going to provide hundreds of jobs for Barbadians. Sir, I cannot understand how reasonable men and women who say that they are interested in the development of Barbados and Barbadians could oppose every project that creates or has the potential to create meaningful employment in this country. I do not know anything about Deltron or whatever the project is called but again from what I am told is that it will create meaningful jobs for Barbadians because there is a significant manufacturing component with export capabilities.

Mr. Speaker, what did we hear on Wednesday? We heard that they are going to create space that people should have been able to play on. I did not know that there was a shortage of spaces in St. Michael for people to play on, because I drive around St. Michael. In fact, I played cricket the other day at Combermere, maybe not as good as my friend the Honourable Member for St. Philip North or the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central, but I play cricket at Combermere, I go to the Stadium, I go into Brittons Hill. Sir, they are a myriad of places to which people of St. Michael have access to recreate.

Mr. Speaker, another issue is that you hear this foolishness about potential damage to the water supply. As I said, the one thing that that project has with all the other projects that were mentioned is significant employment opportunities that is what the Barbados Labour Party is against. The Barbados Labour Party is against us trying to transform this society, it is against us trying to create real jobs for our people, so that the next time that we have the challenges that we presently have as a country that we are better able to withstand those challenges.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we have moved onto alternative energy as an opportunity for us to go into a new industry for our young people. That is why we have been championing the creative industries as another opportunity for us to be able to create opportunities for our young people. Mr. Speaker, that is what we are supposed to do as a Parliament and as a Government.

Mr. Speaker, instead what did we hear? We heard to hold on the budget, let us have a national consultation. Then of course they started the public relations campaign. I looked in my newspaper on Tuesday and I heard about the level of corruption in Barbados increasing, from a former Member of the Barbados Labour Party. I heard again today from the Honourable Member for St. Thomas about corruption. I have not heard yet from Honourable Member for St. James North but I know that we are going to hear about corruption.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this, and we need to look at the Standing Orders. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has been delivering the same speech in here twice for the last three years, during Estimates and during the budget presentations. Sir, I could sit here and close my ears and my eyes but I am still going to hear the same thing, it is going to be about fees for the university, about Cahill, about the Sandals Memorandum of Understanding, about UCAL, about Government hiding the truth state of affairs and not letting the people know how much money it actually owes, including a list of people who are owed, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, there are no hidden things in Government, indeed, if the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East were paying more attention over the last two to three years when we were saying to them to let us have fewer Second Reading speeches during Estimates so that we can spend more time going into the Heads, so that we can spend more time discussing ministries, so that the people of Barbados and they themselves can have a better idea of what we are planning to do and how we are planning to spend the people's money, we would not have, for example, today my friend, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown coming here and wanting to know why we are not discussing other areas because they would have been discussed during the Estimates.

Mr. Speaker, we would not have the Honourable Member for St. Michael East asking for discussions about what is happening in the Belle because they would have been discussed during the Estimates. Mr. Speaker, instead they want to grandstand, they want to send around emails inviting everybody to bring 30 people down to Parliament to appear to be popular, Sir, and they are not interested in serious discussions about this country and this economy.

No.C38C (30)3.24 p.m.

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Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: ... They want to send around emails and invite everybody to bring 30 people down to Parliament to appear to be popular. They are not

interested in serious discussions about this country and this economy, and it is regrettable. It is regrettable. I side with my colleagues that it is shameful this display that we are willing to do whatever it takes to regain the power in this country; and it does not matter how much we cry down Barbados, once we believe that we can get our hands on the reins of power. It does not matter which investors we criticise, and how we criticise them because we are only interested in creating the impression that there is chaos in this country and that Government does not know what it is doing. The Member for St. Michael North East I heard her, and in fact just on Tuesday there was a simple illustration in terms of why, when we hear suggestions about having consultations and bringing in the Opposition to work and talk to us. A couple of weeks ago, the Member for St. Michael North East told the Member for St. Michael South, the Right Honourable Prime Minister, "I wanted to support you in the Bill to include the pensionable age for the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Auditor General but my people did not want to do it." When we got downstairs, her people were saying, "It is disgraceful what happened. We wanted to do it but our leader did not wish to do it." I heard on Tuesday about Ryan Straughn predicting a two per cent levy, and every time the Honourable Member said it Mr. Straughn ducked down his head because he was ashamed. He knew it was no prediction on his part. He knew. That is why there is a lack of credibility on the part of that Honourable Member, certainly on this side, and I am very sure on that side, because if in little things you cannot stay within the four corners of truth, imagine what happens with bigger things. That is why there are credibility gaps. That is why there are credibility issues.

You want to create the impression in the public that the Government comes in here with a Budget and there is no consultation, but to my knowledge and certainly since we have been in office, we have never yet brought a Budget to this Parliament without consultation wide and far. Consultation does not mean that you have to take every initiative or every suggestion on board and read it into your Budget. It does not mean that. Yet, having said that there was no consultation, the Member for St. Michael North East can still say, "I will call this the Abed's initiative, and I will call this the technocrats' initiative, and I will call this X initiative," but there is no consultation. If we want the public of Barbados to treat us with respect, if we want people once again to come down to Parliament because they believe that Parliament is a place where they can learn something, and that it is a place where good and honourable men and women are, we need to start making some changes our own selves. We need to. Unless and until we do that, then we will still have to resort to those days, as I said, of sending around emails and begging people to bring people down to Parliament dressed in red to pretend that we are popular. We have to make those changes, and that is why I make the point about the Estimates, because if

we had spent the time, rather than 28 or 29 of us saying the same thing, discussing the relevant Heads and hearing what is happening within the country, hearing what is happening within Ministries, some of my younger colleagues would not be fishing around today and making errors, because they would know. I am calling on us to make the step to reform so that we can make a difference. We can make a difference individually and collectively, but make a difference.

Sir, once and for all, let us be more honest in our presentations. Call a spade a spade or say nothing. Being in Opposition does not mean that because you cannot come out and say you support a matter, it does not mean that you have to curse and shout and shoot it down. You can take the position and say nothing. Sir, as I said, we come in here and I am almost sure what everyone is going to say, except of course for the Member for St. George South. I am never sure what he is going to say because he does not know what he is going to say himself until he stands up, Sir. Everyone else I am pretty close to knowing what they are going to say. We indeed need to move to a better space where we can use our collective abilities on behalf of the people of Barbados, but it can be only done if there is trust and if there is real trust and mutual respect. Sir, I am saying to you that it is regrettable that we do not get that fully from the other side. Even in simple things like cooperating in terms of the order of speaking, it becomes an issue. Everything becomes a political issue in this country, regrettably.

Mr. Speaker, you have a Budget presentation, and by and large, you have heard from the private sector. I heard the Member for Christ Church South in his presentation refer to a KPMG analysis, and that was more or less all right, but you cannot come and say “I understand the importance of making the grants to move along small businesses.” That would be giving Government credit. You cannot come and say that you understand the importance of extending the special development areas. That would be giving Government credit. You cannot say that you understand if we implement the levy properly and administer it properly that there is the importance of that to health care generally in Barbados; not just to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital but health care generally because you need to address all sorts of things that will make people ill. That is the idea. You cannot sit down and say that makes a lot of sense. In the absence of another funding initiative which we have said is being worked on, you cannot even give us credit for that for five minutes. You have the same presentation: Barbados falling down. It is the third most highly indebted country in the world. Just ahead of us is Jamaica, et cetera. Then you list all the debts that we owe. We owe the National Insurance Scheme (NIS); that is known. We have never hidden that. You would create the impression that all of these things you are saying in terms of Government debt are not known to the Government or to

the people of Barbados because they were just discovered by the Member for St. Michael North East. We know what they are.

However, on the one hand you say that we are highly indebted, we cannot get our bills paid, we cannot pay back VAT in time, we cannot pay the NIS and we cannot pay the income tax returns on time, but you are going to find \$60 million or \$80 million to appease my friend from St. Michael East in solving his problem. You are going to immediately ensure that anyone going to university in fact does not have to pay any more to attend university. You will solve that problem. We do not have any money but you are going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on initiatives. Pray tell, Mr. Speaker, having spent so much money on education in this country, why does the Member for St. Michael North East believe that she can stand in Parliament and make those kind of statements which do not add up, and that the ordinary people of Barbados are going to believe them? They do not make sense. They cannot make sense. If on the one hand you are saying that we do not have any money to spend to do all of these things, if tomorrow you become Prime Minister will you in 120 days do all these things? Where will you find the money from? I do not spend time when I stand in this Parliament trying to ‘big up’ myself. I almost said something unparliamentary but I try, and I say all the time that when I speak, I want my mother at home who is 89 years old on Monday to understand clearly what I am saying, and for her friends to understand clearly what I am saying, and to know that under no circumstances will I use this pulpit to do other than speak from my heart and speak honestly to the people of Barbados.

3.25 p.m.

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Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: (Seq 32)

... to understand clearly what I am saying and for her friends to understand clearly what I am saying and to know that under no circumstances would I use this pulpit to do other than speak from my heart and speak honestly to the people of Barbados. I do not have to come in here with notes given to me by others and say that I am speaking from my heart and when I speak I am speaking as XX and then read misleading information that was given to me, I do not do that. I believe that we have a responsibility to work together to try to transform the lives of those people who entrusted the responsibility in us and with us. It is regrettably over the last couple of years that we cannot and have not. I take a lash at my friend from St. Michael East from time to time. I say to him that he behaves like if he is the only black person in Parliament and he takes that in his stride depending on his mood et cetera. I understand his philosophical moorings but I want to say to him and to

anyone like him who believes that because I do not keep noise and call myself a Pan Africanist et cetera that I know where I come from, I know where I am going, my mother was a school meals workers and my father was a policeman. I grew up with three boys in a house, four of us sharing a bed. I know all these things but I do not have to come and shout across Barbados and say that I am black and I am for black people et cetera. The reason why I am in here is because I came to the people of St. Philip South and told them I want to make their lives different and improve their lot and that is what I have been trying to do over the last couple of years.

Mr. Speaker, if I go back, that is why I say there is a disconnect, and the The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was clear to say that he cannot in a Budget presentation address all the issues in Barbados, that it is impossible. You bring up issues like the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East brought up that he did not touch on University of the West Indies, that comes under education and we know what is happening. I know for example, that is all goes well that my nursery school in Oldsbury should be up and running come January or February next year and other initiatives that we are doing in St. Philip education wise. We have not discussed road, it has not been addressed in the Budget but if we had discussion in the Ministry of Transport and Works we would know what we are doing in terms of the infrastructure in Barbados. We know that roads need addressing. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North knows that there are roads in St. Philip South that need addressing and I have already given him a list but the Budget is not the place to capture all these things.

Mr. Speaker, again, if you listen to some individuals you would believe that the challenges that we have in terms of law and order in the country are new, that we never had them before. I read a Green Paper on Government Proposals for Crime Reduction, April 2001. Sir, do you know whom that is signed by? The Attorney-General at the time was one David Simmons. Sir, it was a Green Paper on crime and much of what I read in the newspaper a couple of days ago is what is in this 2001 Green Paper you know. There is nothing new. We also have the Law and Order Commission. It started about 2005, I think that the report was finished in 2006 or 2007 and we had all kinds of meetings all across Barbados but all of a sudden the challenges that we are having as a country happened because things are hard in Barbados. Sir, we never had these challenges before but across this Green Paper in 2001 and across the Law and Order Report, there is a common theme in terms of how we had escalated gun violence in the country, how we need to look at the level of violence in this country and, moreover, how do we engage in a scientific way in terms of the policies that we put in place to ensure there is a reduction of crime in the country. Sir, that is what the team at the Auditor-General Office and

myself have been doing. We did not get any Green Paper or White Paper, we do not need any national consultation. I have had one national consultation, Mr. Speaker, and that is because I wanted to and I still want to transform the juvenile judicial system in the country and I shall address that before the end of the year. Sir, that I felt needed a wide discussion and wide public consultation but we have not had any reason to have any Green Paper et cetera because we understand the issues and in fact, have been working methodology to ensure that Barbados can continue as a safe place to live, work and die and, Sir, it still is.

Mr. Speaker, I get into my car and drive to Oistins on Thursday night, I buy a beer and I sit and relax without any problems. I do not feel threatened..

Asides.

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: I hear an aside about who drives back home but that is not important. I do not feel threatened because Barbados is still a safe place to work and play. It is still a preferred place for international investors and for visitors to come. Why are we walking around the country and why are we taking aircrafts and going to North America and holding town hall meetings with some of our supporters and then getting journalists to write and create the impression that it is all doom and gloom in the country. Why is it necessary to create the impression that you cannot get health care in Barbados, that if you go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that there is no chance of living. Sir, it is not necessary. We all Government and visit friends and constituents in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and it is still the best health care facility in Barbados if not in the English-speaking Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker, there are facilities in other parts of the Caribbean with less quality care, with less quality ability to cure people and before they see the doctor, they have to pay and we complain and complain. It is wrong and it has to stop. Sir, I am sure that in spite of the challenges that the people of Barbados are having, that in spite of the sacrifices that we have asked them to make that when they sit down and do an analysis, when they sit and see where we are going and in particular when we do what is required to ensure that we go where we are going, this country is going to be better off than it has ever been. We intended to transform the economy.

Mr. Speaker, we have some issues and a Budget will not cure one or two of these issues. Sri, I will make two further points.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have two more minutes in which to conclude.

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Sri, I will make two points in two minutes. Sir, issues one and two. We hear all

the time that the public service is too large and that we need to divest and give more the private sector. Sir, the odd thing about Barbados that I cannot get understood and why we ended up where we have ended up over the years is that unless Government take the initiative and spends the money things do not get done at all, so Government spends the money on tourism our biggest earner, Government spends the money on marketing and on encouraging more airlift into this country, the hoteliers sits and reaps the reward in terms of guest. You ask them to contribute a bit more and there is noise. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East ask why it is that the private sector did not take up Sam Lord's Castle but if it was left to them, it would not be done. Sir, it is the same thing with Almond Beach Hotel and this is the contradiction. Sir, they ask why did the Government not go into Almond Beach earlier. These are the kinds of statements you hear out there without the type of analysis that is required if we are to move forward as a country. We as a Government have not got ourselves involved in any private sector related arrangements that we did not believe was in the best interest of Barbados and in particular that would create jobs in Barbados because we do not want to be in the business of running businesses, we want to be facilitators, we want to provide the incentives and we want to ensure that these private sector agencies are better able to execute but, unfortunately, if we do not get involved in this present culture....

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House C 38C Seq 33 3.34 p.m.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: ... agencies are better able to execute but if we do not get involved, unfortunately in this present culture and this present culture I do not mean today. There has been a culture in Barbados for many, many years that unless Government spends the money the private sector will not step up. Then the third area which cannot be addressed in a Budget is the issue of business facilitation across Barbados. We need a cultural change. Sir, I remember when I came back home in 2001 how enthusiastic I was because I was heavily involved in the international business sector and it took me a year or so to become a bit disillusion. We need a cultural change in terms of how we facilitate business in Barbados and just business even for ordinary Barbadians not investors, just ordinary Barbadians. That cannot be addressed in a Budget.

Sir, I thank you for your indulgence. I wish, like my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, that I could be given another 10 minutes but I know, Sir, that you have to be fair and then with those words, I thank you for allowing me to support this Resolution.

Mr. Speaker exited the Chair and Madam Deputy Speaker assumed the Chair.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I must say that whenever I hear the Honourable Member for St. Philip South speak, I find the content of his presentation not to be very but extremely distasteful. We were talking about the former Prime Minister, Mr. Errol Barrow and he liked to put things in their true perspective even though sometimes he used language which was common to everybody and for everybody to understand and the word *nincompoop* is one that he used to use and for a political *nincompoop* who has only graced this House a few years ago and who contradicts himself when he talks about his origins, and he is sleeping in a bed with three boys and he does not like to pretend that he is more than anybody else, his content is something completely different. For him to refer to a distinguished Member of this House and a man who served not only as Attorney General but as a distinguished Chief Justice and some of the jurors in Barbados would tell you that he is one of the best Chief Justices that we have ever had, but for him as a former Attorney General and there are certain ways that you do not treat colleagues so for him to come to this House and refer to the Honourable Sir David Simmons as "one David Simmons" is totally disrespectful but that is the Honourable Member for St. Philip South. When you listen to his presentation it is fair obvious ...

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: You are agreeing with me. You keep quiet on this, the Honourable Member, sorry.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Address the Chair, please.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Yes, I will address the Chair. It shows in his presentation that there is nothing in this Budget because all he has address is an attack on the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and the Members of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) and he has not actually dealt with anything in the Budget and like the true *nincompoop* that he is, he ...

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: That is a term of endearment. How do you mean that you do not know?

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I will ask you to refrain from insulting each other, please.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I earlier said that the former Prime Minister used to speak in terms that everybody could understand. Nincompoop is a newcomer to Parliament and it is within that context that I am calling him a nincompoop. I am calling him a political nincompoop. The Honourable Member for St. Philip South has come to this House and he has shown an ignorance of what transpired in the Ministry of the Civil Service. He states that many of the ministers in the previous Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Administration padded ministries with supporters or he said whether supporters or not. Madam Deputy Speaker, I recall even when I was a Minister of Government, which was before the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) demitted office, and you wanted to appoint a simple General Worker you had to go through the Civil Service. I do not know if anything has changed since 2008 so it is wrong and misleading to come to this House and speak in those terms.

As I said, it is obvious that there is nothing in this Budget that he can speak about so he has to speak in the language of the Minister of Finance and talk about the initiatives taken by Government that have increased unemployment in the private sector. What are these initiatives? I am seeing all around me in my constituency day after day persons being sent home, persons being laid off. I am hearing about these unemployment figures being reduced but I do not know what sort of data they are using but even statements like that are misleading. When he speaks of attacks the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is only stating the facts as they are. The Honourable Minister of Finance came to this House and he said that Sam Lord's would start in September 2015 and this is almost September 2016 and Sam Lord's has not started. He said that Hyatt would start in August 2015 and Hyatt has not started. He said that he made no mention of Four Seasons so if he is coming now and mentioning Four Seasons, well it is obvious that we have to think of Four Seasons starting somewhere down the road, maybe after the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) comes to power. I believe that has been deliberate because they probably anticipate that there would be an objection by Town and Country Planning Department to the 15-storey therefore, notwithstanding the fact that they have given a commitment, they know that 15-storey building cannot come on stream in the time that they said it would come on stream. This is consist with the presentations which the Minister of Finance has made in this House in the past. The Minister of Finance comes to this House, I am not calling him a liar, Madam Deputy Speaker, but it has reached a stage where, if he comes year after year and he gives us certain undertakings and he has not been able to keep his undertakings and keep repeating himself, obviously the people outside, the people of Barbados would call him a liar, but we cannot do it in here and I will not do it in here. The Minister of Finance gives commitments that he knows the Government cannot satisfy.

House C 38C Seq 33 3.44 p.m.

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Mr. G. W. PAYNE: ...we cannot do it in here, and I will not do it in here, but the Minister of Finance gives commitments that he knows the Government cannot satisfy. We cannot accept these commitments as given by the Minister of Finance, and this is what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was stressing.

We have never had a Leader of the Opposition on this side that has not given excellent replies to the Budgetary Proposals, but the Honourable Member for St. Philip South comes in here and says that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, who is the leader of this party, repeats everything every time that she speaks. Well, there is need to do it because you have to repeat it every time to remind them that this Government is doing foolishness, for want of a better term and using the term of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

If the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East did not emphasize the folly that was going in the Ministry of Drainage, my friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, that Cahill Energy project would not be abandoned. The Cahill Project was abandoned because of, you could call it the mouthings, the emphasis that has been placed on the folly of Government with respect to the Cahill Project. Do not attack the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East in those terms because whenever we realise that you have fallen short and, to use a word that Honourable Member for St. Philip South like to use all the time, that you are engaging in projects bordering on corruption, we will let the public of Barbados know.

Mr. Speaker, I am from a constituency that has more than been neglected by this Administration. I hear the same Honourable Member for St. Philip South talked about the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East inviting people down here, but the Honourable Member should not blame us if he cannot get anybody to come down here. I heard two Members of the Government in the recreation room quarrelling about how come we cannot get anybody to come down here. They were quarrelling in the recreation room how come they cannot get anybody to come down here and the Barbados Labour Party has all of the people outside. Even the news media, I mean I do not agree with them when they said that the Prime Minister was booed but if he was booed he was booed, but that has nothing to do with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Mr. Speaker, we in St. Andrew look forward to the Budget. I was in this House for so long now, I cannot remember it, it is not that I am old, I got in here very early, and there was a time that people looked forward to the Budget. There was a time when Honourable Members on

that side did not had to invite anybody down here to see them. Around the time of the Budgets somebody as photogenic as the Minister of Education used be surrounded with fans, but where are these people now? Where has all the roses gone? Do not blame the Barbados Labour Party for that. It has something to do with the unpopularity of the Government. As Donald Trump would say, the unpopularity is huge, and I believe that you all know one day coming soon what is going to happen.

Mr. Speaker, the people in St. Andrew as I was saying have been hoping...

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I do not have to go into Cabinet. You would know that, but if you want me to come over there and help you I could come over there and help you.

Mr. Speaker, the people in St. Andrew have been hoping every year that the Minister of Finance would institute measures to stimulate the productive sectors so that there could be growth in the economy, so that people could come back to work and so that St. Andrew could be like how it was prior to 2008 with low unemployment, and that is a fact. St. Andrew relied heavily on work in Government agencies. We do not have any hotels, we do not any tremendous amount of businesses and we do not have this lot of pride, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East could tell you that, that constituents would come and say I want a job in any office because I had the experience of a lady who drives a car coming to me wanting a job and wanting to work as a labourer, and I said I cannot do that, but she insisted and eventually she got a job, and I was driving along the road and I saw her car parked and she is weeding alongside the road. That is the type of people we have in St. Andrew. We rely a lot on the productive sectors to be stimulated, and during the last eight years nothing has happened in St. Andrew. St. Andrew is just like most of the constituencies in the north of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I normally, either on the night of the Budget or the morning after the Budget, drive through my constituency, and whether I stay by Gambies' Bar or go down in Orange Hill or to the Village Inn in Belleplaine or the Belleplaine Snackette or wherever, I go to get the pulse of the people with respect to the Budget but this year is the only year that I did not had to do that because shortly after I left Parliament on Tuesday night - and that is the first time I have ever heard of Budget on a Tuesday, it was a Budget during Olympics, we have never had a Budget during Olympics, that is madness - a gentleman called me and I was a little surprised because he is a staunch member of the Democratic Labour Party. He is a very decent fellow and when he called he said he wanted to speak to me and asked if I could come to St. Andrew, and I

went down. Now, this is a man who as I said he was a Democratic Labour Party supporter and is a self-employed contractor in the carpentry business. I took notes when I went down. He does not drink, does not smoke or deal with drugs. As I know and as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East knows we do not deal with those things in St. Andrew. He does not gamble, he is a Christian man and a man who people look up to. I went down and when I got down there he said he needed help he proceeded to relate, and I was writing... Now, this is a man who as I said was a self-employed small contractor and in all appearances was doing well. He had a policy in CLICO, he was an investor in the BFDA Programme, he had savings in the credit union taking advantage of the credit facilities offered by Government for income tax purposes, he took out mutual funds with a financial institution, he was repaying the bank a loan and every year he tried to do his repairs and improvements to his house in order to get that tax credit. The man told me that for the last three years things have gone a little downhill, his wife has been laid off, private jobs have fallen to a point where he had to lay off his two workers, he had not paid his land taxes for over five years, his national insurance

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3.58 p.m.

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Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, private jobs had fallen to a point where he had to lay off this two workers, he had not paid his land taxes for more than four or five years, his National Insurance Scheme for his employees for himself and his employees was in arrears, and he was being used by this two employees for severance. He said to me, "Mr. Payne, I want help from you." I was taken aback because I did not know what help that he could have wanted from me. Sir, this is a true story, I could give you the name. The man said to me, "But I don't want any money, I want you to help me to get rid of these people."

Mr. Speaker, I do not know what he meant by "these people" you would have to interpret what he said. He said that a tax amnesty cannot help him, that sometimes he is so ashamed to take his wife to the supermarket. Here was a man who was doing well and his income was decimated because of Government's policies, the failure of the economy to grow as a result of the policies of the Democratic Labour Party and the taxation measures of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Mr. Speaker, I had to reflect, when I recognised the disconnect between the Government and my constituents, I had already seen this disconnect with respect to the treatment of the people in White Hill but the rest of Barbados does not understand how bad this Government is

treating the people in White Hill, you would have to go down there and see it for yourself. Sir, there are people who are living under galvanize sheds, the roads are moving away.

Mr. Speaker, this is something that has never happened. When I say this Government I do not mean the Democratic Labour Party because there was a time when I was in Opposition. When I first came to Parliament I was in Opposition and there was a Member for St. Lucy who was the Minister of Housing and every time I called him with respect to a matter he would come immediately. I never had any problems with housing or with drainage. Mr. Speaker, that was a caring Government. As I said this Government has nothing to do with the Democratic Labour Party and I still keep close contact with Members of the Democratic Labour Party. I go to lunch with them and I repeat almost every week and they are ashamed at the way how this Government is treating the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I also recognised that disconnect in the way they have been treating CLICO International Life Limited. I want the Honourable Member for St. Philip South to know that it is the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East who brought to this Parliament the plight of the people in CLICO International Life Limited and not a word has been said about CLICO International Life Limited, apart from some passing reference, but if I get the opportunity I will get to that.

Mr. Speaker, what struck me and almost brought tears to my eyes, I was seeing from another angle when I analysed the priorities of this Government, the shift in their concerns because they were now more concerned with the plight of extremely wealthy yachts owners then they were concerned with the plight of the type of constituents. Sir, this man I am talking about is the same type of man who you would find in St. Lucy, in St. Michael North East, in Christ Church or in any constituency but I could not understand how come there is this shift.

Mr. Speaker, we have no problem with the yachting business being stimulated but the concern is... Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs spoke on this matter, the Honourable Member spoke like that of a little child who was now receiving candies, the Honourable Member spoke about how impressed he was about that former Senator. I would not want to tell him that the grandfather of that same former Senator might probably not be speaking to his grandfather but that is a subject for another forum.

Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that those wealthy yacht people, some of whom I deal with on a daily basis, are not people whom we should have some concern but that you should have equal concern or more concern for the people with whom you interact on a daily basis. Sir, as this

gentleman was speaking to me, it brought real tears to my eyes because even if I did not want to cry, he was crying. This man was crying and I do not like to see big people crying like that.

Mr. Speaker, I had to ask myself what I can do to help this man. When I looked at the budgetary proposals there was a pattern that was playing against him, the economy was doing well, he had his Mutual Funds, he had credit savings in the credit union, improvements yearly, and he was being given tax credits for all of those things. All of those things were taken away.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James South has probably given the worst presentation that I have ever heard in this Honourable House. The Honourable Member spoke as though he was on a mountaintop. When the Honourable Member talked about education, about dealing with certain things that he would have to tell his constituents this or that, but you have to prep and to prepare your constituents for certain things. Sir, the changes in the educational system were made abruptly, people had their children at the University of the West Indies and all of a sudden they had to make adjustments; people were living from month to month and had to make adjustments all of a sudden. This man was in that boat.

Mr. Speaker, I think that had the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs though this thing through and seeing that the Honourable Member was taking away the tax credits with respect to mutual funds and savings from the credit union, had the Honourable Member allowed the tax credit for the full university education, something I do not have a problem with, I think that would have helped that man tremendously.

Mr. Speaker, it is still something that Government has to look at. Sir, I know what I am talking about, I have a daughter who went to the university to do medicine. I had applied to the Student Revolving Fund and it was turned down. I do not know why, I do not know how a student could have to have a means test... This is also something that Government should look at, it was not so in the past. I have the letter and I could show it. the only reason she did not go to Medicine School in the Caribbean was because of the fact that the applications came in late in United States of America, England and those places, so that if you apply a year ahead. I could not afford me but I had to borrow money to send her. She went to the Royal College of Surgeons, albeit when she returned here the Minister could not even accommodate her with an internship in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, that is beside the point, but now let us take this gentleman who was in a similar situation when those two children that he has at secondary school when they go off to the university, he has had to call in his mutual funds to pay for the first child...

No.C38C (35)4.07 p.m.

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Mr. G.W. PAYNE: ... I mean, cuddear. Now you are coming with an amnesty, and you are telling me that you have to use this amnesty by January? You should be seeing this man right in front of your eyes. There is no way that man could pay any arrears or interest or whatever, I mean, until about five to ten years down the road; that is if you have growth in the economy and he could get back to work. That is the Democratic Labour Party. That is this Administration. Then you look at the question of CLICO, which I have mentioned. This Government has no face with respect to CLICO. How could a Minister of Finance come with a Budget at this time, with what is going on with CLICO? Those investors and policyholders in CLICO are suffering. People were being paid pensions, and the pensions have stopped. People want to know what is going on with respect to CLICO. Every time the Minister brings something to this Parliament -- and he is going to come back with the bond issue -- he refuses to come back and give this Parliament an update, but the situation with CLICO is so serious that you should be given a monthly update by Parliament -- I think Parliament is the best place -- on what is going on with CLICO.

You have people who have died and they have not got back their pensions. People want to know if in this arrangement they will get back their pensions, and if they get back their pensions, whether the arrears will be paid. Trinidad's Government arrested this situation almost immediately, and Parliament was kept abreast on a regular basis. They had a minister specifically assigned, and the situation was arrested so quickly and so efficiently that now you have Mr. Dupre, the villain who is responsible for all of this, now wanting to petition the Government to get back. Are you aware of that?

Aside.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: He wants back the company because the Trinidadians were able to put it back on its feet. That could have happened in Barbados. We should have been kept abreast. You are dealing with a serious situation because there is the question of confidence. You could make all the changes now. You could get all of the licences, put all the staff in place and everything else, and then you have this insurance company that has the face of CLICO. I do not know about the Minister of Finance but I, for one, would not recommend anybody to have any dealings with that company. There are a lot of things that this Minister needs to tell us.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have two minutes left.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: Two minutes? What is the position with respect to the new dealings with CLICO? The deadlines that the Honourable Minister mentioned have passed. Let us know about the new deadlines. The policyholders are in the same position as they were six-and-a-half years ago. Have the agreements been signed? Has the Judicial Manager supplied all of the documents and done everything to ensure that the company is up and running? I have my suspicion about the Judicial Manager. I do not know him, but \$13 million -- and that is going to be taxpayers' money -- has been paid to the Judicial Manager so far. Thirteen million dollars, and in a short space of time. There is nobody in Barbados that I know who works for that amount of money in such a short space of time. Thirteen million dollars. I have said already, and it might look a little awkward, but National Insurance could have been dealing with this matter in a roundabout way, and I believe that a lot of money could have been saved. If not the National Insurance, some other entity could have dealt with it six-and-a-half years ago. We want to know whether or not the investors' and policyholders' money is still safe.

There is also the question with respect to the Eastern Caribbean investors. Ralph Gonsalves, the Prime Minister of St. Vincent, had expressed some disquiet, and there is still disquiet with respect to the Barbados plan. What is the position with respect to that? All of these things we need to know. We want to know whether or not the people within the new insurance company have been recruited. When will the company start? When will those transfers be done? My understanding is that all of the agreements have been forwarded, even though there might be a few things that might not be quite proper with respect to the agreements.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your time is up, Honourable Member.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: When all of this thing is done, there must be legislation to ensure that there is no recurrence and a proper investigation of what has transpired. In addition to that, Madam Deputy Speaker, bear with me just for a second, the shareholders in BAICO who have been refused part of this whole arrangement, including a lot of the churches, and you are fully aware of that, we need to know whether or not their funds will be written off. I am obliged to you.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

HON. M.A. LASHLEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to enter this Debate and also to congratulate the Member for St. Michael North West for his presentation on Tuesday. Of course, when the Member for St. Michael

North West, the Minister of Finance, was in the process of delivering his presentation and when he got into the Proposals, I recognised the shock on the faces of the Opposition Members. In fact, they believe, as they said days and weeks before and as was said by Members in here too, their mantra and their tactic was to feed the Barbadian public with negatives about this Government and its measures, and also to inform the public about measures that they anticipated this Government would again place on the people of Barbados. Let me say before I get into the substance of my presentation that the Member for St. Andrew, in reference to the Member for St. Philip South, indicated to this Chamber that he referred to a former Chief Justice in a disparaging way. Let me say that is not true. No remarks came out of his mouth seeking to destroy the integrity of the former Chief Justice or to cast any aspersions on his character. What the learned Attorney General was saying was that the same former Chief Justice, in a similar position to him, also had the opportunity to deal with matters that were raised by him in a call-in programme.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: On a Point of Order. The Member is misleading the House. I do not know if the Honourable Member is speaking in the same tone when he went to St. Andrew and he asked and they said they had not seen the Member of Parliament George Payne, and he asked, "Who is George Payne?" I would expect him to speak in that vein.

4.14 p.m.

Thursday, August 18, 2016

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: (Seq 37)

... when they said they have not seen the Member of Parliament, George Payne, and he asked who is George Payne, so I would expect him to speak in that vein. If he is saying that a former Chief Justice of Barbados, a former Member of Parliament, who represented one of the constituencies in St. Philip should refer to as one David Simmons and if he is saying there is nothing disparaging about that, well you take your pick. I am saying this is a different Democratic Labour Party. There is nobody in the Democratic Labour Party in the past, I would not refer to any former member including the Honourable Member for St. John, I would not refer to him as one David Thompson. It is insulting.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew would like me now to tell the public of Barbados who is George Payne and I would proceed to do that. Madam Deputy Speaker, I would get back to George Payne in the fullness of time. Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South did touch on an issue in

relation to the crime which all Governments have to grapple with and indeed he referred to reports that the Barbados Labour Party made documents of this House and he also referred to the fact that there were a number of town hall meetings getting issues and getting information and to bring this document to this House so that they would have proposals to act upon. I also want to support the learned Attorney-General to the fact that during that period of time, and if the Honourable Member for St. Andrew read a case before the Court of Appeal, a criminal appeal matter No. 23 of 2000 called *Jerome Bovell v R* and the same Chief Justice was sitting in the Court of Appeal at the time and in that judgment of April 23, 2002, the judgment speaks here to the 1998 Firearms Act and this is what it says:

"It was a direct response to an upsurge in violence crime in the decades of the 90s that a new Firearms Act was enacted. This Act came into force after amnesty was ordered for persons to hand in illegal firearms. The Royal Barbados Police Force received 104 firearms under the amnesty."

The Chief Justice then at the time was the Honorable David Simmons and then further in this judgement it referred to the statistics and it states here:

"In Barbados for the five year period 1997 to 2001, the statistics of the Royal Barbados Police Force disclosed a worrying trend in firearm relating offences. The figures for the two most usual offences are as follows: Firearm Offence 1997, 1998, 199, 2000, 2001, Shooting with Intent -- 27, 35, 39, 65, 36; Possession 33, 43 73, 83, 66."

Sir, those are between 1997 and 2001. Those are the facts that came out in the Court of Appeal Decision and stating why the Firearm Act was passed and this is a judgment by Sir David Simmons who was the head of the court of appeal at the time making the statement. I just wanted to put that on the record.

Mr. Speaker, let me get into the meat of my discussion. Madam, as I have said the Opposition expected an as their counsel their candidates and some of their supporters, who rushed down here on Wednesday, a rent a crowd as you would call it, and they came in here so lukewarm because after the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West the next day all of the stakeholders and I can mention them, the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry said it was the right move. The Small Business Association said they support the policies with respect to small business in Barbados and in fact, signing the praise of the Minister of Finance (3) The President of the National Union of Public Workers and the Barbados Workers Union again were on the side of the Minister of Finance and his proposals and lastly all right-

thinking members of the Barbadian public were still on the side of the Minister of Finance.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to applaud the Minister of Finance for his vision and his approach and the fact the he set out a growth pattern and by doing that he has also ensured that the vulnerable, the poor and the weak are protected by a safety net by policies enunciated in this Budget and so the Honourable Members on the other side as they got up to present the case for the Barbados Labour Party, in fact, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph started to pooh-pooh some of the proposals calling it trinkets and saying it was trivialising and that these matters do not touch his constituents and a whole set of issues and statements that he repeats every year.

Mr. Speaker, I was expecting the Honourable Member for St. Andrew to talk half hour on White Hill but he refused to do half hour on White Hill because I have in my possession a document but I am not going to refer to it now. I believe that we will have a debate again on road infrastructure and I think that would be the appropriate time to make use of that document. Madam, I would make that a document when the Honourable Member for St. Andrew fully represents the people of White Hill because I get more letter from Senator Irene Sandiford about the people in White Hill than from the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. I consider here to be the defacto representative of St. Andrew.

Asides.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: No. I will not do that now, there is always strategy. Madam Deputy Speaker, let me say that the Opposition in all of their responses -- tell me how can an Opposition get up during a debate and try to make issues out of a proposal that, to my mind, touch the lives of many public officers in the country.

Sequence 37

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House C 38C Seq 38 4.23 p.m.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: ... out of a proposal that, to my mind, touched the lives of many public officers in this country and it is in keeping with the Democratic Labour Party's history in terms of the protection of workers. We have had a long history particularly through the forms of legislation that we have passed that we have acted true to form by protecting those temporary workings and ensuring that there is security of tenure in their employ. In any employment relationship the employee wants to make sure that there is some sort of certainty in the terms and conditions of his employment. We have temporary officers and every Member of this House - I experience it when I

was the Minister of Housing - that temporary officers who apply through the NHC for housing. Those officers who would have made an outstanding contribution to this country and to the Civil Service, they want to own a piece of this rock too and, of course, out of the conditions of getting the mortgage from a financial institution or a bank they had to produce the letter of appointment so that they can secure their finances to get that loan and to get a piece of this rock. To that I must congratulate the Minister of Finance. They do not want us to do that because I have had the experience of some temporary officers who came to my office, when I was Minister of Housing, even now as Minister and also as parliamentary representative, brandishing notices to quit, letters from landlords to either move their houses of the lots or to give up the rental tenancy but now they can breathe a sigh of relieve. We have now touched those temporary officers with compassionate hands and I wonder if the Shadow Minister of Labour, in fact, he is a real shadow.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I am sorry, I said shadow, I did not say shallow, that would be unparliamentary, the Shadow Minister of Labour, the Honourable Member for St. George South, and I am not surprised because he was confused about the difference between a tribunal sitting under the Severance Payments Act and a tribunal sitting under the Employments Rights Act, basic, basic knowledge, but I was surprised that he did not connect or support wholeheartedly the appointment of these temporary officers given the fact that we know what they have gone through. It puts us in a position through the Minister of Housing to now craft a housing policy to include these temporary officers that were previously omitted, not through any fault of their own, but because of their tenure in the public service. Those prison officers who would have gone to bed at night with uncertainty looming over their heads and the fact that owning a piece of this rock, owning a house at one of the estates in Parish Land, we can now craft a policy to include them in that housing policy and I believe that the Minister of Housing would move forward in that direction. That is what the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) is against because they want to go into their rubbing shoulder campaign or other rubbing episodes to go out there and to full the heads of the people in the constituencies that they are running in because all of a sudden now it seems that in order to qualify for a candidate for the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) you must have certain certificates and also you must have certain ...

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Let me leave it there, but I know that there are some of them, and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South knows too, because he is in a position and he should have the necessary information in

relation to persons who are masquerading as candidates and we cannot have those types of people really gracing this August Chamber or getting close to the finances of any Government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have to drive home this point. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has assured us that there will be a committee that will be put in place to ensure that this proposal is implemented and he clearly set it out in his document since it is not, as the Opposition would like to say, a promise. I received a call from one of my constituents, a prison officer and then again today, many calls praising this Government for that appointment and they say that they cannot wait until they can go about proudly and wave that letter of appointment in their hand to the public service. Instead of those temporary officers coming and waving letters from banks and credit unions denying them loans, they can go with that letter of appointment and they can come back with a letter from NHC, a letter from the bank, a letter from any financial institution saying that you have qualified for a loan and you can now own a piece of this rock. That is the vision of this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Government. We cannot have a Government like this. This Government is a Government with caring and compassion hands. Of course, Grotto, a rent-to-own and also direct purchase of a unit.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the response by the Leader of the Opposition started at 4 o'clock, dealt with issues of CAHILL which this Government answered, dealt with issues at Grotto and this Government answered, dealt with issues at Coverley and the Government answered those questions and then all of a sudden at 10 minutes past 6 o'clock, she said: "I now turn to the Budget" and I made careful notes because when I was a junior in the law courts you had to make notes and this is what the Opposition Leader said: "Now let me get to the proposals of the Government." She said that the special development areas, she had no difficulty with that, support it. Duty free zone, support it. She supported the \$50 million for the small business but then today the Opposition presented arguments counter to the Leader of the Opposition.

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Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: ... \$50 million for the small businesses, but then today the Opposition presented arguments countered to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition because they got up and criticised every measure that this Government put in place, so what we are seeing is a breakaway from the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I have it here. All at 10 past six. All of these proposals. I have no difficulty with that. I think that we can do this. Yes, I support it. I have no difficulty with the clean-up campaign, and I am so glad that the Minister of Finance has also indicated that he is throwing out an offer to the private sector to get involved in this programme. They will oppose this because this again is creating employment to be organised by the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Transport and Works and the Ministry of Health.

Madam Deputy Speaker, they get in here and say that people are suffering, that people want jobs but we are creating the environment here where young people and some of the people who got laid off from jobs will be given the opportunity to come and work. Yes, they have said they do not want it for five months, that they hope that it is continuous, and I hope that the Honourable Minister of Finance once he is in possession of the resources would extend it for another five months. I have been assured by the Right Honourable Prime Minister that it would be continuous, that Barbados must be kept clean.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what would also trouble them is the fact, in my discussions with the Minister of Finance, that along with this clean-up and debushing campaign we would embark on a very serious and aggressive mill and pave programme of all of the roads in Barbados. We have cost it, in the first phase, of about \$15 million, and it will touch all over Barbados. They are concerned because Barbados would be busy. Private contractors along with the Ministry of Transport and Works would be involved in this project.

Madam Deputy Speaker, instead of getting involved in constructive discussions, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas decided to go down a path of asking me where is the bobcat. I am not a police. The police has been involved. They are investigating the matter. If the Honourable Member really wants me to say who took up the bobcat, she should trouble me some more and I can say who because there is a similar surname, that is all I will say, that was mentioned in relation to this bobcat. I am not going to interfere with any police investigation because I am an officer of the court and I believe that the police investigations must not be obstructed. The police should carry out their investigations. We were not negligent and sat back and say look let us do an investigation on a matter, the matter is being investigated.

Madam Deputy Speaker, along with the mill and pave programme hopefully by September, the Honourable Minister of Finance referred to it in his Budget, we will have the CAF fund to the tune of US\$10 million for the roads, we have followed the guidelines of the financial rules and we have estimates of all the roads and those roads will be sent to the Special Tenders Committee. I am made

to understand that they are being sent by tomorrow. They have indicated that the Special Tenders would give a particular date for all of the contractors to bid on these roads. We will have the CAF roads and the mill and pave programme because we recognise that there have been complaints about the state of the roads in Barbados. We recognise also that we have gotten more claims coming in in relation to damage to vehicles as a result of the potholes. We are still continuing our own programme. We are still working. The depots are still working and we are doing that. Here we have more employment opportunities coming through the construction of new roads and also the mill and pave programme, and along with the debushing programme, so we have opportunities out there now for Barbadians who are unemployed to come and be engaged in meaningful work.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also want to touch on another matter that was raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East again in his excitement got up and said that we are employing Trinidadians at Mangrove and that they have mechanics in The Ivy and in other parts of his constituency... I know those mechanics he is talking about.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have two minutes left.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Let me say that to say that we are only employing Trinidadians at Mangrove is wrong and misleading. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central could tell you, he visited Mangrove and we have redeveloped the Quality Assurance Department because we believe that we should do more work in-house. There is some work that can be done in-house that we send out to private companies. We are looking, as instructions from the Ministry of Finance, for cost reductions in our state agencies, and the Transport Board is one. We actually have about 20 Barbadians out there working, persons who worked with the Ministry of Transport and Works who were laid off that worked in the mechanic shop, students from the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and other persons from the Quality Assurance Department. There are only four Trinidadians working at Mangrove and all of the rest are Barbadians, and he got in here and said that we have Trinidadian mechanics working out there. If you go out there now you would see men who graduated from the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic working fixing engines, building parts and doing an excellent job, so to say that they only fixed one bus again is misleading. This Quality Assurance Department that we have extended out there along with the Trinidadians... In fact, one of the same Trinidadians was engaged by the Barbados Labour Party, but I would not get into why he had to leave.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time is up now.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I am saying that we are restructuring the Transport Board. We are looking in terms of ensuring that we have a proper maintenance programme for the buses. It is wrong to say that the Transport Board supplies less than 100 buses daily, it is not true. Through the efforts at Mangrove and the efforts of other service providers we have been able to maintain between 125 to 130 buses, which is our target. I believe that with the project at Mangrove where some of the buses that we believe that we can now source parts from other stores that we can bring that up to about 175 but

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Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, through the project we have been able to save money. We have been able to even pass on knowledge to the Trinidadians, to some of those young Barbadians out there working and ensuring that we had a fleet that can stand up. I thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Dr. Miss M. M. AGARD: Madam Deputy Speaker, before I begin I would like on the behalf of my family and my constituents to offer my condolences to the Speaker. I know that he is not here at this time but I would still like to offer my sincere condolences and I trust that his sister will rest in peace and rise in glory.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I prepared for this year's Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, I was overwhelmed by a phase that continued to reverberate in my head and it intensified as the day drew closer. With all the chatter surrounding my country, and our prospects as a developed nation on the cusp of celebrating 50 years of Independence, whether it was wise to forge an Independent nation or remain a colony of Britain, whether today we are richer or poorer, whether we are on a path of growth and regeneration, diversification or refractory recession, doom and gloom, whether an election is coming right after our 50th Anniversary celebrations, at the start of 2017 as though we do not all know unequivocally that an election is constitutionally due within the next 18 months and therefore it will come, with all the talk of a pending devaluation by so many names, the charge of greater job losses, inflation, hopelessness and gloom one solemn phrase with its multiple origins from Peter Benenson who was the founder of Amnesty International, Benjamin Franklyn, Eleanor Roosevelt and indeed John F. Kennedy keep playing in my head. Though lengthier, I prefer the version from John F. Kennedy and it goes like this:

"We are not here to curse the darkness but to light a candle that can guide us through the darkness to a safe and

sure future, for the world is changing, the old era is ending, the old ways will not do, the problems are not all solved and the battles are not all won. Yet we stand today on the edge of a new frontier, a frontier of unknown opportunities as well as perils.”

Ma’am, of course, he goes on to say, give me your help, your hand, your voice and your vote. That is for whom it is intended. Ma’am, the first loan print version of that compilation was by the English Wesleyan Minister, William Watkinson, in 1907 who put it this way:

“Denunciatory rhetoric is easier and cheaper than good works and proves a popular temptation, yet is it for better to light the candle than to curse the darkness.”

Ma’am, as a true child of Independence, born nine days after we broke the Trident and raised the flag to signal the birth of our nation, I am forced to reflect on my posture as a citizen of this country, I can say to you that there is harmony in my public pronouncement and my private intentions that I want nothing but the best for Barbados. It is a posture that I have taken before I entered these Chambers from the first day I entered and today I continue to say it. Ma’am, I choose today, as I do every day, to light a candle, rather than to curse the darkness. Ma’am, in doing so I am aware that there are many things that we could have done differently and many things that we could have done better and I am committed to identifying these things when it so merits but I will also give acknowledgement and praise where policies are here to improve our circumstances in life and there are many.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to say that I really have no fundamental issues with these budgetary proposals of 2016. Now, I cannot deny that Barbadians have had to endure hardship. There have been those with sufficient wealth and discretionary savings who were able to overcome and withstand the transition from an economy of prosperity to one of recession but for others it has been a long, harsh, almost suffocating period of hardship, adjustment and sacrifice.

Ma’am, I want to acknowledge these people because as we turn the corner and improve our circumstance, I do not want for them to be the sense that we have not identified or acknowledged the suffering of our people, for they have indeed suffered.

Ma’am, I am making a point of identifying them because I certainly hope that as we turn the corner and we are on a path of prosperity that these would be the first individuals whom we would look towards to ensure that we can provide the necessary opportunities for them to regain all that they have lost and more.

Ma’am, when you consider that there is a promise of almost \$1 billion in investments pending I certainly look forward to an opportunity of creating that somewhat equitable society where individuals by virtue of their talents, the promise and their efforts can benefit wholeheartedly.

Ma’am, the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals laid here in these Honourable Chambers this week by the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs was to me, as I believe it was too many, a projection of hope and promise. The Honourable Member reported progress with our homegrown fiscal consolidation programme, an improvement altogether in the macroeconomic conditions of Barbados. even as the Honourable Member has had on more than one occasion to admit certain shortfalls and to review the progress we were making and to make adjustments accordingly, but for those of us who are in business, I mean real business, for those of us who have had to build a business and navigate treacherous waters of building that business, we know that it is prudent, it is wise and it is required that almost on a quarterly on an annual basis one has to return to one’s practised policy, review them and make the necessary adjustments.

Mr. Speaker, this is not any admission that the previous policies were wrong or that they were flawed, it is simply an adjustment...

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Dr. M.M. AGARD: ... Madam Deputy Speaker, this is not any admission that the previous policies were wrong or that they were flawed. It is simply an adjustment to suit the pending conditions, and certainly I honestly cannot admit that there was necessarily any deliberate failed effort on the part of our Administration. Ma’am, I want to just briefly mention a couple of the measures that impacted me favourably. I do not intend to spend a long time talking about them, because the response of expert stakeholders has given an indication, if one were to ask, that this is a Budget which they found commendable. Some of them were even exuberant about it, so who am I to really challenge much that was found therein?

I want to recall that in one of the first speeches I gave in these Chambers, I made a plea for small and medium-sized businesses to be given more support from Government. I believed then, as I do now, that small and medium-sized businesses have a role to play in the recovery of our economy; that through periods of austerity they have been resolute in providing employment opportunity for some of the most marginal in our society,

especially women and young adults. They generate movement of cash without placing excessive pressure on our limited foreign reserves, and collectively they make up a significant percentage of our non-Government work force. Yet, they are most vulnerable to the shifts in economic prosperity. Hence, I said then, as I say now, that in the same way that we can offer sometimes upwards to \$700 million in subsidies and concessions to big business, it is only fitting that we should look toward providing the necessary financial support to small and medium-sized businesses. I certainly want to welcome and commend the provision of a \$50 million provision from the Industrial Credit Fund for grants and soft loans, and I want to say, Ma'am, that I know what it was like to have started my business when an opportunity presented itself to me in 2005. I would certainly recommend to all aspiring entrepreneurs to make good use of this particular provision. Of course, \$50 million cannot be compared to the \$700 million concession that we give to big business, so I would therefore hope that \$50 million is just the beginning of what Government intends to offer small business. It does not always have to be in cash but it can be in facilitation. Therefore, I am hoping that certainly we would find the additional ways to ensure that small and medium businesses remain viable.

Ma'am, in fact I really feel that we should do a study on the cottage industries in Barbados to get a sense of their contribution to national development. I really do not believe that we give credit to small businesses in this country. There are over 11 000 of them, and I believe that if we were to know and appreciate the concealed wealth of opportunity that resides in the cottage industry, that can certainly serve as encouragement for those who falsely believe that mainstream employment is the only kind of employment that provides opportunity. That is not necessarily the case. Ma'am, I also see benefit in the provision of duty-free shopping zones for Barbadians as well as visitors. This would allow the Government to harness the latent foreign exchange held by many Barbadians throughout this island.

Aside.

Dr. M.M. AGARD: Maybe I should not have said that, because I think it is against the law. I do not hold my foreign exchange. I make sure it goes to the bank, but let us be real. We know that small amounts of foreign exchange are held by most Barbadians - I would say almost all of them -- and this is certainly a novel way for the Government to harness that exchange. It also creates further enterprise opportunities for entrepreneurs, and I hope that they would take this opportunity to get a foothold in the merchant market.

Ma'am, I now come to the increase in the non-contributory pension. I know that we have had people

scoffing at this \$10 a week increase but in reality, that amounts to \$520 a year, and this is from a sector of our pensioners who actually had made no contribution to the fund. I am not casting any judgement on them, because many people found themselves in the non-contributory category through no fault of their own. It is commendable that in Barbados, in spite of not having contributed a cent in many cases, we can still look upon all of our senior citizens and try to bring a measure of dignity to their existence by ensuring that they have that provision as well. Certainly, this \$520 a year will make a difference in the lives of our senior citizens. It is all right for the millionaires among us to scoff and say that \$520 is nothing, but to the senior citizen it will make a difference, and I welcome it. They welcome it too. Ma'am, in addition to an increase in the non-contributory pension, I want us also not to forget those who have gone home medically unfit and who are recipients of a disability pension. Even if it is the case that we are not able to look out for them at this time, I certainly hope that they would come under the radar and that the day will come soon when they too can receive an increase in short order. They are some of the most vulnerable individuals in our society navigating these difficult financial times, and we ought not to forget them.

This Budget has been accused of being an Election Budget, because it makes provision for the appointment of temporary officers to a more permanent position. I do not know whether it represents an Election Budget or not, but I know that to these temporary officers this simple singular measure will make a significant difference in their lives, because it provides them the opportunity for security of tenure. Many of them have tried to access loans which they had to forego because they did not have a permanent appointment. For example, loans to purchase a house, to purchase land, for their education and so on, they have all had to put those on the back burner. Today, they can put them on the front burner. Today, they can anticipate a certain peace of mind as they get their articles of appointment to their relevant positions. I am not going to underestimate the usefulness of that move, because I can see that it impacts Barbadians in a very significant and positive way.

These are just a few of the measures that I would like to highlight, Ma'am.

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Dr. M. M. AGARD: (Seq 42) These are just a few of the measures that I would like to highlight. There are many more but certainly these are the ones bringing relief and security to my constituents as indeed to all Barbadians.

Madam Deputy Speaker, before I close, I want certainly to get to the issue of the two per cent cess. Now, we have discussed at length the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) taking a toll on Barbadians and the cost that is attached to the care in the management of non-communicable diseases, we have discussed it at length in these Chamber. I do not intend to discuss that any further but I certainly want to say that in spite of a significant percentage of the country's revenue being assigned to health care the rise of new non-communicable diseases annually and the resultant cost of treatment represent a cause for concern not only as a health crisis but as an economic and a national development crisis and that certainly demands an urgent and definitive intervention even if it has to be a multisectoral remedy that includes several Ministries to curb this very troubling development. Madam, in a recession where the capacity to generate revenue is constricted the financing of an every expanding health care system becomes a notable burden. The issue of health care financing must be tackled frontally and boldly if we are to maintain our standard of living and provide the best care and alternatives for those who afflicted by chronic non-communicable diseases. This Government needs to make its proposal to introduce a national health insurance fund a priority to serve all Barbados and we look forward to its implementation within the next two years as suggested.

Madam President, in the meantime, the imposition of a two per cent tax on imports and domestic goods for the provision of what will be known as the National Security Responsibility Levy will serve to assist the financing of debt incurred at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as a result of the management of these non-communicable diseases among other things. This recommendation may will serve to be one of the more harsh measures of this Budget and it needs to be critically examined even as much as it is essential.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to draw your attention to a couple of issues that troubled me with respect to this particular measure. Last year, the Minister of Finance in the face of falling oil prices decided that the cess on BNOCL products would be retained for one more year so that a significant part of those resources could be used in assisting the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in its effort to settle the debts on goods and services. Madam, I may have missed it, I do not think I did but I may have missed any reference to this particular cess in this year's statement and I certainly would like to know what is the status of this cess on fuel. I want to know whether it is coming to an end as has been suggested by the Minister last year or whether it will run parallel to this new cess. I am hoping he could give us some update on that in his wrapup.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also want us to be aware that a two per cent increase on goods does not remain a two

per cent on goods at the point of sale. I recall when the cost of gasoline increased in 2008. I was a fledgling business person at the time and the cost of doing business immediately escalated and the excuse was that it was a transactional increase, that at every point there was a transaction that the increase was applied and, Madam, I suspect that with this two per cent increase in cess at the Port so to speak that consumers will find themselves paying considerable more than a two per cent increase on goods as a result.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that we do not have price control measures in Barbados but I do believe that consumers need to be protected from opportunistic merchants who would take advantage of this opportunity to the detriment of the consumer. I hope that the Minister would take his promise that he would regularly review the state of affairs concerning this particular imposition and if necessary make the adjustments to make sure that our consumers are not disadvantaged.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I recall one Minister of Finance who said that prices are sticky downwards. What he implied by that is that whenever there is an increase there is an almost immediate increase in price but whenever there is a reduction it is very slow to move and therefore it is the consumer, the average Barbadian, it is my constituents and your constituents who suffer disproportionately and whenever we choose to place an increase on goods and services we must forever be conscious of that fact, that prices are sticky downwards. Yes, you may have choice but there somethings that are not discretional.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I also want to suggest to the Minister that these funds be treated in a very specific way. I know that he would be inclined to say that it is not his job to micromanage any resources and I am not asking him to micromanage the resource but when you make a statement such as the part proceeds of the levy will go towards servicing of the loan which the Government has agreed to borrow to provide the Sanitation Service Authority with a fleet of new truck and part of the proceeds will Government towards much needed parts for the existing fleet then I begin to get a little uncomfortable because monies have a way of being lost in translation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I really want that this National Social Responsibility Fund provide the resources for the handling of debt to health care primarily. I do not want to hear next year that virtually all of it went to the Sanitation Service Authority because of the cost of those trucks and that we still have outstanding debt at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I do not intended to split hairs over public health because I know that the Sanitation Service Authority is health. Madam, health is health but I am simply saying that we need to be a little bit more particular

in how we distribute this money. If it is that we want to say 10 per cent or 20 per cent will go towards the Sanitation Service Authority for public health services then we know that no more than \$20 million of that collected considering that the \$82 million projected in collections is only an estimation.

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Dr. M. M. AGARD: ... than \$20 million of that collected considering that the \$82 million projected in collections is only an estimation we will be certain that we are not disproportionately disadvantaging the QEH. Madam Deputy Speaker that is what I am looking forward to.

I think that we also need to look even as we make provision for resources. To reduce that QEH debt, we need to continue looking at efficient ways of managing the expense account of the QEH. Nobody knows more than me that medical equipment and services, diagnostic equipment is exceedingly expensive and that we need some of the best brains in Barbados and even beyond to ensure that the treatment rendered to Barbadians is top of the line. It has always been and I trust that it will continue to be but having said that, I still believe that there is too much wastage and that we need to look at the efficient management of this debt. I am almost certain that I heard the Minister of Health speak to some procurement of Bill that he was scheduled to bring to the House and I am still on that. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South planned to bring it.

Asides.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: The National Procurement Authority, I am looking forward to that, Madam Deputy Speaker, because I believe that will serve as a critical plank in the management of our health debt.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have two more minutes.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. There is just one other thing that I would say seeing that I am running out of time. I want to bring your attention to a provision that was made in these Chambers, I believe it was the 2012 Budgetary Statements where a provision was made in our Income Tax deductions for medical examinations. I might be getting it all wrong but I believe that there was indeed a deduction that was acknowledged for an annual medical examination to the cost of \$750 per year.

Last year, a number of Income Tax deductions were actually removed and I considered it to be unfortunate in a climate where we continue to say that we are battling health diseases that particular provision was removed.

Asides.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: I think that was also removed but if it was not removed then the Minister will correct me. Has it been restored?

Asides.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: Oh, it is going to be restored. I am very glad to hear that because certainly, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is one of the most progressive measures. If we really want to beat down our chronic health problem that people would actually look after their health in a preventive way and not wait until disease manifest itself to pursue treatment which is always more costly than prevention.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there were a couple of other things that I wanted to speak about but I will wrap up because I do not wish to be disrespectful to the other speakers to come, but I just want to say in closing that when I was coming here on Tuesday, I was actually thinking about what I wanted from the Budget and I was extremely hyped up. I wanted a phenomenal Budget for Barbados, I wanted a jubilee Budget, I wanted a Budget that was bold and ambitious even aggressive in its approach to laying down policies for robust economic growth, for expanding and diversifying the economy to enhance our revenue earning capacity and generate employment for foster debt, sustainability and accelerate our restructuring programme. I wanted the ideal Budget even as I knew that the ideal, though desirable in the current climate was not practical. I understand that what the Minister of Finance has brought to these Chambers is a measured Budget where he has done the best that he could within the limited fiscal space that he has and it is my hope that as we continue to gain lost ground and the stability of our economy climate is restored that we can then pursue that which we know to be an inalienable principle, the scripting of a financial statement that will instruct and stimulate the transformation of a nation in a manner that is acceptable to most. Until then, Madam Deputy Speaker, we will light the candle and not curse the darkness.

I am obliged to you.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. First of all let me say how grateful I am for the opportunity to be a part of this

discourse which is our annual ritual in discussing matters of the economy and measure of our Budget.

I first of all would like to express my gratefulness to my constituents in Christ Church East for allowing me this privilege to represent them here in this Parliament. I should also like, Madam Deputy Speaker, to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Finance for what I consider to be an exceptional job being done on this year's Budget. I see the Budget, Madam Deputy Speaker, as a document of hope, a document that inspires confidence, a document that say to our people across this nation that none is lost and that even in the face of difficulties and hardships that there is still reason to be resilient and to be hopeful. A document of hope versus an odyssey of hope as is perpetuated by the Barbados Labour Party (BLP).

Why do I call it a document of hope? I do not believe that hope needs to be scripted in any ordinary document, because I believe that we have a document of hope that has been handed down to us over the generations called the Bible and you can look to any portion, whether the old testament or the new testament and you can find statements of hope that are eternal statements, for example, "I will lift my eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help, my help cometh from Lord", "ask and it shall be given, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be open unto you." Some of the eternal words etched in this great document and if any Barbadians has lost their way and wants to reconnect with genuine hope, Madam Deputy Speaker, you can turn to this book and find all the hope that you need to find. I do not intend to read the odyssey of hope, I intend to clean to this document of hope that has been given to us as a guide for our own walk on this earth.

I hear the stories told of persons who cannot eat, who cannot put food on their tables and who are having all kinds of extraneous difficulties due to the harsh economic times that we now face but this is not the first time that Barbados has gone through harsh economic times.

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Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: ...who are having all kinds of extraneous difficulties due to the harsh economic times that we now face. This is not the first time that Barbados has gone through hard economic times and this is not the first time that persons scattered across this country may from time to time find it difficult to make ends meet for our fore-parents had a term called 'cutting and contriving' where you had to take little and make the most of it, where you had to look at the things that you did not have and inspire hope in those who depended upon you that one day those things would come, but here we are being pilloried by the Leader of the Opposition about what is not

right with Barbados and what is not right with the Government of the day but never focussing on what is great about our nation.

As we reach our 50th Anniversary, I cannot boast of being an independence child. I was born eight years before independence. I was born in 1958 eight years before independence in 1966, so at that time when the country was transitioning into that new phase I was but an infant, as one of those students who stood along the roadside in St. Andrew and witnessed the Queen as she passed through on her way to the opening of the East Coast Road, but I remember a politician who tried to make us in St. Andrew believe that the whole notion of independence was the beginning of a new era, a new stage of hope and a new place in the world where Barbados, a Small Islands Developing State, would be able to chart its own course and its own destiny and where we would become recognised as a small but bold country that was willing to believe that anything we put our minds to do we could achieve. Madam Deputy Speaker, that view was inspired by our founding father, the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow and buttressed by a number of politicians, including Joy DaCosta Edwards who made a significant impact on the lives of the people in St. Andrew and helped to shepherd us through that infant stage of development.

I see the 50th Anniversary of independence almost like the lifecycle of man where you go through your early stage of trust versus mistrust, where you go through the early stage of identity formation versus identity confusion and where you go through your early stages of young adulthood and middle adulthood, and now our nation has found itself on the threshold of a kind of new and improved development journey.

I am very, very happy that within the context of these times the Minister of Finance was able, with the support of his team in the Ministry of Finance and the full backing of The Cabinet of Barbados, to craft a document that says to Barbados now it is time for us to move to the next level. Yes, the early stages of the development of our nation would have been the 'show me' and 'give me' and 'help me' stages of development, now this country is saying to its citizens we have come this far by faith leaning on the Lord, now it is time for you to put your hands even further on to the plough and let us forge our way forward to a greater destiny of prosperity, and, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have no doubt in my mind that that is what will happen.

The Honourable Minister of Finance proposed to this country over a series of Budget the journey that he wished to take with the support of his Cabinet along the way: the strategic plan, the mid-term strategy and on and on. On every turn this Government was criticised. I do not recall any time in any Budget where the Leader of the Opposition

stood up and gave this Government any accolades for its efforts, not that I expected that because it is not the role of the Government to sit back and wait to be affirmed by the Opposition, to be convinced that it is doing the right thing. We come in these halls on a weekly basis or as often as we do knowing that what we are doing is from a position of conviction, a position of study, a position of sincerity and a position of hope. We did not have to wait until the odyssey of hope document came out by the Barbados Labour Party to tell us that there is an opportunity for us to embrace hope.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Yes, I call it the odyssey. As a matter of fact, I have observed with some curiosity that that document is seldom referenced by any Member on that side, and I noticed yesterday that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition waved it once in her presentation. It is not required reading. It is not a living document, for hope springs eternal not because of any scripted statement but hope springs eternal from the vicissitudes of man's heart and man's reliance on the eternal hope-giver that things will be okay.

The Minister of Finance has taken us through a journey. We were told that in this developmental quest the country's economy had to go through a stabilising phase, and that we have done. We have been told that the country's economy had to proceed from stabilisation to restructuring, and the restructuring has been happening.

I hear the Leader of the Opposition keep saying that she wants to have this roundtable where we all get together and we all talk economy and whatever else. We rubbed shoulders or we rubbed other parts in that confine trying to get ahead on a collective process. I do not know why, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we who have never merited the support of the Opposition in this House, except for one or two Members, and one of two Members, I speak, for example, of the Honourable Member for St. George North who in spite of his tendency to be mischievous from time to time would say to the House I support the measure, and he did so yesterday again although a little bit discombobulated, 'catspraddled' because of the order he was called in. He was called in as a night watchman to hold an end but I remember hearing him say yesterday, you know I agree with this measure but I am asking the Minister of Finance to give us a little bit more explanation, and I could live with that. I heard the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown who, in all of his honesty and sincerity, applauded the Government for the Hyatt project. All he was asking for is to be included in any discussions going forward, and that is fair. It is his constituency and I do not believe that the Honourable Minister of Finance or anybody on this side has any objection to that. What is important is that we see this Budget

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Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Madam Deputy Speaker, it is his constituency and I do not believe that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs or anybody on this side has any objection to that, but what is important is that we see this budget as one that outlines the forward movement of the Government, the recovery of the economy and the commitment of the Democratic Labour Party Government to be progressive yet cautious about how we go forward.

Ma'am, it is a budget that covered the social, as is reflected in the measures for pensioners and others, the responsibility levy; it is a budget that covered the economics, as was shown in the Government's intention to boost small business, the Government's intention to continue to drive forward those sectors, tourism and others that need to be continued in a strong and robust way; it is a budget that covers the environment by virtue of the Government's spend on addressing matters related to environmental issues; it is a budget that covers governance by virtue of the Minister's insistence that things must be done in accordance with the realities of the State at this point in time. Ma'am, we know that the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs is on track.

Ma'am, we know that a progressive budget does not mean a reckless budget, that a progressive budget looks for avenues of opportunities without slowing down or jeopardizing those areas of growth recovery. Ma'am, yes, the economy is growing, it is not growing at an alarming rate. Ma'am, after all, if a man comes in for stabilisation because his legs have been broken, when that man recovers you do not expect him to go out and run as he did before he got his legs broken, that man gingerly takes his time to get back to a place where he can perform at the level which he would have before performed. Ma'am, that is the reality. Ma'am, I believe that as we move ahead and as we continue to identify new opportunities that this growth will pick up.

Ma'am, I see this budget as an inclusive budget, it touches pensioners, it touches small business persons, it touches workers, and it touches the healthcare system by virtue of measure no. 8 that speaks to the 2 per cent national social responsibility levy that will be introduced by September 1, 2016. Madam Deputy Speaker, I thought that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West laid it out in a succinct way. I want to assure that Honourable Member that we in the Cabinet incorrugated those issues and came up with a conclusion which is similar to the Honourable Member's, that is, that there must be the careful delineation of the allocation of the these dollars, so

that each segment of healthcare area or public health will be treated to the amounts that were committed to it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that is important because the healthcare system is not the only aspect of public health, it is one of the critical areas. I believe that it is the area that commands the greatest level of injection of financial support but then there is public health, there is environmental health, there is the Sanitation Service Authority, and we have heard a lot about that.

Ma'am, let me say that I applaud the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs for finding an avenue in his budget to ensure that there will be a consistent and persistent inflow of support for the Sanitation Service Authority. It is important because the Sanitation Service Authority commands a budget of almost \$62 million per year. Ma'am, one compactor truck would cost the Sanitation Service Authority in excess of \$200 000 per truck.

Ma'am, that is the reality but we have not been sitting down and twiddling our fingers and complaining as to why the Sanitation Service Authority is not capitalised to the extent where it can carry its own weight, we have been doing work that includes the drafting of new legislation; we have been doing work that includes the complete reform of the Sanitation Service Authority. Ma'am, that process is completed in draft, now to be taken to Cabinet for Cabinet's approval.

Ma'am, we have been doing work like a fleet management and a route management study, assisted by the Koreans, now we have a realistic understanding not only of what it would take to service the island adequately on a daily basis, but how the island has now developed to include other aspects on all of its routes. That is work that has been done.

Ma'am, I want to take this opportunity to applaud the workers of the Sanitation Service Authority who continue to produce excellent service under strenuous circumstances -- management, the Board and the workers, those who work hours in and out, all hours of the day and night to ensure that Barbados is kept at a level that is acceptable and healthy.

Ma'am, I will also make the point that I applaud the Sanitation Service Authority for the work they did over the Cropover season and that unlike the propagating of those negative beliefs that they were able to service that sector flawlessly for the entire season. Ma'am, they deserve our gratitude and our praise. Ma'am, the environmental cleanup programme to be introduced, I also that that is an important area that we need to pursue.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to make the point that every piece of bush out there does not need to be cut down, it is absolutely critical to our environment sustainability. I want to further point out that in those areas where it is necessary to clean up for the safety of pedestrians, for the safety of persons in their neighborhoods and for the beautification of the island, it is important that resources are available for that work. Madam Deputy Speaker, I heard the talk about who should or should not be hired but I want to remind Barbadians and this Honourable House that when the NEEP Programme was introduced it generated a lot of negative talk from the Opposition. As a matter of fact, they have their acolytes going around taking pictures of workers all over Barbados, including the Belle Gully, for some reason unknown to man because they felt that we had introduced a programme that would serve our political benefit.

Ma'am, I want to say this, I am not going to talk about hiring, I am not going to talk about how the Beautify Barbados programme was hired, where the workers came from and who was responsible for bringing the workers into the Government sector, who failed to introduce the programme the way that it was recommended by Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. It was never supposed to be a department, it was supposed to be a programme that had its own life, and there will be a time for that. Ma'am, nor would I talk about the 1999-2000 hiring of almost 2 000 workers at the National Conservation Commission, and which constituency benefitted, and who Member of Parliament was involved. I am not going to talk about that yet.

Ma'am, I hear this talk about nepotism and this and that, I am not going to talk about nepotism yet, but I will ask about the Silver Sands bath, about who gave the contract and who carried out the work. It disrupted four feet in a bed, but there will be a time for that. Ma'am, nor will I talk about Kensington Lodge and who gave out the contract to whom, who illegally removed asbestos from the roofs there against the standard of the country. I am not going to talk about that yet, there will be a time for that.

Ma'am, I am not going to talk about who got the contracts for EduTech and who was involved in giving them out, who was in there as one of the subcontractors.

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Dr. Hon. D.S. LOWE: ... I am not going to talk about who got the contracts for Edutech and who was involved in giving them out and who was in there as one of the subcontractors. That information is available too, so all the

whooping and hollering you hear and the finger-waving about corruption and the fact that the corruption discussion will occur in this Parliament soon, I am waiting for that discussion to happen. I heard the Leader of the Opposition in her preamble saying, "I am not going to focus on the past. This is all about the present." The only way sometimes that you can really test the character of those who speak is by tracing their history, and the truth of the matter is that the annals of the Public Service maintain file systems that tell the stories long after politicians move on or move out of Government. I just want to make that point.

The Budget covers environmental sustainability and my Ministry has been at the front of environmental sustainability by the promotion of the Green Economy, by developing environmental legislation, by supporting energy-related legislation, and by supporting renewable energy projects. I want to rest there for a second. The issue of renewable energy is what the Government promised in the restructuring of the economy to give rise to new sectors in Barbados that are sustainable sectors. I am sure that we would agree that, as well as the tourism industry is doing under the able guidance and leadership of the Honourable Minister of Tourism, tourism has built-in vulnerabilities that can set in at any time without visionary leadership and without good guidance. The renewable energy sector is one of the most promising sectors in Barbados, and if given the attention that it should be given, will become, I believe, the vanguard of recovering the economy and moving Barbados forward. I sat in here yesterday in horror hearing the Leader of the Opposition try to black-eye the Deltro project, and link the Ministry and Minister of the Environment with the project. If you would recall some time ago in this House, the same Member said that the Deltro project was another Cahill and it would contaminate the water supply in Waterford. Let me give this House what I know of that project; and I heard the Minister of Industry and the Attorney General made very stout representation of this project.

What is the Deltro project? The Deltro project is a proposal to build a 20-megawatt solar farm at Waterford. Waterford is a parcel of land in excess of 250 acres where the Botanical Gardens only occupy around 60 acres. The director of the Botanical Gardens has spoken to me and showed me information where a previous Minister of the Environment under the Barbados Labour Party said that Waterford was an area where renewable energy projects could be built. If you know the Waterford land under question, it stretches from the Combermere School side all the way over to Highway 2A. It is divided by a road that allows access for the Barbados Water Authority to get to one of its stations in that area. On the Waterford side, the terrain is best suited for botanical gardens, but who is going to want to take up 250-odd acres of land to turn into botanical gardens where people from St. James, St. Thomas, St. Michael, Christ Church and St. George would

come and find a place to recreate, when there are scores of recreational facilities all over this country that the National Conservation Commission has been very good in placing out there and maintaining?

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes. I would like you to stick to time please.

Dr. Hon. D.S. LOWE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am saying that the 60 acres for the land for the Deltro solar project is just about a small portion. Do you know that when the Botanical Gardens' portion is taken out and the Deltro solar farm portion is taken out, there is still in excess of 150 acres or so?

Asides.

Dr. Hon. D.S. LOWE: The truth is that I heard about the cow man. The cow man was up there for years and nobody did anything to help him. When we became the Government, the first thing that the late Prime Minister did was to revisit that project and indicate that he wanted the project to continue, but he wanted the area to be seen as a sustainable development area. That is what happened. All of a sudden, there is talk of the cow man. Do you know what ran the cow man from up there really?

Asides.

Dr. Hon. D.S. LOWE: The manure and the urination. You know when a cow decides to urinate, it is a lot of urination. All of that seeping down to the same so-called well that the Leader of the Opposition spoke about. Listen to what happened to the cow man. The cow man was given the option of choosing a piece of land across the street or a piece of Land for the Landless. We have it in documentation. They came to the Ministry and met with me, the Permanent Secretary and others. Madam Deputy Speaker, do you know what really caused him to run? He had refused to move. Do you know what caused him to move from there? They started to slaughter his cows because the cows were competing with the space where the marijuana was grown, and they cut off the cows' heads and left the partial carcasses on the Botanical Gardens' grounds. The horse man took up the offer and moved his horses, although he was a lesser threat but his horses strayed all over the place.

Aside.

Dr. Hon. D.S. LOWE: We did not run anybody. We did not stop anybody from milking their cows. There was a conflict between two informal economies, and as a result, the man decided, "Let me save what cows I can and save my life."

Asides.

Dr. Hon. D.S. LOWE: We moved out, so let me move on quickly because I know my time is up.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, your time is up, Honourable Member.

Dr. Hon. D.S. LOWE: I will conclude. There is no threat to the Deltro project. The Deltro project has received the full attention of the Town and Country Planning Department, it has got the okay from the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), the Barbados Water Authority, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Drainage Division, the GEED (Government Electrical Engineering Department), the Ministry of Transport and Works and the Ministry of Housing and Lands. All of them have seen the application and all of them have given the sign-off on the application. The Leader of the Opposition should tell the House whether or not she received a copy of the environmental impact assessment (EIA), because it is our certain knowledge that the EIA passed hands from one person whose last name is Christie to her. Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe that our leader, our Prime Minister, continues to insist that when we are moving through on all of these things that we follow the letter of the law, and the Town and Country Planning Department head has also insisted that if you have questions, call and ask, and if you need assistance let him know, but follow the law.

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Hon. Dr. D. LOWE: (Seq 47)

He has also insisted if you have question to call and ask. If you need assistance let me know but follow the law. This project has followed every single point in the Terms of Reference and it is a project that once the Town and Country Planning approves will go ahead.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

The Honourable Member for St. James North.

MR. E.D. HINKSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank you. I first wish to say that I intervene in this debate here today with the pleasure and on behalf of the great people of St. James North. I must say that the Honourable Member who presented this debate may very well have turned out to be an outstanding international trade Minister if he had been allowed to remain in that position to which he was appointed in 2008. In fact, he might very well have been in line for Oscar award right now, as the Leader of the Opposition said if he had gone into acting but we on this side believe and we know that other Cabinet members

agree with us including the Minister of agriculture who wrote a letter to his Ministry officials and told them in writing that they must not deal with the Minister of Finance without his permission and consent, so he knows that but we certainly on this side believe that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West appointment to the position of Minister of Finance by the late David Thompson and his continuing appointment at the behest of the Right Honourable Prime Minister has been one of the worse appointments by the political leadership of any country anywhere in the world to a public office since Captain Guelier (2:33) the Roman Emperor appointed his horse as council of Rome. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West continue to blame an international recession now long past for the incompetence and callousness of his Government. These Budgetary Proposals can only be described as an adhoc attempt by the Democratic Labour Party Government to shore up their disastrous management of the economy over the last eight year. The Honourable Finance Minister says that there has been a RESUMPTION in the growth of the economy yet this nation is one of the only three Caribbean countries to have experienced an annual negative growth since the year 2008. The Honourable Finance Minister says that the economy is growing again yet Barbados is the most indebted country in the Caribbean per capita and among the seven most indebted globally. The Honourable Minister of Finance says that the economy has realised an improvement yet the fiscal deficit at 6.9 per cent for 2015/2016 is higher than the 5.8 per cent that it was for the previous year. Madam, that Honourable Member himself says that this of course was disappointing, those were his words two days ago. Sir, that Honourable Member, the presenter of this debate still predicts a year end growth in the economy of 1.5 per cent. Sir, that is unrealistic considering that the growth in the first half of this year, according to the Central Bank of Barbados Report was only 1.3 per cent and even the most uneducated person in Barbados knows that the first half of the year is always better economically for Barbados than the second half, that the tourists come mainly in the first half of the year and in a tourist driven economy there is no way that the first half of the year would only realise a 1.3 per cent growth figure but overall you are going to get a 1.5 per cent. This Government, Madam Deputy Speaker, has utilise this Budget to impose taxes No. 34, 35 and 36 since it came into office on the already overwhelmingly taxed Barbadian public. The Honourable Minister of Finance has tried at least different fiscal strategies since 2009, all at a huge sacrificial cost to the ordinary citizens of this country and all of them have failed singularly and/or jointly to impose the quality of life of the vast majority of Barbadians except of course you are a member of the Democratic Labour Party fatted calf or their friends yet the Honourable Minister of Finance now impose a national social responsibility levy, sweet sounding words, rhetoric but all it means is a tax, which at the rate of two per cent taxation

on imported goods with the exception of goods for the manufacturing, agriculture and tourism sector plus VAT will again substantially increase the cost of living of Barbadians.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this new tax will in fact directly increase the cost of living in the country from as early as next month by three to four per cent. This is yet another broken promise by the Democratic Labour Party administration which in 2008 stated that the reduction in cost of living was to be its number one priority. (7:21)

Sequence 47 INCOMPLETE BY VELDA

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House C 38C Seq 48 6.01 p.m.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: ... in the 2014 Estimates and taken many persons off the welfare list who were on previously. There is no way that a policy sum of \$2 million can alleviate the financial challenge which daily confronts thousands of Barbadians particularly now that this levy is being implemented. The proposed \$10 weekly increase in non-contributory pensions for senior citizens is sufficient to pay only a water bill and is if you are lucky enough to be living in a part of Barbados that gets water, a basic human commodity. This increase, the first in many years for old age pensioners cannot offset the harsh fiscal measures which this Government has imposed on senior citizens over the last few years. Almost incredibly from a political party that previous used to profess how much it cares about poor people, this new levy is not the only additional tax in this Budget. An increase Bank Assets Tax up from 0.2 per cent to 0.35 per cent has also been announced. This tax will undoubtedly be passed on by the banks to its ordinary customers.

Furthermore, this callous Government has proposed an amendment to the Income Tax Act to take an increase payment of Withholding Tax at the rate of 6.5 per cent up from the usual 12.5 per cent on partial withdraw rules from registered retirement saving plans by Barbadians who are now financially strapped and who have been forced to dig deep into their savings after being encouraged by a previously enlightened Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government to invest in these instruments, not even that the Government could look after. They increased the Withholding Tax up from 12.5 per cent to 16.5 per cent and ordinary Barbadians who have lost their jobs has had no salary increase for six years. The cost of living has gone up and inflation by over 30 per cent since this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Government came into office having now to dig into RRSPs and you are being taxed more heavily for it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, all of this is against the background of a decision by this Cabinet authenticated by the signature of the Honourable Minister of Finance on 15th April, 2016 on an order to increase the salaries of Cabinet Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries by 10 per cent, up above what they received in the previous month, under circumstances where public servants and Government employees have not received a salary increase for over six years. Spectacularly, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has insensitively commented publicly on Facebook that public sector employees should now voluntarily agree to a pay cut that the Parliamentarians took their pay cut for two years and now the public sector employees should voluntarily agree to a 10 per cent pay cut too. Do you imagine that, Madam Deputy Speaker, that Honourable Member, still remains in a Cabinet of Barbados after publicly saying so. The late Prime Minister would absolutely correct in his judgment that that Honourable Member would not see the inside of a Cabinet once he headed it. No surprisingly though, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central who is in here with the benefit of a minibus load of votes who speeches in Parliament are no more than five occasions annually. No more than five times a years does he speak in this Parliament, betrayed by his body language when the Honourable Leader of the Opposition revealed these ministerial salary increases, his uncompromising desire that he wanted his \$16 500 a month now up from \$15 000 a month. Do not mind that his ministerial mandate is to preside over people who are the most vulnerable in this society and who have greater needs than anybody else. The Minister of Finance's announcement that this Administration intends to finance and/or reduce transfers to ministries and statutory boards by about \$50 million annually for the next four years reveal a Government that, and I agree totally with the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, is taking blind leaps in the dark without knowing where it would land. A government must be able to prioritise its national development agenda. That is its job. It must know which areas can be cut in the interest of our people's progress and it must know which areas cannot be cut on the contrary in the interest of our people's progress. Where will these new financial cuts now be made in an environment where the Government's delivery of social services to our constituents is already so poor. Nowhere, Madam Deputy Speaker, is this Government's failure in its ability to delivers to our people more aptly seen than its policy towards the funding of tertiary education of the funding of tertiary education. Children of poor, working-class and struggling middle class Barbadians.

While I join with the Honourable Minister of Education in calling for all defaulting borrowers of student revolving loans to pay their dues to the Government and people of Barbados, the undeniable fact is that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has to take ministerial responsibility for the present situation

where persons do not know whether they can take up their places at the end of this month at the University of the West Indies (UWI), at Hugh Wooding Law School or at any other tertiary institutions into which they have been accepted because the funds in the Ministry of Education to which they applied for a loan are no longer there. They are unable to finance them. This situation ought to have been easily predicted by a minister who had a hand on his ministry. The worst Minister of Education out of 13 ministers in this country. This should have been dealt with a long time ago. We have not been told when this Government reasonably expects to fulfil all of the conditions of the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) loan of \$15 million which the Honourable Minister of Finance mentioned two days ago and which we know have not been fulfilled so this issue about a Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) loan of \$15 million will soon come is a fairy tale. When will the Student Revolving Loan Fund be able to access these moneys. The Honourable Minister of Education in last year's Budget, almost exactly a year ago, promised to have a national consultation with the people of Barbados on the issue of funding tertiary education in Barbados. Madam Deputy Speaker, I, at the time, said that I look forward to that consultation. I, in fact, commended the Honourable Minister of Health for doing that and I went to one of the consultations that he had and I said that at least the Minister of Education is taking a leaf out of the Minister of Health pocket. Do you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, not one national consultation on education has been held since then even though the Minister of Education made that promise? That does not surprise me, Madam Deputy Speaker, because this is the style of the Minister of Education, making promises and commitments before this Parliament like sending documents on educational policy to the Opposition Office and not doing so 18 months after. That is his style so that does not surprise me. The Honourable Minister of Education and his Government have made a complete mess of the development of young people by their ...

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Mr. E. G. HINKSON: ...that is his style so that does not surprise me. The Honourable Minister of Education and his Government have made a complete mess of the development of young people by their bungling of the bursaries, their bungling of the grants and now by their bungling of the Student Revolving Loan Fund. This is a Government that has failed to give the majority of our young people a realistic belief and hope that they can now acquire the knowledge, the skills and the training which are required to assist them in realising their full potential and in being the best citizens of this country that they can be. The youth of this country deserve better, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The aftermath of the decision three years ago to impose the payment of tuition fees on Barbadian students at the University of the West Indies and at other tertiary institutions highlights the complete incapacity of this Cabinet to do its duty to our people by ensuring the continued development of our human resources.

Education has been seen by every post-independent Government in this country except this present Administration as a public good. Every Government for the last 50 years found money to afford Barbadians with free tertiary education even though they could not find it. There is no Government in the history of the independence of this country that could afford free tertiary education yet every single one of them found the money, millions of dollars every year, to fund it so that poor people's children can rise from the circumstances of their birth and sit as Prime Minister in these Chambers. The taxpayers of Barbados paid for this Prime Minister's education for ten years, four Degrees and paid for a Minister in the Other Place for nine years for him to get one Degree and they could sit around a Cabinet and commit this social and economic injustice to the people of Barbados.

The inability of this Administration to understand that our society just cannot afford the socio-economic fallout associated with this change in national educational policy has been one of the primary causes of the decline in our status as a leading development country in the world.

The Honourable Minister of Finance had the opportunity in this Budget to restore some of the tax allowances which were removed from the people's earning capacity last year. He has not restored any of these tax allowances even though he hinted a few months ago that he may restore some. All of the tax allowances, whereby you give your church, to your school, to the Salvation Army and to the service clubs, were taken off harshly last year by this Honourable Minister of Finance and this Government causing a tremendous social and economic impact in this country on those organisations, non-governmental and churches, that were assisting the Government in terms of the social welfare of people in this country. The Honourable Minister of Finance promised a few months ago that he would restore some of them but not one mention of that, yet Cabinet Ministers one after the other praised this Budget.

There has been no stimulus in this Budget, Madam Deputy Speaker, for ordinary Barbadians to acquire affordable housing.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes left.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy since

taking up the housing mandate three and a half years ago has not delivered 25 housing solutions to the people of this country, and The Grotto is remaining like a ghost town, unable to make a decision on it, and Coverley with about 1 000 houses, more than half of which are occupied. One would have thought that a Minister of Finance would have taken the opportunity two days ago to announce some kind of package to help alleviate one of the great social problems of this country, housing, but he failed to do so.

The Honourable Minister of Finance has failed to address the critical issue of our continuing annual decline as a nation in which to do business where we are now ranked at 119 down from 103 two years ago, a matter of which I know the Honourable Member for St. James South, because he speaks about it publicly, is concerned but he seems to be unable to deal with it. Not even within his own ministry can he deal with it. Barbados is becoming a more and more uncompetitive society and is losing it previously cutting edge in economic and productive activity to other regional countries.

The announcement, Madam Deputy Speaker, of an in the future appointment of temporary public officers who have been employed in such a position for more than three years is smoke and mirrors, the usual tactic of the Democratic Labour Party to try to trick the people of this country. One of the last acts of the last Barbados Labour Party Administration on the 31st of December 2007 was to pass and have the Governor-General assent to a Public Services Act under which after one year acting in a position they should be appointed unless the Governor-General freezes the position. That was the position but the Honourable Attorney-General would not understand that. He does not even understand first-year constitutional law because he certified that you could fingerprint Barbadians at ports of entry and exit in Barbados in breach of the fundamental rights, clause 23, the provision in the Constitution, anything that a first year law student at Cave Hill would understand. He does not understand that so I excuse the Honourable Minister of Finance who is not a lawyer for bringing that two days ago because he has an Attorney-General as principle legal advisor to the Government who does not understand first-year constitutional law.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that announcement is comparable to the present Minister of Transport and Works the Honourable Member for St. Philip North who when he was Minister of Housing and Lands three months after the 2008 election went around with letters handing them to people in The Pine, in the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East constituency, and in other constituencies showing that they would become owners of their units, something that now over eight years afterwards has not been done. They could not carry the letters to a bank and say I am now the owner of this lend me a

mortgage and use my unit as collateral. Even now they are not the owners.

What the Honourable Minister of Finance announced two days ago is no joy for public servants because they had that right over eight and half years ago. It is the fault of the Democratic Labour Party Administration for failing to implement that law. Even now they are putting it down the line by setting up a committee to look at the procedure and the methodology and the legality of appointing it when the law is there, but that is the Democratic Labour Party for you, deception, lies and propaganda.

We will leave for another occasion, Madam Deputy Speaker, as stated by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition

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6.24 p.m.

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

Mr. E. D. HINKSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, can you grant me time just to wind up. Madam Deputy Speaker, discussion on the prevailing corruption and spiritual wickedness in high places which now permeates too large a part of our governance. Our country under the Democratic Labour Party is no closer than before in getting out of the woods economically. This Administration has failed to communicate any vision of how it hopes to develop our people and our country at the macro level over the next decade.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please take your seat, your time is up. We need to stick to time.

Mr. E. D. HINKSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am obliged.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to support the Resolution that is before this Honourable House which speaks to the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016, as delivered by our Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs. Let me at the outset give my unequivocal support to these Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016. Sometimes in the absence of knowledge and in the absence of being involved, we can arrive at conclusions which are totally false. I have seen

over the last 2½ days now that the other side has arrived at conclusions which are, in fact, false.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs brought before this Honourable House a set of proposals which basically are to keep this economy growing, meet many of the needs of the citizens of Barbados and engender a sense of hope as we try to emerge out of the difficulties of 2007, 2008, et cetera. Madam Deputy Speaker, but it seems to be things within these proposals that burn deeply within the bosoms of Members on the other side.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James North became quite animated when the Honourable Member spoke in relation to temporary officers in the public service who have been promised that officers who have been in the service for three or more years and are qualified would be appointed to the public service of Barbados.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are a few things which must be made clear in relation to this matter because I see this being treated like that of elastic, it is being stretched to its tightest limit because somehow the Honourable Members on that side would want to confuse the point. Ma'am, in 2007, December, the Government of the day brought a Public Service Bill which eventually became the Public Service Act, 2007. In that Act, the Government of the day spoke to the appointment of officers of the service who up to the 31st December, 2007, would have put in three or more years and were unappointed, they were not part of the establishment.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that particular clause was applicable for those persons in the public service and had attained three years up until December 31, 2007. Madam Deputy Speaker, anybody who on January 1, 2008 had attained three years was not eligible because basically it was a close piece of legislation relative to those officers. It did create some confusion because persons had interpret it to simply mean that once they attained that three years that they should automatically be appointed, that was not the case, that is why there was still some confusion in the country and there is even more confusion now because some Honourable Members on that side do not understand the legislation that was passed under them and in their dying embers of their Government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this caring Government as it is reflecting on the complaints that were coming from temporary officers who when they go to banks -- I am surprised that credit unions are involved in that. Well, the one of which I am a part of is not involved in that. They are asking for a letter of employment. This is really crazy. Ma'am, those messages got to our ears and in order to release the angst of those members such a policy, sensible

as it is, is being put in place. I am hopeful -- because none of us would be sitting on the Committee. There is one Minister of the Civil Service, the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados. I know that the Honourable Member will not be sitting on that Committee, we do not sit on Committee that will be done by the right people in the Public Service of Barbados.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this follows on with what is happening for teachers, because the Ministry of the Civil Service will have to raise the establishment in order to accommodate the number of temporary posts that were created, while there would be some persons acting in established posts, some persons would had been given Civil Service permission in temporary arrangements. Ma'am, all of those now would have to be brought into permanent establishment. If the permanent establishment for clerical officers, janitors, et cetera, was a specific number but your number is beyond that, then you have now to create posts to satisfy those numbers.

Ma'am, that is what now has to happen, the legislation did not deal with anything like that. In the same way that we brought a Teachers Orders here to give relevance to what happens to teachers, a Public Service Order will have to come to give relevance to that particular work. Ma'am, I thought that we so needed to clarify that.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I know that we can scream, holler and look naked like the emperor but that does not make the point.

Ma'am, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, also spoke to the issue of \$5 million being placed temporarily within the Student Revolving Loan Fund. The Honourable Member for St. James North knows the Student Revolving Loan Fund well, the Honourable Member has been a lawyer of the Student Revolving Loan Fund, I believe for 20 years now. The Honourable Member has been entrusted as a lawyer to collect outstanding moneys owed by the clients of the Student Revolving Loan Fund. Ma'am, I do not know of the Honourable Member's success that is not within my remit.

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Hon. R.D. JONES: ... Now I do not know of his success. That is not within my remit, but the Member should state before the House and declare your hand, declare your interest.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member. For what reason do you rise? What are you rising on, Sir?

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: Sorry, Ma'am. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. I have declared that interest on many occasions in this House, and the Honourable Member very well knows my success rate, and that is why I have remained one of the lawyers of the Student Revolving Loan Fund after eight-and-a-half years of Democratic Labour Party rule, because I am the most successful lawyer in terms of collections in the Fund. The mere fact that I am still the lawyer eight-and-a-half years after a Democratic Labour Party Administration shows my success rate.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. No Point of Order.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: In fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, as Minister of Education I thought, maybe wrongly so, that there would have been a conflict of interest relative to the Honourable Member for St. James North. I said to him quietly one day, "You have not been successful in the collection of these funds. Why do you not surrender the files back to the Student Revolving Loan Fund?" The Honourable Member said to me, "Give me a sum of money and I will surrender the files." That is what was stated. That is what he said. I was aghast. "Give me a sum of money, man, and I would give up the files." I was completely perplexed because I never believed that would happen.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I really and truly did not think that this Debate would degenerate into a debate on my legal skills. The Honourable Member I excuse him; he has never been legally trained, but the Right Honourable Prime Minister would tell him. I do not think the Attorney General could because he never practised law in Barbados. Lawyers should be paid. An attorney-at-law should be paid for his fees so there is nothing untoward about that, but the fact is that the Honourable Member took a decision not to remove me because I used to collect, and still do, the most money out of all the lawyers for the Fund.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. No Point of Order.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Madam Deputy Speaker, I would not know which lawyer collects or not because we are run by a board in a body. That would not fall under me in that kind of way. Just let me share with the House, because the

Member made heavy weather of the Student Revolving Loan Fund. This emerged out of the Higher Education Loan Fund which was set up by the Democratic Labour Party to help provide funds for Barbadians studying, particularly abroad but also in Barbados. In 2008-2009 it was extended to also deal with hybrid studies, which would be face-to-face and online studies as well. Out of 4 995 recorded loans, 2 742 are accounted as active loans within the Student Revolving Loan Fund, and the remaining balance of 2 253 denotes loans in study or within the grace period. At June 30, 2016, of the 2 742 loans 1 766 were in fact delinquent.

In fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I am not going to spend all of my time dealing with that issue, there are arrears of loans up to June, one to 90 days, 506 loans for just under \$190 000. This is the Member who said that he was and is the most successful. Ninety-one to 180 days, 177 loans, roughly \$247 000. The most successful. I am going down as it ages. One hundred and eighty-one to 365 days -- that is a year -- 233 loans, \$655 000. One to two years by the most successful lawyer, 214 loans, \$1.3 million.

Asides.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: Madam Deputy Speaker.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Sir, on what do you rise?

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He has now said that these are not loans for which I am responsible, because certainly they may be overall loan debt but they certainly are not loans for which I was responsible. Madam Deputy Speaker, he has a duty for the first time to be honest to this House.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member. You have made your speech already. Please continue.

Hon. R.D. JONES: He has to withdraw, Madam Deputy Speaker, he has to withdraw that comment, accusing me....

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. James North, would you please withdraw the comment?

Hon. R.D. JONES: Have it struck from the records.

Asides.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, he was giving the impression that they are loans I collected. If

he has now clarified that that is the overall loan portfolio of the Fund, I would withdraw.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please withdraw the statement.

Asides.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: I withdraw, Ma'am.

Hon. R.D. JONES: The final point I want to make on this, and these would be the loans over two years-plus, where the Honourable Member -- remember we have been in office eight-and-a-half years, according to him -- I came in there and I found him. This is over two years, 636 loans, \$25 million. He has been successful in not collecting any part of that \$25 million, it would appear.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: I have to rise again, Ma'am. Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. He has again implied that I have been responsible for failure to collect all of these loans, and that is not so. I have no more than 30 files at the present time. All the other files have been concluded. I have collected all the money, and there are millions of dollars that I have collected on behalf of the Student Revolving Loan Fund. Millions of dollars, and it is not over 20 years; it is about 15 years. It is about 12 years, and millions of dollars, but certainly, Ma'am, he is giving the impression that I am responsible for six hundred and something loans, and that is certainly not so.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Fair enough. Thank you.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Is there any further point on that? You have heard it. I am sure all persons involved are paid the requisite rates. I would urge the Honourable Member for St. James North to expedite the exercise that he carries the portfolio for, so that he can help ease the agony of some of those who would like the opportunity to use the Student Revolving Loan Fund. The Honourable Member seems to be very agitated. The other point I want to make is that the Honourable Member has been making the same speech for the last three years, and he has been making very heavy weather of this. It has to do with tertiary education. Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to share a few points using the statistics to support the points that I am making. I do not think that on this side we are truly well aware of the significant amounts of money that even in these difficult times we have been spending on education. I am going to just share a few of these points with the Honourable Members.

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Hon. R.D. JONES: (Seq 52)

I am going to just share a few of these points with Honourable Members. The Higher Education Awards, which is given to persons who never had to pay tuition fees, the National Development Scholarships, Government Scholarships, Special Awards, Financial Assistance Programme, all of those grants.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in 1996, the amount of funds being expended were in fact, \$5 200 000. In 2003/2004, \$21 898 000; 2010/2011 in the difficult times, \$37 million that was being expended by this Government; 2011 another \$37 million; 2012/2013 another \$35 million. Sir, in three years that is over \$100 and something million dollars in grants to individuals. In fact if you had to add up the years between 1991 and 2003, it would not even amount to that figure that I have mentioned in those three years during the most difficult times.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let us go on because figures speak more. Madam, school meals: 2003/2004 - \$18 million; 2013/2014 - \$25 million in the difficult times; Barbados Community College 2001/2002 - \$16 million rising to \$23 million in 2011/2012 which now stands at about \$21 point something million. The Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic 2003/2004 - \$9 million. It now stands at \$13 million in the difficult times. Capital expenditure: There was a period when we had a programme call EduTech and so therefore between 1999, \$39 million; 2000 - \$60 million; 2001 - \$58 million; 2002 - \$67 million; 2003 - \$48 million in exceptional times but during the lean periods we have kept capital expenditure still at a high level \$32 million in 2014/2015.

The Government of that day through the Caribbean Development Bank for primary schools, the IDB for secondary schools and the Government of Barbados with counterpart funding had about nearly \$500 million to do the total. Madam, I like to be fair.

Madam Deputy Speaker, infrastructural works, rationalisation; curriculum improvement et al, teacher training and software and hardware technology. We talk about implementation deficit. Madam, in the period between 1999 and 2007 the \$500 million dropped to about \$300 million because there was substantial implementation deficit, that is something which seems to assail the system and it has to change but when you get up and say to the Government that it seems to have implementation deficit just look at EduTech, major and significant, year after year, year after year, you had to go back to the lending agencies and change the scope and change everything so you would not be running up against penalties et cetera.

Madam Deputy Speaker, teacher training: sir for most of 1991 to 2007/2008 teacher training was between

\$2 million \$2.5 million, \$3.5 million. Madam, from 2008 it was 3.5 to 5.3 million across that span of years in teachers training. Sir, we have gone even further now in teaching training. Madam, Erdiston Teachers Training College, which provide the bulk of teaching training in Barbados in its infrastructure went through some difficult times but if you venture now to that facility, you would see two new carparks added to what was there. You would find four timber classrooms and recently in the last year, you would find another five very large classroom refurbished at Erdiston Teachers Training College along with three micro teaching rooms and the next target is the maintain Erdiston Building which is to hopefully start quite shortly in another five or six weeks at Erdiston Teachers Training College. It is totally transformation of Erdiston Teachers Training College taking place even now in a situation of scarcity. Sir, we are not surrendering and putting our hands up in the air and saying that there are difficult times, we are working through the process, we are enhancing the college.

Madam Deputy Speaker, along with that, being launched on September 1st, would be the Bachelor's in Education Primary. We are making the point that teachers will eventually come to the classroom fully trained. We would be having about 150 persons being trained, some from the classrooms but a group of those also coming green from the schools and the college to go and be trained as teachers utilising that facility. Madam, all of that is happening.

Madam Deputy Speaker, tertiary education. Madam, moved from 2001 from \$90 million to at one point in time \$198 million during the most difficult time that we had in the country. Madam, all of this was continuing in the midst of these difficulties, so the Honourable Member can talk, scream and holler without the facts.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I go on because it is important that you look at the statistics relative the amount of money paid. Madam, in 2006/2007, we were paying about \$93 million to the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill and that figure in the following year went up by \$40 million. Madam, it went from \$93 million to about \$129 million and the numbers also went up. Madam, I have no quarrel with numbers going up from \$5,553 in 2004/2005 reaching a height of \$8 793 in 2012/2013. Madam, that is what the figures were like, a tremendous burden at a time -- I am just talking in relation to numbers, not in relation to quality of teaching or the students' right for tertiary education.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados unlike other richer neighbours continued to pay 100 per cent outside of the small university fee for its students. Madam, I believe that it is the Honourable Member for City said that morning that when you have difficult circumstances that you have to come up with innovative solutions but I thought he meant

creative solutions to meet the burdens of the period and saying to students that they have to pay that 20 per cent ..

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Hon. R. D. JONES: ... you have to come up, he said, with innovative but I thought he meant creative solutions to meet the burdens of the period. I am saying to students, look you have to pay that 20 per cent cost. The state will still carry the 80 per cent on your behalf. You could have come up with another solution which would cap the numbers and therefore persons would not be looking to university to fulfil their demands or needs.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have two minutes left.

Hon. R. D. JONES: On top of that, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have looked at the Barbados Community College and we have said to them that it is written within the law. You have quality teachers up there and you need to transition some of your programmes to degree level.

Last year, there were three or four new degree programmes. This year, there are five or so new degree programmes so last year you did pharmacy, Bachelor in Nursing, you continued with the Bachelor of Finance, you continue with the B-Ed technology or Tech-Voc. This year you have media, I call it Bachelor in Media Studies, you have what used to be called Medical Laboratory Technology now referred to as Bachelor in Clinical Laboratory Technology, you have Sports Bachelor, so the institution is evolving creating opportunity for Barbadians also to go to the Barbados Community College and we continue to build out opportunity for person to access education even in difficult times. This is a short time to really go through the kinds of work that has been done and continues to be done.

I have two minutes but let me just wrap up by saying that a Government that is populist, and the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) was founded on a populist agenda, caring for the poor, the vulnerable, the under-privilege, et cetera, but it also has to manage the resources that it has in its grasp.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time has expired.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Some of the debt that we currently have is because we tried to maintain a very large social infrastructure on declining resources and as a result some debt was built. The work and the effort of the

Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs is laudable and must be commended, therefore I reject out of hand the kind of assertions which are being made by the Other Side in order to pollute the environment and to cause the people of Barbados to distrust the Government at this time.

I support this Resolution.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 7:00 o'clock this evening, this is a short five minute break.

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

The question that the House do now suspend until 7:00 o'clock was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

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RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, we were on Order No. 21 and to that we will return, but before we do that, a matter has been brought to my attention which occurred in my absence. Now, Honourable Members know that we try to conduct ourselves in a certain way, and there is some language that is considered unparliamentary and so on, and having spoken to my learned Deputy, Her Honour Mrs. Thompson, and having looked at it, I think there is some uncertainty as to what should have transpired. I am speaking about the use of and the reference to an Honourable Member as a nincompoop by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. That is unparliamentary and the ruling is that it should be struck from the record. We will not allow Honourable Members to disparage other Honourable Members like that. I do not care who is used as the authority whether Errol Walton Barrow or Sir Grantley Adams, it is simply not on, so the use of that word is to be struck from the record. Good. Yes, let us continue. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the truest thing said by the Honourable Minister of Finance in the course of the presentation of the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals on Tuesday was that these adjustments might be hard and the journey way too long. He went on to say to the country that given that the adjustments have been too long and the hardship that the country has endured has been severe that we must

continue to hold strain so that he can position this country to be able to bring down his deficit over the course of the next few years.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the Honourable Minister of Finance continues to ask us as a country and as a nation to make an ongoing sacrifice in relation to our expenditure and certainly our revenue. He paints a picture that the turnaround has started. He paints a picture that the prize of prosperity is set to be seized upon and enjoyed by every man, woman and child in Barbados. Those are the words of the Honourable Minister of Finance. It is an image of Barbados, I believe, that many Barbadians cannot relate to because many Barbadians have not begun to see the signs of prosperity particularly in a Barbados that right now seems to be withering away daily. If you ask most Barbadians about the mirror image of Barbados that they see right now, the words that come to mind are hardship, high unemployment, insecurity and frustration. Many of them do not feel as though the policies which have been implemented over the course of the last few years are actually starting to realise any significant growth. Why it is so difficult for Barbadians to even come to grips with this particular Budget? Why is it so difficult for even Honourable Members on this side to be able to grasp that? We are even a little closer to where the Honourable Minister of Finance and Government of Barbados would want us to be. It is difficult because pronouncement after pronouncement has been made by this Administration touting that things are going to happen, construction is going to take place, brand name hotels are coming to the country, that there are going to be significant injections within the tourism industry, that creative industries are going to be expanding, and that moneys are going to be spent on things like small business enterprises that for the most part all Barbadians would want to see, but we have a different picture which is a picture where a lot of those things have not happened.

This Government has become also known for announcing that legislation would be passed. It announces week by week and pronounces from occasion to occasion that things are going to be passed to make it easier for persons in this country and investors investing in Barbados to be able to do business here, but whether you take the Prevention of Corruption Bill which the learned Attorney-General has indicated now, while it has not been proclaimed it has been passed in both houses but it has not been proclaimed, is no longer a priority by this Administration although this Administration touted on coming to office in 2008 that this was a significant platform upon which it felt that the landscape of Barbados needed to be transformed, that there needed to be integrity in public life, but even on pronouncements of legislation that would transform the landscape of Barbados this Administration continues to be lacking.

We have heard much about the Procurement Bill since 2008, again nothing has happened. Procurement Committees have been set up. This Administration has indicated that it appreciates why these things need to be done but yet still Barbadians and persons overseas recognised that nothing is happening. Even if you take things like the lottery tax, which again was supposed to generate significant revenue for this country, yet again this Administration has failed to even enact or to bring the piece of legislation to Parliament.

This Government has become a Government that has not always been known for being truthful with the facts. Whether you look at the issue of education or at the issue of the layoffs, in both instances we have found this Administration wanting. On the one hand, this Administration has said to the people of this country through the learned Honourable Prime Minister that there would be no layoffs and then we come to find that over 3 000 people were sent home without any method for ensuring that those persons are able to survive once they go home.

We also had the situation where in the layoffs a policy was articulated by this Administration that it would be done on a last in first out basis, again that was not done so it is by no surprise that when these Budgetary Proposals are again brought before this Chamber that on this occasion yet again the public of Barbados is left to wonder what is really happening, what is actually going to be implemented by this particular Budget.

I think we have read in the newspapers and we have seen on social media a number of persons commenting on their perspective on the actual Budget and it is clear that there is no clarity in terms of thought as to how a lot of the policies that have been enunciated in the last few days will be implemented. You have a situation where all of the things which this Administration has said it would do, it continues to avoid implementing a number of their policies and they continue to be found wanting.

Mr. Speaker, it is all well and good to say that we have growth in the economy but we are clearly seeing that while on the one hand Government is saying we increased by a per cent or by .5 per cent, in the same token Barbadians are not seeing these green shoots to which the Government is referring. The fact of the matter is that after the 19-month programme there is still work to be done. After the 19-month programme there is claims of a tourism-led recovery for Barbados but despite the fact that the Honourable Minister of Tourism is for the first time touting that tourism arrivals were significant for 2015, there was an increase for tourism arrivals, he has not spoken to the fact of tourism spend. This Administration has repeatedly appreciated on different occasions that it is not sufficient just to have tourists coming to Barbados but

we also have to see the contributions to the Barbadian economy being meted out in a certain value.

I for one have recently worked with my parents to reopen Braddie's Bar on the outskirts of St. Lawrence Gap. I have had the benefit of seeing tourists in the island frequenting for the Crop Over Season, having the opportunity to liaise with a number of the taxi men who would have been transporting persons in the country, but the reality is that they all say over the course of the...

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Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Madam Deputy Speaker, tourists in the island had the opportunity to liaise with a number of the taxi men who would have been transporting persons in the country but the reality is that they all say over the course of the past few years there have been peaks in the two weeks prior to Cropover. What has happening now, particularly this year, you are having a situation where only in the few days before Cropover you are actually getting significant business. Since the Cropover period has ended tourists have returned to their destinations, they are not staying as long as they used to stay in Barbados. Madam Deputy Speaker, another factor that is creeping in is that a lot of times when they do come to Barbados, they are not spending in the same way that they used to spend.

Ma'am, there is no denying that under this Administration we lost the legacy carrier American Airlines. I believe that has dealt a significant blow to the type of clientele that we used to see coming to our shores. Ma'am, tourists are now more discerning in how they spend their money and where they spend their money. I have seen tourists commute from the airport in taxis, I have also seen tourists get Transport Board buses and come through St. Lawrence Gap to get to their destination, while along the way asking persons where to find the guest house or the hotel accommodation that they are going to stay at. That is the type of tourists that we are starting to see more and more. It means that while we continue to rely on tourism to be able to grow out and to expand the Barbados economy, we have to be mindful and we need to be hearing from this Administration what are the policies that are being put in place to deal with this new type of tourist, the type that would rather buy food off the street than to frequent the restaurants along the south and west coasts.

Ma'am, while we are still attracting some of the high-end tourists, the reality is -- and we have not heard it from the Minister -- tourism spend is, in fact, down. This perhaps is best articulated in the fact that the foreign

reserves are actually down as well, because if we had all of these tourists, surely they should be spending. That would be the corresponding conclusion that would stand to be made but we are not seeing the increase in the foreign reserves which would justify the fact that we have all of these tourists on the island.

Ma'am, I think that is something that I would have wished that the Minister of Tourism would have addressed. I know that the Honourable Member has had a rough period of a number of years where there were no benefits...

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. Sir, tourism spend actually is up, according to the Caribbean Tourism Organisation on spend. It is true that I did not mention it in my speech but I could not have mentioned everything.

Ma'am, for the information for the Honourable Member as well, foreign reserves is not only based on tourism spend, it is a very complex sum that has to do with foreign investment and servicing of loans, et cetera, so that you cannot simply say because foreign reserves are down that that means tourism spend is down. Ma'am, that part is more for the benefit of the Honourable Member but the Honourable Member was misleading the Honourable House when the Honourable Member said that tourism spend is down, it is not down and that is according to the Caribbean Tourism Surveys and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North gets information from them all the time so that the Honourable Member could confirm that with the Honourable Member.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, thank you for the elucidation.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: It is a point of order. If she is wrong, she is wrong.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please take your seat, let me rule on that.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the fact that the Minister of Tourism feels it necessary to be drawn out now to provide the facts. Mr. Speaker, the truth remains that even the Central Bank of Barbados Governor has predicted in the last Press Release of June, 2016 has predicted that Barbados' current projection for economic growth that this has been lowered by more than 1.5 per cent mainly because most major investment projects are behind schedule.

The Governor also points to the fact that the main impact of the recent value in the value of the Pound Sterling may well be on the sale of villas and second homes to United Kingdom residents. The growth rate could be higher if investment in tourism and alternative energy can be speeded up. Again, I would hope that when we come to something as important as the budget that the Minister of Tourism who is vested with certainly great responsibility for fuelling the Barbadian economy would address some of these issues.

Mr. Speaker, I do feel that if it is that the issue of Brexit in relation to the United Kingdom coming out of the European Union is so important to Barbados and its impact on the Barbadian economy I do feel that Government and indeed whether through the Minister of Tourism or the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs should address what is it that this Administration is intending to do to ensure that we are not severely impacted by the lowering of the British Pound and also in terms of its effect on the sale of villas in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we have a number of British visitors who also purchase homes in Barbados but I do feel that this is a point, particularly going forward if we are relying so much on tourism that needs to be addressed, certainly by this Administration.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue is that with the lowering of the Pound it is now going to perhaps become cheaper for a Canadian tourist from whom we rely on heavily to come to Barbados to go to the United Kingdom as opposed to coming to Barbados. Again, it would certainly give us some assurance in terms of knowing what are the efforts that are going to be going on by this Administration as it relates to getting tourism moving.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard nothing about what is owed by the Barbados Government to its creditors. Back in 2013 this Administration, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs in the budgetary proposals indicated that an Inter-American Development Bank loan was supposed to help to assist to pay down the creditors in the tourism industry that Barbados owed. We heard nothing about that. What does Barbados owe? What is it that we are operating on? Who do we owe and how much do we owe? I think the public of Barbados deserves an answer as it relates to what is happening as far as that is concerned? Is it going to be crippling our ability to market Barbados as a destination?

Mr. Speaker, much has been said about Sandals and we appreciate that Sandals has benefited Barbados to some extent because it has taken the burden off the Barbados Government from having to take up a number of resources for marketing on the country. the reality is, as we have said on this side, we have no difficulty with Sandals but we do feel that a lot of the concessions that have now been

granted to the hoteliers have been long incoming and so by being long in coming, I think the Minister of Tourism needs to recognise that in his earlier contribution yesterday, the Honourable Member may not be aware but the concessions that are now being granted to hoteliers in Barbados that are the same as those now being granted to Sandals there are some difficulties with the red tape of accessing those concessions.

Mr. Speaker, it goes a step further, the problem that a lot of them are having is that they do not have the storage facilities that the Sandals Hotel chain has, so that when they order for the duty-free concessions to come in through the Minister it takes about three to four weeks in terms of supplies and they cannot order in bulk, they cannot order for six months or for a year, so they have no storage facility to place their items in the interim.

Ma'am, a lot of times the operators are at the mercy of a number of the suppliers in this country and I think that is something that perhaps the Minister needs to look into because it was not a criticism per se by the Leader of the Opposition of the absence of the Minister, per se, of being able to sign off on the dotted line, it was really an observation that there are still players in the industry who are experiencing difficulties in accessing the very concessions that Sandals has had full reign over. I think that is something that certainly needs to be addressed.

Ma'am, I agree with the fact in this budget that attention is being placed on diversifying to the yachting sector and while I accept that we need to look at other avenues and other income streams, I do feel that equally most Barbadians have said to me in the last 24 hours, what about the vendors. Ma'am, vendors in this society are constantly being harassed for licences. There is a system in place for licensed, we recognised that there is a problem with either obtaining or producing the licences and I say to the Honourable Ministers and to the Government that they need to fix this problem. If we can fix it for persons coming from outside, then we need to fix it for persons who live and reside in Barbados as well. It cannot be one set of rules in Barbados for one group to make it simpler for persons to do business while the average Barbadian is confronted with a situation where every time you see Christmas or Cropover rolling around you see large numbers of vendors being harassed on the streets of this country who are simply trying to ply their trade, a number of them no doubt had fallen prey to being laid off by this Administration as well.

Ma'am, the issue of Special Development Areas, again this party has indicated we have no difficulty with extending the Special Development Areas. I would however had hoped that, and I would like to think that we could move forward in this direction where instead of Government continuously making pronouncements and throwing out policy initiatives that perhaps before they

come to this Honourable Chamber that more thought has been given that there is something where they can say that it is along the coastal areas that are now going to be covered, from St. Lawrence up to Ragged Point or is it going to involve some of the landside areas as well, because I think now we have to wait still for that policy to be fleshed out when in truth and fact these are things particularly as we are approaching another tourist season shortly that I think investment...

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Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: ... I think now we have to wait still for that policy to be fleshed out, when in truth and in fact these are things, particularly as we are approaching another tourist season shortly, that I think investors overseas would want to know. Even locals here would want to know so they can plan their business accordingly. The issue of the duty-free concessions as well is another good initiative, perhaps long overdue. What I have realised from this Budget is that the Minister of Finance and this Government have tried to make up for eight years of failing to acknowledge a number of the people and the individuals and businesses in this country who have been asking for various concessions, or in some cases, facilitation of their business. I would err on the side of caution because I have heard a number of the Members speaking earlier today, giving the impression that all of these persons and stakeholders who are speaking are patting the Government on the back. I want them to realise they are not putting you on the back. They are saying that they are glad that, finally after eight years, you have taken their concerns and their hardships on board and you have selected certain things to be able to help stimulate the economy.

As it relates to the issue of small business and creating the special fund of \$50 million with resources from the Industrial Credit Fund, again this is nothing new. It is a welcome initiative. The Barbados Labour Party would have been at the forefront of pushing small and micro enterprises. We would also have been at the forefront of ensuring that small businesses played a pivotal role in developing the Barbadian economy. There were a number of funds under the Barbados Labour Party's special technical assistance programme. We would have worked assiduously to help with the establishment of various credit unions, and I believe that it has been too long in coming to recognise that a number of the funds that have been set up have been problematic for a number of small businesses to access. The red tape is what continues to cripple Barbados. The ease of doing business is critical, not only to small and medium-sized enterprises but also to large corporations. I think it is something that all of us acknowledge needs to

happen, so I look forward to a swift administration of the policy which will surround this, because we are well aware that the 40 per cent procurement which this Administration would have promised back in 2008 to small businesses has not yet happened.

Asides.

Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Indeed, Mr. Speaker, again we hear 45 per cent now and we heard 40 per cent from 2008. The fact of the matter is that it has not yet happened, and the fact that it has not yet been realised is a further criticism of this Administration; not that it does not understand what it needs to do but it has a difficulty implementing a lot of what it has to do. Access to finance has been an issue for a long time. The fact that this has been coupled with high electricity and water rates, increases in the VAT, and even the Mobile Tax which obviously would have impacted on a number of the small businesses which use not standard landlines but certainly their mobile phones to be able to conduct business, has created significant problems over the years for these entities.

Turning to the National Social Responsibility Levy which was introduced as well in this Budget, I have no difficulty with anything which is going to be put towards assisting with healthcare financing in this country. What I do have a difficulty with is that, yet again, it seems as though we are moving onto something else, which I believe was announced in the Budget last year in relation to taking money from a fund and placing it to help healthcare. What I have not heard anything from this Government about is the American World Clinic. I remember when I was in the Other Place, much was said about this particular project in terms of turning the St. Joseph Hospital into a world-class facility. The last reports in the public domain was that the private investors were awaiting word from the Cabinet of Barbados. Whether that is untrue or not, the fact of the matter is we have heard nothing from this Administration. This project was touted as a project which was going to, again, further diversify the Barbadian economy and the Barbadian tourism product as well in the area of health tourism. I would wish that perhaps in the wrap-up that the Minister of Finance could also speak to that. While we are trying to take revenue from our locals to help to pay to finance our healthcare system - those who can pay will pay for the ones who cannot - at the same time it is important that projects like this are not left to flounder. The American World Clinic has gone onto other territories and established their world clinics, so my question to this Administration is why has the same not obtained in Barbados? It is in the Bahamas, for the benefit of the Honourable Minister of Small Business, who should know better.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue that I have with this Budget is that I remember being very pleased in the last

Budgetary Proposals that there was supposed to be a cut across the board on Supplementaries; and that unless it was emergency services, child care or things that were of national importance, that we would not see Supplementaries coming back. The Government was actually taking control of the Government's finances and being able to put us in a position where we could get back on good footing. After going through the exercise of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure just five months ago, spending long hours in here debating various Heads, we find ourselves here five months later hearing an introduction of another proposal from this Administration that a \$50 million cut in approved expenditure would now be enforced across all Ministries. I ask the question of this Government: What has happened? The Supplementaries did not work. How are we to know that this is actually going to come to fruition? There has been nothing further articulated by the Minister of Finance to suggest which Ministries are going to be cut. We would have heard that there was supposed to be another committee set up some time last year, which would have looked at the restructuring of Government agencies, particularly statutory corporations. There was supposed to be a merger of the National Sports Council and the Kensington Oval Management Incorporated; we have heard nothing further on it. There have been audits of the persons in the institutions, creating absolute confusion and disarray among people who feel they are going to be placed on the breadline, and then you hear nothing further. I believe that this Administration owes it to the people of this country that if they are going to make announcements that they are going to reduce expenditure and that they are going to follow a particular procedure, then they owe it to the people of this country to follow that procedure through.

There was even the establishment of an infrastructure committee led by the Minister of Agriculture. That was supposed to report to this country on a regular basis. I have not heard anything further about that as well. I believe that was supposed to allow this country to know what was happening as it related to various projects that the Government was proposing to introduce, but again that has been allowed to falter. It is not that the Barbados Labour Party Opposition wants to criticise the Government at every juncture or that the people of Barbados have no faith anymore in this Administration, but the reality is that you have not provided us with the information for us to be able to say that you are actually implementing a lot of the things that you have proposed to do.

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

Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am curious as to where the cuts are coming from. Why take us through the exercise in futility in the Estimates where we believed that we are cutting even the welfare, but

then to come back to hear that welfare is now being increased by \$2 million? As far as I am concerned, it should never have been cut in the first place, because all of the statistics on the country living in Barbados that were done, shared by both sides, made it clear that people were falling below the poverty line and falling at a rapid rate. Any Administration that had that information available would have known that at that time it was not fair to the people of this country to cut and slash the welfare budget. Painting a building and renaming the Welfare Department is not providing welfare to the people of this country who are the most vulnerable. The Barbados Labour Party would have set out the Poverty Alleviation Bureau which would have been instrumental in assisting a number of the households across this country as it related to poverty. I say to this Administration: It is not fair to poor people in this country to take them through the ringer in this way, making them feel as though they are second-class citizens.

I have heard nothing on welfare-to-work. Perhaps that is something we need to hear more about. Instead we are hearing about the debushing programme. I will get a little parochial because I believe that the Sanitation Service Authority is right next door to St. Michael South East, yet I can drive through St Michael South East and see piles of garbage very close to the Sanitation Service Authority, whether it is in East Terrace, Meadow Road, Bottom Close or Regent Hill, and I beg the question: How is it that we do not have a better system in place at this point in our juncture, in our 50 years, where we can better provide for the removal of garbage, for the removal of bush around this country?

7.32 p.m.

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MISS S.J.O. BRADSHAW: (Seq 57)

... where we can better provide for the removal of garbage, for the removal of bush around this country. Sir, introducing a programme for the 50th Anniversary does not solve the problems that are facing this country. We need something more sustainable. Where are the solution in terms of recycling, where are the initiatives in this Budget that would encourage persons to get involved in recycling. What are we doing to teach our children to recycle? Sir, those are the things that I believe that if you are going to introduce measures, those are the initiatives that I feel the country would be more satisfied in hearing but instead we are once again left with policy initiatives which go no further than they did last year or the year before.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would want to say that I cannot support all aspects of the Budget. I do feel that some of it needs to be further fleshed out and I would hope that in the fullness of time, the Honourable Minister of Finance

would seek to do. However, I find hope in the fact that the Barbados Labour Party has set out clearly in its Covenant of Hope what it intends to do for Barbados. We have taken the time to go through all of the various pillars of governance in the country. The things that we as a Barbados Labour Party will commit to and we have set out even in terms of financing what are our priority areas, what are the things we believe as a Party we will spend on, some people on the other side will scoff at that but we believe and I believe certainly at this juncture of our history it is not enough for politicians anymore to just come to public life without having a clear vision as to what they stand for. I think that it is important for those who have not had the opportunity to read the Covenant of Hope that they do so because we speak to the issues that we will give priority to when we become the next administration.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, it is gratuitous that this debate is taking place in our 50th year of Independence and I believe that when the economic history of Barbados comes to be written the decisions made by this Parliament during this debate may cause this debate to be regarded as perhaps one of the most important debates in the history of this country. Sir, at the outset let me say that there is one core issue that this Parliament and the country must settle upon. Our economy progress, our progress as a society over the first 50 years of Independence have been based on a factor called stability, stability as represented in the present of a fix and stable exchange rate, stability as expressed in the form of sustained fiscal prudence. Our challenge now as a society is reduced to a simply matter as to how that stability that has underwritten Barbados's development as a society can be maintained and if I may be, not sensational but be truthful, this House has to settle on an economic policy that would ensure that Barbados does not go the way of Jamaica or Guyana. Sir, this is an important debate. Let me just say that when economic historians come to deal with this Budget, they will set it in the context of the transitions that have taken place in the Barbados society over the course of the last 50 years. Sir, in 1966, Barbados was a society whose economy was based on a 200 000 ton sugar industry but since then there has been a vast transformation of Barbados. we have been transformed from a sugar industry economy to a multi-sectoral economy and, Sir, let us remember that at various stages in our country's evolution over the first 50 years, we have had a buoyant manufacturing sector, we have had buoyancy in agriculture, we have had buoyancy in international business and all of these enabled the country to be able to make substantial investment in our social sectors and to extend to our people the number of entitlement and welfare

programme that substantially raised the quality of life of Barbadians as a whole but over that transition, Mr. Speaker, we have built up an economy with a social system which can only survive if the economy is firing on all cylinders.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados has now however reached its stage where the economy is not firing on all cylinders but we have retained all of the social systems, all of the social benefits, all of the entitlement arrangements that were in place when the economy was firing on all cylinders and we come to the end of 50 years of a society facing a very, very dangerous problem. We now have a society which has an economy that no longer support the social system fundamental far-reaching adjustments have to be made.

Mr. Speaker, in the course of the last few years, the Government has sought to address this matter. The insufficiency of economic resources generated by production to carry the social sector by doing things that are no longer sustainable. Sir, Barbados now has to recognise that unless there is a far-reaching change stability will go and there will be an economic and financial disorder in the country that would be similar to Jamaica and Guyana without our having the residual resources to find off the deterioration in our standard of living that has taken place in that country.

Mr. Speaker, what is this leading to, that Barbados has not had the resources generated by tax revenue our economic activity to continue to support the social system that we have had. What has happened then is that rather than making the adjustments precisely the factor that has undermined the Jamaican and Guyanese economies have been resorted to in the country. There are two statistics and two statistics about all else that I want to bring to the attention of this House so that the House can begin to understand why I say that we have a responsibility in this Parliament, in this debate to make sure that Barbados does not go the way of Jamaica and Guyana and that Government's policies have to be set in the context of whether it is trying to stabilise the economy to prevent us from going in that disastrous direction. Mr. Speaker, there are two statistics that matter, the first is that Barbados reserves have declined substantially since 2008. I refer you to Table 1 of the most recent Report of the Governor of Central Bank of Barbados. The holding of reserves in Barbados by the monetary authorities - \$1 billion 477 million in 2009, they fell to \$883 million by June 2016. The foreign exchange reserves of Barbados despite all of the policies introduced by the Government to compress demand have fallen by almost \$600 million in the last six years.

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Right Honourable O. S. ARTHUR: ... of Barbados, despite all of the policies introduced by the Government to compress demand by, have fallen by almost \$600 million in the last six years. A Minister of Finance is not the existing ??? it is the direction in which it is going. This country as a small open economy has lost almost \$600 million in reserves over the course of the last few years and it is now down to \$800 million. Indeed, Sir, a large proportion of those reserves lost occurred precisely since June last year and in a period when this country was facing a bountiful tourism industry results for which I commend the Government.

Mr. Speaker, the question is what has been driving this? The answer is that the Central Bank of Barbados that held none of the Government debt in 2008 has since 2008 printed, and they did not fully print all, but the Central Bank of Barbados holding of Government's debts moved from zero in 2008 to \$1 369 000 000 by June of this year. Barbados' reserves and Barbados' stability based on a stable exchange rate has been put in this tragic set of circumstances by the Central Bank of Barbados printing of money. Mr. Speaker, very often I am accused of being too harsh on the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados but I urge every person interested in what should or should not happen in this country to read a book called "Monetary Policy, Central Banking and Economy Performance in the Caribbean". Sir, in this it refers to an article written by the Governor of the Central Bank and Mr. Compton Bourne and it simply says according to Bourne in an article published in 1999 that fiscal deficits that were accommodated through the printing of money played a central role in undermining the currency of Jamaica and Guyana. In Barbados we now have the situation where because of the general problems in the buoyancy of the economy the Government has run out of financial options and it has increasingly utilised the printing of money on a scale that has caused our reserves to fall by \$600 million the ??? of which I am sure and I speak to you as the only person in this House who has ever lived in a country that has had the devalue because of the printing of money.

Asides.

Right Honourable O. S. ARTHUR: The idiot who is the Attorney General is trying to interrupt me.

Asides.

Right Honourable O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, the only thing of which the Government can be sure is that it cannot this policy of having the printing of money by the Central Bank of Barbados as the means of which it intends to finance its operations. This Budget reflects a determination on the part of the Government to move away from the

printing of money to having Government's operations financed by increased taxation. Mr. Speaker, it may not be a popular policy and it will not be a popular policy but the truth of the matter, Sir, is that if the alternative is that you continue to print money to meet deficits that are unsustainable it behooves us to come back from the cliff that leads to destruction because that is precisely the cliff over which Jamaica and Guyana went as represented by the Governor of the Central Bank in his article in 1989. Sir, we are at that moment where Barbados could be in the departure lounge waiting for the final boarding call to disaster and it behooves this Parliament to recognise what is at stake and at issue, and no matter how difficult the situation might be in terms of their policies, the alternative to continuing on this current path will lead to the same situation as has occurred in Jamaica and Guyana that is why I said, Mr. Speaker, that this House has an enormous opportunity but also an enormous obligation to Barbados to ensure that our next 50 years are based on stability and fiscal prudence as the first 50.

I said to the Minister of Finance that I have been harsh on the Governor of the Central Bank as I needed to be because he knew what he was doing was wrong. He is not helping the Government when he indulges the Government's appetite for finance but opening up the printing presses of the Central Bank Government. He has now recognised and he has called for measures to stop the Government from having to rely on the printing of money to finance its operations. What has come to the House is a set of proposals that incorporate that determination to move away from the worse possible economic practice in a small open economy and it is up to this House, Mr. Speaker, to be equal to the obligation of history that falls on us as Members of a duly elected Parliament. Do we have it in us to take the hard difficult measures to make sure that Barbados does not go the way of Jamaica and Guyana because that is precisely where this country is going.

Sir, the measures that have been brought to the House, there are a number of them that are neither here nor there, and as a minister of finance I know that sometimes you bring measures just to soften the blow, but there is a core issue, our stability is at risk. Barbados, if this situation in the reserves continue, if the situation with the printing of money continues, the stability that has underwritten our development in the first 50 years goes and Barbados will be on a frolic like those countries that have not understood how important is stability as a factor in sustaining its growth.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has many issues options to face. I note that the raising of the taxes is really not to finance new activity, it is just simply to maintain existing activity. The Government could have, if it had so chosen, used other options as well. It could have chosen to reduce its social spending, it could have chosen to have

created a regime where, as the Government contracts its social spending, it encourages the private sector to increase its investment in socially related activities but the Government has made a determination, I hope that it would stop printing money to finance Government operations. It will use its money to maintain social spending, especially in health, and this House should only agree to support the policy if: a) there is a clear declaration by the Minister of Finance that he will stop using the expedience of the printing of money to finance Government's activities, and b) if the Central Bank of Barbados agrees to abide by Section 48 and 49 of the law. Section 48 and 49 of the Central Bank Act was written to recognise explicitly in Section 5 that the maintenance of ...

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Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Central Bank Act was written to recognise explicitly in Section 5 that the maintenance of stability is so vital to the purposes of Barbados' development, that it is the purpose for which the Central Bank has been established. Sections 48 and 49 of the Central Bank Act prescribe a process that must be followed by the Central Bank when the stability of Barbados is threatened by the Government seeking to use Central Bank printing of money in order to finance its deficits.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we could only support these measures if there is also a commitment by the Central Bank itself to be prepared to follow the law to the letter and that if the Government wants it now to print money that do what the law at Sections 48 and 49 says, that a report has to go to the Minister indicating that the action on which the Government is embarked will endanger the monetary stability, which is Section 48, and Section 49, which indicates what the Minister must do and precisely how he must make it public, how he responds to the advice from the Central Bank in respect of maintaining stability in this country. Sir, this is a serious matter. It is too serious for the House to take lightly.

Sir, the measures before the House are not easy measures. In fact, there will be some who feel that there are risky because the Government is seeking to maintain expenditure and activity by increasing taxation on a shrinking economy. The result may be that the Government does not succeed at all because if you continue to increase taxes on a shrinking economy, you collect less and less taxes as the economy shrinks in response to the increased taxation, so that there is an inherent risk in the policy that the Government is intending to pursue, and the Government has to be mindful of it.

Mr. Speaker, it also ensues that the Government intends to supplement this measure mainly to raise taxes to stabilise by trying to increase the level of investment in the country. I have been speaking on this matter and I have made it clear that the strategy when you are dealing with fiscal consolidation of seeking to have an investment-driven economy is a correct policy, but I also must say that the institutional arrangements by which this Government is seeking to bring that about are not coherent. Now, it is not necessary so much a criticism of the Government but a recognition that you would have a situation where fiscal policies reside in the Ministry of Finance and the Honourable Minister of Finance would implement measures to deal with the fiscal affairs but intestine is located elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, I did not have that difficulty in 14 years as a Finance Minister. I had the responsibility for planning and one of the easiest ways in this country by which you can as a Minister of Finance and Planning stimulate investment is through the planning process. This Minister does not have that discretion. The truth of the matter is that an investment-driven approach to the solution of growth in Barbados can be frustrated precisely because you have the Minister of Finance empowered to do one set of things, namely to raise the taxes but he does not have the authority to implement the arrangements by which an investment-driven approach can in fact be implemented. It was my speech last year, and I refer to it again, I made it clear that if as happened last year in the Budget we had \$200 million of taxes you need \$500 million of investments to offset that negative effect, and that is not happening because the institutional arrangements are not in place to make it happen.

Sir, I also must make the point that Barbados has to appreciate that there are aspects of the Nordic model that has not been always been understood but that must be followed now if we are to get out of this. Sir, the countries in Scandinavia have heavy taxes but also lots of entitlement. Those are only two parts, Mr. Speaker, of the situation. You would also find, and it is a famous article written by an economist from the ...Institute of Technology, that there is a third aspect to it. The Nordic countries also have some of the most effective and efficient means of generating business and investment so much so that almost in every instance the Scandinavian countries have some of the best ease of doing business conditions of any group of countries in the world. They create the conditions through business facilitation and investment facilitation that generate the income that then is distributed by the Government through the Government's welfare system. We have two aspects of it, the taxation and the benefits. Barbados does not have the third, namely a set of investments facilitation and business facilitation measures that would be comparable to what exists in the Scandinavian countries.

The Honourable Minister of Finance I say to you that what you are doing cannot succeed unless Barbados puts itself in the same situation as the Nordic countries and that the drastic and dramatic transformation that is necessary now is a comprehensive revolution in Barbados' business and investment facilitation measures. Sir, why it is crucial is that one of the ways in which this country has been going backwards is precisely in respect of investment and business facilitation. I say to the Honourable Minister of Finance that it does not require any fiscal adjustments of any notable nature to change business and investment facilitation measures. This presentation to the House at this critical juncture in our history's development would have been more credible if it had also referred to what is going to be done by the Government to underpin growth by unleashing those forces of business and investment facilitation that have worked to make the Nordic experience in its totality a successful experience.

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish I had more time but I will speak outside this Chamber, Sir.

There was an aspect of this Minister's presentation that bothered me. I like people to read Sir Arthur Lewis from time to time. Sir Arthur Lewis has a book called the "Theory of Economic Growth" and he says at page 226 that the central problem ...growth is to understand the process by which a community is converted from being a 5 per cent to a 12 per cent saver with all of the changes in attitudes in institutions and in techniques which accompany that transformation.

In 1994/95, Barbados was similarly limping away from a recession, and my Budgets in 1995, 1996 and 1997 recognised that if you are having a balance of payment problem and you are limping away from it the best way to deal with it is to encourage people to increase savings rather than to increase taxes. Those Budgets of 1995, 1996 and 1997, when you go back to them, were all designed to introduce registered saving plans and all of these things. Why? That if people save, we protect the balance of payment but if people also save, as must happen in this country,...

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8.04 p.m.

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Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, they were all designed to introduce Registered Saving Plan and all of these things. Why, Sir? It was designed so that if people

save they protect the balance of payments but if people also save, as must happen in this country, it is the means by which they get the capital to start making the investments themselves to be able to stimulate growth in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs needed a suite of measures to address the fact that it seems that rather than increasing savings, Barbadians must have now reached the stage where dissaving has become the norm, people have been running down their savings simply to be able to manage in this environment. I heard the Minister having a policy whereby he wants to go back and let people dip into their Registered Retirement Savings when they are only doing that because they have run out of cash. It is sending a signal to you that everything that Lewis taught us is going topsy-turvy in this country, that the savings rate are too low and that in order to help protect the balance of payments stop believing that you have to deal with it only in the form of taxes and recognised that you can cause people to save now to build for the future as the preferred option by which to proceed.

Mr. Speaker, may I say also that there are aspects of the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals that are salutary. The Government of Barbados has recognised that a major initiative with respect to the financing of debt is necessary to give it fiscal space. May I say to Parliament and to the country that there is no disgrace in doing that, the countries in the Caribbean that are now going or that are poised to grow are the countries that have recognised that they had a debt problem and have put mechanisms in place to deal with those debt problems, that is how you release resources to have funds to do the capital investments, as well as to attend to the problems of the hospital and other places where Government is not doing what is needed to be done. Mr. Speaker, I have called for it, for Government to deal with this debt problem and I urged that it be addressed as a matter of urgency.

I also understand that the Government is seeking to privatise its assets. I fought the last election on that issue. Some people felt that I lost the last election on it, but I confronted my colleagues and said that if we become the Government we are never going to be successfully to be able to manage Barbados' affairs because the Government would be assets rich but cash strapped and that in order for us to put this country in a stable position we would have to sell assets. Sir, I was honest with the country, I believe that the Government has now to be honest with the country too and that in respect, both of privatisation and debt refinancing, the Minister needs to be specific and say how much of the adjustments to be contemplated must be accomplished by these two measures.

May I say again, Sir, the policy on which the Government is embarked to move from financing its

activities to dependence upon the Central Bank's printing of money, to raising taxes, is high-risked because the Government is going to be taxing an economy that is shrinking and has shrunk and that you may not get the results that you might want to expect from the tax measures. It is therefore so very important if the country is to be stabilised, if the Government is specific in indicating what proportions of its adjustment measures have now to be addressed by persons from privatisation and the fiscal space to come from debt refinancing.

Sir, I urge as well that the Government and the country go to the full extent of the Nordic model. The Nordic countries have maintained social investments, they have maintained taxation but they have sought to be able to underwrite their welfare by having the best investment and business facilitation policies of any group of countries in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the situation is difficult, none of the policies to be implemented, whether by a Barbados Labour Party or Democratic Labour Party Government will be easy, because this country is going through a transition where its economy is based... It is not by recession but by fundamental changes in the environment within which it has taken place.

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am winding up, Sir. Sir, the measures before this Honourable House is part of an important set of measures that can help to reduce stability. They are necessary but they are not sufficient and the Government may want to give consideration as to what else it must do to make sure that our next 50 years can be based upon the same kind of stability and fiscal prudence as the first 50 years. I am greatly obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I am obliged for this opportunity to share a few thoughts on the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016 of Tuesday. Mr. Speaker, as the last person on the Barbados Labour Party side to speak, I think it would be remiss of me not to begin by congratulating all of the Honourable Members on this side for the very excellent nature of their contributions. I noted the concern articulated by the learned Honourable Attorney-General when the Honourable Member spoke today with respect to the fact that in some instances there has been a repetition of concerns expressed by the Barbados Labour Party spokespersons with respect to the financial situation in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, to be fair to the learned Honourable Attorney-General, the Honourable Member spoke well, the Honourable Member

targeted the Leader of the Opposition when he made his remarks about repetition.

I think, Sir, having listened to the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter the Honourable Member would better understand the concerns. The ills, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the pathology, the sclerosis, if you will, that has set in, Sir, has not gotten better. The extent of the deficit, the debt profile of the country, the problem of the hemorrhaging of foreign exchange, all of these things, Mr. Speaker, continue on a trajectory that remains unbroken and uncorrected. Mr. Speaker, it is for that reason and that reason alone that spokespersons on this side continue to drive home the concern that we have with respect to the direction in which the country is going.

Mr. Speaker, it would be childish of me not to acknowledge that there is some good in this Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016 and I want to start on that note. Mr. Speaker, part of that about which I wish to address this Honourable House is the way forward, it is precisely that to which the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has just addressed. I take the view, Mr. Speaker, that one of the things that we have to do is to recognise that in straightened circumstances, with reduced policy and fiscal space, we as a people need to master those things over which we have control.

Mr. Speaker, there are some things within our domain and those things that are within our domain, in my respectful view, Mr. Speaker, Sir, must be done and executed to the very best of our ability as we fight in these difficult waters. Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I said, it would be childish not to acknowledge, for example, that the initiative to utilise Special Development Area legislation to improve the greater Bridgetown is an excellent one.

Mr. Speaker, there is no Barbadian who can feel proud of the capital City of Bridgetown, when it drops to sleep after 4.30 p.m. every evening.

No.C38C (60)8.23 p.m.

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Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: ... There is no Barbadian who can feel proud of the capital city when it drops to sleep after 4:30 every evening. When we travel and we see what capital cities around the world can be, we recognise the extent of the potential that we are failing to grapple and grasp. I have no difficulty at all with that initiative. Mr. Speaker, I am equally attracted to the idea of utilising duty-free zones, and quite frankly I would like to hear some more about it. I think that this is something that must be fleshed out and carefully thought through. As a person who

has the privilege of being in this House and is charged with the responsibility for shadowing matters relating to commerce, however, I make this caveat. Philosophically, Mr. Speaker, if we are going to go the road of utilising duty-free zones, let me say that for my part I believe that it is an opportunity for us to engage in much needed democratisation of the Barbados economy. The duty-free cartel in Barbados has remained the same from time immemorial as far back as the memory of man doth run. Mr. Speaker, there is an opportunity to break that stranglehold and to make it more reflective of the wider, broader base of the social economic profile of this country, which I think we should be looking to do, Sir. There is no magic in selling a premium wine or jewellery or alcohol or whatever. This is something that can be done by anyone, and I believe the opportunity is before us if we are going to go this way, to treat the democratisation of that particular subsector as a low-hanging fruit.

Mr. Speaker, more substantively, I say at the very outset that I take the view that we in this House should be humble enough to recognise that we are privileged to stand here on the shoulders of titans. There are some who gave all, sacrificed their very lives in order to make this island the best developing country on God's Earth. Those people, Sir, were not capable of stooping so low as to come to this place to toy and play games with the legitimate ambitions and aspirations of the citizens that we have the privilege of representing. On Tuesday night, I winced during the presentation of the Minister of Finance, and wondered to myself if he ever became acquainted with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, who stood in this House on the 13th day of December, 2013, and gave a Ministerial Statement, a copy of which I have in my hand, Mr. Speaker. He said at Page 12 the following words:

"Cabinet has agreed to institute a strict programme of attrition across the central Public Service, filling posts only where it is absolutely unavoidable over the next five years ending 2019. This essential programme of attrition is expected to reduce central Government employment levels from approximately 16 970 to 14 612 jobs; a projected loss of 2 358 posts."

That was said as an article of faith, a statement of policy intent by this Government in December of 2013. Any person who is familiar with the ordinary usage and understanding of the English language would come to an understanding that this programme of attrition to run five years to 2019, being essential, was a programme within which we are still in the middle. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday evening I heard a policy pronouncement which would have us accept that all of the temporary workers in the Civil Service are going to be appointed. Mr. Speaker, there is a mutual exclusivity in the two things, because you cannot have a programme of attrition in which you are getting rid of 2 000 posts and at the same time have a programme in

which you are going to be establishing posts. For those who do not appreciate the point, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member himself spoke to this in his own presentation when he said that his appreciation of the difficulty confronting temporary officers was that there were no vacant and established posts within which to appoint them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that there cannot be a trifling with people's legitimate aspirations on this matter, because it is true that all of the temporary workers in Barbados legitimately want to be able to go to confront a bank, and the Members on that side have heard me speak to this matter as recently as the last time I spoke in this House. I am on board there, but I want to know for certain that we can make this happen. I find the sleight-of-hand very interesting, where you cannot get a date by which the appointment is to take place, you seek shelter behind the face of a committee that remains unnamed and unformed, but it is good political posture. Mr. Speaker, there was a gentleman who never became President of the United States of America though he tried more than once. He was a Governor of Illinois and he said something that is very important at this juncture. Sir, he said that inconsistency on the part of a politician may be an abomination unto the Lord, but for the politician it is a very present help in time of trouble. This Government is in deep, deep trouble. It has lost faith with core constituencies, and what we know for a fact is that it is 18 months, at most, away from a General Election, a date with Destiny. We are now embarking on a road that is like the abomination unto the Lord, Sir. The pathway is easy, inconsistency, confuse people, induce them to believe that that which they want can be, and it may never come to pass. That is the danger, Mr. Speaker. It is something that we cannot afford to toy with.

Mr. Speaker, I want to also speak to the question of the platform that we have to lay for the way forward. In my view, Mr. Speaker, one of the first things we have to do, as I said at the outset, is to master those things that were within our immediate grasp and control. I do not share the view expressed by the Prime Minister when he spoke to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the start of this year, I believe it was, on the matter of business facilitation. He indicated that it was his view that this is a journey and not a destination. Let me be very clear: If you do not set down any roadmaps or check points along the way to establish where you are, then anything that you do, any travel, will become a rambling, a journey without an end, Mr. Speaker. You have to have clear sets of roadmaps and check points along the way if any effort is going to be worth your while, and you are expecting to come to any realistic final point. So it is with business facilitation in Barbados, Mr. Speaker. The danger that we are facing in this country is that at the highest level of Government there is an inclination to treat this as though you can just flick it off the pads. It is a lighthearted approach taken by the

Government. There are people out there who are treating this land of our birth as though we are a collection of underlings. The 'Ease of Doing Business Report 2016' tells the world that Barbados is the most difficult place to do business in the Eastern Caribbean, Mr. Speaker. That means something. Mr. Speaker, it tells the world that we are to be ranked alongside the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a war-torn, conflict-riddled jurisdiction. That means something.

8.21 p.m.

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Mr. K. SYMMONDS: (Seq 62)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, why I have a difficulty in being treated that way what means even more to me is the day to day frustration of the people I represent is seen when they go about their legitimate daily business. Sir, beyond the investor that we would want to come to Barbados, beyond the business man, the ordinary Barbadian born and bred, the man who brings in a car part at the airport and is told that he must go down to Warrens with the paper work because the paper work is to be processed down there and it takes four or five hours waiting down in Warrens to be told to come back the next day, Sir, and when he gets back the next day to get back the paper work he is told to go back up to the airport to collect the product.

Mr. Speaker, that waste of time, two days has a cost. The Attorney-General knows, or should know that a man leaving St. Philip on his way to work in Bridgetown who is reported for speeding will have a case heard and can only under this system have a case heard now in Horse Hill, St. Joseph and he goes to Horse Hill to find people from all around Barbados who have similar traffic matters converging in Horse Hill, St. Joseph and he will spend a whole day in Horse Hill, St. Joseph and that has a cost associated with it.

Asides.

Mr. K. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I am not into the blaming of any particular member now. I am dealing with a failing in our system. Sir, one person may be able to deal with it and another person may not but collectively, it has a real cost and Mr. Speaker, the solution is what we have to target.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to this Government that we are not alone in trying to move an economy into a more sophisticated modern setting. The reality that we face is that we have to look at how some of the other people who found themselves originating in a similar economic profile that we did and who travelled the same journey, what have they done. I find it interesting that Jamaica, which as you

just heard the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter said went over the edge and has had to experience the struggle of pulling themselves back up now, was able to sit down, and this is the precedent that they have set. The head of Government, the Prime Minister, as he then was, convened a set of meeting with all the heads of departments and their deputies, all the chiefs and their deputy chiefs because every Government department in some way plays an interactive role with the private sector and part and parcel of the whole interaction and purpose of the meeting was to identify three or four initiatives that you can in every Government department that makes that Government department more responsive to the concerns and needs of the business community in the country and you set a time frame within which those three or four things that you have identified as immediately achievable fruit can be implemented and you hold people accountable for the process. It is not a difficult thing but I do not share the view either that this forum is not the forum for us to be articulating this type of approach as the way forward because Mr. Speaker, the truth is that what happened in this Budget is that we treated the issue, the burning question of business facilitation in Barbados as though it does not exist. The learned Attorney-General of the land knows that this is a humbug. The Minister of Commerce knows this is a humbug. The Right Honourable Prime Minister knows this is a humbug and, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Budget itself cannot be empty of any form of interventions that would reflect Government's shift or Government's urgency in trying to treat to this matter. Mr. Speaker, Sir, that is but one suggestion of a plausible way forward.

Mr. Speaker, I have a concern as well about the international business sector, another sector which is critically important but about this Budget remain absolutely silent. Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me be very clear about why it is critically important. Sir, for me, it is not critically important that I look after the interest or articulate the concerns of a multi-millionaire who has invested in Barbados, what is of critical importance to me is that my constituents can have buses running from in Arch Hall to get them to Bridgetown and the only way they can get that done is if we can get the international business tax receipts, the Corporation Tax receipts back up to the \$300 million level that it used to be when the Barbados Labour Party was in Government. We need to have garbage trucks collecting the garbage from my constituents so that they do not have to wait three weeks for a collection and the only way we can get that done is if we can get the corporation tax receipts, so there is a nexus, a linkage to be drawn against the efficiency of the international business sector which is a financial rain maker, it could flood the land with money if we manage it well and this is what we are not doing, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, it is a source of concern that along with 91 and 92 other countries that we entered into an agreement voluntary and we said with them that we are going to

collaborate to form a common reporting regime on matter relating to the bank accounts held by individuals in the country who have come from over and away to do business here. We enter into an agreement with them that if they are charities or companies here we will let them know who the beneficiaries are of the companies or the charities accounts because that is the only way the way can effectively work towards concerns about money laundering which is the illegal movement of money or trafficking or terrorism all of which is caught up in this illicit movement of money and finance. Sir, this Government agreed that by the end of 2015, we would have a legislative framework in place. (8:00)

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House C 38C Seq 63 8.30 p.m.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: ... with their feet, they go elsewhere. We are born here, we cannot go anywhere else. They go elsewhere to seek a better life, Mr. Speaker, and leave in their wake a set of frustrated Barbadians who need the tax receipts from them.

Mr. Speaker, I turn my attention next to the concern which I raised in the last Budget which was on a matter relating to ...

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: On a point of elucidation, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House a bit. The matter of the Common Reporting Standard that Barbados has signed on to as early as an early adopter for 2016 is a matter that the Government has not fallen asleep at. Certainly it is not dissimilar to that of Foreign Accounts Tax Compliance Act (FACTCA) to the US that we signed on to and the truth of the matter is that nearly all financial institutions that are engaged in FACTCA ought to have the necessary structures in place to ensure that they do comply with the common reporting standard and therefore are in a position to do such. The Barbados Revenue Authority that is deemed the competent authority as part of the Ministry of Finance has also invested in technology and systems to make that happen and is principally ready.

As recent as Tuesday morning at 10 o'clock the Barbados International Business Association, the Barbados Revenue Authority and the Ministry of International Business met on this matter and we agreed on the way forward. The regulations have been prepared and are with the Minister of Finance for forwarding on to Cabinet and any necessary adjustments are to be made through the Chief Parliament Counsel's Office.

I wish to tell the Honourable Member for St. James Central as with the entire International Business and Financial Services community that the Government of Barbados through the Barbados Revenue Authority is very much ahead of the game on this matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thanks for that elucidation. Honourable Member, please continue.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: May I continue, Sir? Mr. Speaker, I am obliged for the intervention of the Minister but I ...

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: On a point of elucidation, Mr. Speaker. If the Honourable Member would give way or rather yield, as my friend, in my capacity as Minister responsible, as the Honourable Member knows, we are presently going through our preparation for our mutual evaluation and as part of that we are actually looking to see where our gaps are and this is indeed one of our gaps. I can make the commitment that I have already identified who, in the Chief Parliament Counsel's Office, will be doing the drafting because we need to have the legislative framework in place before the end of the year. I do not often give my commitment on issues of drafting but this is so important for our financial services industry and for us as a country that I will give you my commitment that, in fact, it will be done before the end of the year.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time would have expired in five minutes time but you have seven minutes in which to conclude.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I am obliged, Mr. Speaker. Let me say that perhaps this is one of the better moments of the Parliament. I make these observations, Mr. Speaker, because I am aware and, indeed, I have discussed it with the Leader of the Opposition that the Cayman Islands had passed their legislation since last year. We understand, on This Side, Sir, the urgency and we do not articulate it as a cheap political point, it is a genuine source of concern.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to get back to the other issue which, I think, helps us to form a vision of the Barbados we will have for tomorrow. I want to think that Members on Both Sides should be able to agree that the economy of tomorrow will be characterised by fairness. It will be characterised by a balance which allows competitors to have a level playing field. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that there is nothing wrong with that and that is an objective which we should be striving to. Mr. Speaker, the energy sector is a sector which is of strategic national importance and again, with respect to the Barbados National Terminal Company Limited (BNTCL) this Budget could have been used by the Minister of Finance to give the country an

insight into the privatization process that is, in fact, taking place under the Democratic Labour Party (DLP). I do not want them to flinch because that is not a bad thing. As I understand it, Mr. Speaker, the sale of the BNTCL will go to and there should be about \$85 million received from it.

Mr. Speaker, again, let me start by saying that I think it is a wonderful thing that a born and bred Barbadian will be the owner. I think it is a wonderful thing.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: That is my information. If I am wrong you can get up on a point of order again.

Mr. Speaker, the point that I want to drive to though is that we are having this discussion, first of all, in the context of a Budget in which a draconian tax was imposed to raise \$143 million in a year and if it continues, I presume, it will be that and more per year. Mr. Speaker, now that has an inflationary element associated with it. The cost of living in Barbados will likely spiral upwards. You take the National Terminal Company which has strategic importance in distributing energy products in Barbados and in which Government historical had capped profits at one half of 1 per cent so that we shield the consumer out there buying gasoline, diesel, fuel oil or whatever, we shielded them from the full market value of what the fuel put would have been because Government owned it. I wanted to hear the Minister of Finance give this country some assurances as to what the sale agreement would be, what it would contain and whether the consumer in Barbados can expect to be in anyway shielded because the concern that I must have is that my best information knowledge and belief is that the accountants are saying that the reasonable rate of return on such an investment is 12 to 20 per cent. If that becomes the throughput for energy then, Mr. Speaker, the cost of increase of energy products in this country will be startling.

The Minister of Finance has the opportunity to wrap up and I would hope that, apart from cursing me and the Leader of the Opposition and the usual exercise, I would hope that he addresses the country on concern of that nature because I sense, Sir, that there is an inevitability of a hike consequential upon the sale and change of hands of the National Terminal Company Limited (BTCL) from Government to private sector but there is another aspect of it because, as I understand it, there are two players in this market. We have, on one hand, a company called Rubis and another a company called SOL. Mr. Speaker, across this region there are other terminals. They have them in Martinique where there is a joint venture between the same two companies. In The Bahamas, there is the joint venture, Sun Oil is in it and the same two companies. In St. Lucia, there is a joint venture, there have a company called Buckeye and the same two companies and they have joint

ownership arrangements, Mr. Speaker. The reality is here, and I am talking now serious talk about what is the nature of our market, because while we have a Fair Trading Commission, the Fair Trading Commission's policy on these matters is that you can only go to them after you have sustained injury, you cannot go before, but when injury is sustained, in some instances, it is a little bit too late and I want the Government to be thinking down the road. What is the situation if vis-à-vis the fairness in allocation of product, in the event that there is a shortage. When one competitor has to depend on another competitor who exclusively controls the terminal. What is the situation of fairness with respect to the avoidance of port charges when two vessels arrive ...

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Once again the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I do not want to take him off his stride but he did make the point that one could only go to the Fair Trading Commission with these matters after you have sustained injury. Let me make it abundantly clear. That is not the case. The Fair Trading Commission is empowered to address such matters without any injury having occurred. Where the Fair Trading Commission is of the opinion ...

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Hon. D. O'N INNISS: ... let me make it abundantly clear that is not the case. The Fair Trading Commission is empowered to address such matters without any injury having occurred. Where the Fair Trading Commission is of the opinion that there is going to be a dominant position, the law allows them to intervene. In the case of the Barbados National Terminal Company Limited, the Government has not yet decided on the owner or who would be the new owner of the entity. It is merely in the form of the negotiations and has been stated publicly, it is subject to the approval of the Fair Trading Commission.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member, please continue. Honourable Member, you should be wrapping up though, your time has expired.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I will, Sir. I will not belabour that aspect of the debate because there is yet another issue that I wanted to raise.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just get on with it. Just one minute. Good.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I will wrap up on this at the same time because the Government invites you to speak to them on the basis of other solutions and other ways and

then when you do they want to shut you down. I say to the Government that I look forward to the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resource Management being given the opportunity, the wherewithal that it desperately needs, to make sure that we have a final and definite authority for the testing of proteins for export so that this country which is now producing cheese - and yes, this might be a certain private interest - that is producing milk, poultry and fish will be able to reach the European Union market and exploit the opportunities available under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) where we cannot sell to Europe any proteins because we do not have the necessary definite authority in place for the testing of the protein and, Mr. Speaker, worse yet, we still do not have the legislation before the House where the Chief Medical Officer will be the final determiner.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I thank you.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for dinner until 9.45 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 9.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

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8.54 p.m.

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RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, Honourable Members, this Sitting is resumed.

NOTICES (Recommitted)

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of Government Business.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice of the following Resolution.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SUM OF \$50 MILLION TO BE GRANTED FROM THE CONSOLIDATION FUND AND BE PLACED AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2016-2017, AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 2, 2016-2017, WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Recommitted)

ORDER 21

Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016-2017

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

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, first let me signal my support for the Resolution that is before this Honourable House and to congratulate the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs on the measures advanced in this Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016, that are aimed at small and medium-sized business development, the healthcare sector and at development within the foreign reserves earning sectors of this country.

I also want to congratulate the Honourable Member for recognising that the magnitude of the present Current Account fiscal deficit and the high debt service cost to Barbados and the anemic economic growth could not be achieved by a fiscal consolidation policy tool along and required in addition refinancing as a policy tool to create fiscal and debt sustainability.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think, however, that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has gone far enough in this regard. I firmly believe that there is an absolute necessity, Mr. Speaker, to deal with this country's debt crisis as it is presently seriously undermining the fiscal consolidation exercise itself and also undermining economic confidence and economic growth. Mr. Speaker, there is no secret that I have expressed my concern regarding the continuing pursuit of an austerity economic policy to effect debt and foreign reserves sustainability. This policy is being pursued by a strategy of fiscal consolidation and exercise of expenditure reduction and increase taxation and a monetary policy stance of accommodation to the Treasury.

I have outlined the challenges that this stated economic policy would continue to encounter to achieve the deficit sustainability and debt sustainability, given the magnitude Mr. Speaker, of the Current Account deficit on the fiscal balance and the attendant debt service thereto. I have outlined, Sir, fundamental differences between the

present global financial economic crisis and those that Barbados has managed in the past. These difference, Mr. Speaker, reasoned for a different economic strategy to be determined other than the budget strategy which was used successfully in those circumstances, simply because, Sir, the magnitude of the current fiscal deficit and the current debt stock does not allow for the correction to occur.

Mr. Speaker, I have said -- and I am not going to be a hypocrite to myself -- that it is almost impossible to effect debt and fiscal deficit sustainability through aggressively reducing a Current Account deficit from 12 per cent to about 4 per cent in about four to five years, in the context of this country's sovereign credit rating as it relates to the fact that we are now between five and six notches below investment grade.

I have argued, Sir, that this could not be seriously done without having a serious impact on the growth of the country and by extension, revenue. I have said before that one of the attendant facts that would occur would be the continued fuelling of a wave of short and medium term borrowing and also from Central Bank continue to support and the National Insurance Scheme the Treasury of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the measures that were introduced between 2013 and 2016 had some effect, they were able to reduce the wages and salaries bill to the Government, and also transfers on the Current Account.

Mr. Speaker, while that is true, those same measures also significantly increased the attendant short and medium term debt stock, as well as the interest charge on those debt and as a result the total debt stock, both domestic and foreign. Mr. Speaker, as a result of that, I am confident, Sir, that we will continue to have an impact on the economic performance and consumer spending.

Mr. Speaker, let me be clear about a few things here as to why I have to say what I have to say. In the recessions of the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and 2001 too, investor confidence in Barbados remained solid. This was manifested through continued strong appetite to subscribe to and to take up Government's Savings Bonds. Mr. Speaker, this trend was reversed in 2014. The last eleven series of Saving Bonds issued had a very poor uptake. Therefore it was my contention then that the Central Bank of Barbados would be forced to continue its aggressively opened market activities.

Mr. Speaker, this is precisely what has been happening and what has continued to happen, that is the reason we have had a \$1.3 billion increase total net lending to the Government, directly through Treasury Bills uptake and through direct credit from the Central Bank of

Barbados itself. This would be happening too with respect to our Treasury Bills and so on.

Mr. Speaker, for many years these problems were building up in Barbados and the central Government under both Administrations carried the recurrent expenditure of inefficient State-operated enterprises. Sir, prior to the accrual accounting system the cash accounting system allowed State-owned enterprises, recurrent operating deficits and debt costs to be managed off books and this artificially kept the central Government fiscal deficit and debt matrix looking better than they actually were.

Mr. Speaker, the accrual accounting practice started in 2007, so that when a Democratic Labour Party Government came to office this new accounting practice forced the Democratic Labour Party to bring all expenditure that the Government would have incurred and not when Treasury executes that expenditure. Let me repeat that again, when the Democratic Labour Party came to office this new accounting practice forced the Democratic Labour Party Government to bring to book all expenditures that the Government incurred and not when the Treasury executes that expenditure.

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Dr. Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: ... Let me repeat that. When the Democratic Labour Party came into office, this new accounting practice forced the Democratic Labour Party Government to bring to book all expenditures that the Government incurred, and not when the Treasury executes that expenditure. Therefore, what is important in this regard is that in the annual exercise of the Estimates, it meant that this Government had to make provisions for the expenditure on State-operated enterprises, Mr. Speaker. In so doing, the current account deficit ballooned as well as the debt metrics. Mr. Speaker, this Government cannot be blamed for that. The buildup of the State-owned enterprises' operating deficits and the buildup of the debts were carried for many years, and it happened under both Administrations. Given the present operating deficits, Mr. Speaker, it means that the Treasury now has to manage arrears that may be heading close to \$800 million a year. These arrears have to be paid by the central Government and the arrears will continue to balloon in the face of persistent revenue challenges of the state-owned enterprises, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, why that is important for us to understand in regard to the current account deficit and its management, is that the normal strategy would be to engage two activities: One, the International Monetary

Fund position, which is to privatise; two, the former Administration's position, which is also to privatise, or to downsize the State-owned enterprises by essentially reducing its wages and salaries bill. In this regard, they speak about enhancing efficiencies and streamlining. In the bottom line in our context, Sir, given that about 70 per cent of the transfers are really wage-related, it means that we are in a rather difficult position. Mr. Speaker, the importance of this for me is that it is not a simple matter that this Administration is faced with. The challenges were being built up over a long period of time, and as a result of that, how one goes about managing this particular set of challenges requires a completely different approach to some of the approaches being used presently within the Caribbean and internationally, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what I would want to do is to look at some of the new approaches that I believe should be considered, Sir. The entire Caribbean and Africa have been challenged for many years with respect to the issues I just raised: High debt services, high debt stock, high fiscal deficit and the prescription by the International Monetary Fund, or what I would prefer to call the international sovereign debt restructuring architecture. The last has meant that before you engage in such activities, they are going to introduce an austerity programme which, when it comes to central Government, requires essentially wage cuts, pension cuts, downsizing of services or entitlements as well as moving to socialised losses which are issues with respect to healthcare, housing and education, and then the State-owned enterprises because of our circumstances of the level of development that we now have. What we now have is a relatively small private sector, so Government continues to have to carry a fair amount of the growth of unemployment opportunities. This is what faced Africa and what is facing the entire Caribbean right now. Mr. Speaker, the point that I am making here is this: The international architecture that analyses how one should go about dealing with this type of fiscal and debt instability, that approach simply redounds to several things, and these are transferring many of the economic gains and developments within a particular country, reversing several of those gains, protecting the markets and not protecting the economies. Mr. Speaker, the international architecture, by protecting the markets, prescribes a set of policy frames, and they are all designed around how one makes sure that the international financial system continues to get back its money.

Mr. Speaker, the architecture sets a frame, even though there is not general consensus as to how to protect the creditors to the particular debtor countries. What is prescribed, Sir? One of the things that is required is that in the architecture, the prescriptions are designed to ensure that you reduce your fiscal deficit and debt stock down to a level that is considered acceptable, and that would effect continuing growth and development so that there is less

risk to the creditors getting back their money, Sir. When there is any evidence that that becomes a problem, the international architecture prescribed by the International Monetary Fund usually says, "Let us engage in debt reprofiling as Step 1." Mr. Speaker, the debt reprofiling exercise is saying to the debtor, "You are having some problems here. Let me give you a little bit more time to repay the debt." What do they do? They come in and negotiate extension of maturities of debt alone; that is what debt reprofiling is. However, if when that happens and there is a continuing growth of your debt stock and your debt service as well as your fiscal deficit, then a second wave of protection kicks in, Mr. Speaker. That protection is designed around saying, "It is better for us to refinance and restructure as opposed to default, so let us sit down and talk." Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the way forward for us -- and I speak with some strong sense of appreciation of some of the risks -- is to move with some attendant haste in regard to refinancing and debt restructuring.

I have heard the Minister of Finance in previous Budgets indicate that it is not an easy process. He is correct. The reason why it is not an easy process is because there is no international architecture to manage it, Mr. Speaker. What the International Monetary Fund considers to be debt profiling, Moody's and Standard & Poor's consider to be debt default. Mr. Speaker, in the international arena the IMF and the international capital markets committee are now working together to establish a framework that would be a central framework for all debt restructuring that member states would become part of. What does this include, Mr. Speaker? Things like collective action clauses; that is, you would define the framework or the procedure for debt restructuring within the legal contract that is set around the bond or the loan that you would have. Outside of that, Sir, there is talk about an international sovereign debt reform tribunal, which would now be an arbitration-type approach to arbitrate disputes between creditors and debtors. Outside of that, Mr. Speaker, you are on your own in regard to engaging the negotiation process and utilising your own domestic jurisdiction in terms of the legal framework and policy analysis to get yourself out of the hole.

10.13 p.m.

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Dr the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: (Seq 67)

... or utilising your own domestic jurisdiction in terms of the legal framework and policy analysis to get yourself out of the hole. What I am sure of is that in the prescription of the restructuring there are three things that are always required (1) You always consider negotiating with the creditors regarding extending the maturity of your debt whether on bonds or loans, you also attempt to reduce

the interest rate on the loan and then there are times when you look towards debt forgiveness or you look for a principal reduction. Sir, outside of that the architect beyond that is default. Why that become important is because the complexity of the process necessitate that the creditor believe he has some risks of losing his money so as a result of those attendant risks there is the potential risk of litigation. Sir, outside of the litigation dynamics and the political and social repercussions of some of the actions taken you then have predatory type creditor behaviour. Sir, outside of that you then have another set of situation developing interest he discussions as you are going forward which relates to which particular loans are you going to deal with. Are you going to only deal with central Government loan? Are you only going to deal with contingent loans, or both and so on. Mr. Speaker, when we speak about re-financing and debt restructuring we have to understand that we are getting into a rather complex area.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to explain what I think should be the approach that we use. I am going to be very slow and do something that I do not usually do, if you allow me to do it. Sir, it is that I want to explain a strategy. Mr. Speaker, this is what I am going to recommend. I am going to recommend that Barbados seeks to refinance and restructure the national debt of the country or several of the debts that carry high interest rates. I am recommending that the option that we use is the option known as the consolidation approach. Sir, the consolidation approach is nothing new, it is common sense but the approach to refinancing prescribes that Barbados consolidate its debt or its series of debt into a single debt with an interest rate lower than the average rate of the collected debts that are being consolidated and create a sinking fund.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a new strategy, some people seems to have their brains locked into a box. Sir, this is what consumers and businesses do every single day when they are consolidating multiple debts and debt payment into a single amalgam of debt and debt payment on a day to day basis. They do this by negotiating with a bank, a single loan at a lower interest payment and have the bank retire the other loans contracted to the consumer based on contracts specific and the consumer only repays the single loan to the bank. There is nothing new about that, that is a standard practise in banking.

Mr. Speaker, strategy 2 is this. Strategy 2 relates to seeing the new low cost loan as a certificate of deposit in the bank. The bank determines the savings or earnings on the deposit as an interest payment on the certificate of deposit. This earns deposit interest while waiting to retire debt can be used to retire the same Consolidated loan faster or it can be invested as part of the public finances in the infrastructure or however the Government wishes to, or that interest can be reinvested in other interest bearing

instruments. Sir, there is nothing new about that, this has been going on in international financing for donkey years.

Mr. Speaker, notice that in this approach the creditor risk is nuked. There is no requirement for the creditor to take losses by the debtor pushing for extend maturities on loans or bonds, no request for reduced interest rate and reduction of principal. This approach sovereign debt management back into the hands of the sovereign and settles the creditor's future concern regarding the State, honouring the debt obligations incurred.

Mr. Speaker, this is ensure by another strategy that was developed in the United States of America in 1770, and also utilise in England in 1854 or something like that, that is by establishing something call a sinking fund Commission and this Commission is comprised of the debtor State and the creditor country or creditor fund to manage that fund.

Mr. Speaker, the consolidation approach is also modular in nature, so if you find a situation where you cannot find a single creditor that would engage in the negotiation with you well then you can find two, three or four and create the various funds to manage out the overall series of debts that you have.

Mr. Speaker, I am confidence that approach properly utilised will deal with a whole series of negative in relation to the debt refinancing issues. I have said before that what we can also do is the following because if you cannot find a single creditor or several creditors to engage in the consolidation approach, I have said because the majority of our debt is domestic debt that what we can do is to look to engage in the actually restructuring exercise because if you check any actuarial report, the interest rate in regard to return on investment is significant below any of the loans that the National Insurance Scheme now present to this Government or any Government in the administration of the loan before. Therefore, that gives us an opportunity to be able to manage down with regards to maturities and rates without affecting the solvency of the fund.

Mr. Speaker, the same thing is true with respect to the Central Bank of Barbados. These are strategies that are critical. I have said before that going on to these mechanisms you can move to manage down further your Treasury Bills rates and that has significant implications because of the large quantity of Treasury Bills presently held by the Central Bank of Barbados. these would save millions of dollars that can be utilise in regards to effecting our debt retirement and so on and so on.

Mr. Speaker, I also said and I am confidence of this and I do not mind all the talk, I stand up and I stand behind my intellectual strength. We have sold large number of discounted bonds in the country.

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Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: I do not mind all the talk. I stand up and I stand behind my intellectual strength.

Mr. Speaker, we sell and have sold large numbers of discounted bonds in this country with the with the credit arrangement as successive, Mr. Speaker, you can purchase back those because they are at discount. Another significant way of saving with respect to this country. Mr. Speaker, I would also say this, the repurchase of discounted domestic bonds should not be understated given that the majority of our commercial bonds are being offered for sale and were sold at discount it should be very feasible to repurchase those at par value or slightly below par value. I do not see any fancy magic in that and with significant savings.

Mr. Speaker, as I wrap up, I am suggesting that we should move at a faster rate towards refinancing and debt restructuring because I believe very strongly that the magnitude of the deficit and its sustainability in regards of debt service cannot effectively be executed given the overall magnitude of the deficit you are trying to deal with and the debt stock. It is at the point now where for every reduction in transfers and subsidies as well as a reduction in wages and salaries you are increasing the debt services on the interest rate. In other words, you are creating a vicious cycle that cannot be solved by cutting taxes or in raising revenue in that way therefore I stand and say that the approach I recommend would be the consolidated approach which is a long established approach and execute the refinancing that way, once we can find a single creditor, and because it is modular you can have multiple creditors and several different funds to deal with those particular loans when they come due because the Consolidated Fund that you have has a significant lower rate than the added loans you are trying to consolidate. Doing it that way puts back the management of the process into the hands of the sovereign - yes, I am wrapping up, Sir, I can see your anxiety. In addition to that, it removes some of the attendant risk to the creditor because 90 per cent about a restructuring exercises are because the creditor feels he is going to lose money. As a result, it becomes predatory in nature and a whole set of other things happen and this removes that. I say this because the majority of our debt is domestic and held heavily by the Central Bank of Barbados and the National Insurance Scheme. We can move to the restructuring side of it, Sir, if you cannot find any creditors and deal with that restructuring in regards to your bonds, your treasury bills and also with respect to managing down general rates.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore conclude by saying to the Minister of Finance that, I think, we have moved in the right direction but I think that he needs to move more aggressively in this particular direction and I am confident that once we do this, we can affect the level of debt sustainability and fiscal deficit sustainability that we are looking to achieve but it is not going to happen under an austerity programme because austerity on its own cannot affect debt sustainability when the debt stock is extremely large and the fiscal deficit is extremely large, you would implode the economy on the growth side or prolong the anemic growth for a very long period of time. As a result of that, Mr. Speaker, I felt compelled to put my position on this matter because when it all boils down, I am going home and I am going to be happy with myself and I therefore congratulate the Minister of Finance on the other measures that he introduced which is the measures in regards to small business development and activities in this country, measures with respect to special areas development that would drive tourism investment, measures in regards to those measure that deal with stabilising healthcare investment and financing.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, I therefore give my support. Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a very brief intervention in this debate on the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals for the year 2016/2017 and I say brief because in past Budget Debates I have felt the need to defend what the Government has been doing because the policy prescriptions put in place have invariably been opposed by Honourable Members on the Other Side. This year though, marvellous to relate, there has been no substantial objection to the measures announced by the Minister of Finance therefore, there is really nothing to defend as such. There may be a few things to explain but certainly nothing to defend because there is, certainly based on what I understood to be said in this House during this debate, a general agreement on the specific measures introduced by the Minister of Finance.

Before I get into the speech I want to make very briefly I should like to congratulate all Honourable Members for the contributions they have made to this debate and, of course, specifically Honourable Members on This Side of the House for the excellent contributions they have made. The contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Philip West being the last such contribution and to congratulate too the Minister of Finance. Once again, he has been Minister of Finance since 2010 in the month of September and I really feel obligated to congratulate him for the tenacity or the stick-to-itiveness and the courage which he has shown in administering the affairs of the Ministry of Finance and in his charge of his responsibilities

as Minister of Finance in perhaps the most difficult period in Barbados' post-independence economic history. Lesser men, I think, would have buckled or crumbled, but the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West stuck to the task and, I think, is deserving of my own gratitude and my congratulations and, of course, the gratitude and congratulations of Honourable Members on This Side of the House.

Every year when the Budget date has been announced there is a tendency in Barbados for publicists to jump into the fray and sectorial interests to announce what they want to see in the Budget, what they want out of the Budget and what decisions the Minister of Finance should make and the more one listens to these claims, requests and prayers one gets a sense that a minister of finance is some kind of St. Nicholas coming down a chimney annually laden with gifts to be packed into this or that pair of stockings and ...

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Hon. F. J. STUART: ...coming down a chimney annually laden with gifts to be packed into this or that pair of stockings, and invariably when people's prayers have not been answered, the Budget is dismissed as not being a good Budget because it did not have anything in it for them. It has never been my understanding that Financial Statements and Budgetary Proposals are approached in that way. I have always understood, from the time I listened to the first Budget delivered in Barbados by the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow some time in the late 1962 - I was only 11 years old then, but I well recall his making the point as far back as then - that a Budget is an instrument of economic policies, a tool of macroeconomic management, and therefore while sections of the community are entitled to look at their own particular interest, a Minister of Finance has to take a more holistic view of the macro economy and to make decisions and introduce measures consistent with what that view reveals.

I have not in my lifetime seen any Minister of Finance of Barbados who anybody could accuse of being actuated by malice who did not have the best interest of Barbados at heart and who did not set out to do the best he could in the circumstances with which he was presented from time to time. Mr. Speaker, that was true of the late Mr. Barrow, it was true of the late Tom Adams, it was true of the late Sir Harold St. John, it was true of Dr. Richie Haynes, it was true of Sir Lloyd Sandiford, it was true of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, it was true of the late Honourable Member for St. John and, of course, it is true of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. All of the Ministers of Finance of Barbados, I am satisfied, set out to do their best for Barbados, not actuated by

malice and not wishing to tear down and destroy Barbados. Every single one of them wanted to see Barbados grow, they all wanted to see price stability in Barbados, they all wanted to see exchange rate stability in Barbados and of course they all wanted to see as many people as possible working.

With those objectives in view, of course, in terms of those who wanted to see Barbados grow, they knew that they had at their disposal a tool called fiscal policy. For those who wanted to see price stability or rather when they wanted to see price stability they knew that they had at their disposal a tool called monetary policy. When they wanted to make sure that the currency was insulated from attack or unnecessary risk they all knew that they had at their disposal something called exchange rate policy. Of course, in terms of job creation, they deployed all three and in some cases they used a fourth tool which has from time to time been called incomes policy. All of them are united in the fact or by the fact that they wish Barbados well and they had to take a macro perspective in terms of the decisions which they made from time to time or the policies which they introduced.

I well recall a very robust debate taking place in this House in 1986 when it was fashionable around that time, the then Honourable Prime Minister of Britain and the then President of the United States of America both been experimenting with supply side economics, and proceeding from the position that if you ease tax rates for the riches people that their savings would be converted into investments and there would be a land flowing with milk and honey for all of the people of their respective countries. That experiment was attempted here in Barbados between 1986 and 1988. It did not work. Until that experiment was embarked upon we were accustomed to the practice of demand management in our economy rather than supply side economics and we then had to get back to where we were once that experiment was proved to be a failure. There was a lot of fallout from it, but I just give that as an example that Ministers of Finance overtime have experimented with various theories with a view to seeing how best they could make Barbados a better place, how best they could get the economy to grow, how best they could get people employed and how best they could guarantee price stability and how best they could protect our exchange rate.

The last eight years in the economic history of Barbados were very, very difficult years - that may be an understatement - because when the present Government came to office in the middle of January 2008 it was just after there had been a financial meltdown in the richest and most powerful country and economy on earth, the United States of America, the contagion of which touched the entire western world and of course affected small open economies like Barbados in fundamental ways. Mr.

Speaker, that cannot be wished away. Nobody uses it as an excuse. What we use it for is to provide context for a lot of what has happened not only here in Barbados but in other parts of the Caribbean and of course in other parts of the western world.

Two Saturdays ago I was listening to the head of the Bank of England, Mr. Mark Carney, and he was saying that the struggle with the British economy was still continuing and that interest rates were then going to be lowered further to 0.25 per cent and that the Government of the United Kingdom would have to try and pump billions of Pounds into the economy to get some activity generated there and to get the kind of turnover that would make for job creation, for growth and that kind of thing.

In the United States of America in the campaign going on now, nobody has challenged the fact that one candidate has made the point - in fact he is not the only person who made it, it is being made by others far more credible than him - that the gap between the rich and the poor in the United States of America has widened considerably over the last eight to ten years. In that great country tonight as I speak there are about 36 million people still on food stamps in the richest country and the most powerful economy in the world. These are not excuses, these are explanations and contextual realities on the basis on which we have to look at what we are doing here in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret

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Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that this country has had some fairly serious revenue problems over the last eight years, those revenue problems have resulted from not only sluggishness in the economy resulting from the same meltdown to which I have referred, but also as a result of decisions we had to take here in Barbados in order to keep the economy together and to protect certain sectors from extinction, or a certain sector from extinction.

In the process, of course, in order to ensure that the full weight of all that was happening globally and regionally did not fall too heavy on the shoulders of the workers, the tax bands in our income tax arrangements were moved from \$24 000 to \$35 000 and the tax rate was lowered to facilitate people earning up to \$35 000 in terms of the disposable income they would have available to them, so people in Barbados, workers who were working for \$35 000 or less were taken off the tax role.

That had revenue implications, as did the fact that we had to move in wisely and I think sensibly to protect the International Business Sector from which we got substantial corporate tax revenue when changes in the legislation of Canada put us in a position where the competitive and comparative advantage we enjoyed as a domicile using the Double Taxation Treaty as our instrument, those advantages were threatened by the fact that legislative changes in Canada were going to put countries that had Tax Information Exchange Agreements on the same footing as Barbados and Barbados would lose its position as the lowest tax jurisdiction in this region.

Mr. Speaker, we had to lower the tax rate from 1 per cent to 0.25 per cent and that had revenue implications as well, so that when we went to do our Trade Policy Review before the World Trade Organisation some time at the end of 2014 or in 2014, the confession had to be made that while our expenditure had remained relatively stable and unchanged between 30 and 35 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, that our revenue position had deteriorated and had fallen as low as about 24 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, but even though we were getting less revenue we still had the same obligations to meet and in some cases we had greater obligations to meet. Sir, I am going to give perhaps one of the more dramatic examples of those obligations.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard a lot of talk around Barbados and I have heard a lot of talk in this Honourable House about the Government's attitude to tertiary education. I heard it in this debate too and I do not know that the Democratic Labour Party has ever had to defend itself on the issue of tertiary education or on education of any kind because we are the party of education, from nursery to tertiary the Democratic Labour Party is that party. The University of the West Indies at Cave Hill is here because of the Democratic Labour Party. That did not happen anywhere else, it happened after a Democratic Labour Party Government came to office. The story of our free secondary education programme is there, all that we did in primary education is there, the Barbados Community College is there, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic is there, the Barbados Hospitality Institute is there and of course our programme in nursery education being aggressively pursued now and improved upon by the Honourable for Christ Church East Central, the distinguished Minister of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation.

Mr. Speaker, if I may just give an example of the kind of challenges which the Government has faced in the face of falling revenues, I could mention, first of all, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. When the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in 2002, when the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act was passed in 2002 and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was moved from a Central Government department to a

statutory board, the Government of the day, the Barbados Labour Party in office, made an announcement that transfers from the Central Government to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital were going to be capped at \$115 million. That is a fact of recorded history, that is nothing that anybody can challenge, that was publicly announced and publicly pursued and it is not something that I am criticising, it is just a fact.

This Government, though, has had to face transfers to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as a result of all the changes taking place around the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and taking place in Barbados and taking place in the health sector. Since we have been in office, we have to transfer to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, not \$115 million in any financial year, but as high as \$204 million to keep the Queen Elizabeth Hospital afloat and it is now stabilised, I believe, around \$175 million or \$180 million to ensure that Barbadians continue to receive the kind of healthcare to which they have grown accustomed. That is a reality that our revenues had to face in spite of the fact that it had fallen as low as about 24 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, while expenditure was up at about 35 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.

Mr. Speaker, if I go to the University of the West Indies, in the year 2001 -- and I got this information, I requested this information, I requested it in writing, I made it very clear that I wanted it properly researched, I asked for it in good time and the information at my disposal is therefore given against that background. In the year 2000-2001, the Government of Barbados was transferring or has actually transferred to the University of the West Indies the sum of \$60 918 055.75.

Mr. Speaker, in 2009-2010, one year after we were in office... I better go to 2008-2009 first. In 2008-2009 transfers to the University of the West Indies were

\$140 519 499.86. Sir, it was \$60 million in 2000-2001, but by 2008-2009, it was \$140 519 499.86. Mr. Speaker, the following year 2009-2010, it was \$197 849 950.34. Sir, from \$60 million in 2000-2001.

This information came off the Smart Stream Financials, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation has properly researched it for me.

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Right Hon. F.J. STUART: ... In 2013-2014 this information came off the Smart Stream financials. The

Ministry of Education properly researched it for me. It was \$178 076 719.29, and on and on I can go. All of this was in the face of having less revenue or catastrophically lower revenues than one was accustomed to. These costs at the University of the West Indies (UWI) did not happen by accident. This is the Cave Hill News, 'Chill', for March 2014, Issue No. 15. Mr. Speaker, I am going to read from it just for the edification of the House because when I listen to discussion in this House and elsewhere, I get the impression that the things that happen do not have any cause; they just spring out of nowhere and they result from the inherent iniquity of Honourable Members on this side.

On Page 11 of this document, with Page 10, when the UWI was getting its accreditation from the Barbados Accreditation Council, there is a photograph here of the then Chairman of the Accreditation Council, now High Commissioner Yvonne Walkes, the now UWI Principal Ms. Eudine Barribeau, the present Vice Chancellor Sir Hilary Beckles, and a Ms. Valda Alleyne, the Executive Director of the Barbados Accreditation Council. On that occasion, the now Vice Chancellor spoke, and I am just going to read three paragraphs on Page 11, Mr. Speaker:

"Sir Hilary said that in expanding the campus, Cave Hill has proven that it was possible to grow both in terms of quantity and quality. 'We knew that with the scientific application of all of the variables involved in a quality process that indeed it was possible to expand, to grow and to sustain an enhanced quality in the process.' He said that the goal of the campus was to give Barbados and the Caribbean a campus of which they could be proud and a place where parents could send their children, knowing that they would receive a quality education and where employees could feel they were participating in a major developmental exercise."

There is nothing wrong with that. I fully embrace that, but listen to this paragraph now, Mr. Speaker:

"So as the enrolment grew, the budget also grew. The physical infrastructure also grew. The teaching staff grew. The maintenance staff grew. The services and management staff grew. All of the variables required to ensure that no quality gap opened up between the expansion process and what was taking place in the classroom were put in place,' Sir Hilary said."

There is nothing wrong with all of that, but let us understand that if all of these things are growing, costs will go up, and that helps to explain why this Government, since it came into office, has had to transfer to the university as much as \$197 million on one occasion and another high in 2013-2014 of \$178 million, because costs went up and we were relying on revenues that were not as healthy as they used to be.

I listened to the speech of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter in here this evening, and we discussed the speech after he finished it, and I had to say to him that while I understood everything that he was saying, what I think was missing from the speech was fidelity to context. I sat in this House from October 1994. I sat on the other side of the House. The Member for St. Lucy and I sat over there from 1994 on October 6, and I was acting as Opposition Leader when the Value Added Tax (VAT) was introduced to this House. I am the person who made the speech on behalf of the Opposition because the Leader of the Opposition was out of the country at the time. I well recall that the VAT replaced about 12 other taxes, and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy made a speech in here around that time at which everybody on the Government side laughed. He said that what was being called the revenue neutrality of the VAT was a myth and that the VAT was going to bring in sums of money much larger than the Government was saying. Everybody laughed. The VAT for the first year brought in nearly \$200 million more than was projected by the Government when it was introduced, and from then until about 2006 the VAT was performing so well that I had to tell the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter tonight that he actually stopped delivering Budgets in this House. He started to deliver something called an Economic and Policy Statement because there was no need to tax anything, there was no need to bother about revenue; it was flowing in, and all he had to do every year was to come into this House, stand up in this seat where I am now and deliver economic and policy statements. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East knows that is true. That is true. There was no need to bother about revenue. Everything was flowing. The VAT was performing well. The truth is, as he admitted here tonight in the conversation with me, the VAT has now become something of a problem. We have tinkered with it a little too much, he said. In fact, he did say there were a few things he did back then when he was introducing it that, if he had to make those decisions now, he would not make them. That is the reality. When one compares or tries to compare what happened between 1994 and 2008, that has to be taken into account.

I have also asked for information on what were really the sources of Barbados' foreign reserves during that period, because I happen to know that we talk about earning foreign reserves now but a lot of those foreign reserves were not earned. A lot of them were borrowed. I will get the information because we will have some serious discussions on all of this. I hear about all these projects and investment and so on. Let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker, and if I am to be corrected, I would invite any Honourable Member on the other side to correct me: The three major infrastructural projects to happen in Barbados between 1994 and 2008 were the building of that Judicial Centre, the replacement of the prison at Dodds and the demolition and rebuilding of the Hilton Hotel, and of

course the ABC Highway which is of a different nature, quality and kind.

11.02 p.m.

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Hon. F.J. STUART: (Seq 72)

Mr. Speaker, of course, the ABC Highway which is of a different nature, quality and kind, all of them are Government sponsored. This whole idea that the private sector was tripping over one another to invest in the economy and so on is not supported by anything that I know in Barbados, and Kensington Oval is the same this, it is the Government again. Sir, I hear all this talk about the private sector and business facilitation but it did not happen between 1994 and 2008 either. I hear all this talk and I sit and listen with amused silence.

Mr. Speaker, I am a student of economic history not only of the period between 1994 and 2008, I am a student of western economic history, that of Britain, the United States of America, Canada, all of Latin America and all the Caribbean. I have internalized all of that, I have spent a lot of time on it, so nobody can fool me with this fancy talk. The four major projects were the judicial centre, Government; the demolition and re building of the Hilton Hotel, Government; the prison -- Government and Kensington Oval -- Government. The ABC Highway is of a different nature, quality and kind but that was the Government too. I do not know where this private sector that I hear so much about from the Opposition was and how mobilized there were and how ready they were to invest. I do not know where they were during that period that all of a sudden the present Government does not practice business facilitation and therefore, they are being frustrated, I know better than that.

Mr. Speaker, when the Special Development Area Act. was passed in here, I was sitting on the other side and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy was here with me and every imaginable incentive appropriate at the time you could get just to invest in the four areas identified, Carlisle Bay, St. Lawrence Gap, Speightstown and the Scotland District. I am going to tell the country what these incentives were. If you were going to invest in any of those area, Carlisle Bay, Speightstown in the parish of St. Peter, St. Lawrence Gap in the parish of Christ Church, or the conservation area as defined in Section 2 of the Soil Conservation, Scotland District Act, you are exempted from these taxes; import duty, environmental levy and VAT on inputs for construction of new building and the renovation or refurbishment or existing building. You are exempted from charges on the repatriation of interest and capital for a period of 15 years commencing on a date to be prescribed by the Minister. You are exempted from land

tax on the improved value fo the land and you are exempted from properly transfer tax payable on the initial purchase of the property. Sir, those are the exemptions that you got and the activities in which you had to be involved were hotels, including conference areas, residential complexes, commercial or industrial including office complexes, other facilities directed towards the improvement and expansion of services to the tourism sector, water based activities, tourism projects highlighting the heritage and natural environment of Barbados, arts and cultural investment and agriculture based activities. Sir, as long as you were involved in any of those activities in a special development area you were entitled to the exemption I just identified and that continues to be and it will continue to be so with the measures introduced by the Minister of Finance under the same Special Development Area Act.

Mr. Speaker, do you know something. The Scotland District is still up there untouched. This legislation proclaimed on November 4, 1996, but the Scotland District is still up there untouched, Carlisle Bay is still out there untouched too. In fact, which the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter became sufficiently discouraged by the fact that not enough enthusiasm was beign shown for investment under this legislation he brought the Pierhead Development Act to this House specifically identifying that area out there for investment with all the incentives attached but it is still out there, so when I hear about all this facilitation and the present Government this and the Town Planner that and so on I do not know where all the other things were happening in Barbados that I do not know about. I know the four major projects that happened between 1994 and 2008 were the prison, the judicial centre, the rebuilt Hilton Hotel and Kengsington Oval, all Government projects.

Mr. Speaker, I just say all of that because I like to put these things in context but, as I have said, I do not intended to be long. I just want to say that I think that the measures introduced by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West are measures focusing in the right direction. The amendment the SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT AREA Act I think is a good amendment. I sincerely hope that the amendments excite more interest than the original legislation did. The national social responsibility levy that is an important piece of legislation. I hear the emphasis being placed on how much revenue it is supposed to bring in a financial year but if we want the hospital to be run properly, if we Barbados to be clean, if we want the Sanitation Service Authority to pick up our garbage on time, all this cannot be done in the context of an absence of revenue. The Government has to have revenue at its disposal to do these things and I am very pleased, in fact, the Minister of Finance and I discussed this and this is the plan that we will make sure that this revenue is spent for the purposes for which it is collected. Now, in the best of

worlds, no Government can put itself in a position where if it has to deal with emergencies like a natural disaster or something like that, it has so segregated monies to which it is entitled that it remains faithful to that and allow the consequences of a national disaster to remain unattended but other things being equal these monies have to put the Sanitation Service Authority right, keep the Queen Elizabeth Hospital right, make sure that Barbados is cleaned up and kept clean and any other issues which might have been identified by the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, measures relating to small business is long overdue and, of course, I do not have to speak for the small business people, they have already spoken for themselves in terms of how they feel about the announcement and all of the other measures, one after the other, I heard the Leader of the Opposition go through them one by one and basically agree with all, just picking at this, or picking like that, the normal kind of scratch grain politics that she practices, picking at this and picking at that, the corn in one direction, the oats in another and the wheat in another and she picking around.

Sequence 72

Thursday, August 18, 2016

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: ...this recession has been on many countries. For example, as you see on the cable television news stations, even the United States of America, which is said to have been the country that has recovered the most or the best from the recession, still has several significant underlying structural deteriorations within their economy that are just really being masked by macro figures coming out of a stock market that is on a rollercoaster ride up and down every month. They have weak wage growth, shadowy unemployment growth, because they are producing jobs but the jobs they are producing are of lesser value in terms of their earning capacity than they were before. In fact, most independent observers are saying that the recovery in the United States of America economy in this recession is the worst that they have had for any recession that they have gone through. In other words, it is a slower rate, it is much smaller and it is not as robust as has been in the past. That is the United States of America.

I will not even go the United Kingdom because we know what is happening there. Of course, they have now scored an own goal with Brexit. Nobody sent them in that direction, they decided that they will turn and kick the ball into their own net, but that is a matter for them. Mr. Speaker, even without Brexit, the British economy was basically stuttering, trying its best to find footing. On both sides of the Atlantic there were different approaches as the Honourable Member St. Philip West would have noted in his presentation. On the English side, there was the massive

austerity programme, and on the United States of America side there was the economic stimulus led by the Federal Reserve Bank of the United States of America with what they call quantitative easing. In other words, they were printing money, buying bonds and floating money into the American economy to stimulate economic growth, and in Britain the Chancellor of the Exchequer was sucking every cent he could find out of the British economy by a massive austerity programme, so two contrasts in economic policies: one highly embedded in the supply side economics, the other one in demand management, the Keynesian style, and both producing less than desirable outcomes. It means therefore, as the Honourable Member St. Philip West and others have said, that there are tools other than the traditional tools which you have to utilise but you have to know the context within which you are utilising them and the complications that evolved around the utilisation of those tools. Large economies have a lot more leeway because they can dictate outcomes in the marketplace, small economies are takers of events in the marketplace. This does not mean that you cannot intervene but you have to intervene under the most appropriate conditions and with a clarity regarding what it is you want to have come out of when you intervene.

A lot of people point to Jamaica, for example, about how Jamaica has been able to restructure its debt. It did a traditional debt restructuring mixed in with some non-traditional approaches. St. Kitts had a slightly different thing with theirs, they did some debt for land swaps and so forth and so on. They all had that, but one thing that is quite instructive about these entire exercises as they have unfolded in different countries, particularly the ones that I have identified, is that if such approaches, unique, interesting and productive as they can be and have been in those examples, are not accompanied by the appropriate policy mixed of deep structural reforms in the economy, then you are going to end up exactly where you left off because it is like having a burst pipe at your house. I had one recently at me. Mopping up the water or going to the Water Authority and trying to negotiate a new water rate does not solve the problem of the burst pipe because if the pipe is bad and it is not replaced you are going to end back up at the same place.

I used to make that point to the University of the West Indies. I heard the Prime Minister speaking about it. The Prime Minister knows very well, because he was right there with me in this regard, that in 2010 when I became Minister of Finance, just shortly after that, having been seeing these statistics that the Prime Minister has identified so correctly right before me and not having dealt with it before in that kind of way and certainly not as close up, I invited the University of the West Indies, and the Minister of Education can confirm this, and the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Finance and I made the point that based on the trajectory of the financing model of the

University of the West Indies the Government of Barbados will within two years' time be unable to sustain that level of financing. Is that not so? I was not a novice but I looked at the figures. I did not get a calculator, I got a notepad and sat down and when they were talking I was doing some maths and I said but we are about \$30 or \$40 million out that we cannot finance and I predicted that if we did not address that issue that we would likely be in a position where we would have gone from being ahead of the game because in 2010, the Minister of Education could tell you, we were actually ahead in our payments to the University of the West Indies and we were donating money and we were giving money to help build the new chancery for the Vice Chancellor in Jamaica, to owing the University of the West Indies near \$200 million in arrears. Now, you add up \$40 million from 2012 to 2016 and see if we are not near where I thought we would have been in the circumstances, but of course when I said it everybody jumped on me. I came in my very first Budget presentation and laid out those figures, go and get it and see - I presumed I was a young Minister of Finance at that time and in the face of much push back from the University of the West Indies and elsewhere I backed out -- and I said that my only regret is that I was not firmer and put a stop to that when it ought to have been put to a stop to because it would have saved us having to take the decision on tuition fees that we had to take eventually.

Mr. Speaker, that is a lesson learnt so I am not afraid to not admit that. I can admit that. I can also admit that I met with the Transport Board, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South was the Minister, and I asked them a simple question: I said I am not expert in this, I am new, I do not know much about it, but explain something to me: If as you say in your programme document, I said in the Estimates, that the private sector people controlled about 60/65 per cent of the market - I do not know if that is true, that is what they say - and you have another 10/15 per cent of Barbadians providing their own private security, it means that the Transport Board is therefore providing 20 per cent of the travelling market in Barbados, how it is that we are spending \$100 million

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11.33 p.m.

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Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, I asked them to explain to me how it was that we were spending \$100 million to support 20 per cent of the market, that that does not make any kind of economic sense to me at all, and everybody in the room went silent as nobody could have answered. I said maybe I am wrong, I do not understand the arithmetic, I do not understand how the thing works but it just does not make that kind of sense to me. How are we

spending BD\$100 million a year to move 20 per cent of the travelling public in public transport provided by the Transport Board and subsidised as a rate of \$2.50 per trip? They tell me the average rate in real terms should be about \$5 per trip.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that what you see here, if you look at the Economic and Social Report at the Table on Government's operations in relation to our revenues, a point made by the Right Honourable Prime Minister, when our revenues, because of this recession, dipped to 24 or 25 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, our expenditures were still registering close to 36 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, more than a 10 percentage point difference in the two, but if you have that you are going to run a deficit. That is why I said last year in my presentation that we in Barbados -- and I heard the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter making that point but in a different way --but I said it last year. If we want to have Scandinavian type economy where people get either all or the majority of social services provided free of cost at point of delivery, you cannot expect to have an American type low tax economy, the two just do not add up, they collide. If you want to have free sanitation, if you want to have highly subsidised public transport, if you want to have free healthcare and free education and free social welfare, if you want to pay \$25 per week at a day nursery when the real charge should be \$100 at least, if you want to have those things, then, as the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter said, unless you are going to unleash an investment grid that allows you to bring massive amounts of domestic and foreign investment in your country and at rapid rates, then you are going to have to pay for it out of your pocket in terms of tax.

Mr. Speaker, we have a society what Lil Rick called an "Ah Get Through" society -- "Ah get through, don't mind I asked you to pay for me at the door and you ain't pay me no mine, but look a' me in the people VIP, ah get through". Sir, that is the mentality that we are encouraging people to develop, that we must not have to stand either the responsibility or some of that responsibility to cover the cost of what we want and we know works for us because we have the experience in the post-Independence period of Barbados as to what works for us as a developing country. sir, we do not want to take responsibility for that, we feel it is somebody's else problem, that we can ease through the door, as I used to say when I was small, "stow away" in the fete and then tell somebody "ah get through".

Mr. Speaker, so that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Chris Sinckler, is a villain because I say these things very plainly to people and why it is important for them to understand that, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church West said, not in those words, but quoting speeches of J. F. Kennedy this afternoon I think in a really excellent presentation, you reach a stage where it is not

what your country can do for you but it is really what you can do for your country. Mr. Speaker, the reality is this country has done a lot for all of us here in and outside of Barbados in the last 50 years. If it is now that we have to do something for our country, then we have to rise to the occasion and do it.

Mr. Speaker, I hear these things and I keep making these points, it is not necessarily who is managing what, because we have some business gurus in Barbados, experts... There used to be a poem they used to make us do in school called something with people around dominoes and they call it 'lords of the game'. They do not play the game, they are just standing around it. There are a lot of people who have never touched a football yet know a football better than Messi or Renaldo, et cetera. There are some who have never ridden a horse, yet claim to be better than Venice Richards. They could tell you everything he has done on the horse but some of them have never seen a horse in their lifetime, so that we have experts in the game who like you tell you everything, so that they will tell you that the issue that can solve the problem for Barbados would be for the Government to privatise all of its State entities and that will solve this problem.

Mr. Speaker, that is what they do, they hold these meetings and that is all they talk about. I know them so well, that if you go to address them you just have to put privatisation on the table and you would see them jumping up and down, they like that, because that is what they want to hear.

Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that some privatisation is not good but I always make the point it is not who is managing. It does not matter if you change the managers, if I swap out public sector managers for private sector managers of what exists now at the Transport Board without changing what exists at the Transport Board, you are going to get the very same results because the structure of it is just not right for the times. Therefore it does not make sense changing the manager.

Mr. Speaker, I heard people talking about privatizing the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. They are asking why the Government not privatises the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, that it would give us fiscal space. I asked what Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation are you talking about, the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation is a corporation right now that does not cost the Government of Barbados one cent from the Consolidated Fund, apart for some one-off thing that they may want, but they do not cost the Government any money recurrently.

Mr. Speaker, if I were to sell the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation tomorrow, it has accumulated debts of more than \$75 million. If I were to sell the

Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation tomorrow, do you feel that I could get \$75 million for it? I would have to be selling the people in the building too, not just the operation. I would have to be selling everybody inside and hope that I would make some value off human beings. Sir, if I were to sell the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation with an accumulated debt of \$75 million and I got \$25 million for that sale, I would still have \$50 million to worry about, which then comes onto the Government's books and I then would have to pay it out of the limited fiscal space that I have, so that privatizing the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation is of no benefit to the Government. Mr. Speaker, that is what somebody wants, a wish list.

Mr. Speaker, if I were to privatise the Sanitation Service Authority tomorrow to Mr. Hosea and Hosea, Mr. Cherry would like to get it. If I were to sell it to Mr. Cherry tomorrow, even if the assistance of his good friend, the Leader of the Opposition, as chief financial officer and advisor...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: No, I am not putting her as lawyer, because after the experience with the Four Seasons Project she might run him into problems. I am speaking hypothetically.

Asides.

No.C38C (75)11.42 p.m.

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Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: ... I am not putting her as lawyer because after the experience with Four Seasons, she might run him into trouble. I am not putting her as the lawyer. I am speaking hypothetically. Even with the most brilliant advice in the world available to him, and he is an enterprising young, black businessman in Barbados and should be encouraged - I am not discouraging him at all - if I were to give him that tomorrow -- not even sell it but give it to him -- the question would be, "Who is going to pay for the collection of the waste?" If I am not charging people at the point of collection, or somewhere thereafter on their water bill or however it is done overseas, how will it be paid for and who will pay for it? The State is still going to have to pay. If I privatise schools' meals, as one person in the Chamber of Commerce told me we should do - and when I asked him "how much money do we spend in schools' meals?", he said "I do not know" -- unless you are prepared to charge the real economic rate of producing schools' meals, how is the person taking it going to pay for it? They are not going to absorb that cost. They are coming right back to Government. The point that I am making is:

Changing the manager or the owner is not going to affect who is going to pay. That is really the issue in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, when we do this National Social Responsibility Levy to help ensure that there is a smooth allocation of resources to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) and the public health system -- not just health care but the public health system in Barbados, including environmental health care and treatment -- it is to ensure that we do not have the shortages that we are currently experiencing in such a sensitive and critical area. All of us visit the QEH. I have seen the Leader of the Opposition going in there as I have gone in to visit family and so on. We cannot and I am not, and this Government will not, and I am sure the Opposition will not, support any situation or condone any situation where there has to be almost a medical arbitrage on the provision of care in Barbados for ordinary Barbadians. It cannot happen. We cannot countenance that, and if we reach the stage where people have to be making decisions about if they are going to get X or Y drug or A, B or C treatment, then you know that you are going a little too close to the line. Therefore, we determined that it is time that we find a permanent public healthcare financing solution. The Ministry of Health has said what they prefer. They have taken advice from international experts. We have had town hall meetings and people have suggested all kind of things from 'fat tax' to whatever else, and we have said all of that is good and well. We have said it is going to take some time to put that in place, there is going to be a lot more public discourse over it because we have to refine it, and we have to look at the actuarial impact and all of that; but in the meantime there are people in the hospital in the public health care system who need treatment, and we are going to do this.

That is why I ask Barbadians to be patient -- no pun intended -- because at the end of the day, as I said in the presentation of the Budget, you can put off paying a car payment, you can go to the bank and beg for some time on a mortgage even though some of the banks do not encourage you in doing that, and you can put off or put back education in terms of going to university or of a child going to an institution where you can say "wait a year and let us see how things happen"; but if you are facing a serious illness, you cannot play around with that. That is going too close to the crease, and that is why we brought this. When I hear people at the Chamber of Commerce breakfast talking about how much it is going to cost and so on, all of that is true. If you put a tax on imports, it is going to increase prices; that is known. Right now, a lot of people do not know that we are operating at almost negative one per cent inflation, and in a small, open economy like ours, having deflation -- because that is what that really is -- is not a thing to be encouraged at all. The little increase in prices and in the cost of living may not be exactly a bad thing to have happen in Barbados, because it helps everything. It helps economic growth and it helps revenue

because it increases the value of your spending. Of course, the measure can have an impact of protecting your foreign exchange by dampening demand for foreign exchange.

I made that point because I want to very quickly go to this. The Prime Minister made this point about borrowing foreign exchange, and I keep telling people that the foreign exchange market has changed in Barbados. There are a lot of major players in the foreign exchange market who previously used to have to go to the Central Bank but who no longer go. In fact, there are some who no longer go to any banks in Barbados at all. There are major retail operations in Barbados which have United States accounts in Miami and so forth, and do their purchases over there. They do not go to anybody here to get things. The market has changed, so when people talk about reserves and believe that what used to obtain previously, where you had a winter season and you saw this big spike in the reserves because a lot of tourists came and a lot of money was spent and went straight into the Central Bank through the banking system, that does not obtain any longer. Do not expect to see it because a lot of the money stays out in the open market, and that is what we keep our eyes on, in addition to the foreign reserves position. If we bring in \$3 billion in inflows and spend \$3 billion on outflows, that is cool because it means that whatever the demand is the supply is meeting. Therefore, you do not have to worry about anybody going to the Central Bank and running down the reserves. In the last few years -- firstly because we have lost investment grade, secondly because the market is extremely volatile, and thirdly because it is costly -- we took a decision in Government that we would not go to market every year borrowing money to shore up the reserves but what we owe in terms of debt we will pay it out of the reserves. That is why the reserves have dropped, certainly in the last 18 months to two years.

I heard the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter speak about Central Bank printing of money. Nobody wants to encourage a Central Bank to print money. It is not something to be encouraged or countenanced, but we also know there are the realities of real life and it is easy to say, "Tell the Central Bank stop printing money," but if the Central Bank stops printing money tomorrow and does not accommodate the Government's deficit, the country may very well shut down. You have to know when you have your hand in the lion's mouth, and you work to ease it out. That is what this Budget and all of the discussion on debt refinancing is about: reducing the reliance on the Central Bank gradually over time so that you work yourself into a position where, rather than drawing on the Central Bank, you can be contributing to the Central Bank. That is what this Budget is about. That is why the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has said he can support it, because he knows that is exactly the exercise that we are undertaking in this regard. I did not have to come and say it as the

Leader of the Opposition wanted me to say it, because you do not have to say those things. You know. If your deficit is too high, you need to do fiscal consolidation, because the fiscal consolidation takes away your appetite for debt, and when your appetite for debt has waned, it means that you go calling on the refrigerator less or you go dipping your hands in the pot less. We have always had a foreign exchange-foreign reserves management system in Barbados of borrowing to shore up the reserves. The Prime Minister spoke about it.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: In 1999, the last Government went and borrowed US\$75 million from City Corp at an interest rate of 9.9 per cent. Do you hear that interest rate, Doc? It was 9.9 per cent, you know.

11.51 p.m.

Thursday, August 18, 2016

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: (Seq 77)

... at an interest rate of 9.9 per cent. Sir, did you hear that interest rate, it is 9.9 per cent. The Democratic Labour Party never borrowed since we came back into office at 9.9 per cent interest rate and we had an A Grade investment grade in 1999 and we borrowed \$75 million from Citicorp at 9.9 per cent. Sir, in 2001, one year later, we borrowed \$100 million from Credit Suisse at 8.7 per cent with an A rating from Standard and Poor and Moodys. In 2001, the year after, we borrowed US\$115 million from Bear Stearns and then 2005, we borrowed \$190 million from Deutsche Bank. Sir, in the space of five years, the Barbados Labour Party borrowed \$1 billion worth of money in the reverse, and as the Prime Minister said nobody earned that. It was borrowed to shore up the reserves.

Mr. Speaker, in the last 18 months to two years we have not gone to market to borrow to since we went to the Credit Suisse. We said we were not going back until we do certain things in this Government and in the country including reducing our fiscal deficit, getting our debt on a downward trajectory because if you want to do debt refinancing or debt restructuring you cannot be presenting yourself at doorstep borrow money and borrowing money all the time like that, you cannot do it because they will tell you that it is a joke. If I said I will let you consolidate some debt they will say, tell me something do you plan to come back next year and borrow more money to go and do the regular things you were doing? Well, I will not encourage you in that. Sir, you have to show some level of discipline and this is what we are saying.

Mr. Speaker, adjustment is never easy. The only thing I think that the Honourable Member for St. Peter's left out of his speech is that he did not take responsibility for some of what has transpired because the last Government has to take some responsibility for it. Sir, the Prime Minister spoke about it. Sir, when we were building Kensington, when we were building the prison, when we were building the coast guard, when we were building the judicial centre, when we were doing the roads and all these things, they were great projects building capacity for the future. Well, not Kensington because I do not know what capacity that was for the future...

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: When we were borrowing to do all those things we were piling on debt which when we went accrual had to be brought to book. Sir, when we spend \$300 million on GEMS, that was not on any book you know. The \$150 million that was spent on Kensington was never done through this Parliament and that was not on the books either but, Sir, we had to bring them on to the book and finance them, and so you would see in this social and economic and report that the expenditure on Subsidies and Transfer to statutory corporation from Central Government jumped from around \$800 million in 2006/2007 to over \$1 billion two years or three years later, and that is where the money is going. Sir, Central Government is not a problem for the Government, it is the statutory corporations and I can make this point tonight without saying anything derogatory about anybody or reflecting poorly on anybody. Barbados has a management problem folks, wake up and smell the coffee. We have a lot of people who are not managing and we as the politicians are taking the blame for it because everybody is going to blame the Minister of Water when the pipes cannot turn on, everybody is going to blame the Minister of the Environment when the garbage is not collected, everybody is going to blame the Minister of Housing when National Housing Corporation cannot provide a house or cannot repair a house but at the end of the day nobody goes to the root of the problem. Sir, some of the people who work in the management of these organisations get paid more than the politicians too, and they get a lot more perks and the root of the problem is in management and productivity and until we can bring people to heel and to make their understand that their lack of attentiveness, efficiency, proficiency and all of those things is causing an impact on central Government budget because those efficiencies have to be financed by central Government then we are going to continue to have a problem.

Mr. Speaker, if the Queen Elizabeth Hospital management and they have done an excellent job in the last couple of years because we have held their feet to the fire but if they cannot get the situation with procurement organised out there, who is ordering what from where and

how is it negotiated? Are you using your bargaining power as a large buyer in the marketplace to demand better prices? If you cannot do those things, if you cannot look at the structure and say I have 15 surgeons -- I do not know, I am speaking hypothetically, I have 15 surgeons in the surgical department but I only need eight, let me tell the others I will put them on on-call notice and I will call you when I need you. If you cannot do those things then central Government has to pick up the tab.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: Well, you call it a political board, it is the last Government that made it a statutory entity, so we have to live with the decisions that we have, you cannot complain, we are playing the cards that we were dealt and we have to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker, when we set up the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as a statutory board we tell them that we are going to transfer the money from you -- it was a central Government department -- we will transfer the money with you, we know the money is going to be short but here is what to do, you are a statutory corporation now so go and borrow. Then they have to come back to the Government to guarantee the loan, a contingent liability that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West was speaking about. Sir, do you know why it is not just a contingent liability? It is a contingent liability which technically the central Government has to pay because they do not have any revenue streams strong enough to pay for the contingent liability and we do all these things and pretend that we have this great wisdom in economics and finance when, in fact, we are really only fooling ourselves because we are not fooling anybody else.

Mr. Speaker, look at the sugar industry. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about the sugar industry needing restructuring but I did not mention anything about the restructuring of the sugar industry but every time we try to put a move on restructuring the sugar industry, we get push back from the Opposition.

The Opposition says that you do not need a factory, that we must scrap the factory; you do not need the kingfisher grass because that is foolishness and you should scrap too, yet this year in February when the BAMC turned up with \$62 million part payment for borrowing and killing pigs, I could not tell them not to come. I will have to pay it because the company belongs to the Government, the debt is contingent and I am the guarantor and if they cannot pay it, I got to pay, so if you borrow \$162 million in 2002, and said you were restructuring the sugar industry then and it was never restructured but now I have to do the restructuring and still pay the debt without the money to do it.

Sir, everybody gets down on the poor Minister of Finance and tells him that he has not met this target and that he has not met that target. How is he going to meet targets in those conditions? It the Barbados Water Authority was to do as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said, the Leader of the Opposition... She said that before they left office they met with the water authority that they were going to do \$1 billion in investment work.

Sequence 77

Friday, August 19, 2016

House C 38C Seq 78 12:00 midnight

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: ... Leader of the Opposition, she said before they left office they met with the Barbados Water Authority and determined that they were going to \$1 billion in investment work. The last Government was in office for 14 years and only discovered in the last year of their operation that the Barbados Water Authority needed \$1 billion in investment work in the water network and then they marched up and down Barbados in St. Joseph -- the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is not here -- to come in here with all kinds of crocodile lamentations that people in St. Joseph cannot get water when he was a Member of the Cabinet representing the good people of St. Joseph and could not impress on the Cabinet that they needed to do major restructuring of the shape of the Barbados Water Authority and the water system network. It is left to the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) in the worst of times economically, in the world's greatest recessions to find \$1 billion to do the upgrades to the Barbados water network that we need to do.

When I do that, as the Honourable Member for St. Philip West said, given the accrual accounting, I have to transfer the money to the Barbados Water Authority as a capital transfer which, under the rules of accrual accounting, has to be recorded in my deficit. The IDB gives the Barbados Water Authority a loan for a \$150 million, it is a loan to the Government because the IDB lends government to government but it is really for the Barbados Water Authority. I have to bring in the Consolidated Fund as financing not revenue but when it is paid out, it is paid out as expenditure because I have to come here in Parliament and appropriate it. It goes straight into my deficit and if the Barbados Water Authority is held up for two years fighting with the union about how to approach the work, when they finally agreed to release the Barbados Water Authority to go and do the work, and the Barbados Water Authority is doing the work as they were doing last year at record pace and getting it down, dividing up the package into package A, package B, package C, package D and they come to me and say, "Minister, we are three years behind schedule with the loan but we have made up

tremendous ground, give us the rest of the money let us do it, it cannot tell them no. If I give you the money it would make my deficit look bad, wait until year after next. I would be crazy when people of the country are having problems with water. People do not understand these things, that is how these things work, so I could tell the Barbados Water Authority do not come and I could come in here with a deficit of 3 per cent and look pretty, but when you turn on your tap you get some rust coming out of it from all of the old rusty pipes that the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) left 'bout in there. I cannot do that and I keep telling them. I said it to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that I cannot do it because you do not run a country so. You do not run a country from a desk in Washington or New York.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, I am saying to people that we have to be patient, strategic and smart and that is what we are trying to do. We are trying to do a delicate balance. You have to put some pressure but you cannot put too much. You have to make some structural changes but you cannot do them too rapidly because you would unravel the whole society. You have to do some debt refinancing or debt restructuring but you have to be careful of how you do it because as the Honourable Member said, International Monetary Fund (IMF) would tell you do this and the ratings would put a lash in you one time so you are like you are on eggshells. That is what managing in difficult recessionary times is about. Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown I guess so therefore I take all my criticism. Do you know that they blame me for everything in Barbados? If a fellow turned on his TV switch and it does not come on it says it is Chris Sinckler.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: He said it is Chris Sinckler that go my TV cannot work. Even the TV is frighten to come on for fear it get taxed. That is the truth but I do not mind because I know, as the Prime Minister has said, like any other Minister of Finance, I do what I believe, working with my colleagues, is in the best interest of the country. We have asked the people of Barbados to bear with us. We have asked the people of Barbados to be patient and I believe they have been generally patient. We are seeing light at the end of the tunnel and the economy is beginning to turn around but we still have significant challenges that we have to address and we will continue to address those as we go along but I am not sugar-coating anything for anybody to make them believe that I can come next week and give all these tax cuts and I do not have to control my expenditure. I am not telling anybody that because that would be to feed a lie to people. Some people do not like to hear the truth but sometimes you have to live with it.

Asides.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is fully awake now. She fell asleep about quarter way through the speech of the Leader of the Opposition and was not heard from after that but at least she has awoken now for the time to go home and I am happy for that, she is my friend.

Mr. Speaker, I think we had a good Budget. We have brought some good measures to the House and they have won acclamation and the support of general public and the Opposition too. Do you know that the Leader of the Opposition supported seven of the nine proposals in the Budget but complained that the Budget I brought was not the Budget she expected. It is like a law student who studies for negligence on an exam and then quarrel when the paper comes and say that the man brought defamation. I do not know what type of Budget they expected me to bring. I brought a Budget control the deficit, I brought a Budget to help wean us off the Central Bank funding, I brought a Budget to help the small business people -- the first time in history -- I brought a Budget to try to ease the students at the Student Revolving Loan Fund, never mind the talk about the training fund thing and that it is insecurities and so forth. It is a temporary loan. The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) is going to approve the loan, we just need to have some technical things sorted out and within months the fund will be replenished, or whichever fund it comes form in the National Insurance Scheme it would be replenished and it would not be a big thing.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: The public service, let me close on that because, I am not a lawyer, but I think I have a fair understanding of the English language and I hear it being propagated in here. I had to send the Clerk of Parliament for the Public Service Act, the new one that was passed in 2007 because the impression is being given and it is a very dangerous impression. I heard the Honourable Member for St. James North talking about it, that there is this automatic appointment once you are a temporary officer and you have served three years in the Government you have an automatic appointment. That is not true. Neither Section 13 nor Section 14 in any of its parts said that because if it were truth what would be the role of the Minister? If you could spend three years in the public service at any time after 2007 and your position is automatically established, you would not need the Minister to create any post because the post would have created itself. It is nonsense to say that and we have said that this Government will amend the legislation, will create the necessary positions and will appoint all temporary officers who meet the criteria of having the three years in the service, we will appoint them and that is the Government's

position. Giving this impression that in 2007 they changed the law and it is automatic and I am not doing anything for them, it is not me, it is the Honourable Member for St. Michael South in his capacity as the Minister of the Civil Service working with the relative and requisite corridors in that particular regard who are going to put in place the arrangements for the public servants.

Asides.

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Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: ...in that particular regard who are going to put in place the arrangements for the public servants.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I know it will hurt you. Whether it comes eight years later or nine years later, it is going to be done by the Democratic Labour Party for the public officers in this country, so if you do not like it, I am very sorry for you on that. I am also very sorry for those who feel that we should not have given the pensioners anything. They say oh \$10 is nothing but \$10 is better than none. Forty dollars a month is a better than none, so if they feel that it is nothing, then fair enough. We have done it and we are proud to do it. If they feel that the \$50 million being made available to the small business people is not enough or is nothing, well then that is their business. We feel that it is something worthwhile to do and we are going to do it.

Mr. Speaker, if creating a duty-free zone in Barbados where visitors and locals could go using their foreign currency to buy certain things like in Panama... We are going to ask the Panamanians for technical assistance in helping us to get it set up too because they have the most advanced free zone operation in the world. Nobody has to worry about if Courts is going to be able to sell a deep freeze and that kind of thing that I am hearing. They got people who have done this all over the world and have done it successfully and both types of business have co-existed and have done very, very well, so we are going to do it. We are going to extend the Special Development Areas to ensure that we can revitalise Bridgetown and who do not like that I am sorry for them but we are going to do it because it is the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, whoever had prepared themselves for a Budget expecting that this was going to be an election Budget, they have not heard the election Budget yet. I do not know what election Budget because there is no election. The only election is the one coming up in October, and I am not interested in that election.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: They are going back in the Steel Shed? Is that where they are going? Maybe they would collect signatures to get rid of the Minister of Finance. No, they are not going to try me anymore because the accountant is still counting the signatures. They are going to try with the Minister of the Environment and probably one of the trucks from the fellow is going to be down there to collect the signatures when they finish with it, so I am not worried about that.

We have had a reasonably good Budget debate. I think people have tried to raise the level of their discourse, and I am happy for that. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas has done exactly as we predicted. She continued to interrupt everybody as they were speaking quarrelling about everything. The Honourable Member slept through half of the debate and lived up to her espanol characteristics. We are happy for her and wish her a very good weekend to come.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: You do not worry about me, I am going to be alright. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas is now trying to defame my character but I am not worried.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you winding up Honourable Member?

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, I do not mind. I am obliged to you. I think that we have done a very good job in this regard. I thank the people of Barbados for the attention and I hope that we could go forward and make this a fruitful exercise for all concerned.

With those words, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Mr. Leader of the House.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, with that we have come to the end of Government Business for the day and I beg to move that the House be adjourned until 10 o'clock in the morning of October 25, 2016.

Of course, this is the regular summer recess which we will take. I am sure Honourable Members look forward to this break so that they could spend time... The

Honourable Leader of the Opposition read out a list of what priorities she has as a parliamentarian and a family person and all of the other responsibilities, and I am sure that we all share those or even greater responsibilities.

Sir, we have had, as the Honourable Member who just sat said, a very successful debate of these Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals. Certainly, I want to join in thanking all those Honourable Members who participated. I want to also thank the support staff here at Parliament who always make sure that these events occur smoothly, the Clerks and his team at the Table, the security that is provided by the Royal Barbados Police Force and of course the other auxiliary security of Parliament, the entire team of hardworking recorders who keep the records of Parliament and make them almost immediately available, and indeed in today's world also joined in the streaming of the broadcast of Parliament. Sir, sometimes we are really talking about whether the CBC or any other radio station really carries the debate is becoming more and more irrelevant in light of the technology... The Democratic Labour Party streams the debate, the Barbados Labour Party streams the debate and Parliament streams the debate so anyone with a little tablet can follow these debates very closely. I want to thank the caterers who would, of course, made sure that the staff and indeed the Honourable Members here were well taken care of. Most of all I also want to wish all Honourable Members a very quiet recess and trust that we will come back rejuvenated and ready to continue the work of the people here in Barbados.

Sir, as I indicated I would like to move that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, October 25, 2016 at 10:00. a.m.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would wish to echo the sentiments of the Leader of Government Business in wishing everyone a pleasant summer vacation. I know that we had a very rigorous debate. We may not agree at all times on all things but I do feel that we continue to act in the interest of the people who have placed us here.

I would also want to take the opportunity to thank all the staff who make this possible who work with us tirelessly to ensure that we have all of the documentation that we need, those who provide the catering, the Royal Barbados Police Force for looking after us, the persons who ensured that all of the videos are uploaded to the websites for Parliament and certainly all of the people who are filming as well.

I would want certainly, since we took the opportunity to watch the Olympics, to congratulate all of the Barbadian Olympians who have been successful and even those who have not been successful but who have been able to represent Barbados proudly. Certainly, we all took the opportunity to watch the race for Usain Bolt a short while ago and I think we could certainly join in commending Jamaica and also Usain Bolt as well on his achievement.

As we take this two months recess, I know it will continue to be business as usual for most of us but I do hope what we would take a lot of what we have done here in terms of recommendations to heart on both sides to do what is in the best interest of the people of this country.

I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let me associate myself with those comments from both sides of the House and to wish the staff

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Mr. SPEAKER: Let me associate myself with those comments from both of this Honourable House, particularly the staff of Parliament and to thank them for their support. I wish all of you a very pleasant break.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Honourable Sitting be now adjourned until Tuesday October 25, 2016, at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question the Sitting be now adjourned until Tuesday, October 25, 2016, at 10.00 a.m. was put to the Honourable the House and was resolved in the affirmative, without division and Mr. Speaker adjourned the Sitting accordingly.

No.C38C (80)12.25 a.m.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

Q1. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Opening. The source opens without the convening sentence (Pursuant to the adjournment ... met at ...). The date is taken from the heading of the source.

Q3. Order No. 21, take-slips Sequence 49-59, about 6.24-8.04 p.m.. The source carries a second copy of the passage from the end of Mr. E. D. Hinkson's speech through Hon. R. D. Jones's speech, the suspension until 7.00 p.m., the resumption, Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw's speech and the opening of the Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur's speech, ending with a repeat of the take-slip 'House C38C Sequence 59, 8.04 p.m.'. The first copy, which is the more complete (the second lacks part of Miss Bradshaw's speech), is printed and the second (about 10,550 words) has been left out. Please confirm.

Q4. Order No. 21, Hon. C. P. Sinckler's reply. Between the speech of Hon. F. J. Stuart (take-slip 'Sequence 72') and the Minister of Finance's reply, the source repeats a passage of Mr. G. W. Payne's afternoon speech, followed by the take-slip 'No.C38C (35)4.07 p.m.'. The passage already appears in its place in Mr. Payne's speech, so this second copy (about 1,290 words) has been left out. Please confirm.

Q5. Order No. 21, take-slip Sequence 24, 2.08 p.m.. A heading in the source reads 'CONTINUE MERGING FRM HERE', a note left from the merging of the reporters' files. The opening of Hon. D. O'N. Inniss's next passage restates the sentence that precedes the note ('I do not bury my head in the sand ...'). Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 21, end of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce's speech. The last paragraph of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce's speech ends 'I am obliged to you, Sir. Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.', so the Speaker's call is run into the Member's speech; just before, the speech label 'Two more minutes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.' appears twice. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Order No. 21, speech labels. The Minister of Finance's speech labels are spelt both 'SINCKLER' and 'SINKLER'; Mr. E. D. Hinkson also appears as 'E. G. HINKSON'. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Notices (Recommitted), about 9.45 p.m.. On resumption after the suspension until 9.45 p.m. the Speaker says 'Good afternoon'; the Resolution read under Notices says 'CONSOLIDATION FUND', and the next line reads 'GOVERNMENT BUISNESS (Recommitted)'. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed on Thursday, 18th August, 2016 at about 9.13 a.m., Mr. Speaker and Madam Deputy Speaker presiding in turn, to continue Order No. 21, the Resolution on the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2016-2017. Much of the debate turned on the 2 per cent National Social Responsibility Levy on imported goods, due from 1st September, 2016.

Her Hon. Mrs. M-J. M. Thompson, Member for St. John, supported the measures and called the Leader of the Opposition's approach 'Trumpism'. Mr. D. G. Sutherland, Member for St. George South, was reminded by the Speaker of Standing Order 28(9) and withdrew a comment; Hon. A. D. Brathwaite said on a point of order that he had confused the Employment Rights Tribunal with the Severance Payments Tribunal. Lt. Col. J. D. Bostic called the Budget 'tax after tax', and Hon. C. P. Sinckler rose on a point of order about the proposed Hyatt hotel. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce said the levy would support the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and Miss C. Y. Forde, Member for St. Thomas, spoke on poverty, drawing points of order from Hon. D. St.E. Kellman.

After lunch Hon. D. O'N. Inniss spoke on small and medium enterprises, followed by Mr. T. A. Prescod and Hon. A. D. Brathwaite. Mr. G. W. Payne described a constituent ruined by the economy and questioned the tax amnesty and CLICO pensions. Dr. Miss M. M. Agard and Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe followed, and Mr. E. D. Hinkson, Member for St. James North, argued that the levy would raise the cost of living by three to four per cent. Hon. R. D. Jones gave figures on education spending amid repeated points of order from Mr. Hinkson.

After a short suspension until 7.00 p.m., Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw spoke on tourism and Brexit, and Hon. R. L. Sealy said on a point of order that tourism spend was up. The Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur argued that the economy no longer supported the social system and urged savings incentives rather than taxes, recalling his Budgets of 1995 to 1997. Mr. K. D. Symmonds, the last Opposition speaker, spoke on the deficit and foreign exchange.

After a suspension until 9.45 p.m., Hon. J. D. E. Boyce gave notice of a Resolution to approve \$50 million under Supplementary Estimates No. 2, 2016-2017. Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick and Hon. F. J. Stuart supported the Budget. Replying, Hon. C. P. Sinckler said revenues had fallen to 24 or 25 per cent of Gross Domestic Product while expenditure stood near 36 per cent, questioned spending \$100 million a year to move 20 per cent of the travelling public by the Transport Board, noted the Caribbean

Broadcasting Corporation's debts of more than \$75 million and explained the debt refinancing. The Resolution passed without division.

Hon. J. D. E. Boyce and Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw thanked Members and staff before the summer recess, and at about 12.25 a.m. the House was adjourned until Tuesday, 25th October, 2016 at 10.00 a.m.