
THE

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RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Last evening when the suspension was taken we were on Order, No. 21, the second debate of the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill.

Before we commence, just let me acknowledge in our Chamber today Mrs. Vanessa Clarke. She would have joined Hansard in the House of Commons as a Committee Transcriber and she retired as an Assistant Editor of Hansard. She is on holiday in Barbados and she took the time out to visit us today as our guest. We are happy to have her and we hope she finds it inspiring.

Yes, the Honourable Attorney-General.

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I rise in support of the Appropriation Bill 2016. Sir, I sat here over the last two days more convinced than ever that we need to reform this Estimates process because if Estimates are to be as meaningful as I believe it should be, then, in fact, we ought to have a more in-depth and serious analysis of the various Heads and the various initiatives planned by the Government. Instead, Sir, we have been treated to what is the norm. We heard on Monday afternoon, the usual response from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East that would suggest that there is nothing good at all in Barbados. If you had just landed in this country for the first time, you would have been left with the impression that this country is a country that nothing works. The bus system does not work, the hospital does not work and, in fact, that Columbus had just arrived, that nothing at all happens in this country.

Mr. Speaker, you heard comments about the Estimates as an election budget. Sir, when I look, as I have done, at the major activities planned by the Government for the next year, there is nothing that jumps out at you. It is a

normal operation of Government trying to ensure that social services continue as normal, trying to ensure that the health system continues and trying to ensure that education continues and, Sir, I will spend a bit of time on those things. Mr. Speaker, for example, you heard that Government had no right being involved in the Almond Project, that it should have been left for the private sector. We all know that if the private sector were interested in the project that they would have jumped and acquired the property. We, as a responsible Government, given our vision in ensuring that as many of our young people as possible are employed, conscious of the fact that every year we have hundreds of young people come into our workforce, we have to look for opportunities that would ensure that they are employed. Sir, the acquisition and development of Almond is but one such initiative.

You have heard that we had no right getting involved in Sam Lord's Castle, that they were legal issues surrounding Sam Lord's Castle and why do we want to jump and invest in Sam Lord's Castle. We have not hidden the fact that we intend to develop Sam Lord's Castle. We came to the public a year or so ago and we said that we intended to invest and develop the project and where we are finding the finances from. We were open in terms of the construction and there was nothing hidden.

We are clear that tourism will continue to play a leading part in the development of this country and we cannot leave it to the private sector alone. Sir, we just cannot. Although if I listen to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, I am very happy and heartened to hear that the private sector is more actively involved in the cruise sector and that they have contributed to the success of that sector. In fact, as a Government, we would like the private sector to be more involved in many other areas. If it were possible that the private sector could take over the majority of our health care system, we would be happy to provide it. If the private sector could develop the transportation system like we would like them to, we would be happy but there are certain responsibilities of

Government. There are some areas that the private sector will not go into that we still have a responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, I heard from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East that at this point in time, we should not be building police stations. We should have acquired four buses and put them in certain areas and that, in fact, this file was on her desk since 2006. Sir, for the record, I have never read any file since I have been Attorney-General that was handled by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East nor have I had the benefit of reading any file signed off on by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph because I did not go George Walton Payne & Company because those were the only files that he dealt with as Attorney-General. Sir, I hear all of that.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. He brought a letter written by a constituent to the Commissioner of Police expressing some concern about the Belleplaine station. Sir, I do not speak to the honourable gentleman but out of respect I said to him that we intend not to redevelop Belleplaine as was contemplated. We are going to renovate the Elaine Scantlebury Centre, we will have a police presence there but in the main, District F will look after St. Andrew. It is a five minute drive down the Horse Hill into St. Andrew. This is the advice from the management of the Royal Barbados Police Force, that they are able to drive down into St. Andrew once they have the necessary resources and that, in fact, they do not need to have a manned station in St. Andrew, given the history of St. Andrew, in terms of criminal activity, Sir, given the history of St. Andrew in terms of complaints, they do not believe it is required but they can have during the day, a presence there which we have agreed, so we will allocate in the Elaine Scantlebury Centre a space, so that the police would have a presence there during the day.

I said that to the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. The Honourable Member said to me that he does not agree and I said, "Okay, thank you". I also said it to the Senator from the Other Place in St. Andrew and, again, the Honourable Senator said to me, "Attorney-General, I do not agree that we need a full police presence". I said to them both that I can only go on the advice I have received. It is not a political issue. I rather err on the advice of the management of the Royal Barbados Police Force. That is what they do 24/7, so that is why we have agreed and gone on this course of action.

Mr. Speaker, there was nothing hidden and there will be a presence. The lady who wrote the Commissioner of Police was probably in shock last night to hear that her correspondence becomes a document of this Honourable House when, in fact, all the lady wanted to know was what exactly was happening in St. Andrew with respect to the presence of the police station.

You hear about sanitation. Now, we have said and the Minister responsible will address it, that there have challenges from time to time. We have placed \$3 million in this year's Estimates to acquire some additional trucks. You have heard from time to time that it was not just a question of trucks, that we have never looked at the routes to make a determination in terms of routes rationalization to ensure that the resources that we have were best being deployed across Barbados. Again, nothing hidden, there is no electioneering about that, none whatsoever.

You have heard about the challenges with water. Mr. Speaker, now what foolishness do we have to listen to, suggestions that water is not in certain places because they do not support the Government and all kinds of nonsense. There is no place in Barbados that supporters of this Government do not reside. We would have to be real mad people to even contemplate that. The only time in the history of this country that anyone that I can remember who is involved in politics said that if your name was Douglas Leopold Phillips you should not eat is an Honourable Member for that side. That is not the philosophy of this Government or this party that I am a part of and never will be.

We are men and women with conscience. We do not do things just for the sake of politics so this foolishness about you going in and having meetings and suggesting that because people are from St. Joseph we are not interested in their development. We are interested in the development of all Barbadians and when we sit down and create policies we do not do so saying that we are interested in A but not B.

Sir, I have this policy, you will never find anyone in this country who says to you honestly that I have ever asked them who they support as a prerequisite for lending them any kind of assistance. That is not how I behave and to the best of my knowledge that is not how my colleagues on This Side behave. You would hear that we have some challenges in international business and, in fact, we are earning less than we did before, but everyone knows that there is no financial services centre in the world that does not have challenges at this point and time because you have the various initiatives, you have the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), you have the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and you also have the general problem in terms of their financial crisis in 2008 that has wreak havoc to those persons who utilise offshore financial sectors. If there is no demand there is no supply and we have had challenges. We have said on more than one occasion that we gave up almost \$200 million in revenue. We took that decision because companies were leaving Barbados. That created a significant hole but the Other Side turns a blind eye ... Sir, there really should be an intellectual barometer, in other words, there should be a requirement that when you say things in this Parliament

that it must be fact checked and we can excuse some areas for lack of knowledge so we can excuse some Honourable Members. The Honourable Member for St. James North, for example, when I listen to him I excuse him because his is lack of knowledge, his is not ignorance. You would hear him talking about the reform of the educational system and that we are not doing any kind of reform. From time-to-time, I hear my friend the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, the Ministry of Education, but it does not matter what some members of the public say in terms of whether or not he is a good educational minister or otherwise, we understand why they say what they say because there are some individuals that it does not matter what we do. There is a chap, for example, who writes in one of our daily newspapers, he had a newspaper walking up and down Broad Street for free and not a fellow would talk it, some Broad Street Journal or something like that, and no a fellow would take it so when it writes and call us a do-little Government, et cetera, nobody takes him seriously, but if you listen to the presentation of my colleague you would hear that over the last 10 years and in particular under his stewardship that many of the so-called schools that were not the best, in terms of the secondary schools, they are gradually catching up. Sir, gradually the difference between what was considered to be the premier schools, the difference between like Harrison College and the other schools that gradually that gap is closing because we are re-looking at our systems, we are looking to see how we can improve how we deliver education in those particular schools and you will see that they are doing well. That is credit to this Minister of Education. You have 6th Forms at Springer Memorial, The Alexandra School and The St. Michael's School because we understand what we are doing. We do not have to listen to the detractors. For example, there is a chap who used to work at university and for the last couple of years he has been criticising this Government but what he has not said to the public is that he is retained by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East so when he speaks he is not speaking as a former university lecturer, he is speaking as a paid consultant for the Barbados Labour Party (BLP), he is not going to say anything good about us.

Asides.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Now back to education. Please do not distract me, in fact, I am surprised that you are early.

Mr. Speaker, early childhood education. The first five years of a child's development are the most formative and we have spent a considerable amount of time investing in early childhood education, in fact, we want to move to a situation where every child is able to go into the pre-primary school in Barbados from as early as possible for free because we understand those first five years are the most important and it should not be a question of whether

or not the person comes from an affluent neighbourhood or an affluent family, we want to give them all an equal chance. That is why there is a school being done at Gall Hill, that is why there is one planned for Durant's Village. That is why there is one being built at present at Oldbury in St. Philip and that is what the Minister says that he intends to roll out, more and more school in that regard. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East should say to the public that for the 14 years under their stewardship that we had more young people coming out of secondary school without qualifications; a serious crisis. Again when we came in 2008 we said this cannot be. How is it possible that we can have so many of our children going through primary and secondary school and leaving without any kind of certification whatsoever? What are we doing wrong? Again, we looked within the system and we have developed CVQs, we want to ensure that whenever a child leaves secondary school, that he or she has some level of certification that you can say at least that this child has been exposed to A, B or C.

We are very concerned about the behaviour of some of our young people. We are spending time trying to address where there are deficiencies. It is very, very simple. My friend the Honourable Member for Christ Church East is adamant that one of the things that we should do, is ensure that we do a serious review of the EduTech Project and I agree with him because if you check and see what is happening in education, you will see that there are millions and millions of dollars that was spent in that regard so there should be some kind of qualitative analysis to see if the money was worth it or if it was well spent or otherwise because if you have juxtapose the amount of money that was spent by that party in that project and the number of young people who were leaving secondary school without any kind of qualifications, something would have to be wrong. This is serious curriculum reform going on now.

Again, Sir, I go back to where I started about these Estimates should be treated more seriously because the Honourable Member for St. Thomas who I just heard biggest contribution is the amount of bread allegedly used at school meals, et cetera. It is regrettable that my colleague Minister felt that he had to respond to that ... and of course the usual contribution about Vault Road and all kinds of...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member...

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member St. Philip South were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. Speaker.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, when I look at our proposed major activities for the year, there is nothing here to suggest that we are being reckless. One hundred and forty-six million (\$146 million) for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is normal. The Honourable Member for

Christ Church South spent some time yesterday showing that it used to be \$110 million or thereabout under the previous Administration and gradually it has moved to \$146 million or thereabout, and if necessary we will add some more, but this is quite standard.

We are spending \$90 million on tourism. There is nothing electioneering about that. The country has to be marketed. In fact, you know, Sir, that we have an odd odd situation where we are probably the only country that Government has to take the lead in the two key drivers of the economy. If we do not do the marketing in terms of the tourism, nothing happens. If we do not do the marketing in terms of international business, nothing happens. In most other countries the private sector actually takes the lead, but \$90 million... In fact, what the Opposition should be saying is that we should be giving tourism more money than the \$90 million if we could afford it. Ten million dollars (\$10 million) to Invest Barbados because the international business sector... When I speak of the international business sector, it is any sector that brings in foreign exchange into this country, and therefore the question should not be whether or not we are giving them \$10 million, the question should be can we afford to give them more because we need to earn more as a country.

Mr. Speaker, you hear from time to time from the other side, as you would hear today and tomorrow, that the roads in Barbados are in need of some upliftment. We accept that, so when you allocate some money through the CAF and otherwise for the development of some roads, you hear it is electioneering.

Asides.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas spends a lot of time talking about Vault Road and other places. All of them complain about roads, and when you allocate some money for roads, it is electioneering. I do not understand it.

Asides.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: I will come to that. when you do your usual subvention to the University of the West Indies, you hear what is that about. This is quite, quite standard. There is absolutely nothing in our proposed agenda for 2016-2017 that smacks of electioneering. Mr. Speaker, \$18 million for Sam Lord's Castle. I spent some time on that before. We have already told the public why we are doing that. It is very, very simple.

Asides.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: I am going to deal with my Heads a bit later so you do not have to bother about that.

Mr. Speaker, I do not see what the fuss is all about on the other side. There are one or two contributions that are worthy of note because the Honourable Member for St. Peter, for example, spent some time yesterday on the issue of correspondence banking, and I agree with him that in fact that as a country and as a Parliament that is the kind of serious issue that we should be spending some time on because if we lose our correspondence banking relationships, it could spell doom for our normal way of life. Sir, put it simply, if FirstCaribbean Bank cannot remit US dollars or cannot receive US dollars, or if it cannot remit or receive Sterling or any foreign currency, then we are in trouble, so that is the kind of serious issue that we should be discussing as a Parliament and as a country because it will have significant negative impact on our way of life. The discussion should not be about whether or not children receive bread and all kinds of foolishness or to create the impression that this Government took money from the National Insurance Board and would not repay the National Insurance Board the money.

Sir, I saw yesterday a publication that said that Government steals National Insurance Board money because the Honourable Member for St. Michael East creates the impression that we went in the dark of night and took the money from Almond and relocate it and we did not have any authority like if we hide and do things, but when you play with the devil you normally end up in darkness because after the same publication I am referring to there was a publication that said that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East... so when you go into the public and create the impression that we are devils and we are so nasty, the same people does look at you, so be careful.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member St. Philip South were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. Speaker.

Asides.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: No, these are serious issues.

The Honourable Member for St. James North spends a lot of time in this Parliament speaking about corruption, about who corrupt and why we cannot get the legislation in place. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North is always with that foolishness and then you wonder why in some parts of the world people are saying what exactly is happening in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that when you look at how Barbados is ranked in terms of corruption, we do better than most parts of the Caribbean and better than most countries that have all of the systems, the Anti-Corruption authority et cetera, in place. I said to the media some time

ago that yes we have the legislation but there are some costs attached in terms of being able to put the systems in place and that in the point of time when we are looking at containing costs we thought well it is not a priority given what I have said in terms of how we ranked in terms of corruption, given our systems in place, given the fact for example that we are doing the procurement legislation because we want to ensure that procurement is transparent, we are doing all of these things.

I said to the same media at that point in time that in fact if it was up to me that my emphasis would be on a law reform commission and law review so that we can ensure that we have the most up-to-date and modern legislation on a continuous basis but again because of the costs involved at this point in time we have had to wait.

You hear, Sir, that we have an expenditure problem, that in fact the Government is overspending and you say to them okay tell us which areas you would like us to cut. We have gone through the process, we took some very tough decisions, so you tell us, you be man or woman enough to tell us which other areas you believe that we should address as a Government. They did not answer that question but they turned around on the other hand and tell us instead where we should be spending more, so we should not utilize the facilities at the Psychiatric Hospital, we should create a new facility to deal with young people who have psychiatric issues and whereas I accept that and whereas in an ideal situation we would want to do that, but again we cannot afford it at this point in time.

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

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, you hear that in fact we should create a new facility to deal with our troubled young people. Sir, this involved more money, you have to build the facility, outfit the facility, hire the staff, but this is it, this is the contradiction, spend more money, yet we are spending too much. Sir, every time you hear on the other side, because it is all about politics and it should not be about politics, it should be about what is best for this country.

Mr. Speaker, I say to everyone who would listen to me, when we sit on Thursdays in Cabinet, we do not take decisions whimsically, we do not say that this is going to look good in the eyes of the public, we do not say that this is going to get us reelected, we say what is the best decision based on the facts in front of us, what is best for Barbados. Sir, that is what we say and I will say all the time, Sir, certainly the Ministries that I am in charge of. If anyone on that side, if anyone in the public has any ideas how we could do things differently and better, given what we have in place, I am willing to listen. I am willing to listen and to make changes wherever possible.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I make the point about having serious discussions about actually spending time within the Heads because it is quite possible that in spite of all the efforts of the Members on that side that they may collide with a good idea. If they happen to collide with a good idea, then we will incorporate it. It is quite possible, so we will listen.

Mr. Speaker, I sit here and take notes every time people on that side speak. You are going to hear and I am going to anticipate it. You are going to hear the Honourable Member for St. Joseph going to speak about the police not getting enough resources, et cetera. Again a bit later this week, if all goes well, I will have my say.

Mr. Speaker, I close by saying this to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. I know, Sir, that you have not had an easy hand. I know, Sir, that you have probably had the most difficult time in the history of Barbados to manage the financial affairs of this country. I know, Sir, that it is not an easy task. Sir, my support for you remains unwavering and therefore I can say to this Honourable House and to Barbados, to everyone listening to my voice, that I stand in support of this Appropriation Bill, 2016. I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, we have had two full days of debate on this Appropriation Bill, 2016, and what is noteworthy is the fact, Mr. Speaker, that from none of the speeches given by the Government Benches, especially the speeches from the Ministers who have Ministry's programmes to defend has this Honourable House or any of Barbados heard anything said in defence of these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. They have all said though we support the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, what a wonderful job you are doing, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South just said it but none of them has taken the trouble to look at these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and to try to defend any element of them in relation to what they mean to Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, now we know and we hear that we want to get into the Heads, we have been informed on this side that the Government plans to debate, when we do get into the Heads, Agriculture, the Ministry of Transport and Works and the Office of the Attorney-General. Sir, three Heads out of perhaps 14 or 15 Ministries and some of those Ministers whose Heads we will not touch have spoken but none of them, Sir, has taken the trouble to defend anything in these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure as far as their Ministries are concerned.

Mr. Speaker, that perhaps tells a story and it is a story that we on this side feel that we should tell the people of Barbados. The story is, Mr. Speaker, is that the figures in these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure are indefensible. This document is one that could well be thrown away. I understand Sir that the primary and secondary schools in Barbados do not have paper to print their assignments on and it looks to me as though the size of this book could have been at least a realm of paper that could have been saved and sent to somebody's school to assist them.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the only reason the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs brought these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure here is because the Honourable Member is obligated by law to bring them here. I honestly believe the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs would have preferred not to present these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure to Barbados because they speak clearly to the failure of Government policies. And if the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure speak clearly to the failure of Government policies then it is pointing squarely to the Government having failed the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure speak of hardship as Government is spending money on a number of feel-good exercises rather than on making people's lives better. It repeats that nobody on that side has said anything to defend their particular Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, instead of justifying the Government programme every single body is critiquing the speeches from the Opposition as if this is some secondary school exercise and we are giving essays and presenting them to the teachers on the Democratic Labour Party side for correction; that is what they are spending their time doing and then they shift to argumentative and ad hominem, instead of focusing on what is besetting us, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is an aside said let us hear you now. Sir, the problem is that this Government, from the time they won, seems to want to abdicate the responsibility for ruling and place that burden on us. Every single speech, including the last one that you heard - the Opposition has no ideas, tell us what to do.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House by giving this Honourable House the impression that when I said that, which you did not hear, that I was asking him to speak on issues, because that is the reason the Government was changed in 2008, because they have no solutions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, if I did not hear him, then I cannot rule on it. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and other Members on that side have been saying repeatedly, we want to hear from you, the Opposition has not presented any ideas, tell us what to do, that is what it amounts to, Mr. Speaker, tell us what to do, present us with your ideas. Mr. Speaker, we did that between 1994 and 2008.

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

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I never said to the Opposition, tell us what to do. I said that I was willing to listen to them, that it is quite possible that they are capable of colliding with a good idea. That is what I said, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member, for the elucidation. No point of order is found. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, we presented our ideas to the people of Barbados between 1994 and 2008 and this country prospered, plain and simple. If the Government wants us to present ideas again, then step aside please and allow us to put this country back on prosperity. Mr. Speaker, what has been evident from Day 1 of the administration up to now is that this Democratic Labour Party administration is focused on what we now call "bread and circuses". I believe the Right Honourable Prime Minister well knows the Latin. I do not. I think it is "panem et circenses", yes that is right. Bread and circuses is the political notion that you distract the masses from the troubles that they are facing by giving them public spectacles, by distributing food. In Rome, they used to have the games in the Coliseum, because as long as you put those things before the people, it would take their minds off the hardships. That is what this administration has been about from Day 1. In the early days they would present a set of National Housing Corporation keys and have a fete. They have moved away from that now, and we are now spending \$5 million on celebrating our 50th Anniversary of Independence; \$5 million and more. I do not think people are against celebrating anything. I think a 50th anniversary is something to celebrate, but within the context, Sir, that the people of my constituency do not have water today. They did not have water yesterday. I have constituents who have not had running water for 68 consecutive days. Individuals in Airy Hill are now into their 32nd day. What is to happen is that the people of my constituency and St. Thomas and others are to be treated to a parish-by-parish celebration telling them, "oh how good life is", when in

truth and in fact they know that they did not have water to take a bath that morning. Bread and circuses, Sir.

The Democratic Labour Party continues to try to distract the masses, but when all the food is eaten and the games are over, when everybody on that side has spoken and said what a wonderful life we live, the people will turn off their radios and find that the man and woman in the family remain jobless, that their son or daughter has had their dreams of a tertiary education ripped away from them. They will be reminded once again that they are hungry and suffering from deprivation. Mr. Speaker, how can I ask people to engage and participate in this bread and circuses programme when there are still houses from Hurricane Tomas in my constituency and in St. Thomas and in St. Lucy, which have now had to be abandoned because this Government did not care enough to lift a hand? I think it is Maya Angelou who said that when you see what a man is worth for the first time that you should believe it, and it speaks to the notion that you really ought to take people based on what they do and not what they say. If we judge this administration on what it does and what it has done, then I fear that the people of this country would be entitled to lose faith in governance. In 2016, with Hurricane Tomas houses now left abandoned, this administration wants to abolish the Catastrophe Fund, but the Government says, "Tell us what to do".

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition has placed before this Chamber a table which shows that the savings rate of Barbadians now is at the lowest in our recorded history and is at 0.1 per cent; a percentage that I think statisticians would rule to be within the margin of error. People cannot save a penny. The Government cannot save a penny, and we know that without savings there is no development. The time is rapidly coming when the Government will be able to borrow no more. If this administration wants the Barbados Labour Party to present ideas, I have one idea, Sir. They should call the election, place themselves and their fortunes before the people, and let the people decide.

Mr. Speaker, this big fat, yellow book is nothing more than an exercise in arithmetic. That is all it is. It is an exercise in arithmetic and, in my respectful view, Mr. Speaker, it is worth less than a housewife in Checker Hall preparing the budget for her household tomorrow or Friday on a piece of shop paper. It is worth less than that, Mr. Speaker, because that housewife, wherever she is, has to look her children in the eye, has to make a decision as to which child will go to school and which child will not, which child can wear shoes and which child will not, which child can get new clothing and which child cannot. Barrow changed it, the Barbados Labour Party took us to a zenith, and the Democratic Labour Party since 2008 has dragged us back into the Sloth of Despond, Mr. Speaker. For

housewives, the issue of budgeting is a real exercise, and for businesses...

Asides.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: The exercise of a businessman or businesswoman who has staff to pay, a debenture or mortgage of some kind to pay, suppliers to pay or customers to satisfy, he or she is going to do his budgeting exercise too, but he or she has to look their employees in the face. In some instances, he or she will know the children of those employees and understand the pain that they are feeling, but we now have this big, amorphous mass called a Government that is not even prepared to look the people whose futures they have doomed in the eye. That is why they can sleep at night, Sir, because they have all grown fat, their doctors have told them to go on a diet because they might not live long enough to see the next election, they are all driving the lavish cars and living the big life, when the people of Barbados are suffering. This administration, the Members there down to a man, none of them are looking their constituents in the eye. I defy any one of them to walk into their constituency with this book and open it to a page and say, "This is where your future lies. There is something on Page 312 that benefits you. There is something on Page 119 that benefits you".

You know what, Sir? Mr. Speaker, in 2006-2007 we laid Estimates in this Chamber. The Rural Development Commission (RDC) was given \$11 million, the Urban Development Commission (UDC) was given \$13 million and then an additional \$11 million for poverty alleviation. Mr. Speaker, today this big, fat, yellow book shows that RDC is getting \$4 million and UDC is getting \$8. UDC has gone from a total of \$20-something million down to a paltry \$8 million, and RDC has gone from over \$11 million down to a paltry \$4 million. We, and when I say "we" I mean rural Members of Parliament, cannot get a house repaired or a toilet dug, cannot get a streetlight on a road, and the Member for St. Lucy will "gallery" because he fixed one house in Bathsheba in eight years. I could show him eight houses since Hurricane Tomas that have not been touched.

So you see Mr Speaker, these Estimates when we add it all together, it shows that this Government has been making decisions about the lives of our people and we are expected to come in here and look over. The Member from St Philip South says we want to get to the Heads. We want to get to the Heads too. We want to get to the Heads and we want to hear about agriculture. We want to hear about a \$500 million sugar factory to be built in Andrews when the production of sugar for this year is expected to be 7 000 tonnes. When you divide 500 million by 7 000, you work out the rate per tonne. We want to hear about that. I want to hear in the Heads about water in St Joseph, and it is alright

for individuals on that side to pooh pooh and say ‘man we treating everybody as equal’. But as the member for St George said: ‘Some people are more equal than others’.

Mr Speaker, the friends of the Democratic Labour Party are building big buildings, making wonderful investments, but who is benefiting, Mr Speaker from that wasteful construction at the Grotto which remains empty to this day, but the contractor has been paid in full. And a project that cost per square foot in the region of \$450 is being sold to the people of Barbados as low-cost housing. Mr Speaker in every year since 2008, the poor have become poorer; the people who were above the poor have now become poor too. They used to call a part of the Caribbean LDCs -- less developed countries. Barbados has now fit into that category Mr Speaker because we are now foodless, we are homeless, we are money-less, in St Joseph we are water-less and the people of Barbados can’t dream anymore of a future and they are now dreamless. Now in case the member feels I am just trying to be cute and use a good turn of phrase, they are some things that they should take into account. Mr Speaker Sir, the Minister of Finance, I can well remember he was such a sincere fella...this sincere gentleman from St Michael North-West used to say to this chamber ‘I feel your pain’. I haven’t heard him say it lately. It is not that the pain has gone because the pain has gotten worse. So that Minister of Finance who used to be sincere, and we believed him to be sincere, all of a sudden now, he can’t even mutter the words.

Mr Speaker, in this budget, in this Estimates sorry, in this big fat yellow book, the names of every Barbadian who cannot pay a bill are written; the names of every Barbadian who is at the mercy of a judicial system that is slowly grinding to a halt...all of their names are written. Every Barbadian who cannot get a house, name written; every Barbadian who is running from a bailiff, name written; who has lost a job, who can’t pay a bill; who can’t get water, Mr Speaker, all of their names are written in here next to something that economists and accountants would call an entry. But my constituents in St Joseph are not entries; when I went to their houses and asked them for support, they were living human beings who looked me in the eye; and when the Democratic Labour Party MPs went to their houses too, they were not entries, Mr Speaker, they were not statistics provided to the Minister of Finance by economists, or by technocrats, they were people. They still are people and there are people that we have sworn to protect and serve and I fear Mr. Speaker, that this Government has let them down badly.

Now the Minister of Finance says ‘we are growing, we are on a growth path, the country is doing well’. But there are many measurements of doing well, Mr Speaker. The Minister of Finance is using the measurement of the economist and his advisors and technocrats who tell him that the country is doing well. I am using the measurements

of the people in Horse Hill and the people in Bathsheba, and in Proute and in Clifton Hill and in every hamlet in St Joseph; and when I talk to those people Sir, they are not doing well. A recent poll was conducted, it was not conducted for the Barbados Labour Party, it was not conducted by the Barbados Labour Party. But in this recent poll, Mr Speaker, a question was posed to the individuals which asked about the overall direction of life in Barbados in the last five years. That was the question, Sir. Six per cent of the people polled felt that things were going in the right direction, 94 per cent felt the opposite. Those individuals Mr Speaker, that is the measurement that I listen to, not the measurement of the economists. Ninety-four per cent felt that things were going in the wrong direction. You know why, Mr Speaker? Because they are the ones who feel it, who feels it knows it. And they were asked Mr Speaker to compare Barbados five years ago with today, and 20 per cent of the people felt we we better off; 80 per cent of the people felt we not better off. I don’t know who did the poll but I remember when the same pollster was doing poll after poll for the Democratic Labour Party and they were not winning then, Sir. Twenty per cent of the people polled felt that Barbados was better off and their lives were better off, 80 per cent felt not. So the Minister of Finance can tell me about his economists and about his technocrats, but the people that elected me in here are not feeling the benefit of that better off.

Aside

The Member for St Philip South want to Pooh Pooh that, but you know if I am not and the Members from our side are not to come into Parliament and say what we see as being wrong in this society, then I hope that when the Government flips into Opposition, that we don’t hear it from them, because I well remember when sitting on that side when they were in Opposition and you would hear to a man...they complain about a road, the next, the third, the fourth the fifth, the sixth thing, but all of a sudden now we are to be mute. We are not to make protestations on behalf of our people. Our constituents are saying, Mr Speaker, that they are extremely concerned about crime, they are extraordinarily concerned about employment; well you know the lack of water people are in the bosom of St Joseph and you know what they are complaining about. People are complaining about education, people are complaining about health care. And an Estimates that is intended to be directed at how we run a country well, has to take the concerns of the people into account. It has to, because if a Government is not there to act in the interest of the people, then for what reason is a Government there.

There is an old saying but we tend not to hear it in this neck of the woods, “Bad governance leads to poverty”, and it may seem trite but it is true, bad governance leads to poverty and we are seeing an improvised Barbadian now being asked to carry the Barbados Flag. He is being asked

to wrap to himself in the Barbados Flag, bread and circuses. They are now poor in spirit and as blessed as they might be, in biblical terms, as blessed as they might be in biblical terms, Sir, that poverty of spirit is perhaps going to be one of the greatest impediments to Barbados' future prosperity.

Less we forget, Mr. Speaker, this administration made a decision last year that hardworking Barbadian men and women were not to be allowed to practise their trade unless they could first prove that they owe the Government no taxes, because some economist told the Minister of Finance that is such a good idea. That is going to do wonders for the Barbadian society. That is what it is going to do, without realising that they were infringing a person's right to work and it has only now they rolled back because of protestations. Lo and behold, Sir, just a few weeks ago, the Government has now another thing to infringe. Now they want to fingerprint you and me, but they do not care because they carry the Diplomatic Passports. We on this side do as well, but the average Barbadian -- there are only 30 of us in here, but the average Barbadian who has to present himself now to be fingerprinted as if he is some kind of villain when he is trying to leave or enter his country is going to be feeling it, but it does not concern anybody on the Government side. These are the kinds of priorities that this administration is demonstrating it is interested in. Instead of looking to make the lives of Barbadians better, they are looking to make the lives of Barbadians worse.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the annual Estimates there is another exercise that features by convention on the Barbadian landscape, it is called the Throne Speech.

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

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Thank you, Sir. I would try to use them.

Mr. Speaker, a Throne Speech delivered by His Excellency on March 6, 2013, in this Throne Speech the programme for the term then starting of this administration was presented to the people. This programme talked about economic development. It said:

"My Government will implement strategies that will expand real growth in the economy, increase Government revenues, reduce the tax share of the Gross Domestic Product and reduce the level of the country's indebtedness to an acceptable level."

I do not know where that promise went, but the one thing we can be sure of is they certainly increased revenues by taxing the stuffing out of every Barbadian. It also said:

"With respect to sugar cane my Government will implement the cane industry restructuring project to bring the sugar industry to at least a commercial break-even position". Of course we are only getting 7 000 tonnes of cane this year in the face of a \$500 million factory, but we would have this programme to bring the sugar cane industry to at least a commercial break-even programme. Sir, this is the 'dosey'. "My Government will expand water supply in the south and east of island in response to the growing demands occasion by expanding housing development. Now, in the east we have not had the expanding development, so our demand did not grow, but what we can be sure of is that our level of deprivation has increased.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Honourable Attorney General chose at this point to mention his stance on corruption. Perhaps I should phrase it differently. He did not mention his stance on corruption. We are left to assume what his stance on corruption is. He spoke about corruption legislation, and in the Throne Speech the Government's programme was outlined in this way:

"My Government is cognizant of the duty to provide good and honest governance to our nation will establish an Integrity Commission to facilitate the implementation of the Prevention of Corruption Act. We will pass a Freedom of Information Act and we will reform the management of public expenditure."

Well, the Minister of Finance is certainly trying to reform it as fast as he could it to spend, but it boggles the mind, Sir, that a Throne Speech having outlined the Government's focus on Corruption Legislation, that the Cabinet of Barbados could determine all of a sudden that you know what, it is not so important anymore. I have to say the Cabinet because I cannot imagine that the Honourable Attorney General is able to commit a Government in this way, so it must have been a decision of the Cabinet, that they were going to back peddle on the Corruption Legislation that they had been saying, even when we were Opposition, was so vital.

Sir, do you know what? This country is now beset by an underground economy, the conditions for it flourishing having been laid by this administration since 2008. So if the Honourable Attorney General does not think that we need corruption legislation I fear that he has missed what they have given birth to. Barbados has an underground economy now like no other and like at no other time of its history, given birth by this administration, Sir. Given birth, Sir, by this administration.

We on this side pray both in the biblical sense and also in the sense of a plea, we pray for a better Barbados. We pray for a Barbados where individuals can go to sleep at night without gun shots ringing outside their doors. We

pray for a Barbados where people can once again dream. We pray for a Barbados where people can once again live in a manner befitting a country that is 50 years of age of Independence, but our pray is not going to be answered by the Democratic Labour Party, our pray is going to be answers at the next general election by the people of this country when they cast the Democratic Labor Party into outer darkness.

I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members just a minute please. I have been thinking as the Honourable Member spoke, although I paid attention to him too, a remark that was made by the Honourable Attorney General when he spoke. I have had a look at it. You are not allowed to impute improper motive to Members and a Member is not allowed to use unparliamentary words by the device of putting them into somebody else's mouth. I am of the view that by putting unparliamentary words into some publication that you would have read is also unparliamentary. So, though it may be late, I wish you to withdraw those remarks.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. SPEAKER.

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, I do not quite understand your ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER: You do not have to understand it. My rulings can be challenged by a substantive motion, as you know, before the House but I can explain it to you later.

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: As you rule, I have withdrawn the comments.

Mr. SPEAKER: And have them struck from the record. The Honourable Member St. Philip North.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter my contribution to this debate and first I want to conger the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West on his clear presentation of the Estimates and indeed the fact that we have seen some positives particularly from measures and, Of course, particularly on the vision that the Minister of Finance and this Government is seeking to move forward with. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I have responsibility for the Ministry of Transport and Public Work. I also at this stage want to thank my constituents for giving me this opportunity once again to make a presentation in the House of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, what was presented from the other side was a set of unclear messages, inconsistency and

confusion. I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, the fact that we have called on the other side and Barbadians have called on the other side for alternatives but when we look at what the Opposition has come with, in particularly in what they call an economic crisis and what they have offered as an alternative to Barbadians. Sir, all I can distinctly remember is that they marched a call to Queens Park, not for soup, but a call to put thousands of signatures on a piece of document and to this date, we have not seen the signatures or the document.

Asides.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Sir, I am saying that is the sum total of the Opposition's response and the Opposition's solutions to what they call a crisis. Sir, that is the sum total. Sir, again, I want to repeat what the learned Attorney-General said. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has the portfolio in the Ministry of Finance in one of the most difficult times and we have to grapple with our programmes, we have to make some cuts and we still have to maintain our social programmes. Sir, our social programmes are still working, we are still protecting the vulnerable. We are still protecting the weak and we are still offering solutions through the various Ministries to ensure that the safety net is intact and that it is broadened. Sir, that is what we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not understand yesterday when speaker after speaker particularly the Honourable Member for St. Michael North criticizing the achievements of the Minister of Tourism and questioning the wonderful project up there in Christ Church, Sandals, that have employed Barbadians in the construction phase and now after the construction phase. Sir, I am not surprised at the Honourable Member St. Michael North. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North was placed in a position to put a case against a Minister that has delivered. It is a fact. He reminds me of when I was at the Bar when a senior counsel said that when you are presented with a case and you do not have a case, you create something call confusion and that is what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North created. He created confusion on top of confusion. He criticized Sam Lord's Castle, again, a project that is within our capital works programme, that again would bring economic activity to the country particularly in St. Philip North and St. Philip South, bring about employment in the construction phase and bring employment thereafter too. Sir, you have an Opposition that criticize a Government for laying off workers and a Government now with its merciful hand seeking to create employment opportunities and they are trying to stop it and, Sir, they are sustainable employment opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South would recall the glory days of Sam Lord's Castle and the contribution it made to parish and to the families and

yet we are being criticized by member after member. Sir, member after member on the other side came in here not offering alternatives but seeking to criticize this Government.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East cited that UCAL, a company in a contractual position with the Transport Board, that they have not received any payments for the year. Sir, that is the allegation. He also said that he wants to know about Trinidadians that are in the country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to report to this Chamber that UCAL was paid this year by the Transport Board on about five or six different occasions. The Ministry of Finance is in charge of the UCAL account in terms of their salaries and the fact is that within the compound at UCAL, there are now some 37 to 40 buses at UCAL. Mr. Speaker, the other thing in relation to the Trinidadians, I would like the Honourable Member for St. Michael East to do a search and go to the Minutes of the Transport Board sometime in August 1998 when the Board Chair by one, Dr. Jerome Walcott, made a decision and the Board agreed that the general manager, the operations manager and a whole team should travel to Trinidad to examine the bus operations of that country and then on 28th July, 1998 the general manager then informed the members of the public of the Barbados Transport Board that members of the PSTC of Trinidad will be visiting the Board on 28th July, to look at buses that were recently purchased. The buses were giving problem so to come in here with a false fury and then come to suggest that the Minister of Transport is bringing in Trinidadian, I do not think we were in office in July 1998 so the fact remain or what we lawyers would say the evidence is here. I know that you travel behind trucks and one of these days something will fall off from a truck and fall into you lap.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to get that out of the way because the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was seeking to use that as his trump card. Again, what we heard from the Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown trumping the fact that, although the Minister of Housing is trying his best, the Honourable Member is trumping the fact that this Government totally ignored the urban corridor of Barbados and that is not true.

I can speak with authority because when I was Minister of Housing and Lands, although challenged by the present financial situations, we were able to utilise the acquisition - I believe that was one of the first things that we utilised the land acquisition at so much in the urban corridor by acquiring land particularly at Whitepark Road and Mason Hal Street because we recognised the quality of housing, the scarcity of land in the urban corridor and we recognised too the fact of the insecurity particular of persons living on lands in the urban corridor, the fact that

some owned houses but did not own the land and some did not even own the land or the housing which was subject to the whims and fancies of the landlords and the landowners. The Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown would do well to have a quiet word with the Minister of Housing and Lands and he would recognise that lands are there and that the Minister of Housing and Lands to ensure that his constituents, for the time being, would be served and that would seek to improve the quality of the housing stock and conditions in the urban corridor. That is what we are seeking to do.

Mr. Speaker, again I have responsibility for the Barbados Transport Board and this corporation was established by an Act of Parliament, I think, in 1955 and the truth is that the Barbados Transport Board over time, had to grapple and still is grappling, obviously with expenditure issues and seeking to maintain a reliable service throughout this country. In fact, when I did my research, the Honourable Member for St. George North in his contribution when he came to Parliament in 1994 to debate the Transport Authority Act, and when I did further research a report that was done on public transport in Barbados by one David Buchanan and David Lashley and Partners - and the Minister at the time was the Honourable Member for St. George North - echoed the same sentiments that there is widespread dissatisfaction with public transport in Barbados, and he said that again in 2007/2008 when the Honourable Member for St. George North was the Minister of Public Works. In that context, Mr. Speaker, we now have to look at how we would seek to bring a satisfactory, reliable service to the travelling public of Barbados. At the same time, what are we going to put in place to bring about these realities? I really want to congratulate the management of the Barbados Transport Board because the measures that they have put in place, we have been able to significantly reduce expenditure - and we will go into details when we get to the heads - we have been able to look at the establishment of new routes to generate revenue for the Barbados Transport Board particularly in the Warrens area and having consultations with the Ministry of Tourism in the area of Historic Speightstown because our research indicated that the removal of public transport through The City impacted on the business in that area and also the commuters from that area being fed up with the service offered by some of the other public service vehicles, indicated to us that they would need public transport in that area. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that we started with only the weekend, and based on the demand we have been able to extend that service throughout the weekdays. It is working well and we are getting revenue from that route and also the other route in relation to the Warrens area and other commercial districts we are seeking to expand our routes to bring more revenue because if we are faced with an expenditure problem, if we are faced with revenue problems, we have

to look at ways and means and how we can look to bring additional revenue into the Barbados Transport Board.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to suggest that over time, the Barbados Transport Board was engaged in charter services and the debate was whether the Barbados Transport Board should stick to providing buses for regular routes or whether we should engage in commercial activity or leave it to the private sector. Engaging in charter services would compromise the service to the other routes, particularly the schools and the other persons on the other routes, so we are caught in a catch-22 position.

We believe, Mr. Speaker, that is an area that we have to either combine with the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport and share the cost where we can now look at the charter services in a real serious way to maximise our revenue intakes because there has been a significant increase for calls particularly in the moving or transporting of tourists as a result of the hard work of the Minister of Tourism. He is responsible for placing the tremendous pressure on me at the Transport Board. I am pleading with the Minister to let us get together in a project and share some cost so that we can maximise on that revenue and we could utilise that money to assist the Transport Board in other areas.

Mr. Speaker, we have not sat idly by or throw our hands in the air and decide that we cannot do anything, let the ship sail out. We recognise the challenges we had with the Transport Board and as a result of the Transport Authority we decided to do a pilot project and encourage the private sector to integrate with the private sector vehicles. We started particularly on the first of December. We engaged all stakeholders and the parliamentary representatives, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, and we went out there and placed the project on the table and discussed the project to get ideas and ways of improvements to the project. Those three areas that we selected were Sturges, Edey Village and St. John but we delayed St. John for the time being. It is a pilot project and there would be challenges. We had challenges particularly on the Sturges route. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas was on top of the game in relation to the Sturges route. I am happy to report that the Edey Village route is working well but we still have some challenges. I been informed that in about two to three weeks from now we would call back in the operators to have further discussions in terms of the routing and the scheduling and, of course, how are we going to move forward in future with the project.

The project was and is designed to bring standards back to the private sector, in that they operated under a contract, under schedule times, and subject to the terms and

conditions placed within the contract document. Mr. Speaker, when we get into the Heads we will speak further on the TASI Project, (Transport Authority Service Integration Project) and the way forward in terms of the integration of the private sector in public transport in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the parent Ministry, we have had challenges and we have gotten numerous complaints particularly in relation to that department in Barbados, the Barbados Licensing Authority. Now, let me say from the outset, particularly in the registration of private vehicle in this country - I do not want to give the numbers - that here is a high percentage of unregistered vehicles on our roads, which is a fact. Mr. Speaker, what is in existence is that the present method of registration and inspection is challenged and there are issues in terms of the monitoring of the unregistered vehicles on the road. I am happy to report that a solution that was led by the former Minister of Transport and Works... I do not recall seeing anything on the files in particular to this matter with the Honourable Member for St. George North. All I remember seeing in the files was the Honourable Member for St. George North and his association with 3S. This is not 3S.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that in spite of the complaints and in spite of the fact...

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I want to say that the Honourable Member for St. George North did put some things in place to grapple with this issue of unregistered vehicles on the road but he did not get to the point where he can deliver any mechanisms in place. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South did work on this issue.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes remaining. Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South did work on a consultancy which is a system called the EVR. This system is really the Electronic Vehicle Registration System. It is similar to what is implemented in Bermuda. We have been able, Mr. Speaker, to have the first component placed under the CAF funds to the tune of \$2.5 million because we have to do it in phases and we have to put the infrastructure in place so that we are able to properly monitor and actually to be able to gain additional revenue as a result of capturing these unregistered vehicles on the road. It is also a law and order issue too because of the availability to get a licence plate. Of course, there is nothing in place in the system really to detect whether licence plates on the road are registered or not. It so happens that you have to have an inspector in place one morning, the police officers out and that you are able to enforce the provisions under the Road Traffic Act. The use

of technology would make it easier for us to detect those persons that are non-compliant.

Mr. Speaker, I would really like the opportunity to develop this further, but I believe we would get to the Heads. Mr. Speaker, I just want to mention that our legislative programme is in place.. We have had discussions with the Honourable Attorney-General. The Honourable Member for St. George North mentioned areas. We have issues particularly with the Breathalyzer testing. We have looked at that, that has been confirmed, we have to meet with the stakeholders, we have to meet with members of the Royal Barbados Police Force to put those measures in place. Mr. Speaker, it has taken some time.

Mr. Speaker, the Transport Authority Act has taken many years too. You do not rush legislation. Mr. Speaker, but in the interim before we place the Estimates, we are seek to place a provision in the Road Traffic Act in relation to the manufacturing of licence plates because of the issues that we encounter at the Licensing Authority and issues that members of the Royal Barbados Police Force are experiencing with criminals committing crimes and having false licence plates. Mr. Speaker, we have said that manufacturer should be under the control of the Licensing Authority. The law as it states, at present only the Government of Barbados is the sole manufacturer of licence plates. It means that we have to bring an amendment to bring those players under the Licensing Authority and with conditions, so that members of the public or people who are up to no good can go purchase a vehicle, go to anybody in any district, get a licence plate, while Government is being robbed of the revenue that it can gain.

Mr. Speaker, that is what we are seeking to do. Of course, our capital works programme. We are also presently drafting a clean transport policy, that is being developed by the Ministry and hopefully we will have that policy to Cabinet very shortly and we will have a discussion on it.

Mr. Speaker, we have a very active year, particularly in our capital works programme. We have the CAF programme where we have \$17.5 million allocated to road construction. We have the Caribbean Development Bank project and the Inter-American Development Bank project for road construction, rehabilitation of bridges, including the Scotland District, so we have plans in place for the execution of these capital works programmes. Sir, also included in the capital works programmes of the Ministry of Transport and Works is the construction of a new River Terminal that the other side was promising to fix and build for 14 years but we, in these trying times, to the tune of about \$3.5 million can construct a terminal for the private sector PSVs because of course we recognise their

contribution to this economy. We recognised their contribution to employment.

Mr. Speaker, yes, there are some issues with which we have to deal. Yes, we have to make the necessary amendments to the legislation so that we have the proper regulatory framework in place to bring about standards, particularly in PSVs. It has taken some time and hopefully, Sir, within a couple of weeks this Minister, along with the learned Honourable Attorney-General will have those provision clarified and cleared to be able to be certified by the learned Honourable Attorney-General.

Mr. Speaker, I know I have been talking about these amendments over time but I also know that recently we had an excellent meeting with the Honourable Attorney-General, particularly in these provisions, et cetera the Breathalyzer testing, manufacturing of licence plates, the demerit points. All of those pieces of provisions that we are going to place in the Road Traffic Act to bring about a proper regulatory environment and framework, because the Transport Authority Act that was passed by the Honourable Member for St. George North is weak, we have to go back to it. Sir, it is good idea.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House when the Honourable Member said that the Transport Authority Act is a weak Act. Sir, that is not true, because it was the first time that the Act was in place. I believe it was the strongest Act...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that is a matter of opinion, though. Please wind up, Honourable Member, your time has expired.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is so weak that police officers do not even charge anybody under the Transport Authority Act, they still stick to the Road Traffic Act, it is so weak. In fact, the Transport Authority Act mentions Transport Inspectors but they do not have any powers, even the Road Traffic Act, so that is why I speak to a regulatory environment. Mr. Speaker, once we have that in place, then...

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, is this the same point of order?

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: No, Sir, the Honourable Member is confusing the Act with the regulations. My view is, and the Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute, this is a point of elucidation. Honourable Member, are you prepared to give way for this point of elucidation. Fine. Go on.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is misleading the Act with the regulations. The regulations enforce the Act, so that the Act of 2007 speaks to what the Transport Authority can do. The regulations therefore give the power to the police to implement the Act. That is what I was talking about.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you for the elucidation. Honourable Member, your time has expired, I will give you a minute to wind up.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member did not even bring the Regulations. Sir, the regulations were never brought. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to get into the cross-talk but suffice it to say that we are on sound footing. The fact is that if you go in the public and ask... In fact, I had a conversation with a person today on my way down. They said to this Government to keep on the path that we are going and that if an Opposition could treat one of their own like how they treat a particular Member in here, we could imagine how they would treat a stranger. Mr. Speaker, not only that, the fact is that the Opposition has offered not one single solution but is now looking to bringing up absentee landlord and foist him on the people of Christ Church West, while ill-treating the Honourable Member for Christ Church West. Sir, I hope that the Honourable Member would get up in here and speak on the behalf of the women in this country, battered women. I hope that you would speak on their behalf. I am throwing out the gauntlet to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, either battered or threatened to be battered, that is my point.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. Mrs. MARIA M. AGARD: Mr. Speaker, I join this debate on the Appropriation Bill, 2016, thankful to the Almighty for his extended mercies toward me and to the people of Christ Church West who continue to repose their confidence in me. Mr. Speaker, before I get into my analysis of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure I want to take a moment to publicly thank those Government agencies that have supported the needs of the constituents of Christ Church West throughout my tenure. Whether it is the social services providing welfare relief and support, the Sanitation Service Authority ensuring that our garbage situation does not become a public health concern, whether it is the Hastings or Worthing Police Rapid Response, or even the Ministries of Finance and Housing, we have been the recipients of timely intervention. I want to publicly state my appreciation to these Government agencies and to say that I do look forward to a continued healthy working relationship with them.

Mr. Speaker, like most right-thinking Barbadians, I want my country to succeed. I do not want my Government

to fail because it is in the failing of any government that the most vulnerable suffer and bear the brunt of any harsh measures, as we have recently experienced. Believe me when I say that I want, and I will always want, my Government to succeed. At the onset, let me state that I am neither an apologist for this Government which continues to understate the gravity and ever-deepening implications of the present crisis, nor am I an alarmist for the Opposition power-seekers who exaggerate even the most superficial shortcomings of this Government. Rather, I use this occasion to share with the people of Barbados my view on the growth and the development of Barbadians in these challenging times, and pledge, like most Barbadians, that my actions will always be concentrated toward leaving for the next generation a more successful and prosperous society than that which I and which we all inherited.

Mr. Speaker, the election victories of 2008 and 2013 were rooted in the impassioned resolve of the Democratic Labour Party that they would commit to social democracy and ensure that the development of our people would be embedded in the economic prosperity of the land. Even now, we hear the same refrain: "This Government is committed to the development of a society that is socially just, economically sound, et cetera." It is in this context that I locate my discussion today. I fully expect that the policy decisions made by any government would lead not only to economic growth of the nation but to development of its people. We need to understand that there are times when economic growth does not always lead to development of a people, but it needs to be our focus and, in any event where it fails to do so, it must become the focus of an analysis to rectify that problem.

Mr. Speaker, I am reminded, for example, of the articulation of the previous administration that established a Barbados National Strategic Plan 2005-2025, and as we approach that landmark and also as we approach the Jubilee of our Independence, I must say and I will say it unapologetically, for me as a Christian a Jubilee has tremendous significance. A Jubilee is the year of favour, it is a year of blessings from the Lord, it is a year of forgiveness of debt, and a year of prosperity, so I believe that the approach of our Jubilee year should register as a significant landmark to all Barbadians, and we should take the time to assess where we are as a people, not just in terms of facts and figures but in the human context. Where are my people? How have we developed Barbados as a nation to this day?

I therefore see these Estimates really and truly as reports that give unequivocal direction to the national priorities that would realise these noble goals of developing our people. On that note, I must admit that it is with some trepidation and maybe a bit of confusion that I note the following: In spite of the implementation of a home-grown austerity programme that imposed its most severe hardship

on the families of low-income and working class Barbadians, and while reporting some successes which we must note, we continue to fail to achieve our stated objectives, not only in terms of the reduction of the fiscal deficit but also our projections for revenue building and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In fact, the most recent Central Bank Report of 2015 reported that the only sector showing growth was the tourism sector. Beyond that, all other sectors either declined or registered nominal growth.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it should concern the architects of our society that in 2016 Barbados continues to rely heavily on tourism, as fragile and vulnerable to external forces as it is. Furthermore, I would expect that a fulsome analysis of this scenario would motivate our leaders to look to enhance other economic sectors by strategic directing of funds to these Ministries. It should be expected, for example, that the Ministry of Agriculture would be the beneficiary of increased funding. Surely, there is no greater pressing need than for Barbados to reduce its heavy reliance on imported foods, and by extension, to increase its domestic crop production; not only in order that Barbadians can feed themselves but also as a means of decreasing our high import bill. It would also serve a pivotal role in the fight against lifestyle chronic diseases by change of diet to a more healthy set of options. To the contrary, this Ministry has had its budget reduced by approximately \$68 million, and of particular note is that its crop production has also been reduced from \$51 million to \$32 million.

Mr. Speaker, these are measures which on the surface seem confusing in the scheme of national development, and I await the explanation either from the Minister of Finance or the Minister of Agriculture for these striking cuts. For my part, however, I want to say that I believe the time has come for Barbados to look seriously at increasing its output in its crop production. I am not prepared to say that, as a people, we have dismissed this harsh and laborious task. No. It is shameful that there are thousands of acres of land lying fallow, and even now plantations are going out of agriculture. I think we first need to admit that the slothful intervention in the face of praedial larceny, both at the level of the constabulary as well as the judiciary, has frustrated farmers. That also, and the sometimes poor, archaic techniques, are disincentives to the application in this sector. Mr. Speaker, we are in an era of modernization and engineers and agriculturalists have now transform the manner in which crops are grown throughout the world and some of the most attractive application for crop production can be seen. I know that the BAS has certainly tried its best and I give them credit but I want us to turn our attention to crop production in Israel, just as an example. I know that there are many more but I will use Israel as an example. As a country, it has been settled in a desert or semi-arid land and yet they have an outstanding crop production in rain scarce areas. In the past

recent years, they have increased their agricultural production several fold and they have done so with the use of technological advances of different types, water efficiency models that reduce water consumption for agriculture but also increased yield and high values of their products. In fact, there is a drip system that has been advanced by the Israelites which direct the water flow straight to the root zone of plants and in doing so, they have made this particular production extremely efficient. Sir, computerized irrigation systems were introduced and climate control green house agriculture was significantly expanded. I believe that we can follow suit and attempt these measure for our own good.

Mr. Speaker, these efficient techniques which enhance crop yields as well as the green-housing techniques allowed not only for considerable production in concentrated spaces but it also creates a turnaround in interest and investment in this very important sector. I believe that with an unemployment rate in Barbados trending towards 12 per cent and greater and significantly so among our young people, I am certain that if we are to introduce these measures to them, that the keen interest of young people who have rightly rejected archaic methods of agriculture may very well be willing to embrace a futuristic and financially satisfying approach to this essential sector.

Mr. Speaker, Of course, we must also commit to dealing very forcefully with theft, informing and support our farmers. Sir, that is recommendation that I wish to place at the disposal of the Minister of Agriculture. I am sure that he will tell me whether they have already considered these methods and whether they are prepared to do so.

Mr. Speaker, equally confusing to me in terms of national priorities is the vote to the Barbados Water Authority that has been reduced from \$80 million to \$32 million and this is in light of the difficulties experienced. I am sure you would have heard the Honourable Member for St. Joseph articulate his concerns but it is not just in the north but it is throughout Barbados where it is said that our water mains network being over 150 years old and subject to constant leaks to the tune of 50 per cent of the water piped, it needs to be addressed. It is difficult to comprehend that in a water scarce country such as ours that a complete overall of our water system is not a national priority. Sir, water is too crucial to all aspects of any country's development not to be given greater national priority. I am, therefore, calling on the Government to speed up and I am one who would acknowledge that they have already started because the constituents of Golf Club Road would have been affected last year by the laying of mains so I know that it is a project that has been started but I saying that we need to have an intense programme of mains laying to replace these faulty mains throughout Barbados. We need

also to arrest the water loss from leaky mains and to respond to calls for intervention more speedily.

Mr. Speaker, I will keep coming back to the development of our people not because it is a solemn promise of an election campaign but because it ought to be the only reason we aspire for leadership at this level. I do have to admit that in our key indicators we are trending in the wrong direction. However, these are all directions where intervention by Government can bring about considerable improvement and even resolution.

Mr. Speaker, it was unfortunate that heavy weather was made in here over the past few days by people who ought to know better about birth rates and death rates and life expectancy at birth rates. They ought to know better because whilst it is undeniable that life expectancy at birth rates have fallen from 77 per cent in 2010, to 75.6 years in 2014, as reported by the Human Development Report of 2015, it is an insult to the intelligence of an educated people to even remotely suggest that because a Democratic Labour Party administration is in power that people are dropping dead. Sir, such statements are not supported by fact and to the contrary, it should be noted that the complete truth is that Barbados remains in the high 90 percentile range for this particular indicators. We are still doing exceedingly compare to all countries who report these statistics. I agree that the downward trend in the Human Development Index is a cause for concern because of the other indicators that have been impacted upon negatively especially our gross national income per capita.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados once enjoyed one of the highest gross national income per capita rankings in the Caribbean at \$21 000 but today, it is \$12 000. We have moved from reporting one of the highest to one of the lowest. This has some impact on the development of our people and it is this singular shift in rating that causes me my greatest concern because our goal of leaving a more developed and prosperous country for the next generation must never be under threat. We cannot in a 21st century Barbados fail in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, the Government must apply itself, not to making excuses but to ensuring that we fully support all the drivers that would bring about an increase in our revenue building capacity or no less demonstrate the level of efficiencies to reduce the runaway level of expenditure that we now see.

Mr. Speaker, when we begin to speak about high levels of expenditure, we turn to an area that is extremely dear to my heart, the area of health.

Mr. Speaker, we have heard recently of contributions regarding the vote for the QEH and whether it has been cut and if it has been cut to satisfy the need for electioneering

in this golden jubilee year or whether it was cut to facilitate the celebration of our independence. Let me state for the record that this puerile thinking interest me not. Health is too dear to me as the profession in which I earn my living and gain my independence as well as the sector in which I have had to rely to keep myself alive. Sir, health is not a political football for me. I can stand here and speak because I know it is a matter of public record that I know intimately of the workings of the QEH. The reality is that, on more than one occasion, I have been warded there ...

Asides.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: Yes, and you too and I am sure that you would share the view that I share in that we repose confidence in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH). Many people have said, but you can go abroad for your treatment and yes, I can go abroad for my treatment but the truth of the matter is that I chose the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) because I have absolute confidence in the skill and the ability of the professionals who work there and I will continue to choose the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) or any other healthcare facility in Barbados as my facility of healthcare choice. All that I want to say with respect to the provision of a vote for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) is that I want to be assured that it provides for the maintenance and upkeep of the surgeries such that in any ensuing year and beyond, all scheduled surgeries can be carried out as planned and so reduced to burdens of those waiting for months for life saving procedures.

Mr. Speaker, I would share would you that is not any academic posturing from me. I would share with you that just this time last week I was scheduled for another intervention and as I was prepping for the intervention, I received a call from my surgeon who said that we would have to reschedule the procedure because the diagnostic piece of equipment broke down so I am not academic when I say that there is a human face to these challenges. The human face exists and a human face sometimes that often has no other option but to rely on the measures and the facilities of the QEH therefore, it stands to reason that our vested interest is always to ensure that there is no deliberate shortfall to place the lives of Barbadians at risk. I also want to say that whatever the vote, I want to be assured that when our seniors and our pensioners, the unemployed or the underemployed present at the hospital and are treated and discharged, that they can actually receive the medication that they have been prescribed and that they are not told that it is unavailable. I want to be assured also that when our patients go even to polyclinics, especially the seniors, that medication prescribed can be garnered from those polyclinics. We have a duty to manage these facilities because people's lives are at risk.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I want to be assured that the staff at all levels are adequately provided for so that the

institution can function at its optimum at all times. I appreciate the explanation from the Minister of Finance when he explained that \$9 million that was removed this year from the vote was removed because the special projects that were the focus of that \$9 million last year have now been completed.

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

Dr. M. M. AGARD: In terms of efficiencies, I want to very quickly make the point that anytime we are having a national discussion on healthcare finance reform that we must not ever fail to consider public procurement. The National Procurement Policy is today possibly one of the root causes of many of the finance problems experienced in health and maintenance of relevant information must always be maintained to support a procurement operation. The practice of procurement must be transparent, non-discriminatory, evidence based in terms of quality and price, clinically safe, affordable and proportionate in terms of commission granted. Mr. Speaker, an OECD survey of January 2016 makes the following assertion with respect to public procurement. It says:

“As a major part of the economy and public spending, public procurement can demonstrate Government efficiency in an era of fiscal austerity, ensuring efficiency and integrity in public procurement is essential to ensure sound public service delivery and maintain citizens’ trust in Government. Governments are recognising the potential of procurement to improve public sector productivity through savings and economies of scale. In addition, Government are tapping into the potential of procurement as a strategic policy lever to advance socio-economic and environmental objectives. Reforming procurement to achieve savings in times of austerity, eliminating red-tape and enhancing productivity are key priorities in times of hard budget constraints.”

Sir, I wish to associate myself with these remarks and recommend that we as a Government take this advance seriously in an effort to improve the efficiencies at the hospital. There are a number of other issues which I would like to raise, certainly I would like to have raised an issue concerning corruption. I am hoping that we would probably get to that at some time but, in closing, I certainly note that the Attorney General (AG) did say that this Government was placing its attention to procurement reform legislation.

In closing, I say that I fully support that in the interest of healthcare and in the interest of all Barbadians.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am obliged to you for recognising me and giving me permission to take the Floor. I am very excited about this moment because, of course, I have come to understand that this is an important moment in the parliamentary life of our Parliament. It is an annual ritual that we undertake every year. Of course, this year marks the first year after seven years of famine which, I believe according to biblical standards, would now have ushered in a period of plenty. Whether those who are our detractors choose to accept that or not, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Honourable Minister of Finance has presented this document that outlines in clear, precise and defensible terms the road on which the Government is not travelling and we are going to march forward with or without the presence of Members of the Opposition who we know would not be in here at this time.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to thank God for his goodness and His love and His mercies towards me. I wish to thank my family for their support and prayers and I wish to thank my constituents for their continued support in spite of being harassed by Members of the Opposition that they should choose another fellow, some believe him to be, instead of me.

Mr. Speaker, I must tell you that I have sat through this entire exercise so far and the entire Opposition has spoken, and would you believe that not one of them could find anything positive to report on the state of this country. So ridiculous were some of the pronouncements that one Honourable Member said the reason why tourists are coming to Barbados is because there is war in the Middle East and that those who would ordinarily vacationed in places like Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and those places, are now here because those places are war torn as though Barbados is the only other destination on earth where people could go, in fact that they are trying to gallop away from domestic war.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege of travelling to a few places in my lifetime so far and everywhere I have gone and met persons and spoke with them one on one they have always spoken of Barbados as a wonderful place to be. As a matter of fact, I remember while living in the United States of America and lecturing at university that many students would say their families saved for years just to visit Barbados, and this year and last year - and I compliment the Minister of Tourism and International Transport - they are coming in their numbers, they are traipsing to and fro this piece of land searching for the kind of respite that they may not find in their own land of birth.

Mr. Speaker, I sat here and listened to the Leader of the Opposition, I really love it when she is not in her seat as she is not in her seat, who reminded me of the poem of William Wordsworth. I am not of the memory type of my esteemed Right Honourable Prime Minister, so I have to

read it, but I only captured a portion of it. When I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East speak the other day she reminded me of these two lines: “I wandered lowly as a cloud, that floats on high o’er vales and hills.” Now, Wordsworth went on to say: “When all at once I saw a crowd, a host of golden daffodils. I know that the Honourable Member is still in search of that crowd because not even the Members on that side wanted to hear her. If you look at the side now... As a matter of fact, I remarked when I walked in this morning it is the first time since I have been in this House that this Parliament has been rearranged in a moment of ‘spectacular’ inglorious shame only because one brilliant young lady in the representative in Honourable Member for Christ Church West who earned her right to be here only now seeking to be displaced by one Humpty-Dumpty who sat in this Parliament and advised a Member of this side that he should kiss - well I would not finish that - and they want to run Barbados.

I have great respect for Members on that side but I want to advise Barbadians that they should be aware of what they are being told. There is snake oil salesman or saleswoman in town trying to sell ice to Eskimos and telling Barbadians that this Government that has been in office now for close to eight years doing its job, dragging a country back from the brink of disaster, setting it back on a stable footing and restructuring it into a future that is sustainable, is now trying to tell Barbadians to choose them.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the years of plenty are now about to commence because things are on the upward trend so says our Minister of Finance. I heard somebody saying that the Minister of Finance prepared the document and that we... We sat with the Minister of Finance in the Cabinet of Barbados and went through every single line of this document. We know what is in it. We know what is in the document Honourable Member for St. George North. We sat down and we worked out our pathway. We understood from the beginning the difficulties that are still ahead but we also understand the hope that lies eternal in the bosoms of Barbadians who are not prepared to follow the script of the Leader of the Opposition, so what is happening is that they are changing the narrative over and over.

They have moved the narrative from implementation deficit, they moved it to corruption, they are now moving it to accountability, transparency, and good governance.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Opposition cannot lecture this Government on matters related to anticorruption or corruption. I was checking the records, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown and I noted something that is historic and amazing, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that the Barbados Labour Party for the 14 years it was in office, left a trail that from St. Lucy, at Crab Hill Police

Station to the south at Silver Sands “Golden Shower”, from the north to the south, from the east, the prison, to the west, Eastry House, and in-between, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and want to now pretend to Barbadians that this Government has lost its way and that the Right Honourable Prime Minister would not speak to his Ministers, and a whole bunch of rubbish.

Mr. Speaker, we ain’t talk Greenland; we ain’t talk Dominica or Kensington Oval. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown still has paint on this heels from the house that were half-painted down by Kensington Oval. The front of them were painted and left the whole backsides of them exposed.

I mean, look, none of us is perfect, the Honourable Member for St. George North would say that, all of us are subject to the infirmities of man, that is why the Good Book says that the Master was touched by the feeling of our infirmities. We all were born in sin and sharpened iniquity, none of us has been predestinated to do the things that we think we have to do, so that when a man or woman begins to prance around and to believe that they have been designated by some supernatural power, certainly not the supernatural power of the Most High but some supernatural power to become the Prime Minister of this country. As a matter of fact, so much so driven by that idea that they are encouraging people to walk around and call them Madam Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, it really causes us a moment of distraction. I have already told my Honourable Leader that as the Minister with responsibility for the Environment, that every single thing that is raised in this Honourable House, especially under the Heads, I will find space to report on my Ministry. But I feel it is important for me to point out that this myth... Sir, there are people out there in the media who are prepared... I heard a gentleman on a radio station by the name of SETA. He was so hell-bent to distract from this Government that he could carry a report on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure - two lines from the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and two excerpts from the Leader of the Opposition, but I realised what happened after. He was taken by the folly that he wanted to laugh some more because there was no substance in what was said. I was reminded, it was like cane pith and when cane becomes pith and you grind it, you will not get a drizzle of juice.

Mr. Speaker, after all of these years and after this brilliance and this propaganda that so-and-so is so brilliant that they do not have to even use a script, that they call around and get notes from people and then issue the notes to Members on their side, I have advised my good friend that he should not accept any script from anybody and just read it, that he should do his own research and make his

own mark as a politician of substance, or he is going to end up being as hollowed as a pawpaw shank.

Mr. Speaker, I am serious about that, so that when you hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael North saying nothing is going on, Sir, there is a rise in FDIs in the country, products are beginning to roll out, in spite of the interference by some people. There is a better and more peaceful feeling in the country about the economy, and the list goes on and on and on.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member in a spectacular fit of false rage castigated the Government, predicting revenue generation has not been on the rise and has not been realised for the last few years but not indicating to the country that while that may be true, that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has been able to manage downwards expenditure. Mr. Speaker, if you are giving an analysis and if you understand the science of numbers, but I do not really put that in the bosom of Leader of the Opposition, because that Member also called for responses to questions raised. I want to put it in the record today that this Minister of Government. I am not prepared to answer to answer any questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition until the Honourable Member comes in here and presents evidence that the Honourable Member has a Legal Education Certificate.

Mr. Speaker, that question has been asked months ago and not one single, not a whisper has emanated from that Honourable Member. I know that the Honourable Member cannot practise in England in the years because we have been told by reliable sources there that the Honourable Member is not qualified to practise as a Barrister up there. Sir, some ignoramus got up on the radio and tried to say O, the Minister of the Environment and Drainage is too harsh on women? Sir, harsh on women, harsh on women, from whence did that come?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been part of a Gallery of witnesses and see how the Honourable Member for Christ Church West has been persecuted and politically raped. Her political virginity has been snatched away. We witnessed a speech today from the Honourable Member as lucidly... as a matter of fact, that really should have been the speech of the response of the Opposition and in another spat, in another spectacular twist of faith and face, another inglorious act has occurred this morning, the microphones were snatched up from next to the Honourable Member and Honourable men corralled in the back...Well, this is what politics has come to in Barbados, it is either my way or the highway, at a time when we are trying to tell the country that they must live together in harmony. How can you set an example of how people in this country should live when you could try to destroy a lady now in the rise of her political career? Do you know that if this term is the end of her political life that she would have been deprived of her

pension? Do you understand that? It is amazing. Any time there is a collision between ignorance and intelligence, intelligence must win, even if it wins in silence.

Asides.

Dr. Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Speaker, I believe that in spite of the bleating of what appears to be a man that I will soldier on. The Estimates are presented against a background of a nation celebrating 50 years of nationhood, a nation that has gone through a period of stabilisation, is going through a period of restructuring of its economy, and is now facing a resumption of growth. Mr. Speaker, is it not true that when the Barbados Labour Party took over the Government in 1994, that after the Government was going through a torrid economic crisis, that growth had returned and it was less than 1.0 per cent? They came into office and were given a wicket to bat on that the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter said he did not want to come off the crease. He was batting so well. All of a sudden, now that the Minister of Finance has steered the economy back to a positive growth trajectory, he is "not doing a thing, wasting time, the country is going nowhere". We heard the Honourable Member for St. Joseph quoting from some poll that this number of people said they are not happy, but if people are not happy, they were not happy when they kicked them out of office either. They were still having difficulties, and they have not yet explained to the people of Barbados why they lost the Government. What went wrong? Why Barbadians gave up on them? If Barbadians are struggling with this Government, they are struggling with this Government in a time of difficulty, but Barbadians were struggling with the Barbados Labour Party when there was much, much, much money in the country. That is the reality, so I really do not listen to the rubbish that you hear.

I am convinced that the Government is on the right trajectory. I am convinced, Mr. Speaker, that the Government's growth policy and development policy is embedded in the global sustainable goals, and it accepts the 2030 agenda for sustainable development as it is outlined. The Government of today is progressive in its thinking, and is prepared to continue to drive the development and the reconstruction of our society. We are reconstructing around four essential pillars: economic viability, social balance, good governance and environmental soundness. The last is where I will take my final flight into my speech.

The Ministry of the Environment and Drainage was allocated a budget of \$107 million last year, and the final budget was \$114 262 508 last year. This year the Ministry is now being allocated \$107 900 000-odd to run its affairs. There are a number of programmes in our Ministry: The Sanitation Service Authority, a project management coordination unit, the Storm Water Management programme, drainage and prevention of flooding, the

National Conservation Commission, and the Coastal Zone Management Unit. Let me say something on the Coastal Zone Management Unit. Yesterday, an Honourable Member on that side unleashed an attack on the Coastal Zone Management Unit. Let me say this in defence of the unit, its leadership and its staff: Every coastal-related project in this country undergoes the scrutiny of that particular unit. As a matter of fact, sometimes the scrutiny is so stringent that you have to almost ask them to rethink the conditions upon which they are going to approve or the reasons why they would recommend the rejection of an application to the Town Planning Department. The project that was questioned yesterday had to go before the Minister because the Coastal Zone Management Unit's initial response was that there might be problems with the project. It is totally untrue, Mr. Speaker, that the Coastal Zone Management Unit sat silent while groynes were placed or while permissions were given for anything related to Sandals. It is untrue, and there is a danger in coming in this House and not speaking the truth. There is a danger, Mr. Speaker, because I heard yesterday too that the Sanitation Service Authority unceremoniously sent home people. I had the manager, the financial controller and the head of engineering down here yesterday. Not a single staff person at the Sanitation Service Authority was retrenched. Not one, yet we heard that yesterday.

I heard somebody got sent home after doing 16 years in the National Conservation Commission. Not true. Just to let you hear their footsteps, people say those things, and it is really unfortunate when you have to come in this House and, in your attempt to condemn the Government, condemn yourself. It cannot work. That is what we have. The Sanitation Service Authority \$50 million. The Storm Water programme \$5.9 million, the Prevention of Flooding programme \$5.3 million, the National Conservation Commission \$24.3 million, the Coastal Zone Management Unit \$2.4 million and again \$9.3 million.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has five minutes in which to conclude. Four minutes, actually.

Dr. Hon. D.S. LOWE: Thank you, Sir. The programmes go on and on. Our Ministry's work is driven or guided by a very clearly defined programme that captures the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 13 that talks about combatting climate change, Goal 14 that talks about conserving and sustainability of our oceans, our sea and our marine resources, Goal 15 that talks about protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of the terrestrial ecosystem, et cetera, and Goal 17 that talks about strengthening the means of implementation and revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Barbados has set on a path as it relates to climate change. Climate change, by the way, has a clear and present threat to our water resources. I hear people now want to blame the

Minister of Agriculture for the fact that there is no water in Barbados, as though it has something to do with the Minister of Agriculture. Sir, there is a drought, a drought that has been going on for three years and the Minister has been doing everything in his power to make sure that creative implements are put in place to enhance the provision of water but Sir, I say this: If the Barbados Labour Party when it was in office had done what was supposed to be done, we would have had less disruption today in St. Joseph as the Honourable Member for St. Joseph has reported because all of the mains would have been laid at a cost that would not have required the kind of stresses and strains that we now face but the Minister has to do the work. We have to change the mains because our unaccounted for water was too high and, therefore, we had to put in place the things that we need to put in place.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point that as long as climate change is a reality and, it is, all nations around the world, even those who are not willing to accept the data, all nations around the world understand that climate change is a fact. It is affecting our weather patterns and we have real difficulties now with the droughts in the area. I know when the Minister speaks, once he is given an opportunity to speak that he will address those issues.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will have the opportunity to come and talk about what the coastal zone management unit is doing and talk about the fact that we just did a climate impact tour and the ravages on our beach because of the same climate change phenomenon. We will talk about what is happening in terms of our public education agenda and that the Government of Barbados is now in over 50 public schools in Barbados getting its message across. We will talk about what we are doing with the Sanitation Service Authority although we have talked about that several times in recent months. The most recent thing that we have now decided to do is to introduce a pilot study where we are going to actually do some route collection announcement dates for Black Rock main road area and for the south coast to make sure that three times a week that waste is collected but in addition to that, we are also going to be educating the persons in those areas of how they should set their waste out because I heard somebody saying that there are these big bags. Sir, the collectors are not supposed to take up bags beyond a certain weight and some people put everything in a bag, toilets, bedsteads and everything and then expect the garbage truck to pick them up but we will educate them as to what they need to do. This Minister accepts that there is a need for the replenishment of our vehicles and the Ministry of Finance has just secured a loan for the Sanitation Service Authority and in this budget, there is a \$3 million allotment to pay for the loan. We know what is going on and we do not need the Barbados Labour Party to tell us. The Barbados Labour Party in 2005 went and bought 20 trucks and by 2007 all of them had

broken down. They went down to five trucks, engines were missing, clutches were missing and all that stuff.

Mr. Speaker, I have here in my possession a fleet management study that was just completed and also a waste audit that we just completed because these are things that have never been done. Now, we know exactly how the waste is being produced, what are the quantities, what we need to collect it and how we need to collect it.

Mr. Speaker, I really would not wish to test your patience any longer but I am much obliged to you, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2'oclock this afternoon.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken we were on Order #21, the second reading of the Appropriation Bill, 2016 and to that we shall revert. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me at the outset, that the Minister of Finance for the presentation of the Appropriation Bill and also for the progress that has been made in regards to two critical areas of our public finances in regards to wages and salaries and transfers and subsidies that has had some elements of stabilising our public finance position. I understand the strategy being employed is the traditional strategy and it is one that has been very successful in many, many areas where it has been utilised this being the strategy of budgetary consolidation with the two familiar tenants of that consolidation being that of expedition containment and tax increases depending on the magnitude of the deficit you are trying to resolve and to attain fiscal and debt sustainability thereafter. That strategy is usually followed by that of structural reforms which usually involves, in most cases, a redefining of your public service and a redefining of your parastatals in regards in regards to the stresses that those parastatals bring to central government's public finances.

Mr. Speaker, with that being said, I want to take a different perspective in regards to view of the Honourable Member for St. Peter as to how we should continue to pursue our path of fiscal consolidation. The two critical components expressed were 1) that we should accelerate aggressive, because it is the right thing to do, that type of reform within the parastatals that would allow the pressures being brought on central government to be diminished significantly. I understand the thesis and the rationale

behind it but there is something called timing of what you do and not only the timing of what you do, but how much of it you can do. The reality is that transfers and subsidies to parastatals are salaries and wages, that is a fact of life. We did not make it so but it is so and I am not going to advise the Minister of Finance to go into any radical chopping up of those institutions to put large numbers of Barbadians out on the streets at this time that will have a significant reduction in aggregate demand in the economy and as a result affect the budget revenue in the long term as in additional national insurance and other types of revenue inputs.

Additionally, Sir, I disagree strongly with this whole notion of the methodology of investments as to get us out of this area or zone of paucity of growth. I believe very strongly that we need to accelerate aggressively our project implementation strategy and I believe very strongly that what we need to do is to be unafraid of the debt perspective. The Chinese debt to GDP is close to 300 per cent, Japan is about 300 per cent, most of Europe is 200 plus per cent and many of them are still growing, Mr. Speaker, because you are driving your growth via strategies that allow for the project development to be driven by investment to create jobs and, by extension, create revenue back to the Government and the projects themselves, when invested in, will pay for themselves.

The best example of that, Mr. Speaker, is the Hilton Hotel that was built by the same group under the debt and in a few years, the Hilton Hotel is profitable and is adding \$14 million to the Consolidated Fund in Barbados, therefore I am not going to accept that we should not pursue aggressively an investment strategy where we concentrate on the projects that stand alone in regards of being able to generate the revenues and returns to pay the majority of the debt service over time. Mr. Speaker, that is where I agree strongly with the Honourable Member for St. Peter. I have already indicated very strongly a whole number of ways that I think that this matter can be handled but I believe very strongly that a decision as of what methodology you use, you could only take one at a time. I stand very strongly because I may disagree with how matters are being handled that does not mean that I am at war with the Minister of Finance or anybody on This Side.

Let me also say, Sir, in a slight twist here that I have listened to the Honourable Members on the Other Side continue to suggest that there were some significant cuts being made in regards to the Ministry of Agriculture but I want to correct one element of that error with regards to the reduction in the area of increase crop production and so on. That reduction is an artificial one in that the reduction is an indication of the moneys that would have normally be budgeted directly for the the Barbados Agricultural Management Corporation (BAMC) and its debt service now being advanced as a Capital Transfer directly to the

BAMC. As a result of that the reduction that is seen is a reflection of that change in how the accounting practice is instituted and I would not want to get into the details because I am sure some on That Side would not understand what a Capital Transfer is, what is a below-the-line Capital Transfer, an asset, amortization, lease, transfers and so on, so I do not want to get into that.

What I want to get into though, Sir, is a matter of the issue of the water crisis in this country. I want to get into this because I have tried over the last few months to explain to Barbadians exactly what were the reasons that we were having the challenge and I explained to them that it was not only Barbados that was having the challenge, the challenge was regional. In fact, now the challenge embraced the majority of Africa. In fact, it is a challenge that is embracing what one would call the entire equatorial belt and every single country in the equatorial belt right now is suffering seriously from a reduction in precipitation. The long and short of that, Mr. Speaker, as I have said before, is that the majority of the 24 wells that we have in this country, in particular, 19 wells which are called coastal wells are under significant stress. That significant stress, Mr. Speaker, is because if you do not have precipitation you are not going to have run off water from the landmass to the ocean from which you can therefore access via the wells. What that means is that the volume of your fresh water column on top of the salt water within the coastal areas is diminished fundamentally. Mr. Speaker, if that continues as it is continuing, it means that several of the coastal wells will be stressed to a point where they have to be taken offline and as I speak to you, we have had to take four wells offline on the West Coast because of the potential risks of saltwater intrusion. There are eight of them on the West Coast and we had to take out four, and we had to also take out a couple in St. Michael, so therefore I am going to take serious umbrage and I will deprecate on any attempt to make this matter a political matter when this involves so much more in regards to this country's survival.

The matter in its significance is not only the impact it is having now on agriculture in general, that is sugar. You have heard that the poor yields in the last two years has been because there was little or no rain to drive the growth of sugar cane in Barbados. In addition to that, that reduction has well systems so bad that it is affecting non-sugar agriculture and it is also affecting farmers with livestock. This is a fact of life. It is nothing that this Minister can do. I do not live by faith and sight anymore otherwise I would put on an Indian dress, a t-p hat and I would be doing an Indian dance and a rain chant for Barbados, but I cannot do it, it requires divine intervention, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that being the case, it is important for me to explain to the persons in business and residents that

are having these challenges what it is that we have done and are doing to deal with the problems that they are having. Mr. Speaker, the strategy has to be short and medium to long term. A short term strategy that we have implement is to import packaged desalination plants, but you just do not go and pick up a desalination plant on a rock. You have to determine the specifications based upon where the plant would be sited so that you would know what is the salinity and so on so that it can function effectively. As a result of that, in 2002 and also in 2004, when the packaged plants were brought into Barbados from the then Williams Industries they were plants that could have been access where they could bring them in Barbados in a matter of a few weeks, it was just a matter of shipping.

Mr. Speaker, I met with the Israeli yesterday and I met with other providers last week and I am going to tell you that package plants will be in the Bridgetown Port within a matter of three to four weeks, but the packaged plants can only give me about 500 000 gallons per day but I am down 2.5 to 2.6 million gallons per day, so therefore what happens when you take the water therefore from the packaged plant and you run it in the system it disappears in the system as though you never really put in anything because the conditions are so significantly worst than they would have been in 2004.

What we also did was to ask that the new pumping station and transfer system at the Lazaretto be operational. It is operational, so we have asked the desalination plant to increase its output. When I met with the Williams Industries personnel and asked them what is the outcome even though we have increased the volume the amount of water that is actually reaching far down into St. Peter is small because it is absorbed where it is required as it goes along and it is consumed, so it is a matter of volumes that you have to deal with right now because the wells are in that poor situation. Mr. Speaker, when I hear people talk about how quickly they can get packaged plants in and this and that, they do not understand the physics.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I have commissioned and, as I think, by within this week we should have the two operators determine to establish the two permanent desalination plants. Those two permanent desalination plants would give us 12 million gallons of water per day but to construct those plants would take about 12 to 18 months to do, so in the short term because, we now have 3.5 million gallons in the St. Philip Water Augmentation Project, we have to get that water to service areas of St. Philip that would normally be serviced from reservoirs that you can now free up those reservoirs to send water elsewhere. In other words, as we speak people who travel to St. Philip would see a main going in around Bushy Park and as we speak there is a main going from Bushy Park heading straight out to Parish Land. The reason for that, Mr. Speaker, is to take the water that would normally

come from Golden Ridge to supply that area offline from Golden Ridge and let it be supplied from in St. Philip, so that would free up water at Golden Ridge to be able to send it to Castle Grant and send it into St. Joseph. You cannot do those things overnight, Mr. Speaker. A main takes time to put in. You have to pressure test it and then you have to flush it and disinfect it, et cetera.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we have just employed a second strategy with respect to St. Philip, that is the Bowmanstan Reservoir which also supply certain areas of upper St. Philip, Moncrieffe, and heading up to College Savannah. Those areas coming down the hill as we would call it would now be supplied from St. Philip which would free up additional water to stay into Bowmanstan and Bowmanstan can pump that water down to Golden Ridge. You do not do that overnight. It has to be planned out and it has to be marshalled and your technical people have to put the systems in place. Mr. Speaker, these are the things that are going on right now.

In addition, to this Mr. Speaker, in St. George there is a well called the Groves Well that has now been rehabilitated and will come on line within the next five days. That well in St. George supplies Bydes Mills, ellerton, Malverton and surrounding district. That well is now serviced from Bowmanstan. When we bring that well system online and supply those areas now Bowmanstan would not have to supply those areas so there would be more water in Bowmanstan to send over to Golden Ridge and Golden ridge supplies Castle Grant and Castle Grant is what supplies St. Joseph. This is what they should have done ever since. This is what the Water Management and Water Resource Study spoke back in 1997, 20 years ago essentially. This is what it spoke to when it spoke to the 50 per cent water leakages and it spoke to 120 year-old mains, but I heard people in here talking and in their term in office in 14 years, they have not changed one main in the Scotland District, rebuilt or fix one reservoir, but now the Barbados water Authority could be held to ridicule.

Mr. Speaker, what is also important is that we recognise the suffering of the people, and I told management we have to find a way around depending on one single main from Golden Ridge to Castle Grant. That was bad for donkey years and we are now changing it. Mr. Speaker, to make sure that we never get in this position again we now have a well in Sweet Vale that will come online next week, that will carry water directly from Sweet Vale straight to Castle Grant, thus solving the problem once and for all. These matters should have been dealt with by those who have the most mouth, they with a lot of hyperboles and a lot of high verbs.

Mr. Speaker, what is sad about it is that we are being hurled to ridicule when we are executing an infrastructural development plan that was known to be required since

1997. Look, do you know the other thing that bothers me, Mr. Speaker, this matter at the Barbados Water Authority has been going on, with respect to the potential strike action, in fact, I am beign told that the workers are being asked to go work-to-rule.

Mr. Speaker, I was not going to say anything about it but I do not know how to say anything else but to say what I have to say, I like the Kerrie Symmonds.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Honourable Member, you cannot use Members' names in here.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: I withdraw that, Sir. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that we have inherited a complex situation, Sir, that will defy any specialist in logic, any mathematician to solve. Sir, back in 2004 the former Government hired a so-called intellectual expert named Dr. Shorey and he was asked to do a job reevaluation at the Barbados Water Authority.

The outcomes of the job evaluation exercise, Mr. Speaker, that is pertinent to my discussion is that we should abandon what is called automatic increments that used to be used within the normal public service.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just a minute, I am wondering where you are going. You are not allowed to deal with anyone, except in their professional capacity and in order to do that, you need to alert the Chair beforehand in writing as to what it is about. Standing Order No. 28(9):

"No reference should be made in the debate to the character or conduct of any person except in his official or public capacity. Any member who is desirous to refer in debate to the character or conduct of any person in his official capacity must deliver the Speaker written prior knowledge of the proposed reference, the notice must set out the facts on which such reference will be based and must be signed by the Member giving it."

Honourable Member you have not done that, Sir. I know you ought to move on.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw but what I will say is that whoever the consultant was that was hired in 2204, did a poor job. Sir, if that is what you want me to say.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have already named the consultant. Please move on.

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, the point is that we agreed that the agreement then was to eliminate automatic increments and come up with a system defined on three points of entry or movement within a

particular category of workers, so people can enter at the low level, and if you are the low level you can then move to the middle level and if you are at the middle level you can move to the top level. Sir, the way to determine the movement is to create a tool which was called a 17-point system that would help you to determine when applied on an annual basis the movements that a person should have established.

Mr. Speaker, the issue with that is that if you were to apply the 17-points system it would take you 55 years to move half of a distance within a particular category. Both the union and management recognising that, determined that what we should do is to renegotiate a different tool to be used for increment evaluation and definition. Mr. Speaker, it had to be then established under a performance management system.

Mr. Speaker, that was in 2006, in 2006 up to now the performance management system has not been put in place, or its secondary amended version. Now we are being told that because you did not put it in place, you have to pay the workers as though it was in place for nine years. Now, what sort of spurious logic is that? You do not have anything on which to evaluate anybody, so what is the basis of determining the outcomes of what it is that you are saying is the outcome? It is not in place and it was not in place, so that it is an illogical premise upon which to define.

Mr. Speaker, they say there is something called a legitimate expectation, so the Barbados Water Authority is to find \$33 million on a legitimate expectation to pay workers for increments by using a tool that does not exist. Sir, they did this back in 2006 and it is now 2015.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what is important and why I had to say what I did? Sir, here is an institution that has been struggling for the last two years because of drought, it cannot supply water to people; we get revenue from supplying water to people so that the revenue of the Barbados Water Authority is down because they cannot supply water during a drought, yet you are going to come and ask for \$33 million, on a spurious unscientific basis. I am the Minister so I am going to speak to it, it is rubbish.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that I held the view, and my colleagues can say honestly so that I said, I believe very strongly that no person should enter the Barbados Water Authority at a particular period of time and that 10 or 15 years after should be earning the same salary. I think philosophically that is wrong, but even though that may be the case the action to take in order to sit and define out the strategy, is not to strike on a basis that has no logic in it, and the as a fact of the matter is that is a fact of life.

Mr. Speaker, I intervened in this matter two weeks ago and I remember having a discussion in Cabinet on Thursday. I said that I feel very uncomfortable about this because it is in contravention to the Employees Right Act. The Employees Rights Act that is the Laws of Barbados has no provision in it for the Minister's intervention, none. Sir, the Laws of Barbados prescribes a sequence of events and those sequence of events allow you to move straight to a Tribunal. It does not even bring in the Minister of Labour. Sir, I cannot reprobate and approbate at the same time, I may do it someplace else but not in here, so Mr. Speaker, this is a rather serious matter and I hold the view, Sir, that I would want the Barbados Workers Union to think through very carefully its actions. You cannot hold a view that an institution is to pay people for what ought to be put in place when the tools that are to determine what to pay them and over what time and place to pay them do not exist, and at a time when the quantum required will not be the base on which the new salaries are to be determined. That will bankrupt the institution for the next 25 years. I am not going to sit down and not tell Barbadians what the facts are. I have all of them, Sir, and I am just simply saying to the Barbados Workers' Union, think through your actions very carefully. It is not a matter of workers on its own merit. It is national development and the potential worsening of a national crisis at a time when water output in Barbados is at its lowest level in years. Those are not my words. Those are the words of the Barbados Meteorological Office and the Caribbean Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology on January 10, 2015. They said we had the lowest rainfall last year since 1946. From 1.5 metres per year we were down to about 0.6 metres, and the year before was not much better. Is this the time, Sir, to be asking for \$36 million? Maybe I am misunderstanding the whole issue and I hope that progress will be made. There is a consultant specialist dealing with this matter on behalf of the Barbados Water Authority (BWA), and I simply ask them to engage and work toward the best solution, but this approach cannot bring the best solution in the interest of Barbados and the BWA, or by extension the workers.

Mr. Speaker, I jump off from there. The Minister of Finance, he can tell you that we used to fight every day because I was fighting hard to hold onto workers at the BWA; the same workers of whom not one was sent home because I went out there, Sir. He was doing what he had to do.

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

Dr. Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: The fact of the matter, Sir, is that as a result of that, we went out there and we created the structures to hold the institution together, and at the same time advance the infrastructure of the BWA in the interest of this country. What we did? We completed the

Ionics water mains project, Sir. What we did? We completed the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) water mains project, Sir, projects A and B. Mr. Speaker, what we did? We have the Barbados Smart Metre programme ongoing, Sir. What we did? We completed the St. Philip water augmentation programme, Sir. All of this to keep employment going at the same BWA. All I am saying, Sir, is I will keep doing what I can do in the best way that I can, but I am going to be very straight up with the people of this country, and where I see things not being appropriately managed, it is my duty and responsibility as the Minister, who will take all the national licks anyhow, to come out and say what I think is right and what I think is wrong, Mr. Speaker.

One last thing as I wrap up, Sir, because you hear a lot of talk out there. The Ionics water mains project came in under budget. The BWA headquarters building came in under budget. In 1985, Sir, the building was supposed to be constructed. In 2002, under the former administration, the Prime Minister stopped the construction of the BWA headquarters, and when the PPC acted they had already contracted the majority of the technical contractors already and a certain lawyer out there had to deal with court action, and the people had to be paid money. I am not in the business of calling names. The fact of the matter is that I have all the contracts, and I am saying that at that point in time the BWA workers were in containers in chink-infested and rat-infested buildings, with pigeon droppings on their heads and all sorts of things, Sir. This administration decided, as they would have done to enhance public workers' and public officers' accommodation, to build two high-rise modern state-of-the-art facilities for them. We took the opportunity, Sir, to do right by those same workers, and have them in a modern state-of-the-art facility. I want to thank Ansa Merchant Bank and I obviously want to thank the Government for that, because it was the right thing to do. Now we have a scanner system monitoring the reservoirs and mains; we have an information communication technology (ICT) system in place now that monitors customer service; a management information system, financial information system, work order system, and inventory system, Sir. You could not do that if it was disparately located around Barbados at seven different locations. That is how you modernise an institution, Sir, and then you move to the infrastructure on the outside, which we are doing now. Mr. Speaker, as I wrap up...

Asides.

Dr. Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: As I wrap up, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Please do.

Dr. Hon. D.C. ESTWICK: As I wrap up I want to put the BWA in perspective. Its evolution from being considered being integrally placed within the primary healthcare system, and as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, the BWA was once under the Ministry of Health. However, the modern prescription for a water authority, water management and waste water management institution is for that to have a premier function in the national development. It is what drives manufacturing, it is what drives tourism, it is what drives the agricultural sector, and therefore we have to evaluate and evolve our water management systems along those modern lines. That is the path that we are on as we would have just taken the institution under the Fair Trading Commission as part of that modernisation exercise. Mr. Speaker, again I want to lend my full support to the Appropriation Bill at hand. I thank you, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Yes, the Right Honourable Prime Minister.

Rt. Hon. FREUNDEL J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I rise to add a voice of support to the Appropriation Bill, 2016-2017, and I should like to begin by congratulating all Honourable Members on this side, starting with the Minister of Finance who piloted the Bill, for the support which has been given to the bill. So far as the Minister of Finance is concerned, I have said in this House already that no previous Minister of Finance has had to discharge the responsibility of that office in circumstances as difficult, in circumstances as challenging as the present Minister of Finance and only his strength of character, only his stick-to-it-iveness, only his steadfastness could have seen us through this period. Sir, that is not another way of saying that if any other Honourable Member on this side have had to discharge those responsibilities it would not have been done. It just happened that the present Minister of Finance is the man in the seat and I think he deserves the commendation of the Government for the contribution he has made to Barbados' stability during a very challenging period.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate and thank all other Honourable Members on this side for the interventions they have made in this debate and for putting the Government's case as spiritedly and as clearly as they have put it over the last few days.

Mr. Speaker, this exercise is grounded in the Government's responsibility before the end of every financial year by virtue of the provision of Section 108 of the Constitution of Barbados to lay Estimates in this Parliament and by virtue of Section 109 of the Constitution to introduce an Appropriation Bill. Sir, every year we go through this exercise, the discharge of a constitutional responsibility and I have always considered, I think the Minister of Finance referred to it when he was piloting the Bill that it would be eminently more useful if we were in a

position to agree on both sides of the House to trying to do as many of the Heads in the Estimates as possible. Last year, the Government tried to get the Opposition to agree to that procedure and we did not succeed and once again this year, on Wednesday afternoon, we are now completing Second Reading speeches and will have only tomorrow and Friday to look at all the Heads of expenditure contained in the Estimates. It was not always so during the day before Independence and immediately after Independence. The practice was for the Minister of Finance to a very short introduction and the Leader of the Opposition or the Shadow Minister of Finance to do a short speech and then all the issues of concerns of members of the House were dealt with in Committee of Supply. I hope that we can get back to that because this whole exercise is about holding the Government to account and making the Government account for its expenditure and making the Government justify the programmes to which that expenditure relates. Sir, we are only to get back there, of course, if there is a little bit more trust and a little more understanding than at present exists in this House.

Mr. Speaker, we work with what we have and, therefore, we debate at length the Appropriation Bill.

Mr. Speaker, said this Bill is introduced every year but this year is a different kind of year because the Appropriation Bill 2016/2017 is being debated at a time when Barbadians are celebrating their 50th year of Independence, their Golden Jubilee. Sir, 50 years ago, when the Appropriation Bill was being discussed, Barbados was producing about 175 000 tons of sugar, one year after the Barbados' Independence, we were producing as much as 204 000 tons of sugar because we were still largely and agricultural economy. Sir, today, 50 years later, we are now a modern services economy on the cusp of effecting fundamental reforms in the sugar industry, putting the agricultural sector on a completely modern footing, creating a sugar cane industry really with a number of other side benefits, not the least of which would be the contribution of that sugar cane industry to our energy resources, so things have changed and as far as I am concerned Barbados has a lot to celebrate at age 50.

Mr. Speaker, I know that a number of questions have been raised, some snide remarks have been dropped, the Independence celebrations have been slandered by Honourable Members on the other side and all sorts of dark motives have been attributed to the Government and imputed to the Government for celebrating Barbados Golden Jubilee or having Barbadians celebrate the Golden Jubilee of their Independence.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it very clear that for me and for Honourable Members on this side, it is not an issue for compliments. The Cabinet settled this issue, our sister Caricom country Guyana is also celebrating 50 years of

Independence, has also allocated expenditure for that purpose and other countries across the world that became independent in 1966 are to my certain knowledge doing the same. I understand well the tactics of saying that the monies allocated for the 50th Anniversary celebrations should more properly have been allocated to the service of the causes of the poor and most vulnerable elements in this society. I am very familiar with that. I heard the same things said when this Parliament was celebrating its 375th Anniversary. I sat here on Monday afternoon and hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East make statements which can be interpreted in that way. We are in the Lent season and it is interesting how history can sometimes repeat itself. Sir, 2 000 years ago, at the home of the man called Simon the leper, accompanied by Mary, Martha and Lazarus, our Lord was a guest and Mary, was carrying an expensive perfume in what has been described by Holy Writ as an alabaster box, and she took this perfume and pour it on the master, on his head and on his feet and she used her own hair to dry his feet. This perfume was very expensive and a protest went up at the home of Simon the Leper that this was wastage. That perfume - so it was said - should have been sold and the proceeds used to spend on the poor. Our Lord made a very interesting observation.

Before I say what his observation was I should that the person who was critical and led that charge in respect of the use of that perfume in the way in which it was used by Mary was a man called Judas Iscariot. A few days later he was going to sell the Lord for 30 pieces of silver but he led the charge and he said, what wastage, this could have been sold and the proceeds used to be spent on the poor and our Lord made a very interesting point. He rebuked Judas and those who were inclined to support him and said Mary had done the right thing. She knows what she will always have access to the people you are calling the poor but I am not going to be around for too long so she is doing for me what she can do now because I will soon not be around. Mr. Speaker, I say that, not only because even though Judas Iscariot died 2 000 years ago, he has descendants down to this day but Barbados will never, ever after the year 2016 have a chance to celebrate a 50th anniversary of independence again. This is a one time opportunity for the country and it is an opportunity we have to seize now. Your Honour heard the same kind of arguments when this Parliament was celebrating its 375th anniversary, a waste of money. We will never have the chance to celebrate a 375th anniversary again as we will never have a chance to celebrate a golden jubilee again. Another jubilee, perhaps a diamond one or some other kind, but this golden jubilee represents a moment and that is why I said when it was launched, it is not a period for extravagance and uncontrolled merriment, not a time for unrestrained jollification, it is also a time for reflection because Barbados has to look at itself, we have to understand where it is we came from, we have to understand where we are,

and we have to be clear as to where it is we are going. As was done to Judas Iscariot 2 000 years ago, I rebuke those persons who know the cost of everything but do not understand the value of anything. I will repeat, this 50th anniversary celebrations is not up for negotiation and I am prepared to be judged on this.

Mr. Speaker, it is the party that I now lead that took this country into independence. Interestingly enough that is another parallel, some of the same arguments were heard in this House 50 years ago as well. On that occasion, occasion it was that we should not have independence at all or that if you were going to have it you should have it within the context of a federation. Some felt it should not happen at all and some felt that you should have it but within the context of a federation. History repeats itself and I would have thought that this was a sufficiently a prudent national moment for the country to unit, look back at what we have achieved and resolve to do better over the next 50 years. Instead of that, you had to sit in here Monday evening and listen to a lot of shame and scandal politics. Nothing in Barbados is worth it, everything is wrong with Barbados. The repeat visits whom I meet at Ilaro Court in the first four months of the year and who tell me what a great place Barbados is and that this is there slice of paradise with some coming here for over 50, 60 and 70 years and making sure that their children get to know Barbados, they do not feel that way about Barbados but we have politicians who, for narrow partisan political purposes, would drag their country down even as it celebrates its 50th anniversary of independence. A plague on their houses, I say, but not good enough at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I take the Appropriation Bill and this debate this year very, very seriously as I take all of these debates seriously but we have to face the reality that over the last few years, particularly since 2008, the global financial meltdown occurred in the last quarter of 2007 and for the last few years, Barbados has been facing some challenges. I am not one of those people who believe that one should be tyrannised over by the present. I would not believe in the tyrannical present because there is a past and unless you have a past you cannot have a present and, of course, the present is one's pathway to the future.

I have heard it said in this House over and over again and in this debate as well that the Government has been holding on to the fact that events outside of Barbados explain what is going on in Barbados now. We have been ridiculed for that over and over and over again. I seem to recall, and if I am wrong on this he can correct me, but I am certain that I heard the Honourable Member for St. James North with this in his speech in this debate but he is always saying it that we are blaming external events for what Barbados has gone through over the last seven or eight years. Mr. Speaker, that is not another way of saying that I pay a lot of attention to what the Honourable Member

for St. James North says in this House. Whenever I listen to Honourable Member speak I am always reminded of an assessment done by a former Prime Minister of Barbados in this House of another Honourable Member of this House exactly 33 years ago. What that Honourable Member said on that occasion I always feel able to whisper to myself as the Honourable Member for St. James North speaks in this House. He expresses himself so passionately but at the same time so clearly and so simply that by the time he has finished you are left in no doubt that he was talking foolishness. That was a judgement pronounced by a former Right Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados in this House 33 years ago in respect of another Honourable Member of the House. I did not agree with the assessment then...

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member, let us hear the objection.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, you have today ruled and the Right Honourable Prime Minister ought to know, he has been around here for a long time, that the word talking foolishness is unparliamentary. Even today you ruled on that, so I am calling the Right Honourable Prime Minister to withdraw those words.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, it is one thing to say that of a specific Member. Did he say that to you? What was the context?

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Were you not listening, Mr. Speaker? He said that the Honourable Member for St. James North is talking foolishness.

Mr. SPEAKER: You see there is a difference Honourable Member. One comment that might be unparliamentary when referring to one particular Honourable Member may not be if you are just referring to a group of persons.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Are you therefore saying that some Honourable Members are more equal than others in here?

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not hear him say specifically that the Honourable Member for St. James North was talking foolishness. I did not hear him say that.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: What did you hear him say, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: He did not say that, so I ruled it out of order. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you. There is the view that what happens outside of

Barbados is of no consequence to us, it makes no contact with us, we are not affected by it. As I have said so often in so many places we are a collection of Robinson Crusoes in our own little island, nothing anywhere touches us and we touch nothing anywhere.

Mr. Speaker, I went home last evening after I listened to some of the debate and I rummaged into my records and came up with a public information notice number 56, I believe, of 2004, an International Monetary Fund Article IV Consultation of Barbados. It is dated May 14, 2004. I could make it a document of the Chamber. Of course, I would have to retrieve a copy of it. I am reading in part, Sir. The first paragraph says the mainstays of the economy are tourism and financial services. The population is about 275 000, per capita income is about US\$9 500 and the unemployment rate, this is 2004, is slightly less than 11 per cent. The United Nations Development Programme Human Development Index ranked Barbados 27th among 175 countries in 2003. It goes on: Barbados economy did well in the 1990s supported by prudent policies and a favourable external environment. During 1993-2000, per capita real GDP growth averaged 2.5 per cent per year, annual inflation was 2 per cent or less and unemployment declined sharply. The structure of the economy shifted from agriculture to tourism and financial services. This performance was achieved in the context of small fiscal deficits, less than 2 per cent of GDP, a conservative monetary policy which resulted in a substantial accumulation of external reserves and a range of market oriented reforms. Mr. Speaker, here comes the clincher. The economy shifted into a recession in 2001 reflecting the global slowdown and the impact of the September 11 events on the tourism sector. Real GDP dropped by a cumulative 4 per cent in 2001-2002. To mitigate the recession the Government launched a national emergency programme of public investment projects aimed at promoting economic activity and upgrading the tourism and economic infrastructure. These and other measures contributed to an increase in the central Government deficit from 2.3 per cent of GDP in fiscal 2000-2001 to 9.5 per cent of GDP in 2002-2003 including extra-budgetary spending of about 4 per cent of GDP. As a result the central Government's debt to GDP ratio rose from 63 per cent in March 2001 to 76 per cent in March 2003.

Mr. Speaker, a few things said in this Article IV Consultation of 2004 are instructive: (1) this is not the first time in Barbados' history that unemployment was above 10 per cent. It is not the first time in Barbados' history that the fiscal deficit reached as far as 9 per cent in our case because we had a more sustained period of downturn because nobody could pronounce on the depth or duration of this financial crisis, so ours went to about 11 per cent, but this went to 9.5 per cent in 2002-2003 as a result, says the International Monetary Fund economists, of 9/11 and events taking place in the global arena, so when the

Barbados Labour Party is in office what happens outside of Barbados can affect Barbados but once the Democratic Labour Party comes into office what happens outside of Barbados remains outside of Barbados and the Democratic Labour Party is to accept responsibility for everything.

Mr. Speaker, that is where I think we need a little more intellectual and political honesty. Noting is wrong with criticising the Government or nothing is wrong with calling upon the Government to do better. The Minister of Finance saw the fiscal deficit at over 11 per cent and chopped it in half because we understand the importance of getting the deficit down. I heard my respected colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, say yesterday that he would not be inclined to praise the Minister of Finance for getting it down to where it is because it should not have been up there in the first place, but it should not have been up there at 9.5 per cent in 2002-2003 either, but it was brought back down, hip, hip hooray, eureka. We have to be a little more understanding in these circumstances. This is nothing new. Barbados has gone through this on many occasions and successive Governments of Barbados have had to take these kinds of decisions in the past, and we take them because we all wish Barbados better.

I really feel that the speech made in here today by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West should be an object lesson for Honourable Members of this House. We can criticise one another, we can feel uncomfortable about the exercise of policy options but when all is said and done, this is our Barbados and we do not want to live anywhere else. When all is said and done, that is our hospital, we should not try to undermine confidence in it, and I want to congratulate the Honourable Member for Christ Church West for a very mature speech.

Mr. Speaker, at the same time, of course, I condone with her in respect of the savagery meted out against her by some rather philistine colleagues with whom the Honourable Member has broken bread and who gave the Honourable Member the impression that the Honourable Member was one of them, while sheathed, they had daggers concealed, ready to wield them against her, to ruin her political reputation, but if they were only aiming at the political reputation one would not mind, because politics is not for Sunday school children, but even her professional reputation came under attack by some of her philistine colleagues, but the Honourable Member has handled all of this with an exemplary strength of character and impressive personal dignity and the Honourable Member is to be commended for that.

Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. Sir, Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure are what they say, estimates and I think the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has made this point. The whole discipline of economics rests on the

inarticulate major premise that human behaviour can be harnessed and quantified, regulated and predicted.

Mr. Speaker, around the 1950s, a branch of economics developed called econometrics, its object was and still is to prove or disprove existing economic hypotheses to accurately quantify economic relationships and to successfully predict the economic future. There has been no Minister of Finance of Barbados, whether a Minister of the Barbados Labour Party or Minister of the Democratic Labour Party who has been able to come into this House with Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and come to report to the House the following year that he did not have to change anything. You estimate revenue, sometimes you get more than you anticipated, sometimes you get less. You estimate expenditure, sometimes you have to spend more than you expected, sometimes you spend less.

Mr. Speaker, when we came into office, for example, and the Minister of Social Care will validate what I am saying, we found a situation - I think the now Minister of Finance was Minister of Social Care at the time - at the Welfare Department, for example. At the end of the financial year sometimes as large a sum as \$13 million had to be sent back to the Treasury because it was not used but it was budgeted for, because you are doing estimates and econometrics and the econometricians are still trying to nail all of these things down but you cannot look into a crystal ball and see how things will turn out and how people will behave, so we do estimates, we do the best we can in the circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, that is what this exercise is about. When we met over the weekend, of course, we had discussed it in Cabinet before, but when our Parliamentary Group met over the weekend to discuss and to prepare for this debate, one of the questions I asked was that each Minister look at the allocation to his Ministry and highlight whether there were any spectacular increases in respect of allocations or whether there were any spectacular reductions in respect of allocations, because only in that way can you determine what is about to change, either for the better or for the worse.

Mr. Speaker, we are not out of the woods in terms of our economic and financial challenges, we still have some mountains to climb. As I speak, the British public was told a few days ago to prepare for further cuts in expenditure in that country, because of how troublesome this crisis and its effects have been. And a small country like Barbados, small and vulnerable, depending on tourism and financial services, in a world where we have to box in the same ring as some of the most powerful countries in the world, we have our challenges.

Mr. Speaker, the Republic of Brazil that has to host the Olympics later on this year, I believe, climbed through economic hell, and that was one of the BRIC countries that was radiating all the optimism and all the good fortunes you could expect from any country just 18 months ago, but all of that has changed.

The Minister of Finance mentioned our sister CARICOM country, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela [...] on its knees because oil prices have almost hit the floor, that is the kind of world in which we are living, and for anybody to come into this Honourable Chamber and to give the impression that that is alright, all well and good for them in other parts of the world but that we in Barbados have some standard of perfection and infallibility to meet is to be disingenuous because we live in the real world.

Mr. Speaker, every year when the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure are being prepared, whether we like it or not, a major transfer has to be accounted for, for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, that is an inescapable obligation of the Government. When the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act was proclaimed in the year 2002, within a few weeks of its proclamation, the Government of the day made it very clear that transfers to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would be capped at \$115 million, that if the hospital wanted more money, so it was said, it would have to get it by borrowing or by looking at its own internal processes to generate the kind of additional revenue it would need to properly discharge its obligations and to efficiently provide its services. Mr. Speaker, that cap of \$115 million was never once met.

That cap of \$115 million was never once met. We always had to go for it because we do not live in a society where only rich people get sick. Poor people get sick too, and it is they who need the services of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH). As the Honourable Member for Christ Church West said this morning, there are some who have the option of going elsewhere but the most of us here have confidence in the QEH and its professionals and are prepared to go there. That cap of \$115 million was never once observed, and since we came into office, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Health, the present one and the former Minister of Health, the distinguished Honourable Member for St. James South, will tell you that we have had to do transfers as high as \$204 million to the QEH. That is not an obligation from which any Government can retreat. When we talk about whether there is a reduction in the allocation to the QEH or an increase, let us understand that whether there is a reduction or an increase, whenever the QEH has a challenge, it is the Ministry of Finance and the Consolidated Fund that have to deal with that challenge. In a sense, therefore, the debate is academic, because when all is said and done, when things go wrong and we come into this House, we hear what the Government should do. It is the Ministry of Finance and the taxpayers who have to find

the money to make sure that the needs of the QEH are met, but that is an obligation we cannot get away from. That is a fixed obligation.

This year, the transfer is \$146 million and we hope that we do not have to go substantially above that. We hope that as the discussion continues about financing healthcare and so on, that we can at some stage in the not-too-distant future reach some conclusions on which there can be a national consensus so that we do not have to deal with these challenges. The University of the West Indies (UWI) is another fixed obligation. We cannot escape that either. As I understand it, the transfers to the UWI are done in two tranches and it is an annual thing. All the time it is done, but it is an inescapable obligation because of the Government's commitment to the provision of university education for Barbadians. We cannot get away from that. The Transport Board must get a subsidy every year because it is not the people who come into this House - and as Barbadians like to say, "larging off" about the Transport Board -- who catch the buses. It is poor, modest, simple people from the villages, from the hamlets of Barbados that have to rely on our public transport system to get from their homes to their places of work and back home. If the Transport Board were run as a commercial entity, let us be very frank, it would have to provide an exclusionary service because there would be people in the society invariably who would not be able to afford the services it provided. Government usually has to step in and make sure that it helps that institution. We try to keep the subsidy down to as low a level as possible, and call on the Board to use all of its endeavours to improve its efficiency and its operating procedures so that the pressure put on the central Government at the level of transfers could be alleviated. It is an obligation.

After that there is the issue of debt service. Debt service is related to our fiscal deficit position; certainly debt service at the domestic level, and that is why it is so important to get our fiscal deficit narrowed down. We are not saying that there should be no fiscal deficit at all. After all, the development of Barbados post-1961 was made to rest on deficit budgeting. Deficit budgeting was introduced in Barbados by Premier Errol Barrow, later to become Prime Minister Errol Barrow, later to become the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow. He introduced it, and made it clear in this House, as the records of this House will show, that he is an unrepentant product of the Keynesian revolution of economic thought. That is in the records of this House. He introduced deficit budgeting. The issue is not whether you have a deficit but whether you have a manageable deficit, and that is what we are working our way towards now. In 2004, the Government of the day knew that a 9.5 per cent deficit was not manageable and had to try and get it back down. Today, we know that our approximate six per cent is not manageable and we are

trying to get it further down as well. That is what all of this is about.

However, there is no compromise of the services that the Government is providing to the people of Barbados. No compromise at all. People will still have access. People still have access and have had access right through this crisis - right through this challenging period - to our health services. Children still left home every morning and went to school, and so on. There has been no compromise of our services. From time to time, and I again pray in aid the mature observation made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West; from time to time, a vehicle will break down or a piece of machinery at the hospital will break down, but that is no basis for condemning your own country and all of its institutions. Shame-and-scandal politics? What is that? This is our country. We go other parts of the world and we see failures as well, because whatever man creates is subject to a flaw of some kind. Nobody has asked us to be perfect. As I said when I launched the 50th anniversary celebrations, we are not asked to be perfect. Perfection is the exclusive preserve of the Almighty. We are asked to be faithful to the causes that matter to us and that are designed to make Barbados a better place.

Mr. Speaker, I agree entirely with the observation made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West when he talked about our state-owned enterprises. Statutory boards in Barbados were introduced in the common hope and in the fond expectation that their levels of operation and efficiency would be superior to the central Government. It was thought that, given the services that they were intended to provide, it was better to have them segregated or removed from the purview of central Government and be given the right to operate on their own, since they were supposed to provide particular services and provide those services at an enhanced level of efficiency.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Water Authority, for example, came into existence around the year 1980. It all had to do with the fact that the Bridgetown sewerage Project was going to be embarked upon and one of the preconditions for the disbursement of the loan from the lending institution, I believe the IADB was that what was the Water Works Department, a department of Government should be removed and a statutory board created, the Barbados Water Authority. Sir, that is how the Barbados Water Authority came into existence. It has had a good run and has rendered inestimable service to this country throughout its existence. The Transport Board as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North pointed out in his speech this morning, its Act was passed around 1955, when the Rt. Excellent Sir Grantley Adams was Premier of Barbados and that was the objective as well, to try to get efficiencies in those areas. We have had what is now called the National Housing Corporation used to be the Barbados

Housing Authority, it used to be Housing Board and it used to be the Housing Committee. Sir, all of these variants were experimented with, with a view to getting high levels of efficiencies and only last week or two weeks ago, we had an expansive discussion in here on the Barbados Industrial Development Corporation (BIDC) and that too used to be the Development Board and it change its configuration with the passage of time but the objective always was enhanced levels of efficiencies.

Mr. Speaker, as can happen in all of these circumstances, a lot of these statutory corporation, a lot of these state own enterprises have now become bureaucracies in their own right and really, mirror sometimes many of the weakness to be found in Central Government from which they were separated to be examples of deficiencies. We have now got to the stage where things have gone full circle. The Central Government's operations are being streamlined and in fact, we are being told that the problems we are having now are not Central Government's problems but are problems of our State own enterprises when in days of yore, it used to be that the problems we were having were Central Government's problems and we needed to create State-owned enterprises. These are all matters of public administration and we have to try and deal with these matters as they come up.

Mr. Speaker, the Government is committed to the reform of these State-owned enterprises. We have recommendations before us but I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Philip West that human beings work in these State-owned enterprises. These human beings have families. They have expectations, they have commitments and if we are going to aggressively deal with these matters, we have to take all of that into account.

Mr. Speaker, in fairness to the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, he did suggest that there would have to be a carefully planned transition if we were going to go that route.

Mr. Speaker, these are issues that are engaging the Government's attention. The Government is not somewhere fast asleep while all these things are happening around it. We spend time discussing these issues and trying to resolve these problems. You heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip West talking about reports he has had to reach to put the Barbados Water Authority and its present situation in some kind of context. Sir, that is what we do. You heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip North this morning, the Ministry of Transport and Public Works referencing reports that were done in 1998 under the previous administration. We spend time reading and studying what is going on around us and trying to put all these things in context so that we can make informed decisions and do the best we can for Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, these Estimates reflect all of that thinking. These Estimates reflect the commitment of the Government to a social democratic agenda, that is the agenda that this Party has always followed. The only issues we have had to deal with in this very difficult and challenging period is whether we could afford to pursue that social democratic agenda in the same way in which it was pursued when we were not facing challenges of these kinds. I do not like people who speak with a forked tongue. Sir, between 2010 and the last general election, when the present Opposition leader was banished to Gorky by her colleagues and replaced by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, she sat down there where the Honourable Member St. James Central is sitting now and not once, not twice, not three times but on many occasions stood up down there and made speeches in which she said... These were the days when she was making stratospheric speeches, speeches that could not be interpreted as supporting the man who had replaced her and she made these speeches constantly saying that the problem with Barbados was that we are running a Government we cannot afford, that we need to get back to first principles because the Barbados we have today, we cannot afford. Mr. Speaker, she did not say it in one speech, she said it not in two speeches, she said it in many speeches from sitting down there where the Honourable Member St. James Central is now sitting but once she gets from down there to there, everything changes because she speaks with a forked tongue.

Mr. Speaker, we have some challenges in this country. Our National Hero, the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow for years talked about having champagne taste and mauby pockets and the late Guyanese President, Forbes Burnham many years ago, when he was Prime Minister of Guyana and not President challenged this whole region, warned this whole region against having a Cadillac mentality when we only have bicycle economies. Sir, this has been around for a little while and we have to look at our systems, we have to look at our institutions, we have to look at what it is we are promising people in terms of standard of living and quality of life and make sure that what we are committing ourselves to, we can afford. We no longer live in a world where we enjoy preferences and protections, that world has gone and is not likely to come back any time soon, if at all. Therefore, we have to be very careful about what we do.

I support entirely the Appropriation Bill before the House. I take note of all the distractions that are thrown in our way from time-to-time. I heard all the talk about the National Insurance Department and I want to make my position very clear. This Government does not interfere with and has never interfered with the operations of the National Insurance Department. We, the Democratic Labour Party (DLP), created it in 1967 and we created it because we thought that it was necessary. Successive

Governments do a lot of business with the National Insurance Department using National Insurance funds for various developmental purposes and it is Governments of Barbados that should do so because when Barbados develops some of the very people whose funds are being used will benefit from the development and enjoy Barbados. We honour our financial commitments to the National Insurance Department, Government does not borrow and do not pay back so when these wild statements are thrown in the public domain to give the impression that people's pensions are at risk and you have to be careful with this Government because someone is waiting to, nobody has ever taught me to steal, I do not know how to do it. I have always been able, from the tenderest years, to distinguish between mine and thine. I know that a lot of the people who hurl these accusations cannot say that but I am not ready to deal with those things yet, there is going to come a time when all of these things will be made clear and explained. The father of the Honourable Attorney General (AG) taught me many years ago when I was a little boy that in times of peace you prepare for a war and I have learnt that, I do not think he taught him that but he taught me.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART: He is my very, very good friend, the Honourable Member's late father, we spent many, many hours together.

Mr. Speaker, I am not ready to deal with those things yet because I do not like these slanders being hurled about this body stealing and there is all of this corruption and so on. We will wait and see but so far as the National Insurance Department is concerned, I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central fully explained the issue that was raised and I can add nothing of value to that explanation. The documentary evidence is there and I think that all the mischief that was being attempted has been put to rest but on that I say no more.

The issue of biometrics and the fingerprinting of Barbadians, that has been thrown into the mix as well, that is part of what was in the kitchen sink that was thrown at us, and my response to that is simply this. The Barbados passport ranks at number one in the English speaking Caribbean. Barbados has the highest ranking passport according to international indexes in the English speaking Caribbean. If you bring Latin America in, the only three countries in Latin America which passports rank higher than the passport of Barbados are Chile, Brazil and Argentina. Globally, out of all the countries out there, nearly 200 of them, the Barbados passport, in terms of its credibility, ranks at number 21. That is what we are trying to protect.

Mr. Speaker, we have had some challenges with a number of issues coming through the immigration at the

Airport. The Immigration Department has been known to deport or otherwise have people leave Barbados and quite easily they come back into Barbados under another name and you may only know that they are back here if they get into trouble or if you have to deal with them in some other context again and then the process of detection may take place. That is the problem of the countries from which they have come but here in Barbados now, and I am not going to discuss Barbados' national security on the Floor of the House, this is not for me, any public issue.

In recent times we have been having problems with birth certificates, identification (ID) cards, changes of name and passports. I had my heads of departments meeting just two Wednesdays ago with permanent secretaries and heads of departments and it was an education to sit and listen to the Chief Electoral Officer highlight some of the challenges we have with ID cards and their fraudulent use in Barbados. It was also an education to hear the Chief Immigration Officer talk about the problems that department has because people can change their names so easily around here and can use that change of name to get a birth certificate to correspond to it using other people's bio-data, of course, they are getting an ID card with it as well and then can go to the Immigration Department and get a passport.

We have had the stunning story of a man who was sent back here from Canada, he came back, he went and did a change of name, he got a birth certificate to correspond to it, he got an ID card to correspond to it, he went and got a passport to correspond to it and left Barbados again under a new name to go back to that country. He was sent back again, he came back, got another change of name, birth certificate, ID card and passport again. You can change your name as much as you like but you cannot change your fingerprints. If the agencies in question had that kind of reference point, he could not have gotten away with any of that but while he is doing that he is compromising the credibility of Barbados' passports and it gets worst because he is not just using fictional names, he is using other people's data, people that are not using the data, he goes and uses other people's names and gets their information and use it as his own. I sat and listened to these things and that is the background in which this initiative was conceived by our authorities. We have been given warnings, we have been told and we have been made to understand that the reputation of our passport should not be exposed to this kind of contamination, so this is not just for the Government to impose any burden on anybody, it is to protect some of the same people who are protesting because their own details can be used fraudulently in circumstances of this kind.

I freely admit that we may have to do a little more public education on this. As I said, I am not going to discuss for the purposes of slaking the appetites of the

indignant and the angry, Barbados' national security on the Floor of this House or anywhere else, but I freely admit that it may be necessary, and I told the Immigration Department this, to make sure that people understand how this will protect them and their own identities in this whole process. They have to see what is in it for them and when that is seen then everything else will become much easier. This is not any theological preoccupation of mine. It has to do concretely with the national interest of Barbados and Barbados' reputation and signals that we have received on these matters that remind us that we have to deal with these things and deal with them as a matter of urgency.

In the fullness of time, the Government Information Service and the Immigration Department working in collaboration will be hosting a number of programmes and so on on this issue, the object of which would be to show people how their interests are at risk now and how what is being proposed will protect their identity information, that is all this is about. This is not something to come in the Parliament of Barbados and shout about oh the Government trying to do this and the Government trying to do that. I do not believe that the previous Administration had any vested interest in making Barbados uncomfortable and certainly nobody on this side has any vested interest in making Barbadians uncomfortable. We are here to promote the national interest and that is why I go back to the speech made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West this morning. This is our Barbados and defaming it and trying to project to people that it is the worst place in the world when their own experience contradicts what you are saying, can only hold you up as speaking with a fork tongue, and that does not recommend such people to me and, I will argue, in the fullness of time should not recommend them to the people of Barbados either but we are going to get there.

What did Shakespeare, King Henry V say: In peace there's nothing so becomes a man as modest stillness and humility; but when the blast of war blows in his ears; then he must imitate the action of the tiger. The blast of war has not blown in my ears yet and has not blown in the ears of anybody on this side yet. We will get there. Do not rush the brush, you will spill the paint. We will get there.

I will make two other points, Mr. Speaker, before I sit. When we came into office in 2008, the accounting systems in the Government were cash accounting systems. Revenue was recorded when cash passed, when you actually received it; expenditure was recorded when money was actually spent. Before we came into office and while I was sitting in the Other Place the Government of the day, the Barbados Labour Party, made us aware that accrual accounting was being brought into operation in the Government service. Accrual accounting was being called for in this House, I can attest, by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy from 1995. I remember that very well. We

were sitting over there as an Opposition and he was calling for accrual accounting in this country from 1995. Eventually, it came. The shift from cash to accrual has meant that you do not have to record revenue now only when the cash when the revenue has been received but is recorded at the point of entitlement to receive and expenditure is record whether the Bill is paid or not at the point when the obligation has been incurred and acknowledged.

Mr. Speaker, that has had significant implications for the operations in Government. In fact, old habits die very hard and across the public service there is still a tendency to run parallel systems or in some cases to confuse the two systems but that is understandable because all transitions generate these problems. What cash accounting though allowed a Government to do is to hide expenditure sometimes and sometimes to hide debt but once this Government decided that accrual accounting was going to be the way following the lead of our predecessors we had to bring all of those hidden debts and so on to book and of course it changed the entire picture.

This same International Monetary Fund Article IV Public Information Notice to which I referred earlier makes the point... When I sit and listen to what is said in this House one gets the impression that every Honourable Members on the other side of the House is washed in the blood of the lamb, that righteousness can be found over there and all sin can be found over here. Here is what under Executive Board Assessment the directors reported in this notice in 2004. Directors agreed with the Government's focus on expenditure control and welcomed the commitment to wage restraint and the projected reduction in extra-budgetary spending, mainly transfers to public enterprises which remain high, and listen to this, Mr. Speaker, and has diminished the transparency of fiscal operations in recent years. We were running systems here that were diminishing, undermining, fiscal transparency in this country according to the International Monetary Fund. That is not easy now because the accounting systems that we have adopted and that we have been pursuing single-mindedly leave very little if any scope for, that but it is a counsel of prudence that the International Monetary Fund could be saying about Barbados in 2004 that we had procedures in place that diminished the transparency of (SEQUENCE 30) fiscal operations in this country.

It is not a boast, it is not a condemnation either, I am just saying that as we administer the affairs of Barbados let us face the reality that there are always things that we can do better and therefore trying to tear the country down because you have seen some little administrative flaw or something in a particular Government department or something like that, that does not get us anywhere. We have all had challenges, the challenges of running a post-slavery, post-colonial developing society is a big one and

we have been doing much better than countries in many other parts of the world, but I found that commentary very, very interesting and thought I would draw it to the attention of the House.

Mr. Speaker, the final thing I would say before I take my seat is this, when the economy was not growing or when there were no signs of growth in the economy, the Government was the target of the most virulent criticisms by the Barbados Labour Party. Now, the truth is, economic growth is very important, it has always been important but I know that based on what this country was going through between 2009 and up to very recently, up to now, the Government had to place a greater emphasis on stabilising Barbados than in doing anything else.

Mr. Speaker, I am indebted to a former Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, in fact, Barbados' first Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados who stood me up on the compound of the Hilton Hotel one evening, we were meeting for the first time, and he said to me, look, I hear all these people about here talking about growth, let me tell you something, try and stabilise Barbados. do not mind this growth talk, Barbados needs to be stabilise.

Mr. Speaker, I value that advice very highly, not only because it coincided with my own thinking but because it reflected a maturity of outlook that was sadly lacking, coming from other quarters. We stabilised, we took some hard decisions, decisions by the way that the previous Administration was encouraged and advised to take, as long ago as 2001. As long ago as 2001 there was a report on the desk of the people that mattered in the Government of Barbados that the public service of Barbados was too large and that it should be reduced by 10 000 persons by the year 2010. It was not done. We have not got rid of 10 000, we have not got rid of 5 000 people or 6 000, as I hear being said, but we have done a modest retrenchment in our effort to get a manageable public service, that is why the savings on the wages and salaries bill could be accounted for.

And the point has to be made, because this is another thing, the so-called baby boomer generation that joined the public service mid-to-late 1960s there has been a kind of bunching of retirements in the public service since we came to office; people who were working in the public service for 43 years and when you asked them why they were going home before they reach the statutory term, one very good public officer said to me, "I prefer to go and play with the flowers now, rather than having them put on top of me because I die in the public service."

The result of that is, that between the year 2000 and 2016, Government pension bill has doubled. That is another metric to which we have to pay careful attention because as people retire, pensions become payable and

between 2000 and 2010 it has doubled. So this is another area of expenditure that we have to watch.

But with all of these things, Mr. Speaker, we continued to keep our hands on the tiller, we continue to steer Barbados to secure harbour. We knew what helm we grasp, we know what course we are steering and we know what port we seek, and this Appropriation Bill, 2016, is part of that effort. Sir, once again I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, every single Member of the Cabinet, every single Member of Parliament, whether in this Chamber or in the Other Place, Members of the Back Bench; all who have put their hands to wheel, put their shoulders to the wheel, to ensure that we get through these difficult challenges.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I want to say thanks to you. This Bill has my full support. I thank you.

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

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

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, let me begin by thanking all Honourable Members for their contributions to this debate on the Appropriation Bill, 2016-2017. In particular I want to thank, of course, the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Member for St. Michael South for what I deem as an excellent presentation. The Honourable Member really covered quite a number of areas that are of critical importance to the exercise we are doing here this week, in particular this Appropriation Bill, 2016-2017, and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure accompanying it and also in relation to matters that go generally beyond the narrow confines of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. In fact, his clarity in relation to aspects of the thinking that would have gone behind these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure as we presented them, in terms of our principal goal in terms of protecting our exchange rate peg, ensuring that we stabilise our reserves, consolidate our public accounts and of course lay the foundations for resumption of growth in the Barbados economy were quite clear and lucid and makes in my own view commendable reading for Members of the House and of course listening or reading for the public if they get a chance to do so.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in that particular regard it really would not be necessary for me to detain the House too long but there are just a couple of points to which I think I have to respond. (SEQUENCE 31) Before we go there, let me take this opportunity before it passes me to express my sincere appreciation to the Permanent Secretary, Director Finance and other members of the staff of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs for their

absolute excellent work in preparing these Estimates and, of course, the Appropriation Bill that goes with them. These officers work exceedingly hard. They are, in many respects, faceless in the sense that we do not see them up front on a day-to-day basis. Some we do not see at all in terms of members of the general public, but they come to work every day as honest, hardworking Barbadians who want to see their country succeed, who have a vested interest in its success because many of them have families of their own or are part of families that have a vested interest in Barbados doing well. They contribute, as they have for all Governments, without fear or favour but certainly with a fondness for the success which Barbados has been able to gain over the years and no doubt will continue to gather unto itself. I want to thank them. I want to do so, Madam Deputy Speaker, particularly from the perspective that I think we as the political directorate -- not just persons in Government but persons in the governmental structure of the country, both Opposition and members of the governing administration -- ought to, I think, be a lot more circumspect in relation to how we try to reflect on the work of public officers who, of course, cannot defend themselves, in many respects cannot explain their actions, but who I believe should not be subject to the kind of negativity and negative comments, unnecessarily so, I might add, from the Floor of Parliament or elsewhere. That it is why it is ... of disappointment for me whenever I hear persons in the Opposition. It is not generally done down the line; it is done especially and particularly by the leadership of the Opposition or the Opposition Leader, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, questioning the integrity of the information that is provided by public officers in Barbados. These are the very public officers who will have to serve or might have to serve the same Leader of the Opposition if she were to be in Government again, as they did when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was in Government before.

Many of these people are the same people. Some have moved on, others have come in but generally the core is still there, and when you get to the stage where figures that are presented by myself as Minister of Finance, given to me by the Accountant General and his staff and the officers in the Finance Division and the Division of Economic Affairs, and you try to give the impression that these figures are put together, fudged, fraudulently put together to mislead, to fool and otherwise beguile persons in the community, and certainly this House of Assembly, I think it is in very poor taste. It lacks form, it belies the type of poise that one should expect from somebody who is trying to become the Prime Minister of the country, and it is unacceptable. I say in full defence of my staff and the persons who work in the Ministry of Finance that nothing could be further from the truth, and I would give every possible ounce of energy to defend them against these kinds of spurious accusations. The unbelievable thing about

it is that when the information suits the argument of the persons who are presenting it, they hold it up as legitimate, proper and telling an appropriate story for them, but when the information does not suit them, they then turn around and say that the people who put together the information are trying to fudge and fool the people of Barbados.

I saw the Leader of the Opposition get up in here and do the same thing a couple days ago in relation to these Estimates. Savaged them, and said you must not believe anything in here, there are a whole lot of errors and mistakes in the Estimates documents. I could make two points in relation to that, Madam Deputy Speaker. The first is that I do not know about any of these documents produced in draft, and that is the reason why they stamped "draft" on here, that have not had in errors and mistakes of a typographical nature. They are always revised. Very soon in a couple days, another day or so, tomorrow, you are going to get a slew of inserts to take out this figure and put in that figure, change this, and this heading was incorrect, because that is the nature of how this exercise is done. If you go back to the 1966 Estimates presented by the then Honourable Member for St. John, E.W. Barrow, in his speech before he sat down, the Premier and Minister of Finance said, "in a short while you are going to get a set of pages, about nine or ten, and they are corrections to the Estimates" which he had presented. He said that in his speech, and this has been going on forever, but to just come here to score a point to make it seem as though the Minister or the staff in the Ministry of Finance are inept and we have fudged these things and put them together to fool members of the public, it really is not becoming of a supposedly senior politician in Barbados. It is also unbecoming -- and the Right Honourable Prime Minister raised this matter -- to give the impression, and I heard the Honourable Member for St. James Central repeating it but he did not say it in the same way that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said it, but he repeated it slightly in his presentation, which was not a bad presentation at all. It is not up to his usual standard but I understand because he was a little distracted, having had to very firmly deal with other persons in here; not over here.

I apologise, Madam Deputy Speaker, if you see me moving up and down, swinging from left to right as though it is like I am reading a teleprompter. I am not. I am speaking off the top of my head, but the reason I am swinging like that is because, as you can see, the configuration of the Parliament, as far as the Opposition is concerned, is now divided into three camps. One here, one there and one up there, so sometimes when I am addressing the camp down here, I switch to this side; when I am addressing the camp in the middle, I talk to them; and when I am talking about the ones over there and the three blind mice, sorry, the three Members at the back, I will try to lift my voice so that they can hear me clearly.

The point that I want to make is that the Prime Minister touched on it. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter who is not in his chair at this moment, unfortunately, came to this House and presented Estimates, in 2006, I believe it was. SEQ 32)SEQ 33 I have a copy here and I can make it a copy of the House. In fact, it came from the House and he spoke in these terms. He said at page M-18. I am not sure how the paging is done but it is M-18.

“Mr. Speaker, it is in that spirit that I want to talk about some financial reforms that we are about to put in place. I have passed to the Opposition ...(0:57) to (2:22).

Mr. Speaker, that was in the Estimates of 2006. Sir, we came into office in January 2008 and we had to rush as Ministers, if Honourable Members recall, we had to rush as Ministers to pick up some of the drafts of the Estimates which they had left and try to get our own programmes worked into it but basically understand the process and the first exercise I went through when I was a Minister of Foreign Affairs was a mini seminar on accrual accounting, on how they were moving the Estimates from cash to accrual accounting. Sir, every Minister would have had to gone through that. In fact, in every Estimates speech that I have checked since 2007, it has been written in there by the Ministry that Government was transitioning first expenditure and second revenue into accrual accounting.

Madam Deputy Speaker, last year I spoke in this House that the process of transitioning to accrual accounting was substantially complete and I quote:

“Under the accrual system accounting the Government reports its financial operation in terms of operating balance. The operating system is similar to a profit and loss statement and is calculated showing revenue minus expenses. It should be noted that expenses are costs for carrying on the business and do not include capital outlays”. Sir, it goes on to say from last year that, “as part of this process from the next financial year, 2015/2016, Government’s deficit overall and recurrent will be reported on an accrued basis”. Sir, that is what I said last. In fact, prior to last year, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter in this Chamber got up said that he does not understand in his Estimates speech why the Ministry of Finance does not stop reporting cash and report the deficit on an accrual basis once and for all. I indicated in my wrap-up that is exactly what we were proposing to do from financial year 2015/2016.

Mr. Speaker, I am now to come to this Parliament having done exactly what they ... Sir, do you know who was the Attorney-General when the Appropriation Bill in 2006 and 2007 was done. It was the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph I believe was the Attorney-General who would have had to

certify it, for the basis on which the Government will report its fiscal accounts and its financial account on an accrual basis legally to be brought to this the Honourable the House of Assembly. I had to stand up in here and hear that the Minister of Finance was trying to be David Copperfield, changing the systems of measure to fool people in Barbados what the fiscal deficit in Barbados was or the net operating balance of the Government is or was. Sir, that is what the Leader of the Opposition got up and did in here when it was the last administration that took this Government’s financial operations from a cash basis into an accrual basis of accounting. Sir, all I did was to execute because we agreed with them. I will tell you why we agreed, the Prime Minister hinted to it. We agreed with it because as the statement said by the Right Honourable Member, the then Minister of Finance, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, it gives a truer reflection of what Government’s financial condition was or is if you are reporting in the present. It tells you what the real facts are on an annualized basis.

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of disingenuousness. There is a lot of intellectual dishonesty that goes on in Barbados when it comes to these things that I think people need to know and understand what you are dealing with, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam, Honourable Members on the other side need to know because some of them, I believe in their own blissful ignorance -- I do not mean ignorance in the derogatory sense -- I mean that they just do not know and they get up and repeat these things because they sound good. They heard the leader or somebody somewhere saying it and they get up and just re-parrot it as though it is something of fact. I heard the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter speaking and I must tell you, I have a lot of time for the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, a lot more time now that he on pre-retirement leave or pre-retirement mode from Government even though I will tell you this. I have a lot of respect for him, a lot more time for him now than when he was Prime Minister. I am sure he has a lot more time for me now too. I heard the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter got up yesterday and spoke in this debate giving some very gratuitous advice. Sir, somebody messaged me today and said his speech sounded like a job interview, like he was trying to interview for a job. In fact, he said that if he were given the job to advise me, he would have advised on this and he would have advised me on that and he would have advised me on the next thing. I message back the person and said to them, why would I give somebody a job when I can get the advice for free, and he was giving it quite gratuitously.

Mr. Speaker, what the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter did not say and what other(SEQ 33) (SEQ 34)Members over the Other Side, the other part of the Opposition would not say is that they were living in seventh heaven when it came to public finance accounting.

Whilst we are having to live very close to hell in the burning shadows of having to reveal everything the cash basis of accounting allowed the last Government - and the Prime Minister read the IMF, Board Report - to conceal a lot of expenditures that we now, as an Administration cannot do under the accrual accounting system because when you are operating under cash you can have all these below the line accounts - yes the Honourable Member for St. James Central is repeating even before I say it. He knows what I am saying is true. You have these below the line accounts into which money can go and projects can be done, the public enterprise fund out of which money was taken to build the Hilton and to do other things, a fund which the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Government set up when we sold certain assets including Heywoods, that money was secreted out of that fund - do not let us say secreted - it was spent but it was not placed on budget. It was not recorded. The spending went to GEMS, \$275 million up at GEMS, millions of dollars to help build the Hilton. Other moneys were spend, \$150 million to build Kensington Oval. One hundred and somebody million was borrowed to build the judicial centre. Do you know, Madam Deputy Speaker, none of that came through here?

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: None of that had to be shown in any fiscal accounts so when the Honourable Member for St. Peter got up in his usual fashion and spoke about him seeing an understanding of the need to have a deficit of 2.5 per cent and I said that if we do not get the deficit to 1 per cent and we were able to get that deficit down, the rules suited him to do that because all the off budget expenditure that was happening did not have to appear on the books but do you know what happened, Madam Deputy Speaker? Do you know when they created all of that debt and left the system having used the cash basis of accounting and the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) and had to use the accrual basis of accounting do you know what happened? We had to bring all of it on to the books and there goes the fiscal position. That is why the IMF and the rating agencies and others always said, yes, you have a low recurrent deficit but there is a structural deficit that Barbados is running and that is why when they say structural deficit they mean the deficit really exists within the structure of your system but because you do not have to bring it on to your books, it is not readily seen by the average person but we know that it is there. When a whole set of political sanctimoniousness exists in this society that this Minister of Finance is so careless, that I am running up these large deficits, let me tell you something. I hear people talking about subsidies and transfers, Madam Deputy Speaker. Do you know that one of the largest blocks of statutory transfers was created by that Government through the sole action of transforming the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) from a Government Department to statutory corporation. Do you know that the

\$100 million changed with the one thing from being a central Government Department that would have been recorded in the accounts as good and services on wages and salaries became a statutory transfer and then at the top of it, gave them permission to go and borrow. This was a hospital that was not making money to pay back the borrowing. Madam Deputy Speaker, even more than that, when they took the single decision sign the documents to create a private company at the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc., that too became a statutory transfer in some respects.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: That is the thing but do you know what was worst than it? They sent the Airport along, told them to keep revenue that they were making from the fees they were charging, the landing fees, and what was then the Departure Tax and so forth. They told the Airport to keep all of that. That is no problem, good enough, I am happy that the Airport can run itself but do you know what happened? The then Administration, under the Honourable Member for St. Peter decision that we were going to keep paying for the substantial costs at the Airport in relation to air traffic control, navigational system, all of those you would see money provided in here for air traffic controllers, for navigational systems, for things at the Civil Aviation Department all of that. The Government kept all of those costs. Those costs did not did not go with the Airport and my own view, as Minister of Finance, and I believe that the Minister of Tourism and International Transport supports my view too, that some of that cost should be carried by the Airport. The Airport does not even now contribute, Madam Deputy Speaker, to the marketing of Barbados. They benefit the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. (BTMI) that we have to give \$89 million to who everybody - well not everybody but the Honourable Member for St. Michael North - gets in here and say how we give all these people money to bring these aeroplanes here and all of that. We bring these minimal revenue guarantees, as they call them, subsidising the airlines to come to Barbados, all of that, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have to for out of central Government. The Airport benefits whenever a plane lands at the Grantley Adams International Airport (GAIA) and they do not really pay a cent for any of that. So when you set up the system in a way that other people have to be affected by it but you yourself escaped and then you come back years after to then lecture people about how fiscally irresponsible they are is unfortunate because it does not tell the true story of what I, as Minister of Finance, and this Government has had to deal with during this crisis, but only where the rules changed, Madam Deputy Speaker, but the conditions changed too. When you hear Members of the Opposition speaking they speak as though the world stopped in 2007 and everything has been 2007 since then. We have gone through the world's worst recession, we have had major

impacts on our international business and financial services sector. The Attorney General (AG) spoke about it, the Minister can speak about it as well and we have lost Bds\$200 million a year Incorporation Tax largely because of changes to legislation in other countries, particularly Canada, that has affected our international business sector. I cannot go up to the Federal Parliament of Canada and beat anybody and tell them to change back the legislation to suit Barbados. We have lost \$200 million a year and I have had to contend with that as Minister of Finance. When you see all the tax concessions that were being given by the Honourable Member for St. Peter he was doing that on the back of that Corporation Tax and it is no longer there but people still want us to give the same (SEQ34) SEQ35) benefits without getting the commensurate inflows, that is why we have had to make adjustments. Not only have the rules changed, the conditions have changed but yet they expect the same spectacular performance from me as Minister of Finance and from the Government of Barbados even though the rules of accounting and process have changed and the conditions in the world have changed.

The British Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered his Budget today and he has changed the growth forecast. The Bank of England changed it before him anyhow. The Bank of England got in about 300 persons with PhDs, people with Degrees in economics in forms and shapes that you could not even possibly imagine, econometricians, super computers, monetarists, financial specialists and management specialist and they have now changed their forecast downwards, and the Minister of Finance in Britain has gone there and changed his downwards too. Madam Deputy Speaker, whenever the Central Bank of Barbados does forecast and conditions have not panned out the way that they think, because it is only a forecast, and we have to change, we are the worst people in the world for the Leader of the Opposition and her cohorts, not the ones in here I would not call them cohorts they are Honourable Members, I am talking about the ones outside of here, the intellectually dishonest and the political cadavers who are hunting about for some cemetery to lie down in, just getting around talking rubbish.

The International Monetary Fund, somebody said on CNN recently, has predicted global growth incorrectly 96 per cent of the time for the last 20 years, which is a fact, but it is just a forecast.

The Central Bank said that growth in Barbados was about 0.5 per cent. They projected that growth coming this year would be 1.6 per cent. I had an International Monetary Fund staff visit here, and I do not think because I leave the International Monetary Fund to put out their own stuff, and just after they left here the Caribbean Development Bank put out a forecasting, they do not think it is going to grow by more than 0.8 per cent, and I saw the media bound on to the Central Bank; the Central Bank says 1.6 per cent and

the Caribbean Development Bank, a big conference they had, said 0.8 per cent. Do you know what the International Monetary Fund said to me on the exit visit. They said I feel you all might have underestimated the rate of growth in 2015, we believe it might be a little higher than the 0.5 per cent that you have predicted, and we are changing our thing for 2016 to 2.1 per cent that is what they said to me, but all of that is just numbers. I am not overly interested in forecast. I am interested in getting the stuff done that will get us the growth that we need so that we can move this economy forward, that is what I am interested in because a forecast is just a forecast. Anybody can forecast anything.

I forecast that the Honourable Member for St. James Central would become the Leader of the Opposition and leader of the Barbados Labour Party before this term is out but that is just a forecast. Indeed, when he came here today resplendent in his Savile Row three-piece suit, the Right Honourable Prime Minister was moved to ask if he just came from the Governor-General. I mean he looks so dapper that we thought he had gone up to Government House and we started counting the chairs that were empty to see if enough numbers had gone up but he did not have enough. He went right around the roundabout at Belmont and stopped at Dick Sealy at the chapel right outside of Belmont Funeral Home, but do not worry you will get in there, I mean in Government House I do not mean at Dick Sealy, soon enough.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is just a forecast. We would like to be all pinpoint and on target each time but it does not happen all the time, but you cannot keep abusing he central Bank like that like you cannot keep abusing the Ministry of Finance staff. The point that I was making in relation to this, Mr. Speaker, is that the deficit is reported on an accrued basis and the accrued deficit revised and projected for 2015-2016 is going to be 4.2 per cent. For internal finance and cash management purposes you have to do a cash account and therefore the cash basis of the deficit would be 6.3, so when I heard the Honourable Member for St. James Central saying oh he is not sure which one it is whether it is 5 or 6 I am going to teach him a little public finance. That is internal budgeting and cash management. That is not what the accumulated deficit of the Government is. He is going to get up on a point of order, but that is not what it is so that nobody is hiding anything because in here you would see the cash basis...

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. At no stage during my presentation did I say that I did not know what it is. I said that either way the issue was that the deficit as projected is in excess of the projections of the Government's Revised Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy and

in fact it is in excess also of the worst-case scenario projected in the Revised Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for that explanation.

Madam Deputy Speaker vacated the Chair and the Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I take the point the Honourable Member is making about the Revised Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy and again I take him back to his seminar provided by his Administration on accrual accounting, and we are going to do it on the accrual basis. The Revised Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy said that we should aim for a deficit at this time of 3.5 per cent. We have projected that the deficit is going to be 4.2 per cent. There is not any big different between the two really in that sense, but the real point is that as I said in my opening speech when I laid these Estimates that under the accrual system of accounting the rule is that capital transfers ought not to be included in the computation of the deficit so long as those capital transfers are going to create a fixed asset that has a value because it is capital expenditure and you depreciate the asset over time and you put it in there. I said in this debate that there is a debate about whether it should be in or out, and to be on the safe side (SEQ35)(SEQ36) I left it in. I did the worst-case scenario, leave it in and when the guidance comes from the international accounting standards bodies who have already spoken and written on this matter, but you know me, I want to be on the safe side then we will make the adjustments accordingly. But if I were to take out the \$130 million that we gave to the Barbados Water Authority for mains laying and meters then the deficit would go below the same 3 per cent. If I take out the \$50 million that has to go to the Port Authority it will go all the way down.

Mr. Speaker, I am not arguing over these figures or these numbers, what I am concerned about, as I said in my speech, is where is the financing, if you have a deficit, how are you going to get the money. Sir, that is the important thing, that is the only important thing about deficits. You could run a 20 per cent deficit if you know how you are going to get the money; if somebody is going to give you the money to run a 20 per cent deficit then you can run it. the question is, if you keep running deficits that are high consistently all the time, somebody may say sorry, I cannot keep giving you money so all the time. Mr. Speaker, that is why you want to get your deficit down so that you can control and manage your accounts.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at what is transpiring in these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure here, the vast majority of increase expenditure items in here are all capital items funded by foreign low-cost loans from

institutions like the Inter-American Development Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank, CAF, the Chinese Government, and all of them.

Mr. Speaker, again we get into the disingenuousness of what we hear -- we want you to get growth, growth is too low, 0.3 per cent growth is not growth at all, 0.3 per cent growth is not growth at all, we want more growth. Sir, when you try to do the things to try to get the growth, they say that you are spending for an election. Sir, you cannot win with this Opposition -- and I know you would not say that -- but you cannot win with the Opposition at all, but I live by the motto that I do not know what the keys to success are, but I know the key to failure is trying to please everybody.

My job is not to please everybody, my job is to try to do what is right by the people of Barbados, to ensure that I protect the integrity of Barbados' financial and economic system, that we can have the stability to be able to grow, to grow jobs, to grow investments, to grow and develop the people of Barbados, that is my job. Sir, I am not running around like a headless chicken trying to please everybody because that is not going to happen.

Mr. Speaker, when we look in these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure there is \$80 million for the Sam Lord's Castle. We said that we were going to do Sam Lord's Castle, this is nothing new. The Chinese came and gave us \$200 million loan, I would call it on some of the most ridiculous terms. They acquired the land since 2008. The interest barely get above 2 per cent.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: But it is true. The Inter-American Development Bank and CAF said, look, we want to work with you to build your road infrastructure, to help transport, to improve trade, to increase tourism, to do all of those things, we are going to give you some low-cost money. In the case of the Inter-American Development Bank that was almost 1 per cent of; in the case of CAF it was just below 2 per cent. Sir, that I signed for.

Mr. Speaker, the American Government has given us \$11 million to build a number of laboratories, go opposite the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and you would see the laboratories being constructed below the Old Enmore site. Sir, that is grant funding, we do not have to pay it back. We said we want to develop the skills of our people, Barbadians who have lost their jobs and need to be reskilled, so that they can go into the job market and earn money in other occupations. Sir, as part of the transition from the sugar protocols of the old African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries arrangement, both the Lome' and Cotonou Conventions and the transition out of sugar they call the accompanying protocols or the accompanying

measures, they said they would give us budget support but that it has to go to something that can do something productive for the people of Barbados. We said we would do a human resource development strategy and the money is going in there. We said we would do institutional strengthening. We said we wanted to improve the procurement system in Barbados and the Inter-American Development Bank said they would support it. They said they would support an improvement in the Statistical Department and they gave us money for that. We put it in these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, in every area of operation of Government that be improved to help the private sector to move things forward we have put in these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, and we get lambaste for this. It is said we do not know what we are doing; that the country is in the worse possible way; that this is an election budget; it is the Independence celebrations. Sir, we heard a whole set of stuff.

Mr. Speaker, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter who of course... Again I said I have the greatest degree of respect for him and I think he gave a pretty useful speech yesterday and also making some very interesting point but of course the Honourable Member could not pass the opportunity to attack the Central Bank of Barbados and its Governor, that is an annual exercise and we know what that is all about. Mr. Speaker, today's paper has had a splash that the Central Bank of Barbados is being accused of vandalism because it is printing money to support the deficit of the Government.

Mr. Speaker, the easiest way to wane the Government off Central Bank of Barbados funding is to bring the deficit down but do you know, with the Opposition they want the deficit down, they want to win the argument on getting the deficit down but they also want to win the argument on more spending, so you must spend more on everything else but still bring your deficit down. You must raise more revenue but do not raise taxes; you must give away because everybody must get everything for free but you must not impose on the people. Sir, they want to have their cake and eat it too.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what is unfortunate and dishonest about the intellectual discourse on economics, and I had to say this to one of the people from the International Monetary Fund. Sir, I said, you all always talking, because they quote this International Monetary Fund document about the Central Bank of Barbados printing money. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that in every major country that has been impacted upon by the global recession, all of them, all of their central monetary authorities printed money or supported their Governments and are supporting their Governments in the most difficult circumstances -- the European Central Bank, the United

States Federal Reserves. Sir, do you know what they call it over there? They call it quantitative easing and it is encouraged by the same International Monetary Fund that will come down here to lecture Barbados about the Central Bank of Barbados supporting its own Government.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Well, when they say printing money they do not mean that there is a printing Press out there, they mean that the Central Bank of Barbados is taking up Government securities and supporting ordinary Barbadians who are walking around out there, that they can get to live, eat, sleep and enjoy Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, nobody is saying that you should go over there, I do not do it, I do not have that conversation with the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, but the Central Bank of Barbados is the Government's bank and to the extent where prudence can allow and the Central Bank of Barbados can assist the Government in difficult circumstances, it has to assist the Government in difficult circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, if the commercial banks have limits, and they cannot lend the Government much more because they have limits, but they have excess liquidity and they cannot keep and that excess liquidity is deposited in the Central Bank of Barbados, the Central Bank of Barbados is not going to pay them anything for it, so that the Central Bank of Barbados uses the same money to help by some Government securities to assist the Government (SEQ 36) SEQ 37) and recycle the money in the school. The same argument with the National Insurance Scheme (NIS). Every year we have to go through this whole thing about the NIS, and how the Government is raiding the NIS. Mr. Speaker, the NIS has a responsibility to invest the pension money of people in instruments that can give it the highest possible return for the investment which they have made. It is futuristic. They are not investing for today. They are investing for the people who will retire 20, 30 and 50 years down the road or whatever the case may be. It is their job to ensure that actuarially they get the highest rate of return on the investment.

Overseas interest rates are incredibly low, and have been low for almost a decade. In the United States they are almost negative, paying 0.1 per cent and 0.2 per cent. Yet there are some people in Barbados who are telling us that the NIS of Barbados should take up the monies of the people of Barbados and convert it into United States money from the Central Bank's foreign reserves and export it out of Barbados into, say, the United States (US) to buy US securities, to finance the US Government deficit so that the US Government could take the money and send troops to

Iraq, and get 0.1 per cent return and half a percentage point return on it. Barbados is to do this when the Government of Barbados has a need for resources and they can invest in Government securities and get an average of 3.5 or 3.25 per cent on their investment. What kind of prudence would that be for a fund manager to take up the taxpayers' or the workers' money, ship it out of Barbados in US dollars, deplete your foreign exchange, get nothing in return for it, so that you could support somebody else's deficit? Your Government has a deficit which is supporting transport, schools, health and so forth, but you should ignore your Government. I hear that in this Chamber; that the Minister of Finance and the Central Bank are stopping the NIS from investing overseas. If that is what the NIS is going to be investing overseas on, and that is the return they are going to be getting, they are not going to be utilising the scarce foreign exchange we have for that purpose. When the situation eases and gets better, of course. Those who want to go and play the stock market with the people of Barbados' money, it is not going to happen because at the end of the day, as the Prime Minister said, if the NIS runs into any problem, the only place they have to come to is the Government of Barbados. When the Unemployment Fund ran into problems, I had to come here with a Supplementary of \$12 million to replenish that account.

We also heard this thing about -- the Prime Minister spoke about it -- the (BTII) Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated. I am going to wrap up now, Sir. I have all the correspondence here but I am not going to read it out. Do you know why I am not going to read out this correspondence between the entities and the Ministry of Finance, BTII and NIS? It is because I have a little respect for the institution and the people involved. I saw the Honourable Member for St. Michael North with similar correspondence. He only read the ones that suited him, or he only referred to the ones that suited him. I saw him and I asked him to turn it here because it looked a little funny, and I realised that he actually seemed to have the original BTII correspondence with the blue colour print at the top. The one I got is a copy, a black and white copy. He had the original copy. I am not going to read out that but I will defend.

There are very few people I would put my neck on the block for but do you see the chap who is running the BTII? I am not calling his name but he is an honest and decent public servant who means only well for Barbados and Barbadians. He is a hardworking Christian man in Barbados who goes out of his way, drives up and down at all hours of the day and night working to get this Barbados economy going and get the projects going in Barbados, and I am not going to participate in any exercise to diminish him in this kind of dishonourable way that was done by the Leader of the Opposition and the Member for St. Michael North. I am not going to do it. He does not deserve it in this Parliament. I would defend him down to the hilt because I

know his heart and his head are in the right place in Barbados. When you get people who come in here ... and I always make this point, he who comes to equity must come with clean hands. I am not a lawyer. The Member for St. James Central is a lawyer, verified by his certificate from Sir Hugh Wooding Law School. He went. I know he went. He was not the brightest tool in the shed but he went. At least he showed up. He is a good fellow, he is my friend and we go back a long way.

There are people who come in here and say the Government did this, the Cabinet made this decision that they had no right. As the Minister of Finance under the Insurance Act, I have the power or the authority under the Act to issue investment instructions to the NIS. Not only me. Every Minister of Finance has had that authority, but I am not some Lone Ranger out there in Barbados running around on my own doing as I like. I subject myself to governance, and therefore there is a Cabinet. Are you going to tell me that it is a failure of governance for the Minister of Finance to ask the Cabinet to deliberate and give instructions before I exercise my legitimate authority under the law? It could only have been something to help the governance process, but it involved the Cabinet. How would it look, as the Minister of Tourism said, if I sat down across a bed one night and decided to issue that instruction and the Prime Minister and the Cabinet found out about it in the next two weeks? I should be justifiably fired from the Cabinet. We involve the Cabinet in these decisions. We sit down as men and women entrusted with responsibility of governing the country, and discuss the implications of these actions before we go and exercise our duty. Because the law says you can go and do it, would you run off by yourself and do it? You do not constitute a government yourself. This is not a one-man Government.

In this cruel twist of fate, the Leader of the Opposition tried to turn that around to make it seem as though we were doing something that was wrong. If that is the case, I would say to the Prime Minister and the Attorney General that the Act wants changing. It should be changed to say the Minister of Finance under the instruction of the Cabinet or with the concurrence of the Cabinet. That provision needs to be amended.

Aside.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Of course. That is the point. The Leader of the Opposition would not have gone to Cabinet. Do you know why I know that she would not have gone to Cabinet? When they had the Four Seasons matter and the decision was taken, or it was being contemplated that the Four Seasons project should get a loan from the NIS, and the NIS was under the then chairmanship of his excellency now serving Barbados in a different capacity, and the Leader of the Opposition was the legal advisor and partner-in-chief of the person who was running the Four

Seasons project -- I am not calling his name either -- collecting these large legal fees, the Leader of the Opposition was trying to get me as Minister of Finance to execute my responsibility under the law to order the Board of the NIS to approve a loan for the Four Seasons project. (SEQ37)(SEQ 38) I am not going to call his name either but they were collecting these large legal fees. The Leader of the Opposition was trying to get me as Minister of Finance to execute my responsibility under the law to order the Board of the National Insurance Scheme to approve a loan for the Four Seasons Project and I said, no, it has to go to Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, at the time, Of course, the Leader of the Opposition was not interested in anybody's pension because it did not serve her purpose at that time but, all of a sudden now this is the subject of a political meeting at the Barbados Labour Party headquarters which was streamed to six billion people in the world and had six hits, one for every billion persons in the world. Mr. Speaker, six people logged on the meeting, the Honourable Member for the City, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, who I understand logged on twice from different accounts. Sir, it was not the Honourable Member for St. Joseph because he was not logging on to none of that. He is not interested in none of that rubbish. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas logged on the meeting to hear that this Government was trying to carry away money from the National Insurance Scheme. Sir, six billion people on the world wide web and only six people, one for every billion, logged on to hear that rubbish that was being spoken the other night to say that we are doing these illegal things.

Mr. Speaker, do you know that it is a strategy. Sir, anything that this Government does that can help people or can advance this economy or they feel can make us look good, throw a scandal on it, create some doubt, talk about corruption, Ministers doing something and somebody is getting a car, and somebody getting a yacht. Sir, they say that I own a yacht and that I have a yacht down Port Ferdinand.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: I grew up near Brandons, so I can swim. They say I have yacht and I hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael North got up in here and tried to insinuate indirectly he did not do it directly but he did it indirectly that either the Minister of Tourism or myself got some money from Sandals for giving a deal. Sir, I know you had to caution him because he was going very close to the edge and trying to give people that impression. Sir, we need to stop this rubbish.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell you something and everyone knows it. I can speak frankly in here because

everyone in here knows that politicians are the most targeted people in the world when it comes to the issue of corruption and taking money. Sir, that is a fact.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: No, I am talking about a different point altogether. You just wait and hold on. Sir, do not care who says that I own a yacht. Sir, me and my mother, lovely lady that she is, we had a good laugh about it last Mother's Day. Sir, I told my mother that Mother's Day is coming up, do you want to go to lunch, as we would normally take our mother to lunch. She said "lunch", do we not go to lunch every year. Why can I not go on the yacht that they say you own and let us go for a little sail. We can sail around for a while. I hear them talking about how you own a yacht, why do you not take me out on the yacht too, am I not somebody.

Mr. Speaker, that kind of thing does not affect me. I do not care what they say, the good Lord knows where I am but as a politician now in this world, you cannot go and open a bank account in peace. You are politically exposed person. Your wife cannot open a bank account nor your children cannot open a bank account.

Mr. Speaker, I had a couple of friend who called me and told me that they are going to have to stop speaking to you because they went to the bank and they ask them if they are friends of any politician, or if I am family to any politicians. Sir, you cannot even put \$5 in the bank now because they want to know where you got it from, who you got it from and what you plan to spend it on. Sir, if you go to get a loan for a car there are a whole set of questions about where the money comes from. Sir, a whole set of things are asked and I am speaking frankly about this because we as politicians do not let people know the things that we have suffer and suffer through. There are members both in politics now and out of politics whose children have become of age to go overseas and study and when they go overseas, they are struggling to be able to open an account for their children at the university to be able to send money to them so that they can pay their tuition, their rent and board and get meals. Sir, this is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, you are struggling to get a little money for the Central Bank of Barbados or from a commercial bank. You try to give them a debit card and they have to go to a bank overseas and the first thing the bank ask is whether your father is a politician or whether your mother is Minister and, Sir, you are politically exposed, so we cannot give it to you. Sir, that is what is going on.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is that when people say somebody bring \$20 million and give to this politician and he has it in a bank account somewhere, that is absolute rubbish.

Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINKLER: Sir, people donate things to politicians. Sir, somebody donated a flat screen TV to me and somebody donated a coffin to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. I gave mine to my constituents and he held on to his for when the time comes. Sir, all of a sudden, the Honourable Member is in the House harassing me. Sir, at least the people can see in the paper that I gave mine away because it was a donation and I do not want it. Sir, we have to get serious with these things.

Mr. Speaker, everything that the Government is doing somebody is getting something. Sir, Cahill -- somebody is getting something. Sandals -- somebody getting something. The Grotto -- somebody carry away something. Sir, I will tell you that there has been a forensic audit that has been done on the high-rise building and I am waiting for it to be published because it is going to tell the lie about all of the innuendos that have been spread around this place about certain people and that is why I tell the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, who I consider to be an intellectual and a little bit of a philosopher. He is not completely read but he still has some time in spite of his age to catch up never the mind the Honourable Member for St. James Central said he has nothing more than a seventh standard education. I know that is not true because he was at the university with me so I know that he is an intellectual. I always tell the Honourable Member for St. Michael East that he sets a high standard in debate, so keep away from that retail (SEQ 38)(SEQ 39) politics, it does not suit you. He gave an otherwise excellent speech. Do you know that he began the speech by saying that he was not going to criticise these Estimates because he has gone through the Estimates and he realised that what is here this year is pretty much what was there last year. He gave a good speech and then all of a sudden, almost like an aeroplane flying nicely and you see the runway and decide that you are going to drop. He did not have any approach, he just dropped out of the sky by going on and trying by innuendo implicate a legitimate businessman in Barbados of causing the death of a 10- or 11-year old child who was going home from a graduation and expected to go into a senior school in Barbados. That was in poor taste and it is not true. It is ridiculous and I need the Honourable Member to lift his standards. Do not, because you are hanging out with - well I should not say the Sandy Lane crowd - the decedents of the planter class, do not allow yourself to be dragged down in the mud.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I keep telling you so. You are better than that. Do not allow anybody to pull you down to support them. Leave that for the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East who sits down in the Parliament like Queen Ann, pleased as punch with the Leader, not

even lifting a little finger to defend the Honourable Member for Christ Church West who was savaged by the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) and then crying the crocodile tears about the plight that women have to go through in politics. Did you hear it? I had to swallow deeply because I almost choked on my own saliva. I could not believe it, hitching her wagon to Hilary Clinton and talking about, we as women have to go through so much, only weeks after savaging the Honourable Member for Christ Church West ... The cruellest, most unceremonious or sanctimonious cut of all, Mr. Speaker, caught good men ... Do you know there was a picture called, "A Few Good Men?" Well, I am saying that advisedly because I am including the Honourable Member for St. James North, but good men and encouraged them to drag away themselves. They yanked the microphones out of the thing. I came in here this morning early and saw the sound men up behind the thing there fidgeting around and I asked: "What happen? Did the system break down?" I did not know all that time that, on the orders from on high, the Members of that party that sit down on this end - not the Honourable Member for St. James Central because he does not participate in that kind of circus, not him. At least we know he has a lot more class about him, at least sometimes, but they dragged them and made them sit down in the back because they must not sit down next to the Honourable Member for Christ Church West when she speaks. Can you imagine that this is what politics has come to in Barbados, this kind of pettiness of a political despot as so termed by the Honourable Member for St. Peter? What would happen if that person were to get their paws on Government? Is that the way you treat people, in this kind of disdainful way? It is shameful, and then want to come in here crying crocodile tears about how we have a hard road to travel as women in politics, after you slice off somebody's head, a young, upcoming, bright, enterprising, female member of the Parliament and first time parliamentarian. You chopped off her head full ISIS style and come in here lecturing me and this Government about morals and ethics. Should we really be subjected to this?

I am going to make this point finally because I know we want to wrap up this now. Mr. Speaker, this is about foreign exchange reserves and borrowing. I hear this point about Barbados reserves declining and I gave my position on that very clear. In 2013, we had reached the stage where we were losing reserves at a rate of between \$15 million to \$20 million a month and that is a fact. I think it has reached as high as \$16 million or \$17 million a month and we have a monetary and management system in here that we have put in place where reserves are concern. Everyday, I get a print out of the reserve position and we consult. We like our trends because we do not do everyday, if you do everyday you will get a heart attack. You will go up one day and come down the next day but you look at trends. At the end of the week, you look at the trend to see how has the trend been, how much you have lost and how much you

have gain, whatever the case may be and we intervene accordingly, but there are people who give the impression that Barbados is a country that has always had high reserves and that is not the history of Barbados. The average amount of reserves that we have had in Barbados are \$1 billion. There are some periods in time back in the 1990s that Barbados only had \$700 million or if you put it in US\$350 million in reserves and then it went up to BDS\$800 million or US\$400 million so those periods when you heard the Members of the Opposition getting up in here talking about they left \$2.6 billion in reserves and all of that, Mr. Speaker, you know that I like to get the facts, because it has always been that this country has borrowed to show up the reserves. We have never been a country that has earned any substantial amount of reserves. We have always had to go into the market and borrow.

Mr. Speaker, in the space of five years, from 2000 to 2005, the last Government borrowed the following loans, \$75 million from Citicorp at an interest rate of 9.9 per cent, you hear that interest rate Honourable Member, 9.9 per cent, \$150 million. First of June 2000 US\$100 million from Credit Suisse Bank 8.75 percent, BDS\$200 million. December 10, 2001, US\$150 million Bearse Terms and Company limited interest rate 7.25 per cent. December 5, 2005, \$190 million from the Deutsche Bank, 6.625 per cent interest rate. Mr. Speaker, when you calculate those five years, the last Government borrowed US\$515 million in five years which is BDS\$1 030 million and this was in the period when we were doing well, when everything was good, when the world economy was booming and when everybody was happy and tourism was so high and the spend was so great and they still borrowed US\$100 million on average every year for five years which is BDS\$200 million for five years and it was being put into, what did they call it, a rainy day fund and this fund and the next fund. Do not fool yourselves about reserve growth. Reserve growth has always been showed up by foreign borrowings in Barbados.(Seq 39)(SEQ 40) One hundred million dollars of it went to pay off the one that you borrowed in 2000 from Credit Suisse Bank which matured on the 15th of June 2010, so we borrowed that to repay yours. We borrowed US\$80 million, BDS\$160 million, from Scotia Bank Trust in August 2009 and that was to repay the one you borrowed in 2000, so we were not borrowing to shore up reserves, we were borrowing to pay off the ones that you borrowed.

Let me tell you something, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Do you know, and the Minister of Agriculture knows this, that the last Government went and borrowed a syndicated bond for BDS\$120 million to support the sugar industry in 2002 for the BAMC and stood as guarantor for it. Having left the BAMC as a wreck, which we inherited, the BAMC was not in a position to pay it when it matured. It matured on the 1st of March this year. The BAMC wrote to the Ministry in December and said that the first part of it has matured, \$60

million of this loan has matured, and was ready for payment and they were not in a position to pay for it. You see all of the people who are running around talking foolishness about Barbados defaulting, that was not in my programme for debt servicing. They came to the Ministry of Finance and I said to the staff, because there was this suggestion as the Minister of Agriculture knows, let us get the bond holders together and have a meeting, because you got to get two-thirds of the bond holders together and have a quick meeting, and ask them to roll over, I said do not roll over anything, find the money and pay it and pay it on time and in full, and it was paid in time and on full without any fanfare. Mr. Speaker, that is why I can say with a degree of confidence that this country is not defaulting on any loans. We are not defaulting on anything. That is not the history of Barbados and it will not be the history of Barbados once this Government is in office because we put the priorities right. In the Government's budget, it is debt first, it is salaries and wages and it health, education, sanitation and water if necessary, and that is it. You see those priorities, those are what we deal with and then any other number can play after that. Other than national security which of course we all require, police and so forth and so on, any other number can play. Priorities first.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: No, no, no, I am not agitated with you, I am saying that people come to Barbados or people inside of Barbados who should know better make these points. I am saying that in a financial market which is extremely sensitive you got to be very careful when you make these kinds of comments especially when they are not backed by history or facts, and therefore if I seem a little agitated, I should be agitated because when you get a roomful of investors being told that foolishness, people start to get jittery, they start to pull back and do not want to lend the Government. A maturity becomes due that can be rolled over, they say they are not rolling it over, give them some Treasury Bills. People start hoarding US money, oh the Government would soon devalued the dollar so let me gather up as much as I want. That is irresponsible behaviour in an economy like ours and I am not encouraging it and I am not making any apologies for speaking about it because as Minister of Finance my first job is to defend the financial integrity of Barbados and I am going to do that.

I want to close, Mr. Speaker. I am happy that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West is back with us. I want to make a point about Barbados HDI (Human Development Index). You must read these things very carefully and know... The Honourable Member gave a very good speech and I congratulate the Honourable Member for it, but I want Honourable Members and the public of Barbados to know that Barbados' rank in the HDI, not the Member ranking because those are comparative analysis

with peers, our score then, has increased every year since 1980. It has not declined contrary to popular belief. The Human Development Index people adjusted the measurement process and they indicated that because they wrote to us and said to us they were going to make changes to that and you may see a drop in your country rank but that does not constitute a drop in how well you are doing, and it is said in their report.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Well, do not talk about that at all. Do not talk about the ease of doing business. It says that Barbados HDI value for 2014 of 0.785 puts the country in the high human development category positioned at 57 out of 188 countries and territories. Between 1980 and 2014 Barbados HDI value increased from 0.670 to 0.75, an increase of 17.2 per cent on an annual average of about 0.47 per cent. Mr. Speaker, Barbados has actually done better not worse.

Mr. Speaker, it goes on to say, birth rate increased by 6.9 years, schooling increased by 4.2 years and expected years of schooling increased by 3.2 years. It says Barbados GNI per capita decreased by 0.8 per cent between 1980 and 2004.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: The GNI coefficient method, which is done on the basis of purchasing power parity as opposed to the per capita GDP measure. It is a little economics thing that they do. Anyway, let me tell you that the World Bank is really the recognised authority for determining these measures not the United Nations. They get their information from the World Bank. Barbados GDP per capita was never \$22 000, never, do not let anybody tell you that, that was never so. Barbados' 2014 GNI per capita PPP (Purchasing Power Parity) is US\$15 310. The United Nations Index has it at US\$12 and the World Bank has it at US\$15 000. That let me tell you something, that is so because they all have their different ways of computing these things, but the recognised authority for these kinds of economic statistical data is the World Bank because when we go to float a bond, for example, and the bond holders want to get information on the country they call the International Monetary Fund for certain things and they call the World Bank for GDP per capita because these different institutions have different competence and the world Bank which has the largest global gateway is the institution that is relied upon, (SEQ 40)(SEQ 41) When others want to get information on a country they call the International Monetary Fund for certain things such as the Gross Domestic Product; they call the World Bank for Gross Domestic Product per capita because these different institutions have different competences, and the World Bank which has the largest global development gateway is

the institution that is relied upon for these types of development. The United Nation has other statistics that they use, population measures, life expectancy and that kind of thing, but when you get to the economic statistical data, the World Bank is the institution, or the International Monetary Fund, in terms of the monetary and fiscal policies.

Mr. Speaker, that is how it is done, it is not a criticism but it is just a caution in relation to when we see data how it is, but Barbados has increased, our life expectancy has increased and that is why I agree with you that it was nothing more than a case of childishness for anybody to get in here to try to give the impression that the increase in heart attacks and strokes is because of this Government, as though you develop the conditions for a heart attack overnight, unless you have some kind of congenital heart failure or some other problem that you were born with or something like that. Sir, even then those things take time to develop.

Mr. Speaker, if more persons are having heart attacks today it might be because for the 14 years of the last Government they were eating badly. Sir, I could get as ridiculous and say so, and that it is now showing up in their arteries, so that they are now having heart attacks or strokes. So do not let us go there with that type of childishness because you want to sound good.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure are prepared as the intent of the Government for its spending programme for the next year and the potential for the raising of revenue. It is prepared with the best possible information we have at our disposal. Our intent is to put that out to say that our deficit this year on the base is 5 per cent, on an accrual basis, but that we are not satisfied with 5 per cent, that we are going to see how things go during the year and that by midyear we should do like other countries and bring... There are some countries that do two of these exercises but we only do one, but by midyear I am going to bring a Statement here to indicate to the country how well we are doing or how not well we are doing and what adjustments are required because our goal is to get it down below the 4 per cent to 3.5 per cent or 3 per cent. That is our goal for 2016-2017 and that is all we are going to work on.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of the statutory corporations, the Right Honourable Prime Minister has already addressed that. We are going to work on that too. We have already started the process with the University of the West Indies, which we got a lot of lashes for, but which we had to do and we have done it. We started the discourse on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and as I said before the financial year is out we are going to bring a plan here for financing the healthcare, certainly at least for financing the tertiary institution, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The Ministry of

Transport and Works we are asking them to press on with the integration of the PSVs into the system and we are going to work with the PSVs because we are going to say to them, we are going to see how serious they are about working with the Government in terms of public transport. I am saying to them not to keep noise out there that they want duty-free concessions, that they want this and that, they have to demonstrate to us that they are serious in working with the Transport Board to help transport people across the country, that they will help to reduce the cost of public transport and then they could come and talk about duty-free concessions. Sir, I am giving them an incentive, work with us, make the system work, help us to reduce cost and we will help them too. Sir, I think that is a fair way to do it.

Sir, those are the big ones: transport, education, particularly tertiary education, public health and the last one is waste management. Those are the four areas that really take up the large chunks of the transfer and when the Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management spoke about it, the Honourable Member spoke intelligently. We cannot, as a society and as a Government, engage a process so widely and so foolishly that we are going to go shutting down this place and chopping off this place, and cutting out this place, and gutting, we cannot afford it, just because we want a statistical measure. That is not how it works around here. Yes we are going to work the deficit down but we are going to do it. Yes we are going to reform the statutory corporations but we are going to do it in a responsible way. We cannot engage this foolishness about going and slashing everything around the place, as though you are a knifeman with a knife and you are cutting tyres. You cannot do that to people in Barbados and the same people who say that they are going to hold your hands, who are smiling in your face when you are doing it are the same people who are going to run the opposite direction when you begin to do it and say, O Lord, how you are suffering the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we will be fiscally prudent, we are going to do the reforms but we are going to do them in a humanistic way because that is the only way that it can be done. Therefore I want to give people the assurance, do not go to sleep, as the Honourable Member for St. James South said, wondering if their job is the next one to go. It is not that type of exercise, it cannot be that type of exercise from any responsible Government, but do not doubt that we are going to take the decisions that we need to take.

Mr. Speaker, we have reduced statutory transfers by \$170 million in 2014-2015 and we can do it again in a responsible way but we are not going to be raking up two thousand, three thousand and four thousand people. We cannot afford to do it in this society, it is too fragile, the fabric is just not there, we are not large enough for that, and

the private sector is not in a position ready yet to consume that large number of persons if you put them out on the street.

Mr. Speaker, after all, the ultimate anchor of stability of Barbados in terms of the management of its economic sectors is Government. If you destabilise Government, the whole system will become destabilise. All these people you see talking in the private sector, half of them rely on the Government, with some of them the largest contract they have is with the Government. So that when you hear a lot of that at the Barbados Chamber of Commerce talking about the need for Government to cut this and that, I tell them be careful what you wish for because it may very well be you who will be cut, so be careful what you wish for, do not talk.

Mr. Speaker, an individual came to me saying that we should cut School Meals, privatise School Meals and Government would save a lot of money. I asked the person, how much money do we spend on School Meals? He said he does not know but that he knows we will save money. Sir, you come to me with a suggestion to cut School Meals, that we are going to save money. When I asked you how much money we spend on School Meals the person said that he does not know.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot do it that way, we have to do it in a responsible manner, we have to look at those areas that we can do.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, I do not have a brief for Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation but if I were to privatise the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation tomorrow it is going to be of no fiscal benefit to the Government because the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation gets no transfer from the Government right now, and what Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation is indebted for it cannot be sold for, so that all that is going to happen would be that somebody is going to get the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, I am going to get the debt which I will have to pay, because they are servicing their debt now. I will have to get the debt to pay it so that I will be net fiscally back worse than when I first had it, so do not point debt to me.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have said enough SEQ 41) SEQ42). I want, Mr. Speaker, again I thank you for your patience. I thank Honourable Members for their contributions on both sides. I want to thank the staff of the Ministry of Finance and the staff of Parliament for their support in relation to these Estimates. With those very few words, I am grateful to you.

The question that the Bill be read a second time was put to the House by MR. SPEAKER and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUSPENSION

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until tomorrow, Thursday, March 17, at 2 p.m. when we will commence discussion on Head 40. The Ministry of Transport and Works.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until Thursday, March 17 at 2 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

END OF THIRD DAY'S SITTING

CONTENTS

RESUMPTION

Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick, 21, 23, 24, 25; Rt. Hon. Freundel J. Stuart, 25, 27, 32; Mr. E. G. Hinkson, 27; Hon. C. P. Sinkler, 34, 39, 40, 42, 43, 46; Hon. C. P. Sinckler, 37, 39, 41, 44, 45; Mr. K. D. Symmonds, 38.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

AGARD, Dr. M. M. (Christ Church West)
BOYCE, Hon. J.D.E. (Christ Church South)
BRATHWAITE, Hon. A. D. (St. Philip South)
CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
ESTWICK, Dr. the Hon. D. C. (St. Philip West)
HINKSON, Mr. E. G. (St. James North)
JONES, Hon. R.D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, Hon. D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Hon. M. A. (St. Philip North)
LOWE, Dr. the Hon. D. S. (Christ Church East)
MARSHALL, Mr. D. D. (St. Joseph)
SINCKLER, Hon. C. P. (St. Michael North West)
SINKLER, Hon. C. P.
STUART, Rt. Hon. FREUNDEL J. (St. Michael South)
SYMMONDS, Mr. K. D. (St. James Central)

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while 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, Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick. The words ‘Honourable Member, you cannot use Members’ names in here.’ are labelled as spoken by Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK, who replies under the next label ‘I withdraw that, Sir’; they appear to be the Speaker’s. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 21, Hon. M. A. Lashley. The Speaker’s time warning (‘Honourable Member, you have five minutes remaining.’) runs straight on into about 850 words of Hon. M. A. Lashley’s speech (from ‘Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South did work on a consultancy...’), so that passage carries the Speaker’s label. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 21, Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick. The Member says the consultant was ‘hired in 2204’; earlier in the same speech he gives the year as 2004. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 21, Hon. C. P. Sinckler. The Minister of Finance’s name is spelt both ‘SINKLER’ and ‘SINCKLER’ in the speech headings (and ‘SINKLER’ as seconder of the morning suspension). His reply also carries the reporters’ markers ‘(SEQUENCE 31)’ and ‘SEQ 41) SEQ42)’ within the text. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Morning suspension. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce’s motion to suspend until 2 o’clock is seconded, but no question is recorded as put before the Resumption. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Bill title. The Bill is referred to both as the ‘Appropriation Bill, 2016’ and as the ‘Appropriation Bill, 2016-2017’. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed on Wednesday, 16th March, 2016 on Order No. 21, the debate on the second reading of the Appropriation Bill, 2016, with Mr. Speaker in the Chair. The Speaker welcomed Mrs. Vanessa Clarke, a retired Assistant Editor of Hansard in the House of Commons, who was visiting the Chamber.

The Attorney-General, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, said the debate showed the need to reform the Estimates process so that the Heads were analysed in depth; he rejected the description of the Estimates as an election budget and spoke on education and on facilities for troubled young people. Some of his remarks were ordered expunged by the Speaker on three occasions, and on the last he withdrew them after being told that the Speaker’s rulings could be challenged only by substantive motion. Mr. D. D. Marshall, Member for St. Joseph, complained that no Minister had defended the Estimates, that only three Heads were to be debated, and that the country had prospered under his party between 1994 and 2008; Hon. D. St. E. Kellman and Hon. A. D. Brathwaite rose on points of order.

Hon. M. A. Lashley, Member for St. Philip North, described the Opposition’s response as confused and spoke on transport, including an Electronic Vehicle Registration System whose first component was funded under CAF to the tune of \$2.5 million; Mr. G. A. Clarke rose on points of order over the Transport Authority Act and its regulations. Dr. Mrs. Maria M. Agard, Member for Christ Church West, said she wanted her Government to succeed but was not its apologist, and spoke on healthcare efficiencies. Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe, Member for Christ Church East, said that not one Opposition Member had found anything positive to report. The House then suspended until 2 o’clock.

In the afternoon Dr. the Hon. D. C. Estwick, Member for St. Philip West, argued for accelerating project implementation and not fearing debt, citing debt-to-GDP ratios near 300 per cent in China and Japan, and described new water mains and a well at Sweet Vale. He withdrew after naming a Member and was reminded of Standing Order 28(9) when he named a consultant engaged at the Barbados Water Authority in 2004. The Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Freundel J. Stuart, supported the Bill under sections 108 and 109 of the Constitution and read from an International Monetary Fund Article IV notice of 14th May, 2004. Mr. E. G. Hinkson rose on a point of order that the Prime Minister had said a Member was talking foolishness, but the Speaker said he had not heard the remark made of a particular Member.

Madam Deputy Speaker was in the Chair when the Minister of Finance, Hon. C. P. Sinckler, began his reply; the Speaker later resumed the Chair. The Minister defended

the figures prepared by the Accountant General and his staff, said that the Revised Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy had aimed for a deficit of 3.5 per cent and that what mattered was how a deficit was financed, described low-cost loans from the Inter-American Development Bank and CAF, disputed figures on GDP per capita, and said that privatising the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation would

bring no fiscal benefit. Mr. K. D. Symmonds rose on a point of order.

The Bill was read a second time without division. On the motion of Hon. R. D. Jones, seconded by Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, the Sitting was suspended until Thursday, 17th March at 2 p.m., when the House would take up Head 40, the Ministry of Transport and Works.