
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, November 22, 2016

met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, November 22, 2016.

PRESENT

His Honour MICHAEL A. CARRINGTON, B.A., LL.B. (Speaker) Her Honour Mrs. M-J. MARA THOMPSON, M.Sc. (Ph.Ed.) B.A. (Deputy Speaker)

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)

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

Hon. R. D. JONES, B.A. (Hons.), M.A. Ed.,

J.P., (Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation)

Hon. MICHAEL A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.)

(Minister of Transport and Works)

Hon. RICHARD L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A.

(Minister of Tourism and International Transport)

Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART, Q.C., B.A., LL.M. (Prime Minister, Minister of National Security, The Public Service and Urban Development)

Hon. JOHN D. E. BOYCE, B.C.H., MRAC, M.Sc., C. Eng.

(Minister of Transport and Works) (Leader of Government Business)

Hon. STEVEN D. BLACKETT

(Minister of the Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, and Community Development)

Mr. JAMES D. PAUL, B.Sc.

(Chairman of Committees)

Dr. the Hon. DENIS S. LOWE, Ed.D., M.Ed., B.A.,

Dip. Theology, .) Minister of Environment and Drainage)

Hon. STEPHEN A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C.

(Minister of Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Hon. DONVILLE O'N. INNISS, Dip., B.Sc., M.B.A.

(Minister of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development)

Hon. CHRISTOPHER P. SINCKLER, B.A., M.Sc.

(Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Mr. TREVOR PRESCOD, B.A.

Mr. KERRIE D. SYMMONDS, B. A., LL.B.

Lt. Col. JEFFREY D. BOSTIC, M.V.O., B.A. (Hons.)

Dr. Mrs. MARIA M. AGARD, J.P., D.Ds., B.Sc.

(Hons.)

Miss SANTIA J. O. BRADSHAW, LL.B. (Hons.)

Prayers were taken by Reverend Mark Harewood.

MR. SPEAKER: This House is now in Session.

MINUTES

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I have with me the Minutes of our meetings held on Tuesday, November 11, 2016 and November, 15, 2016, respectively.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes be taken as read.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the question is that those Minutes be taken as read. Unless there are any corrections or observations, then let those Minutes stand confirmed.

PAPERS

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to lay the following:

1. The National Cultural Foundation Annual Reports for the years 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the First Reading of the following:

1. The Municipal Solid Waste Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2016.

Hon. D.O'N. INNIS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of Government Business.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the First Reading of the following:

1. The Barbados Jubilee Honours Bill, 2016.

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

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44, be suspended for the rest of this day's Sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 16

RESOLUTION THAT the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply on the Bill to consider the grant of SUMS OF money for the service of this island.

10.42 a.m.

Tuesday, NOVEMBER 22, 2016

Seq. 2

On the motion of Hon. C.P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply. Mr. J.D. PAUL in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee of Supply.

COMMITTEE

Resolution to grant the sum of \$33 111 620 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 2016-2017 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 1 2016-2017 which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

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Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs in the amount of \$33 111 620.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. The matter before the House, which is outlined by the Clerk of Parliament and is carried in our Papers, is to bring to book a sum of BDS\$33 111 620 in reference to contributions and advances which would have been made by the Government of Barbados as a shareholder to LIAT (1974) Limited over the Financial Years 2012-2013 to 2015-2016. As you and Members of the House are no doubt aware, Barbados is at this present time, and perhaps as a result of some of these transactions, the principal shareholder now in LIAT, given its contribution to the airline over a number of years. It is actually a decade-and-a-half now or perhaps even longer. As would be no doubt outlined in this Debate on both sides -- because we have to take responsibility on both sides of the House -- LIAT has for a number of years had significant challenges operationally, but in the instance that we are speaking here now, financially. It has caused member shareholder Governments to have to inject budget support and other operational support, either to support the airline's day-to-day operations or its investment in capital equipment to allow it to continue to fly. There are a number of issues appertaining to these circumstances dating back, as I said, many years, some of which, of course, I am not intimately familiar with but which I am generally knowledgeable about. I propose therefore to leave those matters to the Minister of International Transport to discuss in more detail; but from the perspective of what we have before us in the House, in 2012-2013 the management of LIAT with the support of its shareholders agreed that the fleet of aircraft which it had in operation was aged, challenged and, by industry standards, needed to be replaced over a period of time.

Due to the financial challenges of the airline relative to its ability -- or as the case may be, inability -- to generate sufficient profits to independently finance cash-wise the payment of the company to supply or lease new aircraft or to independently approach financial institutions that would be willing to give it substantial loans to procure such aircraft, it was forced to call on its member shareholder Governments. In this case the principal ones included Barbados, St. Vincent and Antigua, and these were called on to support the borrowing of resources from financial institutions to pay for the outlay of these new aircraft. That decision was taken by the shareholder Governments, which are generally represented in the personages of the Prime Ministers or the Chairmen of the various Cabinets in the countries respective to the shareholder Governments, and of course supported by the Board of Directors of LIAT who are appointed by the said shareholder Governments. In 2013, a decision was taken to procure these aircraft at a cost of US\$65 million and, of course, we would have heard at the time that the Dash-8 aircraft were being taken out and replaced by the new French ATR fleet, Mr. Chairman. The process was to go in such a way as to permit for a gradual replacement of the aircraft. In other words, you would get the resources and replace a batch, then when you got more resources you would replace another batch, and finally you would retire the existing Dash-8 fleet. I am advised that since, by aviation standards, the Dash-8s were still within the capacity to operate, LIAT would sell those aircraft and use some of the resources to be able to write down the amount of the loan or, certainly, to assist in the servicing of those loans. Shareholder Governments were asked to support that and, having looked at a number of proposals from financial institutions, both domestic and external to the region, a decision was taken that they would tap the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) for provision of the loan. The CDB agreed and the process was engaged in relation to that. Mr. Chairman, I said some of this is not necessarily new because these things have happened in the past. What usually transpires in the case of LIAT, I am advised, is that shareholder Governments, on the basis of their shareholdings in the company, are allocated an expected amount as their share in the contribution for the financing of the capital injection. In other words, the Governments shared the costs, and according to the process used, Barbados' share of that contribution was allocated at US\$11.6 million of equity contribution.

Mr. Speaker, I think we should make the point very early because there are some additional things that would come after. For many years, as I said, more than a decade, more than 15 years, successive Governments in Barbados have invested money in LIAT's operation and functioning as shareholders in the company. You would have read or some might have read - I saw it in the media, and that is why it is always useful for people to read behind some of the reports that they see -- that in an Auditor General's Report, I believe the last one for 2015, a comment was

made highlighting the fact that more than \$100 million had been advanced to LIAT to help support the functioning of the airline. In fact, it may very well be more than that but that is what he has reported in his investigation.

10.40 a.m.

Insert s3 juliette

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Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: ...on the basis now of accrual accounting. We changed that system back in 2011 fully. It requires that any such advances so long as they are not repaid or if it is a determination that they cannot be repaid should be brought to book, and today my job is to ensure that the record of the Government in regards to these ones - we did these first because these are the ones that this Administration would have incurred -- are brought to book.

Now, under the accrual system of government - and I have to make this point before somebody runs off and say that we are now doing a supplementary for \$33 million that will increase the deficit in 2016 by \$33 million - all of those allocations will be accrued within the year in which they were contracted so therefore for 2015-2016 only an amount of US\$1.4 million or BDS\$2.8 million would be accrued for 2015-2016, the rest will go back to 2012, 2013, 2014 or whenever it was contracted in those particular years. We are bringing it to book now so that we ensure that this part of what we would have done in our years in Government thus far is accounted for.

Now, as I said, there is still an outstanding amount of close to \$100 million and potentially more because I still have the staff investigating trying to find out how many advances were made by the last Administration to LIAT that would not have passed through the regular Estimates or Appropriations of the House of Assembly and once that information is ready and collated and calculated I give the House and the public the assurance that we will bring it to Parliament and have it properly booked in the system so that the public's record would reflect that it was laid. We have done these because we have the information for these readily available. Obviously, they are more recent so they can be done. We are doing these now but we give the promise that we are going to bring the others in that.

There are other issues pertaining to LIAT that I am not so necessarily competent to speak about. I am going to let the people who are more closely involved with it speak about it. I have my own general views about the airline and its functioning but for the time being as far as the finance part is concerned we are doing exactly what the Auditor General prescribed in his Report. In fact, when the Auditor General was writing that Report these were being prepared

from the year before. We now have all of the information and we have brought it here so that everything will be done as transparently as possible.

Mr. Chairman, I therefore beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. D. O'N INNISS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just moved to make a few comments this morning on this Resolution, I do not plan to detain the Chamber for that long, but certainly, Mr. Chairman, what is before the Chamber today is a very serious matter because the Government has come really to let us know in whatever form or fashion that it is bringing to book... Yes it is formalising, but the net effect, Mr. Chairman, is that there is an injection now of some \$33 million into LIAT at this time. Mr. Chairman, this is a serious time to be talking about injecting \$33 million into LIAT or anything really because at this time we have...

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, it is bringing to book, it is formalising a debt and so on, I said all of that at the beginning. The fact, Mr. Chairman, is that this is a very serious time to be indicating that \$33 million is going into LIAT.

We have at this time, Mr. Chairman, a situation where the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is at the point where operating tables collapses under people as they are receiving treatment. We have, Mr. Chairman, \$33 million being debated in this Parliament today however couched at a time when parents cannot find the money to send their children to school. At a time when our roads are now being taken over by filth we are talking about \$33 million going into LIAT.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: I am surprised to hear the Honourable Member even mentioned the words Auditor General at a time when we have had to look upon a Report of an Auditor General that practically imputes ... to Members of the Administration, that is a fact, Mr. Chairman, and at a time when the Government has not been able after more than three or four years to...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member just a moment. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is not only misleading the House but is imputing improper actions and/or motives on Members of the Government and the Administration because the Administration really is the Government. The second point is as the Honourable Member well knows these resources are not new and fresh resources. This is years since these resources were expended on LIAT. They are additional to the over \$100 million that the last Government invested without bringing to Parliament by way of advances from the Treasury through the pen of the Honourable Minister of Finance, so to come here now and to give the impression that we are not doing roads but we are putting \$33 million into LIAT is really misleading the House and the country because it is simply not so.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, before you rise to speak you used the words ... I do not think that is parliamentary and really would like you to withdraw that remark.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, as you wish.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: The people of Barbados who would have seen that Report will draw their conclusions to suit.

Sir, that fact is that the Honourable Member well knows that this \$33 million does not predate 2008, this is money that was borrowed by this Administration...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment please. He has withdrawn the remark. Honourable Member, have you withdrawn the remark?

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Chairman, you can struck it from the record if you wish but I withdrew it.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: As I said I will leave it for the people of Barbados to judge not only that but the many other actions of this present Administration which they are doing.

Sir, at a time when people in Barbados cannot yet be restored to the original level where VAT was after being told three years ago that it was only to take root for some 18 months, we are debating a Resolution dealing with \$33 million that is going into LIAT.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: It is being brought to book then in relation to LIAT's operations. If the Honourable Member wishes me to be that technical, I will be direct okay. Sir, when the police cannot get the necessary resources to combat unprecedented levels and types of crimes in this country, we are here debating \$33 million in relation to LIAT. Sir, when all of this is happening we are finding ourselves here today debating \$33 million in relation to, if they prefer me to use that expression, LIAT's operation.

Sir, let me say as I have said many times before, that I have no romantic attachment to any airline or any carrier. As far as I am concerned an airline is to take commuters from point A to Point B in a fast and efficient way, safely and at a reasonable cost. Sir, any carrier that can do that has my support. Sir, when it comes to LIAT it would be hypocritical of me if I did not say that what we now have is an entity that is really sucking us dry particularly, Sir, Barbados, an entity that is nothing more than a bottomless pit when it comes to the injection of money.

House C43 Sequence 4

Today, Sir, we have the Minister bringing a Resolution without at the same time bringing any financial in relation to LIAT that we could have the benefit of examining. I trust later the Minister, who will speak in this debate after him, will bring or shed some light on the current financials in relation to LIAT.

Sir, LIAT has never been a viable entity. As far as I am aware it has never made a profit in any year. It has never been able to stand on its own two feet. Sir, I am not standing here as any great defender of LIAT. Those are certain realities.

Some three years ago the loan which forms the subject matter of this debate, today, was given to the shareholder Governments of LIAT in the sum of \$65 million to allow it to reorganize and get additional fleet and the like. Yet today, despite that loan, \$65 million, which is really at the base of what we are debating today, LIAT still cannot stand on its own two feet.

Oil prices, Mr. Chairman, have gone down although you would not believe it in the context of Barbados. This Government has not really passed on the benefits of these decreases in oil prices, to benefit the consumers in Barbados. It is a fact that oil prices have gone down and at the same time despite that, lower oil prices which would lower anyone's operating costs, LIAT still cannot stand on its own two feet.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that this is unsustainable. LIAT, Sir, has grossly in my view underperformed as a regional carrier, and I am really quite aware of the origin of LIAT in the context of the formation and so on of CARICOM and the intention, Sir, and the particular role that was envisaged for LIAT in the context of CARICOM. The real issue now is, the burden of the operations and the inefficiencies of LIAT have now fallen disproportionately on the shoulders of about two Governments, including and perhaps especially Barbados and the unrelenting injection of money into LIAT is not sustainable and I daresay, Mr. Chairman, it really cannot continue.

LIAT has now been subsidized for 42 years and it really needs now to become a low cost and efficient model carrier. It is really high time, Sir that serious decisions are taken in relation to LIAT. The time has come that we cannot any longer shelf the need to take some very serious decisions in relation to LIAT.

Sir, we as a country, certainly in Barbados, we are not getting the maximum financial returns on these extensive sums. Yes, both administrations over the years have injected into LIAT. I have heard -- I believe we need to get some returns for this investment. I have heard the Minister make calls on more than one occasion for LIAT to relocate some of its aircraft to Barbados, for LIAT to be headquartered in Barbados and that would allow us, Sir, to become a hub and would obviously bring some revenue to Barbados. Perhaps now the Minister recognizes and the Government would recognise the importance of Barbados obtaining the Category 1 status. When I made the point some time back that Barbados should realise the magnitude of the task, and when I said we certainly have to push more aggressive for it, the Minister's response to me was, "Barbados does not have Category 1 status and who cares?" So what? That was the response, Sir, of the Minister of Tourism. If we had Category 1 status, perhaps then LIAT would have more reason to comply with the request to not only bringing the headquarters to Barbados, but to in fact register on Barbados' Aircraft Registry as a Barbados registered carrier. It would have more reason and more motivation to response. LIAT even if it wanted to, Mr. Chairman, this is the point I was trying to make, even if it wants to it cannot do it because LIAT has aircraft that flies into US territory. You cannot fly into US territory as a Barbadian registered carrier, unless Barbados or any country at one has Category 1 status. We do not have that Category 1 status, so LIAT has no reason to come here, but if it is registered here it would have to cease its operation into the US territory into which it currently flies.

So, perhaps, Mr. Chairman, the Minister would appreciate the plea that we made, to pursue more aggressively the need for Barbados to try to attain Category 1 status, because we are losing as a result of not having that status as the LIAT example shows. We are losing on all the

pilot and other licences and fees that you get from a safety oversight regulator that would gain if LIAT became a Barbados registered aircraft. Sir, there are also other glaring inconsistencies of this Government in relation to the operations of LIAT. On the one hand today they are bringing to book some \$33 million. The Government really has no clear cut air transport policy. On the one hand today the Government is bringing to book some \$33 million in relation to the operations of LIAT. On the other hand some 5 or 6 years ago, it was this same Government that gave its wholehearted support to an airline, a Barbados registered airline by the name of Red Jet, and I have no difficulty with promoting, facilitating, permitting or whatever competition. I am all for that, Sir, but what this Government did having given its total support to Red Jet, it allowed Red Jet to charge \$12 per passenger. Not only did they charge \$12 per passenger but on routes on which it was directly competing with LIAT. Sir, to make it worse, Red Jet did not even have to apply to the Air Transport Licensing Authority to get permission to charge \$12 in direct competition with LIAT.

This Government actually contributed, Sir, to the financial problems that we are now here debating today, Sir.

In addition, Sir, only recently another carrier, Trans Island Air, sought to bring certain fleet into Barbados to operate. It is a small carrier, competition again, additional capacity. This Government took forever, unnecessarily, to grant certain concessions to that carrier, unnecessarily, Sir. You know that you bring aircraft into a country, certain exemptions apply automatically in relation to certain duties and other imports. It happened in relation to Sandals without anybody batting an eyelid. This carrier wanted to bring certain aircraft into this country and this Government took forever to the point where the carrier had to wind down operations, send people home, then this Government sat on its laurels and refused to do what was traditional and done anywhere else. Eventually now the cart is strengthening back up, but in the meantime people had to be sent home while this Government sat down took its time in relation to that. What a wonderful start to this vision that the Minister outlined for the Civil Aviation Department of Barbados. What a beautiful start that a carrier had to cease operations for a while when the Government would not deal with its application for a routine exemption, that would apply in relation to aircraft being brought into this country.

Sir, I will probably come back in this debate as you have indicated that my time is up. I just wanted to make those few points but I will have to come back to make a few more points.

I am greatly indebted, Sir.

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

The Rt Hon. F. STUART: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a few observations on this Resolution especially since I heard from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North and his very extravagant claims. It is clear which were intended to distort the intention of this Resolution. I think that has now been cleared up. We are not injecting today any \$36 million into LIAT. We are bringing to book expenditure that was incurred in respect of LIAT but that had not been accounted for in this Parliament.

For eons -- in fact the Honourable Member said that for 43 years successive Governments of Barbados were propping up LIAT and for nearly as long that propping up was taking up without the propping up passing through Parliament.

Asides.

Rt Hon. F.J. STUART: I was in here too. You were not in here alone. Sorry Mr. Chairman.

There would be other opportunities to bring to book other bits of expenditure that were incurred by Governments over time that did not have the sanction of Parliament. In those times, in the days of yore we were using a cash accounting system. Today, thanks to the previous administration, and this is not a criticism, we now operate an accrual accounting system, and that accrual accounting system takes care of a lot the abuses or omissions or derelictions, that used to take place under the cash accounting regime. So it is disingenuous to suggest that this is any single-government responsibility. It is disingenuous. The word disingenuous is not unparliamentary, no more than the word ingenuous is Parliamentary. One is the opposite of the other.

Mr. Chairman, LIAT is an airline about 60-years-old now. Had there been no LIAT in the Caribbean this region could not have been held together as it has been over the last 60 years. Airlines have come and gone. They have come to replace LIAT. They have come, they have seen LIAT and they have had to turn in the opposite direction, went out of business and LIAT has been with us for 60 years and with a safety record second to none.

I understand that it has not been making profit but the Government of Barbados, like other Governments across the Caribbean, are committed to the development and the deepening of regional integration, and necessary to the development and the deepening of regional integration is the movement of people and LIAT does just that, moves people across this region, 18 destinations. It used to be 21. It is not 18, 18 destinations, 558 flights per week LIAT does across this region to 18 destinations. Of those 558

flights, 112 of them leave Barbados. What is the Honourable Member talking? If you want to run a commercial airline we could reduce all the flights and just look at the arithmetic, but the actual flesh and blood people who board LIAT aircraft of every week in the Caribbean and move across this region, because we are trying to keep the region together and LIAT is the only airline that has done it over the last 60 years. It is the only airline that has done it over the last 60 years.

The Honourable Member is saying it should be making a profit. Yes, we want everything to make a profit. The Transport Board should be making a profit too, but if we had it making a profit a lot of the people who are facilitated by it from day to day could not get any public transport in Barbados. It is as simple as that. We have to face these realities.

I was very pleased at the last shareholders meeting to be told that LIAT's projected loss for the year 2016 is going to be just \$9 million. It was fifty something dollars the year before, if I am right in saying that, yes. It was \$57 million in the year 2015, and as a result of interventions by the management and by the shareholders, the loss forecast for 2016 is going to be just \$9.2 million.

So this airline services 18 Caribbean destinations and accounts for 558 flights per week across the Caribbean. For the year 2015, if the Honourable Member for St. Michael North wants to know, LIAT moved 733 000 people across the Caribbean for the year 2015. When we are criticizing the airline and talking about making a profit, there is something wrong with knowing the cost of everything and understanding the value of nothing. The value of LIAT to this region is sufficiently high that we should, and we have been accommodating ourselves with the fact that it cost has been fairly prohibitive sometimes.

Sir, 112 flights per week out of Barbados and that 112 flights accounts for 52% of all the flights out of Grantley Adams International Airport. LIAT accounts for 52% of all flights out of Grantley Adams International Airport. We did not come to office in 2008 and found Grantley Adams International Airport with a Category 1 status and then as a result of the Democratic Labour Party coming to office we lost it. It had no Category 1 status when we came to office after the Honourable Member for 14 years was in office and could not get it done, but this Government was supposed to get it done by 2009. The Honourable Member had 14 years to do it and could not get it done. We did not come to office and found a Category 1 status and lost it. There was none when we came after 14 years of the Honourable Member and now because we have not yet got Category 1 status, the Honourable Member is moved, inflamed with anger, moved in righteous indignation because we have not got it. I do not understand that.

The Barbados market accounts for about 20% of LIAT's total passenger revenue. LIAT is important to Barbados. In 2012, according to the information.....

Sequence 6

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Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, LIAT is important to Barbados. In 2012, according to the information made available to me, LIAT facilitated US\$145 million in incoming tourism expenditure to the Barbados economy. This airline has contributed much to the Caribbean and it should be given credit for it. We have had to prop it up, we have propped up American Airlines, we have propped up extra-regional carriers to bring tourists here from all over the place. What can be wrong with trying to prop up our own regional airline? Nobody quarrels when we put money into American Airlines or British Airways or any of the others that we support. Why is LIAT coming under this attack from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North?

Mr. Chairman, I thought I had to get up and make the case for this airline. I believe that the airline should be run more efficiently. I know, I attend shareholders' meetings, as does the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and we know of the steps that have been taken by the LIAT management and by the shareholder Governments to make LIAT more efficient. We went through a fleet replacement exercise, that cost a lot of money. Getting rid of the old Dash-8 aircraft was very, very difficult, especially in the wake of a fire that destroyed a lot of the records in Antigua some time ago. We had our challenges but that does not negative the fact that 112 flights leave the Grantley Adams International Airport, thanks to LIAT, every week. That does not negative the fact the LIAT moved 733 000 across this region in the year 2015. It does not negative the fact that we are continuing to move steadily towards the achievement of Category 1 Status, which we did not come and find in 2008, after 14 years of the Honourable Member, but which we are trying now to achieve in the near future. There are requirements that we have to satisfy, the requirements have not changed. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North knows what those requirements are and if they were as easy as that Honourable Member is trying to suggest, we should have come to office in 2008 and found the Grantley Adams International Airport enjoying Category 1 Status. That was not the case, and we are trying now to get that done.

Mr. Chairman, as for LIAT, we will continue to work towards its efficient operation or more efficient operation, we will continue to strengthen the airline, and deal with all of the weaknesses about which people from across the region complain from time to time. This is not the richest region in the world. I know people complain

about the cost of air travel across the region but given the distances that separate the islands in this region from one another and the frequency with which LIAT has to land and take off, nobody should be surprised at the fuel cost attached to LIAT.

Mr. Chairman, I think we have to be a little more understanding and to thank God that for 60 years we have had an airline in this region with a safety record. It may not always get you where you want to go on time, but it gets you there safely and in spite of all criticism and slanders. Mr. Chairman, we used to be told that L.I.A.T. meant “leave island any time.” It has been ridiculed over the years but it gets you from point “A” to point “B” in the Caribbean safely.

Mr. Chairman, we have had some problems with the pilots and so on and the aircraft has had to deal with about 13 different trade unions across the region. We do not have harmonised labour laws across the region and therefore there have been challenges, but when all is said and done it cannot be denied that LIAT has done more to keep the people of the Caribbean together and to facilitate movement amongst these islands than any other airline that we have seen passed through. I used the expression “passed through” deliberately because they just pass through, they do not stay. LIAT has had the stamina and the staying power to guarantee us the ability to travel across this region, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, for the last 60 years and I am thankful for that. I am sure that the people of the Caribbean are thankful for that as well. I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I too rise to speak on this Supplementary and to make the point that a liability is not money that can be spent, a liability is money that has already been spent, and so it is impossible for the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs to come here today to spend a liability on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital or to patch roads or anything else, it means that the money has already been spent and all you are now doing is accounting for that debt.

Mr. Chairman, I have been in this Parliament for a very long time and have listened to many debates on LIAT. I have knowledge that we even came to this Parliament and debated a Resolution dealing with LIAT incurring expenditure for parts. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North would agree that the Honourable Member is aware where we even had to foot the bill for parts for LIAT. We had to bring them to book because LIAT did not have the money and this Parliament, under the Democratic Labour Party, had to take up that expenditure for LIAT.

Mr. Chairman, the truth is that we have to understand that there is no difference between LIAT and the Barbados Transport Board because we need both of them. The Transport Board moves our productive people on a daily basis, while LIAT brings people to Barbados and moves people from Barbados to create economic activities within the region. Mr. Chairman, whereas one is localised, the other in a sense is international because when LIAT moves from Barbados and goes to other countries, that do not mean that other airlines will not take these people up and take them elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know why we would want to make LIAT a political issue because the truth is that both Governments have had to subsidise LIAT. Both Governments have recognised the importance of LIAT. If there was no LIAT, our tourism industry would not be as successful as it is presently, so that persons who come and try to badmouth LIAT and the Transport Board must understand what they are asking is a reduction in the productivity of the country, because if we do not have the Transport Board to move our workers, neither do we have LIAT, it would impact negatively on the economy of Barbados, so let us stop dealing with the negatives and let us move to a level where we now discuss how we can better LIAT because Barbados needs LIAT even more so than other countries.

11.41 a.m.

I would want to make the point to those countries that are not paying money to LIAT, though: They must understand that if they do not get the services of LIAT, it would impact on their economies in a negative way, and it is in their interest to ensure that they put money into LIAT. Most of the Caribbean countries now are tourism-oriented economies and they cannot afford not to support LIAT. It hurts because the same thing which I am seeing happening to LIAT, because it is localised, is also happening with information. In this Caribbean region, in Barbados especially, we believe that anything we hear internationally that is negative, we must pick it up and run with it. We believe that we cannot have homegrown solutions to our problems. There are so-called experts who, whenever they see things, regurgitate them without understanding what they are reading and give the impression that Barbados is doing things wrong, when Barbados is in a leading position. For example, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North will tell you also that what people now call Airbnb is what we were speaking about in this Parliament since the 1990s and what we refer to as community tourism. All of a sudden, Airbnb is now something big and everybody is telling you to go and support it, but we cannot support community tourism that is homegrown. Mr. Chairman, the same thing occurred with our sugar industry. We were able to breed sugar cane varieties for other countries; now our sugar industry is in the doldrums and

other countries' sugar industries have been able to take our expertise in which we were leading, and they are now leading us.

We saw it with our Blackbelly sheep, and if we do not watch it, we will see it also with our cotton. Mr. Chairman, what is worse is that we were able to develop road tennis in this country and now, if we do not watch it, other major countries will take road tennis to a different level and we will walk around saying, "It is us who started it." I am saying, "Stop the criticism and let us see how we can take this and take it to a different level." Mr. Chairman, what is even worse is that some of the highest people in England have always bragged that they love to come to Barbados because when they come here, they can drink water from the tap. Now, there are people giving the impression that the worst water in the world can be found in Barbados. Mr. Chairman, I still can take a glass and go the tap in Barbados and drink water straight. Because some persons may have rusty pipes and in some areas a well may be being sunk and the water is muddy, people want me to say that the water I am drinking is bad when I did not have that experience. I am not saying that other people may not be experiencing certain other problems. If they are experiencing them, I sympathise with them but do not come to chastise me because I can go to a tap -- and I am sure a lot of us in here can do it -- and appreciate that we can still drink our local water.

LIAT is local. LIAT is ours, and the same way that we can spend money propping up all other international airlines, there is nothing wrong with us supporting our own. The problem is that we have always believed that globalisation is it -- this is something I have argued with the other side about for many years -- and not localisation. Mr. Chairman, I beg to differ because I believe that in order to go to globalisation, you must master localisation first. That is why I am a very strong supporter of the comparative advantage. I believe in comparative advantage because it shows me that people measure wrongly. They measure using local currency when they should measure the cost of the foreign exchange that is being spent. That is why I support localisation versus globalisation, because when you look at the goods which you purchase in your country, you are not outputting the foreign exchange but you are actually saving the foreign exchange. The cost cannot be how much you are paying in local dollars but the cost must be how much you are paying in foreign exchange. There are no foreign goods that can be cheaper than local goods. We have to stop thinking about the impact on us, and start to think about the impact on the country Barbados. Too many people measure everything on the impact upon themselves and do not measure on the impact on the country. If we used to, then we would not be importing a lot of inferior goods into this country because of what they call "costs", without recognising that the costs must be measured in how many United States dollars you

are spending to get that product into the country. If we are to make changes in this country, then that is the way to go, Mr. Chairman.

We have to continue to support things like LIAT. We have to move our people within the Caribbean region, because it is within the Caribbean region that once we strengthen the economies, then we can strengthen the economy in Barbados. Mr. Chairman, we are making big errors, and the badmouthing that we are putting down in this country will come back to haunt us. You cannot hunt with the devil and expect to see the Lord. Those people who believe that only negativity must continue.... I have no reason to give anybody information to badmouth a citizen of this country. I do not even do it to politicians, so why would I give people information to call into a programme to curse another person? That is foolishness. I do not stoop to that level. I leave that to the "blue peter sharks." I have always felt that in a country where you have 50 years of free secondary education, the debate cannot be gutter politics. The debate must be how I can better someone else, not how I can badmouth somebody. This foolishness that you have to badmouth somebody and that you have to go and sneak information and so on, I want to tell some people this: They have to be careful how they leak information and how they leak it with senior officers, and how people go and put it before a camera to expose persons, whether it is their constituent or somebody else.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying that LIAT is good for the economy and LIAT must be protected. As long as I am in here, LIAT will be protected by my voice even if others are not prepared to support LIAT. What I will also say is that I heard a lot of talk about RedJet. I want to say that RedJet provided a good opportunity for us to restructure LIAT. It is regrettable that they put the rates too low, but if RedJet had set the rates right, it would have allowed Barbados to be in a position not only to move towards Category One but also to move towards a position that it would have been able to restructure LIAT and build out its economy. People have to understand that -- yes, I was very supportive of him getting support - because they are getting Government support, they too must be able to support themselves. I am saying that we will support LIAT, but LIAT management also has to understand that the other Caribbean countries have a contribution to make to LIAT. You cannot be piggybacking on the other countries, and you are boasting about your tourism arrivals because of LIAT but do not understand the contribution that LIAT is making to your economy. I am telling them that we will be watching them, we will listen to them and we will analyse. We will not badmouth them, but we will point them in the right direction to show that if they support LIAT, it is in the interest of the Caribbean region and it allows everybody to build their economies so that we can be a better Caribbean region.

11.39 a.m.

Insert s9 juliette

Tuesday, November 22, 2016

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: ...was significantly improved. I would want to have an update from the Honourable Minister of International Transport as it relates to where we are at with this because again this is not an issue that simply affects St. Vincent, this is an issue that in terms of efficiency affects Barbados as well, and I would hope that discussions are ongoing with his ministry and certainly with the Honourable Prime Minister in relation to whether or not the steps that LIAT indicated they were intending to take in response to the Prime Minister of St. Vincent have in fact been taken.

The Flight Schedule was supposed to be reviewed and there was also be a 72-seater ATR aircraft which would be added to LIAT's fleet by the end of October or early November. Again, we are almost at the end of November so it would be important if the Honourable Minister could shed some light on whether we are any closer, given that we are injecting this amount of money that is now being brought to book, to achieving the levels that we have set out to embark on, and I think that is where the discussion this morning needs to go. What is the way forward?

I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy speak. On previous occasions he had spoken to the fact of an airport in St. Lucy. The Honourable Minister of Tourism on the last occasion we had a debate on civil aviation spoke to the fact that there were plans in the pipeline to consider the possibility of this airport in St. Lucy. It was in a prefeasibility stage and I would like to hear more on where we are at because a couple months have passed. Let us hear what is happening there because all of us who traverse the Grantley Adams International Airport are aware that we are still at the stage where we do not have the jet bridges that have been touted for several years, we are aware that we are still at a stage when we check all of the other airports throughout the region that Barbados is sadly lacking behind as it relates to those issues, that people are still getting wet when they come off of aircrafts, and that in some cases they have be transported on the buses to be able to get into the terminal. Those are the things we want to hear about. Mr. Chairman, if in fact LIAT's base is supposed to be moved to Barbados, what are the things that this Administration is doing to ensure that at the point when it is moved to Barbados we are in a positon to be able to handle the traffic that will be coming through our airport.

Mr. Chairman, I saw recently Members on the other side also speaking to the fact that the People's Republic of China was in discussions with this Government regarding

the renovations of the Air Traffic Control Tower. Now, I laud the efforts of this Administration to bring improvements to the workers in the Air Traffic Control Tower but again without the cosmetics that I believe this Administration continues to put into the public's domain making pronouncements without being clear in its focus as to how it is going to achieve these things only continues to set up further disappointment not only for the workers who have to operate with a broken down lift at the Air Traffic Control Tower but who are forced to walk several flights of stairs to get to their work stations. It sets up in them hope and then it is discarded when several months later we hear nothing from the Honourable Minister or we hear nothing in terms of the Government's plans to be able to make improvements to a substantial element of air traffic control at the Grantley Adams International Airport. Sir, I would hope that the Honourable Minister would also touch on that as well.

Sir, what concerns me further is that in the same article I read recently there was also mention of another multipurpose facility being built out for entertainment in this country which we have heard back in 2011 from the Honourable Minister of Finance that one project was going down in Brandons and that never materialised. I would like this Administration to take advantage of the knowledge that the People's Republic of China have as it relates to civil aviation. I had the opportunity recently with my colleagues to visit the People's Republic of China and was particularly impressed by the vast advancements which they have made in civil aviation. We talk a lot about involving the People's Republic of China in projects in Barbados but I do believe that there is a lot to be learnt with the way in which they have been able to network not only their country but also to network their country with the rest of the world in terms of transportation both in terms of aviation and public transportation on the ground.

I think, Sir, that the time has come where instead of this Administration constantly making pronouncements that things are happening and that things are going be unveiled in the course of the next couple weeks or months that we actually enter into a serious discussion with the people who clearly have the expertise and are willing to be able to guide Barbados as it relates to improving its infrastructure. I am sure that Honourable Members on the other side too have had the advantage to visit the People's Republic of China and I think that they too no doubt would have recognised the significant impact that a country such as that would be able to have on the infrastructure of Barbados. We have seen it happening with public transportation in Jamaica as well, and I think that we would do well instead of making these constant pronouncements to be able to put things in place to certainly benefit our aviation industry.

Sir, I would wish to hear the Honourable Minister speak to a number of those concerns. Certainly, if it is that we are to become the base there are some challenges which I think all politicians would accept. Antigua, which is the current base, obviously have concerns over the fact that there would be a loss of employment in their labour force if there is to be a move to Barbados, and we have to be realistic about this. It therefore means that Barbados has to take the bull by the horns and engage in discussions with the Prime Minister of Antigua to explain to that country that while there may be in the initial stages some job losses that in the long term a move to Barbados which has invested significantly in LIAT is in the best interest of the region as a whole.

Sir, I would hope that the political football both at the level of political parties in Barbados and also at the level of the Heads of Government does not outweigh the benefits to the entire region of CARICOM that stands to be able to benefit from a move as significant as this to have the base of LIAT in Barbados.

I thank you, Sir, and I will come back as is necessary.

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

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I am obliged, Mr. Chairman. I just want to say a few words in this very brief intervention. Mr. Chairman, I confess that I did not hear the initial speech by the Honourable Member who led this debate but as I followed the tenure and tone of the debate thereafter I feel that there are a few things that cry out to be addressed with a view to hopefully refocussing some of the energies.

Mr. Chairman, I do not think that there should be any doubt whatsoever about the tremendous significance and quality of the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North. In his speech he struck on a very important tone and note when he urged for this country and by extension more particularly this Parliament to...

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: If the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would allow me, I am sure he too would have a right to speak so he needs not heckle.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North struck a tone which urged us to look in the direction of excellence when he spoke about the need for the Category 1 status at the Grantley Adams International Airport. Unfortunately, Sir, this is not the first time have I have heard him speak to the significance of that and it tends to be interpreted by this Government as being just a

simple criticism. The truth of the matter, Mr. Chairman, is that if we have a locally registered carrier then that carrier would have access if we have Category 1 status to the United States of America jurisdictions. LIAT flies into a couple of United States of America jurisdictions and so therefore in view of the considerable noise that has now started to be heard across this region with respect to LIAT the issue of Barbados having a Category 1 status in the soonest and shortest possible time assumes great significance far greater than it had assumed 10 years ago or seven or eight years ago.

Mr. Chairman, what is the noise that lends itself to this great concern? We have the unfortunate spectacle of Heads of Government of this region shouting across the Caribbean Sea at each other with respect to the future of LIAT

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Mr. Chairman, we have the unfortunate spectacle of Heads of Governments of this region shouting across the Caribbean Sea at each other with respect to the future of LIAT. We have Prime Minister Gaston Browne accusing Barbados, only last year, of trying to collapse LIAT. The Member accused Barbados of "acting in a manner contrary to the spirit of regional integration". Mr. Chairman, we have heard other regional leaders and Ministers of Tourism and International Transport make the point that as far as they were concerned, the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States would be well within its rights to deny over-fly rights to LIAT, if LIAT were no longer to be headquartered in Antigua, but were to be headquartered in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I beg on this note, because I think the critical question here that the Opposition not only has a right to ask but more importantly the Opposition has a duty to ask of the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados who has just spoken but remains silent on the matter; of the Minister of Tourism and International Transport who has not yet spoken on the matter; and indeed of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs who for some curious reason led off this debate is this. What is Government's specific policy and intention with regard to this talk about a planned shift of LIAT's operations from St. John's, Antigua to Bridgetown, Barbados?

Mr. Chairman, that is the core issue here, we need to be clear in our minds what is Government planned intention with respect to the fate of LIAT. Mr. Chairman, no amount of effort to minimise the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North can help us to escape that. There is no doubt, from the Barbados Labour Party side, that LIAT continues to be the major instrument by which we can move people in this region, the major instrument by which we can nip together a region in pursuit

of an objective of regional integration. As the Leader of the Opposition Business has just said, that has always been the mandate, but Mr. Chairman, Sir, that is not the issue that is before us now. The issue that is before us is that in the context of trying to achieve that mandate, LIAT has become increasingly a financial burden that the country Barbados must carry, but at the same time the people of Barbados are not being engaged in serious dialogue by its Government on what is the fate of LIAT and what is the precise intention.

Mr. Chairman, I think, Sir, that it is hurting the airline even outside of Barbados because the people of the region who use LIAT are also not being seriously engaged as to what is the long-term intention of either the Barbados Government or any of the other shareholder Governments for LIAT.

Mr. Chairman, we cannot just have a situation where Leaders of Government and Ministers of Tourism and International Transport shout across the waters at each other, the time has come for us to have a coherent and sensible discussion on some of these things. These things are impacting not only on the psyche and confidence of the market which must travel, but it is also impacting the employees. We know it is a fact that employees of LIAT had 14 months' salary deferrals because one shareholder Government and one shareholder Government alone did not pay its portion of recapitalisation on time.

Mr. Chairman, these are things that we would expect that the Government would engage not just the Opposition, because as you know they treat us as though we are the bastard child of Barbados, we are not to be engaged on matters relating to Independence Celebrations of the land, we are not to be engaged in matters relating to the plans to ensure that our constituents get proper running water, or that roads are fixed in the constituencies, we are treated as though we are the outside children. Mr. Chairman, the fact of the matter is that Barbados needs to hear from the Government in a coherent way on what are the consequences of some of these things for employees. Sir, 14 months of salary deferrals do not just happen like that.

Mr. Chairman, the other issue that we remained silent on was that, yes, there was the acquisition of the new aircraft. As I continue to say, the Opposition has no difficulty with the mandate of LIAT being pursued, as you cannot bring a region together if you do not have the wherewithal in terms of air transport to bring a region that is divided by water together. You will either have to do it by boat or by plane. Mr. Chairman, when the Right Honourable Prime Minister referred to a hanger fire, it was not just a hanger fire, it was a hanger fire that raised serious implications for the management of LIAT and the operational structure in Antigua. Sir, these are the things that the country and the region need to be talked through

because when the fire took place, Mr. Chairman, it destroyed several Dash-8 records and that made continued operations of the aircraft very difficult because the Dash-8's were under lease, so that the fire takes place, the aircraft are under lease, you lose most of the records relating to the aircraft that you had and therefore critical issues such as service records, maintenance records, et cetera are lost. Mr. Chairman, the restoration of the records, and the Opposition should not have to be saying this, the concern was that it would run into millions of dollars to try to adequately restore those records. Mr. Chairman, many of them were paper documented and not backed up by electronic backup. This in turn gives cause for a pause, it gives cause for concern about the management processes that are taking place at LIAT.

Mr. Chairman, a lot of money has been spent since then to get new aircraft and at great pains we went bigger because some of the Dash-8's were sold at spit rate. They were basically sold as though they were scrapped because it was too expensive to return them to their lessors without having any documentation on the maintenance records as well. Sir, after a region is exposed to all of that, at a minimum I think the Parliament of Barbados, not just the Opposition, deserves the courtesy of knowing what the next step is, what steps are being taken to hold somebody or some people accountable for what happened with respect to the fire and more importantly, the need for discipline with respect to the destruction and loss of the records of the aircraft of the region.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Chairman, but nothing like that has been discussed, nothing like that is put on the table, you just come and say that you want a few more millions of dollars. Sir, the problem is that we have come to a point in time where all the Honourable Member for St. Michael North is trying to convey to this Honourable House is that there has to be a greater degree of accountability. Mr. Chairman, any reasonable person, especially a Right Honourable Prime Minister, listening to his speech would have had to have harkened to the wisdom of his voice when he is trying to get a greater degree of accountability out of the Government on matters which are fundamental to economic efficiency and economic propriety.

Mr. Chairman, there is another concern on which I feel that the Government should engage us. Is LIAT still using the Navitaire Reservation System? If it is, has it been corrected so that it is no longer functioning, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North has said to this Honourable House repeatedly, as a hindrance to the ability of the airline to connect with other airlines? Has that situation now been completely corrected or corrected in part? If not, what steps are being taken to get us to a point

where the Navitaire Reservation System, which was acquired at great financial cost and effort, can be made more compatible with what other airlines are doing?

Mr. Chairman, again this is about transparency in the process of dealing with an airline that is there. We understand that, in large measure, it is about the public good. I was mortified when I heard the Right Honourable Prime Minister, I really was, because the Honourable Member speaks to this country as though this is the first time that we have ever heard that there is a desire to have a more economically efficiently run regional airline.

12.10 p.m.

Barbados is on the cusp, apparently, and I have to say apparently because I sit in this House and was sent here by the people, but I do not know and I have not had the benefit of a statement from the Minister with responsibility for International Transport as to what is the precise intention. Do you want to move LIAT to Barbados to be headquartered here? If you want to do it, when do you intend to see it done by? What is the position that is being taken with respect to the utterances made by the Prime Minister of Antigua? He does not make the utterances in secret. Mr. Chairman, the Prime Minister of Antigua has gone so far as to say -- this is exactly what he said and I will quote him -- "We buy flour from St. Vincent, we buy juice from Barbados, we buy vegetables from Dominica, and all I am saying to them is to leave us with LIAT. We have every right to defend what is in the best interests of Antigua and Barbuda." Those are the Prime Minister of Antigua's words. Therefore, Sir, we in the Opposition in Barbados, sensing as we do that the Government of Barbados has a desire to shift the operational base of LIAT to Barbados from St. John's, Antigua, must be curious if not anxious.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is sensing, and these are his exact words, "...Sensing that the Government has a desire to move the LIAT headquarters from Antigua to Barbados". I would understand the other two Members and I would forgive them, but this is now three Members of the Opposition who have spoken about an imaginary policy. The Government of Barbados has never stated that it has any intention of moving the headquarters of LIAT from Coolidge in Antigua to Grantley Adams in Barbados. That has never been stated, so find something else to talk about. That is all I am saying, Mr. Chairman. I will allow the other two because they Clearly, this is just ... and trying to create a regional issue out of it. It is wrong.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, proceed.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Chairman, I am glad that the Acting Prime Minister -- he acts from time to time

-- the Honourable Member has hoisted himself to his hind legs to respond. Mr. Chairman, the reality is that the comments to which I refer were made as far back as May of 2015 and therefore, Sir, they are not of recent vintage. For a long time, the Prime Minister of Antigua and others in this region have been making it clear that they felt deep concern about the direction that Barbados was taking.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, the statement that you just made....

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: What statement? "For a long time people have been expressing concern?"

Mr. CHAIRMAN: No, Honourable Member.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: That it was 2015 since Gaston Browne was expressing concern?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member....

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: I made a number of statements, Sir, so could you be more specific?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: One in reference to standing on his hind legs. Please withdraw that remark.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: That he hoisted himself on his hind legs? Do you find that to be unparliamentary, Sir?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes, it sounds a bit unparliamentary.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Chairman, if you find it to be unparliamentary, I have to abide by your ruling. I withdraw it respectfully and humbly, and I apologise to the Honourable Member for saying that he hoisted himself to his hind legs.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, just withdraw the remark and proceed.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Yes, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: More substantively, if I may, Mr. Chairman, the point is that for a year-and-a-half now this issue has been on the record, and I am happy that the Member for St. Michael South Central has finally got around to responding only to me, but it is not me. It is the Prime Minister of Antigua who started this, and there are others who have been echoing it. It is not the Honourable Members on this side.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: On a Point of Order. The Member is misleading the House. I have made this point

repeatedly. At a Press conference held at the Caribbean Tourism Organisation, I made the point there, it was carried on regional media, all over, as far away as the Jamaica Gleaner. I made the point when we opened the Civil Aviation Authority building at Grantley Adams International Airport. It was carried in the media. I have made the point repeatedly. Do not say that it has not been said. I cannot speak for feelings that Antiguan or the Antiguan Prime Minister, or whoever, may have. I can only speak to the fact that Barbados is not interested in the issue of where the headquarters of LIAT are located. The issue has been increased activity: hubbing. From the Prime Minister's response you can see clearly that is happening; 112 flights a week out of Barbados, nearly double what is coming out of Antigua. That has been our focus and we have succeeded in doing that. Do not misrepresent the thing; that is all. Do not create regional issues.

Asides.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: It leads to misunderstandings across the region and we will have to be responding and taking rearguard action.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you will get a chance to clarify that.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please proceed.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Chairman, I hear the Honourable Member and I am glad to have heard him because he said he spoke before. I must confess I am hearing him now but my concern is heightened, because the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has told this region that since February of 2015 a decision was made to do exactly what the Honourable Member is saying is not going to happen. I do not understand now, Sir, the chaos that reigns. Sir, it was only two weeks ago. Mr. Chairman, if I may, it was only two weeks ago that we heard of a decision taken that water was going to be imported from Suriname. Suriname Government officials were able to speak to a decision that in Barbados, apparently, never took place. We have a Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines saying in February 2015 that a decision was taken and had not been rescinded and, all of a sudden now, we are hearing that the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines clearly does not know what he is talking about.

Asides.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: That is the inference to be drawn.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, unfortunately, I hate to do this. The Member for St. James Central is a former Minister of Foreign Affairs in part, and really and truly now He is going from Antigua to St. Vincent. The February 2015 issue that the Prime Minister from St. Vincent and the Grenadines was speaking of is precisely what I just alluded to. It was the question of the hubbing arrangements and shifting more activity to the southern Caribbean where the population bases are larger. Guyana has 750 000 people, Trinidad has 1.2 million and Barbados has 270 000, so that decision was taken, and that is why, as the Prime Minister said, there is increased activity in this part of the region. That is what the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines was talking about. It was nothing about shifting the headquarters. That is all I am saying.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, thank you.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have two minutes to wrap up.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Three minutes, Sir?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Two.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman, and clearly I will have to come back. If the Honourable Member has taken exception to the use of the words "shifting headquarters", I take that back. Clearly, he is talking about shifting some of the operational aspects to Barbados, but that is what has given angst, and the issue here, Sir, is the angst that has arisen in this region because a decision apparently has been taken. Sir, this Opposition obviously was never told or consulted but the decision is taken and prime ministers within the region have reacted to the decision, as have their ministers of tourism and international transport. Sir, it is not for us to get into that as an Opposition. Our issue is that we must know that whenever decisions are taken, whatever happens, they are going to impact, first of all, on the betterment and the welfare of the travelling public of this region, most importantly Barbadians. Secondly, Sir, is the economic efficiency of what is transpiring at LIAT with respect to its management. That is why I raised in this speech the fact that for 14 months some people did not get paid a salary. That is why I raised in this speech the consequences of the hangar fire, which the Prime Minister treated as if it was a glancing blow outside the off-stump. The truth of the matter is that it was a matter of tremendous significance, Sir, resulting in substantial financial impact. Not a word. Sir, we have a duty to ask the Government not to speak the language of galimatias, unintelligible gibberish, but to speak the language of substance and to enlighten the public about what it is they are trying to achieve in this business

of regional transport. Since I only have a few seconds left, Sir, I think it is better to do as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North has suggested and take another bite at the cherry and come back for a further intervention. I am obliged.

12.18 p.m.

Insert s13 juliette

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Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: ... at all, LIAT has to be a main staple in that discourse. We understand the anxieties of other Caribbean countries, we understand the anxieties of the Antiguan, the Vincentians and so forth but Barbados remains a leader in this region of seeking to keep the region an interdependent space, both economically and socially, and therefore I have no difficulties with the Honourable Prime Minister's attempt to ensure that any decisions taken are taken within the context of sensitivity and ensuring that no island is left behind in this regard and that while Barbados stands in front leading the process that it does not leave any island disadvantaged or any island behind, so I want to give full credence to the Government of Barbados for continuing to ensure that this issue is dealt with and dealt with in a way that is responsible and to ensure that the people of the region are able to continue to rely on LIAT and that whatever we need to do within the context...

I do not understand how you could reflect on potholes and so on in the context of this discussion when the Government has made it clear that there is no new injection of funds into LIAT, that it is simply a tidying up of the records. Potholes do not happen overnight. Potholes are a result of the persistent deterioration of the road system, and that deterioration did not start in 2008. I drive around Barbados. I am from White Hill, I am from Mount All more proper, and I do not know why people want the country to believe that the roads are worse off than they have ever been. The truth of the matter is that to improve our road network we have to continue to rely on an improved economic condition. The Government is doing its best to make sure that these issues are addressed but why tag that on to the LIAT issues when the LIAT issue has no implications for current Government spending. This Resolution does not have any implications for that. What we need to do is to ensure that LIAT continues to be viable because if the region is going to feed itself it means that we have to be more forthwith in encouraging the movement of goods, the movement of food, around this region to ensure that we do not have to continue to exacerbate an already bloated food import bill into this region. Mr. Chairman, that is where we stand and that is why we are here defending LIAT's viability not only from an economic position but also from the socio-cultural position as well.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I want of course to thank the Honourable Member for Christ Church East for a very appropriate contribution. We need to set the context for which this debate is taking place with respect to LIAT. Very quickly we are, as has been said, bringing to book this Resolution. It is actually in the name of the Ministry of Finance. It is bringing something to book and that explains why the Honourable Minister of Finance would have led the debate, however it does have implications for the portfolio I have responsibility for, and again in keeping with the whole issue of context I thought I should just make a few points.

The Honourable Member for St. James Central when he spoke in trying to explain the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North said that all he wanted was accountability and I have to hand it to him because that is a herculean task trying to decipher all of that and summing it up to that. Both Governments have agreed to support LIAT but the Honourable Member admitted that both Governments were wrong. Now, for a very brief period he was a part of that Government. It is true he was in the Ministry responsible for International Transport again briefly with some role, and I am going to assume that he did not agree with the decision of the last Government and this Government because the Honourable Member for St. James Central and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East were right when they said that there is a social component to LIAT that we cannot escape. The most dangerous thing said by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, and again I believe he is on a frolic of his own, was that LIAT should look at the low-cost carrier model in going forward. Let me just say that I can comfortably disassociate the Barbados Labour Party from that and I can comfortably disassociate the Democratic Labour Party from that because that would be the end of LIAT as we know it. As many as 60 per cent of those routes are social routes.

Now, you want to bring the LCC model to LIAT. Legacy carriers do not even want to trouble that model. That is a serious statement but again if you do not have an understanding for the context that you heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church East speak to and even the Honourable Member for St. James Central even if he only glanced at it, I think that even he understands that you cannot look at it simply from a point of view of profiteering, it is a different scenario with LIAT.

On the issue of context we should probably look at the region because LIAT does not operate in isolation. If you take the English-speaking Caribbean alone, all of the

state-owned airlines in the Caribbean are losing money, CAL (Caribbean Airlines Limited), Suriname Airways, Bahamas Air, Cayman Airways and LIAT. In fact, if you look at the aggregated accumulated deficit of all of those airlines it is probably, I am told, close to US\$1 billion. Governments are subsidising airlines in the region to the tune of US\$100 million a year, but why do we do it, we do it because the Caribbean is the most tourism-dependent region in the world and whereas it may cost on one end there is benefit on the other by way of regional movement by way of tourism and tourists moving and the direct and indirect spend that come from that. Mr. Chairman, that is the point that you have to look at and that is the same reason why again both Governments in Barbados and all Governments around the region support interregional carriers as well because that is how we earn our keep.

This notion that somehow you can run LIAT as a business is an absurdity and it is not going to happen. I am not even going to get into the structural realities, those peculiarities about LIAT that render it far more difficult to function as do normal airlines. People would say that the cost of fuel is going down, that is true but the number of landings and take-offs that LIAT has has not gone down. If you look at an airline the most expensive and difficult part of a flight is when it is landing and when it is taking off and that is all LIAT aircrafts do all day long. As soon as the plane gets up in the air the pilot is turning on "The Fasten Seat Belts" symbol, it is time to land again. The wear and tear on the aircraft is high and those again are the structural realities of operating an airline in the region. We have a small market base. Larger airlines have been forged to go through acquisition processes just to be viable. We do not have that luxury, so where does that put us now in 2016, Mr. Chairman?

I know that we constantly hear that you have been in Government for eight years and do not look back, but what have we done, the question has been put.

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These proceeds were for a refueling exercise. You accept that LIAT is critical, so you had a 16-strong Dash-8 fleet that was ageing, stitched together literally, you would look out through the window and see pieces of tape and so on the fuselage or the wings. This was in the time of plenty, you know. We came to office and faced with the reality of the economic downturn but we had to do something about the fleet because safety was beginning to be compromised as well and so we had to do something about that fleet situation. Mr. Chairman, we had to renew the fleet, that is what this exercise is about, that will improve efficiency, it will drive down maintenance cost, it will offer better service. Yes, LIAT has to improve its service and nobody is going to apologise for poor service, they have to get their

act together but yes, they have to operate in a more efficient manner.

Mr. Chairman, when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North was in the Ministry of International Transport, there were 1 200 people working at LIAT. There are now 669. This Government has made tough decisions because we understand that it cannot be business as usual, that is the reality. Mr. Chairman, do you know what? We probably are going to have to reduce that staff count by another 30 persons. Now, it is true that only 90 of those people are based here, most of them are based in Antigua but we are trying to run a lean, mean and more efficient operation but at the same time we are not going to compromise our social responsibility to the people of the Caribbean.

Mr. Chairman, we have 18 countries that are serviced by LIAT, 16 directly and two through a co-shared arrangement with Caribbean Helicopter, those two being Nevis and Anguilla. That model is that you purchase LIAT ticket, get a LIAT flight number but you use another operator, bigger airlines do that all the time, LIAT has to do more of that and we are engaging with players to do more, including Trans-Island Air which is going through a process that is necessary in order to make sure that they can be licensed properly. Trans-Island Air are not using brand new aircraft out of a showroom, they are using aircraft that have some mileage on them. We have to be doubly sure, we have to go through the regulatory process. Trans-island Air is not going to be any competition for LIAT directly, it is an opportunity to work together where their so-called third tier carriers can work with LIAT.

Mr. Chairman, decisions that could have been taken and were not taken before, this Government is now prepared to take because we understand, that is why you heard the Right Honourable Prime Minister mentioned the projected loss in the vicinity of \$9 million. It used to be in the \$30s, \$40s and \$50 million, that is how the accumulated deficit got so high. I think it must be almost EC\$400 million. Mr. Chairman, we are making the difficult decisions in order to see to it that we can have a LIAT that is able to function and to do so effectively for the region, one that can take into consideration its social obligations.

Mr. Chairman, I again felt it necessary to get up on a point of order to clarify a point for about the fourth time. It is true that I have never said it on the Floor of this Honourable House but I have said it elsewhere, the issue for the Government of Barbados has never been about LIAT's Headquarters, the issue has been about the viability, the functioning and the sensible working of the airline, both the social responsibility and to some extent the opportunities to earn revenue.

Mr. Chairman, as it is we have 112 flights a week coming out of Barbados, more than anybody else. The route network has been restructured and is constantly being looked at. The reflecting exercise is now complete, we have all ten of the ATRs here. In relation to the disposing of the Dash-8's, I was not sure what the Honourable Member for St. James Central was suggesting. I was not sure if the Honourable Member was suggesting holding somebody responsible for the fire of the hanger. I do not know if the Honourable Member was saying that there was an arsonist who went in and burned up the place. I am not saying that is what the Honourable Member was saying or was suggesting but the truth is that...

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, somebody should be brought to account but I want to believe that what the Honourable Member was saying, and I will help the Honourable Member here -- and imagine this, imagine I am helping the Honourable Member to be a more effective Opposition Member of Parliament -- the Honourable Member is that the records should have been backed up offsite. It is the destruction of the records that now mean that basically the Dash-8's have to be sold almost as parts. It is appropriate that the records should have been onsite and offsite. The Honourable Member did not make that clear, that is true and the Honourable Member is correct if the Honourable Member is suggesting that somebody should be held accountable for that and not to be held accountable for burning down the hanger. The Honourable Member was not clear. It is unfortunate and that is another issue or obstacle that we had to overcome with respect to this reflecting exercise and so on, but the last Dash-8 was, in fact, sold and so we should be in a position to properly account, as I understand shortly where that is concerned.

Mr. Chairman, Barbados has all of its equity contribution up to date. Shortly after we had done the reflecting exercise there was a shortfall, for various reasons, back then the price of fuel was quite high and there was another equity call. It is true that, yes, some of the partners were a bit slow and there was a cash flow challenge, so that Barbados was called upon and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs obviously responded accordingly.

Mr. Chairman, for information purposes as well, let me say that the decisions that were taken last year to shift and restructure the routes, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda was represented at the Board Meeting in the form of the Minister with responsibility for International Transport and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. Therefore it is not true to say that anything was done behind Government's back. I am not trying to read anybody's mind, I cannot speak for the feelings of anybody, including Prime Minister Browne

or anyone else, I can only say what is indeed a fact and what remains truthful with respect to those operations.

Mr. Chairman, I also thought it was interesting and curious, the Honourable Member for St. James Central raised Navitaire. Somebody should be held accountable for that too because that decision was a ridiculous one and once again, this Government now have to spend an obscene set of money in order to make Navitaire compatible with international systems. I do not know what the thinking there was and when you ask questions nobody cannot seem to answer that.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West would recall that when he was Minister of Tourism and International Transport the Honourable Member came and found Navitaire. Now, again we now have to deal with that, we now have to invest the money to make it more compatible. Mr. Chairman, you are going to ask questions like that but then you do not want us to look back, as you all say. As you say, we have been in office for eight years and that we should not look back. Mr. Chairman, the truth is that Navitaire was a bad decision that was made that now has to be corrected, yet but another example of that.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to give some assurance on the whole question of the categorisation of our airspace and the process that the Federal Aviation Authority goes through. Apparently, the last time I spoke to this, somehow the impression was given that I said it was not a big thing. Sir, we have brought on a consultant working with us to see how we can eventually improve our situation. The point I make is that if you do not have an airline based in your jurisdiction, that it is a little more difficult to get the Category 1 and that you have to work on almost a simulated version of Category 1 status before you can have that Category 1 status.

12.53 p.m.

The Government of Barbados right now is working very closely not only with the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) but, dare I say, with all the United States agencies: the Transport Security Administration (TSA) through the Department of Homeland Security, and Customs and Border Protection. We are talking about a potential pre-clearance option at the airport, so we are working with all of those agencies; and I have no doubt that at some stage, as I did say last time, Category One will occur naturally because we are working towards it. You cannot work on it in isolation. It is not a form which you stay up late a night, fill it in and send it up, and then you get it. There is a process involved, and therefore the question of attracting airlines to be based here, like the TIA (Trans International Airlines) and so on, that is all a part of the whole exercise of improving your administration arrangements. That is

really what the Category One is about; it is not about the airport facility as such. It is about the administration arrangements. The Prime Minister was quite right when he said that there is all this expertise which people have developed now they have gone into Opposition. They did not have it when they were in the Ministry. Sorry, my time is up. Mr. Chairman, I am just saying that we will continue to do what we have to do with respect to civil aviation in Barbados and, again, needless to say, I support this exercise. LIAT has issues, it has to get its act together, and we continue to work with all of the agencies, unions and so on which make up that entity. The President of the Leeward Islands Airline Pilots' Association (LIALPA) happens to be a Barbadian, Captain Patterson Thompson. As a matter of fact, he is grieving the loss of his father, who will be buried this afternoon, and we commend him for his work and offer him and his family sympathy at this time. I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

Asides.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 21 stand part.

The question that Head 21 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative, without division.

On the motion of Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of one Resolution in Committee of Supply, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE, the Resolution was read a first time.

On the separate motion of Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE, the Resolution was read a second time.

On the motion of Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE, the Resolution was agreed to and passed accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting of the House be suspended until 2.30 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.30 p.m. for lunch was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

12.53 p.m.

Insert s17 juliette

Tuesday, November 22, 2016

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise, Mr. Speaker, to support the introduction of this piece of this legislation, the Barbados Jubilee Honour Bill, that is before this Chamber. I am doing so, Sir, because I believe that this is a perfect example of how far we have come as an independent nation, it speaks to the fact that as a Parliament of Barbados having gained our independence in 1966 that we have been able to recognise persons who have contributed to the development of this country over the course of the past 50 years. I believe, whether we were the Government or not, that it is something that the Barbados Labour Party too would have sought to embark on in terms of introducing it into this Chamber and for that reason I believe that all on this side certainly share in supporting this particular Bill in seeing that the persons who have been selected by their peers across the constituencies of Barbados and that, as I can see from the legislation, persons from outside, who would also been able to lend their voice to identify persons who have contributed in the various categories, would be given the requisite recognition by Barbados and the Barbados Government.

I note that the eligibility categories would have allowed person to be nominated for the honour by Barbadians living in Barbados and elsewhere, that the person has to be a citizen of Barbados and is entitled to be registered as a citizen of Barbados. I think the latter point particularly allows for persons who may not have yet acquired citizenship but who because of their citizenship by descent would certainly be able to fall within this category. It also allows persons who have been given significant meritorious service to his community and to the nation to also be recognised. I am sure that when the names of the 50 persons have been published in due course that Barbados can and certainly Barbadian should be able to celebrate in the achievements of our nation and certainly of the various individuals.

I know that there are 11 categories ranging from business, civil society, cultural arts, education, entrepreneurship, innovation, public service, medicine, science and technology, sports and the labour movement. I feel that the categories are certainly quite expansive. Usually we tend to forget the areas of sports and certainly the cultural arts and even entrepreneurship and innovation, but I think that it is a clear recognition that a wide cross-

section of Barbados would be covered through these categories that have been indicated within the legislation.

The fact that we have previously come to this Chamber to have the Centennial Honour again speaks to the fact that I think that Barbadians do understand at the political level that if we are supposed to shape our destiny that we have to start by recognising our people. Certainly, I would hope that in taking the opportunity to celebrate the 50 years that it stands as a moment of reflection on how far we have come as a people. I often stand in this Chamber, Sir, and make the comment that the persons who now sit in this Chamber look like us and they are not the persons who are on the stained glass windows which surround this institution and therefore we are certainly the persons who have responsibility for not only our own destiny but the destiny of generations to come and I would like to think that we do so in a way that when we speak of independence we speak of independence not just in terms of freedom from our colonial masters but we speak of independence of thought, independence of mind and independence of our destiny. It therefore would follow, Sir, that as we celebrate these individuals that we reflect on the way in which we are governed, in the way in which certainly us as lawmakers are in a position to be able not just to recognise these individuals but to lead by example as well.

For those who have contributed to the development of Barbados I salute those persons in advance. I am sure the names will be published in due course. I will take this opportunity to salute all Barbadians whether they are recognised through this piece of legislation or not who have contributed to the development of Barbados recognising that while as a Government we have sought to decentralise services in communities that it would be certainly important if within each of the communities across Barbados recognition was given across the 30 constituencies to persons living in the constituencies who have been at the forefront of these 11 categories because while we may have in the National Honours, there are also persons living across constituencies in Barbados who will not get recognised in this independence celebrations.

I think that this Administration would have introduced constituency councils, for instance, which I believe in some cases if we are fair are not necessarily serving the purpose for which they were intended but certainly if they were functioning the way perhaps they were envisaged we would find ourselves in a situation where constituency councils would perhaps be at the forefront of having persons identified from the various communities who have contributed to the development of Barbados over the last 50 years as well.

My only regret is that perhaps we have not been able to do more and that certainly the Barbados Labour Party has not been able to contribute to the discussions and the

discourse as it relates to the planning of the 50 years of independence and celebrations despite being the Government of Barbados for 24 of those 50 years not that we wanted to be at the forefront certainly of dictating the course of events but I think that it would have been the proper course to perhaps have simply consulted us at various stages to let us know. I have been bombarded with several invitations over the course of the last few weeks to various events. In some cases I know nothing about what the events are specifically about and it would have been nice if we would perhaps have had a briefing of the parliamentarians so that we too would be able to share with our various constituents as well what is really happening for the 50th Anniversary.

Overall, I believe Barbadians have a lot to celebrate. That would not stop the Barbados Labour Party from certainly celebrating its contribution and certainly the contribution of its citizens to the development of this country. We know the role that we have played, we know the role that members on the other side have played and we are grateful for how we have gotten here, but at the end of the day I would hope that we do not forget where we need to go and that we put certain things in place to ensure that in the next 50 years we are not just simply celebrating our 100th Anniversary but that we are certainly celebrating significant reforms to our parliamentary democracy and certainly governance in this country as we now know it today as well and that we can look back on it again and say and reflect on the fact that while Barbados may be small in size that we have been able to produce from both sides of the political divide persons who have been able to contribute to the development of this country regardless of their feelings and regardless of their beliefs but that they have been able to contribute at a level that we can look back and reflect on and certainly appreciate what they have been able to bring to table.

Sir, I do not intend to delay this Bill. Again, the Barbados Labour Party supports the concept of honouring persons who have contributed to the development of Barbados and again we would just have wanted that we would have been able to make certain contributions at the level of the planning for the celebrations of the 50 years.

I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I rise to wind up the debate on this Bill and to thank the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East for the magnanimity which she has shown on this occasion. It is not very often that I am able to say that and say it so readily but I am very pleased to say it today. Perhaps the spirit of jubilee is pervading the atmosphere and has done much to soften the

resonance of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Mr. Speaker, in so saying I have to agree with the Honourable Member that constituency councils had a very critical role to play in sensitising the communities for which they are responsible to what was happening for the 50th Anniversary Celebrations and perhaps for recognising the people at the community level who were deserving of recognition for their contribution to the development of Barbados over the last 50 years and of course to the solidification of their own communities.

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Mr. Speaker, I know that the Constituency Councils in the constituency of St. John and certainly the one in St. Michael South would have done the same thing. I do not know how broad-based or expansive that kind of activity was but I do agree that recognition is very important as a tool in human motivation. I think Abraham Maslow in his famous essay, "The Theory of Human Motivation", written around 1943, in his "Hierarchy of Needs" identified recognition as one of those needs and wherever human beings exert themselves and try to contribute to the upliftment of their fellowmen, I think recognition should be accorded to them. This is what this effort is about, the categories are very expansive, as the Honourable Member has indicated.

Mr. Speaker, I had omitted in my opening statement to mention the Labour Movement but you really cannot credibly discuss the 50 Years of Barbados' Independence and not zero-in on the role played by the Labour Movement over the last 50 years. I know that we had a special occasion coinciding with the centenary of the Right Excellent Sir Frank Walcott to pay tribute to the leaders of Barbados' Labour Movement, the Right Excellent Charles Duncan O'neal, the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams, the Right Excellent Sir Hugh Springer, Sir Frank Walcott and of course Clement Payne. That was indicative of the importance which we attached to the Labour Movement and its contribution to Barbados as a nation over the last 50 years.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the categories identified in the Bill are sufficiently broad to allow some other names to come to the surface. I know that Honours in Barbados have tended to throw up just a limited set of names, sometimes you see names recurring in some cases, but I think this gives a good opportunity for a broader base of worthy and meritorious citizens to be caught. Therefore, as I said, I am indebted to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East for the broadmindedness shown in her very thoughtful intervention.

Mr. Speaker, with that said, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of the Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART, seconded by Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill. Mr. J. D. PAUL, Chairman of Committees in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 7, inclusive, were called and passed.

The Schedule was called and passed.

On the separate motion of the Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART, seconded by Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART, seconded by Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Barbados Jubilee Honour Act, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, with that we have come to the end of Government Business for the day. I beg to move that this Honourable Sitting be now adjourned until Tuesday, December 6th, 2016, at 10:00 o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Speaker, during the intervening period and speaking on the adjournment, I would like, first of all, to wish Barbadians a wonderful 50th Independence Celebration. It has been for Barbados a very important year and I want to take this opportunity too, Sir, to thank and to congratulate at the same time the Committee which was set up by the Cabinet of Barbados and the Office of the Prime Minister to oversee the smooth running of these Jubilee Celebration events. We have just completed the debate on the significance of the 50th Jubilee Celebrations and in that debate we set out to congratulate the people of Barbados for this wonderful achievement.

I certainly want, even at this stage, to thank the Committee who would have looked after the Calendar of Events for this year and indeed importantly thank the people of Barbados for their tremendous cooperation which

they have shown during the year and of course the wonderful participation.

H:C43(19)

Sir, the events will culminate on November 30, as we know, when we officially celebrate the day of Independence; 50 years of Independence. There are a number of intervening events which may be useful to mention. There is 'An Evening of Barbadian Elegance' this evening to be hosted at the Prime Minister's official residence at Ilaro Court, and that is at eight o' clock. There is the 'Dinner and Ball', again to be hosted at the Prime Minister's official residence on Friday, November 25, at 6 p.m. There is the 50th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service which is on Sunday, November 27, at the 3Ws Amphitheatre at Kensington Oval, and again we look forward to a mass celebration with Barbadians as we thank God especially for the wonderful things we have enjoyed over these 50 years, especially Independence. Of course, the Reveal of the 50th Anniversary Independence Monument will be on November 29 at 10:30 in the night at the Historic Garrison Savannah. We are all now aware of the transformation taking place there already in preparation for this very important event. The 50th Anniversary Independence Parade, a much looked-forward-to event, will be on November 30, Independence Day, at eight o' clock in the morning. The celebration will culminate in a Golden Anniversary spectacular 'Mega Concert' at Kensington Oval on November 30 at eight o' clock in the evening.

Sir, I mention those events as special events sponsored by the Government of Barbados and the 50th Anniversary Committee, but there are a number of private events taking places; churches which are setting out to share in lifting up this society, the people of Barbados, and helping to sing our praises to the Master who, of course, decides our destiny. Sir, we want therefore to wish, as I said, all my colleagues, you Mr. Speaker, the Right Honourable Prime Minister and his family, all Members of the Opposition and their families, the Clerk and his team and assistants, the Marshall, the staff of Parliament, the security, both the security of Parliament and the special security provided by the Royal Barbados Police Force on occasions like these, and to all Barbadians; I wish you a very happy Independence celebration in 2016, especially a special remembrance of this 50th Year of Independence as we celebrate and give thanks. May we have a safe celebration, Sir, and come back rested to a large extent and ready to continue the work of the people in this Honourable Chamber on December 6, the date to which we have adjourned. Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Yes, Honourable Member.

Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I too would wish to share the sentiments of the Leader of Government Business in expressing congratulations to Barbados on attaining 50 years of Independence. Certainly, I would wish that, as we break today, those who will participate in the celebrations over the course of the next few days would do so safely and enjoyably. I had the opportunity just now to walk through Bridgetown, and I was pleased to see the blue, yellow and black colours littering the streets by the vendors, persons attired in their Independence colours, certainly in early recognition of the celebration that is upon us. It reminded me of being in New York for Labour Day to celebrate the Labour Day Carnival and being very proud to be a Barbadian certainly, because in the United States when Labour Day is being celebrated there is one thing that stands out, and that is the patriotism of persons who are from the Caribbean. You will see Jamaican flags, Barbadian flags, Vincentian flags, and flags of the entire Caribbean littered across the streets of America; but nothing certainly has given me greater pride to be a part of being able to recognise this little rock that I have come from and the contribution that this country and the people of this country have been able to make to the development of Barbados and, certainly, the region and to the world over the course of the past 50 years since Independence.

Our nation is a great one. It is one that only becomes greater when we recognise the contribution of our people, regardless of their political class, social class or economic wealth. We are certainly able to look past all of those things to be able to ensure that persons are given a fair shot at not only being the best that they can be, but being better certainly than those in the rest of the region and the rest of the world. Our greatness comes from being able to look past the politics and to be able to see that we can contribute, regardless of who we support and what philosophies we hold. Our greatness also comes from being able to educate persons about the contributions that have been made by our people; about the struggle, how we have got to this point, what is it that Independence meant to the people who fought for it in 1966 and before, and the persons who would have helped to shape this nation from being self-governing to full Independence. Those are the things that will make Barbados great, and as we celebrate 50 years I would hope again, as I said earlier in the last Debate, that we would reflect on those contributions. We can do so much more as a nation and as a people to be able to let our nation and the rest of the world know what we have contributed to our development. We have access to the media and we have access to Social Media, in a way that we did not have in 1966. You had to sit down and listen to one or two radio stations. You may have had to sit to listen to or watch programmes on television. Today, we have at our fingertips a generation that is able to not only create but export what it is that our people have been able to do over the course of the past few generations in all of the categories that are being recognised during the Jubilee

Honours for the Independence celebrations; from business, entrepreneurship, culture, sports and the like. I do believe that since we now control as a people the ability to get our message out, to make sure that our message is not distorted and to make sure that somebody else does not write their history on our pages but that we, as proud Barbadians, are able to write our history, that we take this opportunity in celebrating over the next few weeks our Independence as a nation and our contribution to the development of our country and the rest of the world. I would wish to take the opportunity to congratulate all Barbadians who are playing a part in the Independence celebration and all persons who have worked as part of the Committee as well to ensure that the rest of the world appreciates that Barbados has reached this milestone and that it is proud of its achievements of its people over the past 50 years.

Sir, as we take this break I would want to thank Honourable Members for inviting the Opposition to attend the celebrations. I believe we will do our part as we have continued to do in spreading the message of Independence and our pride in being a part of making Barbados an independent nation. I look forward certainly to the next 50 years, whether some on both sides are here or not, that I can be part of helping to shape Barbados in the next 50 years. I thank you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before I put the question, let me identify with the comments from both sides of the House and take this opportunity to wish all Barbados and, of course, the good people of St. Michael West, all the best on this occasion. I think, too, that it is only fair that we single out the 50th Anniversary Committee for the work it has done in these celebrations, and to congratulate them for a job well done, although it is not quite over.

3.16 p.m.

Insert s21 juliette

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KELLMAN, Hon. D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
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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. Dates in the text. The source gives ‘Tuesday, November 11, 2016’ (11 November 2016 was a Friday). The weekday and date do not agree; printed as in the source.

Q3. Opening. The convening sentence in the source begins mid-sentence: ‘met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, November 22, 2016.’ Printed as in the source.

Q4. Committee of Supply, Head 21, after Hon. D. St.E. Kellman. Take-slip ‘H:No.C43 (8) 11.39 a.m.’ carries the reporter’s note ‘Insert s9 juliette’, and Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw’s speech then begins mid-sentence (‘...was significantly improved’), with no call from the Chair; the opening of her speech appears to be missing. The note is printed as in the source. The same ‘Insert ... juliette’ notes appear at take-slips 2, 12, 16 and 20.

Q5. Committee of Supply, Head 21, after Mr. K. D. Symmonds. Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe’s speech begins mid-sentence (‘... at all, LIAT has to be a main staple’), after the note ‘Insert s13 juliette’, with no call from the Chair. The opening of the speech appears to be missing. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Committee of Supply, Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart. An interjection is printed within a paragraph as ‘Rt Hon. F.J. STUART: I was in here too...’ rather than as a separate speech. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Take-slips, about 10.40 a.m. and 11.40 a.m.. The take-slips run out of time order: ‘H:C43(1)10.42 a.m.’ is followed by ‘(2) 10.40 a.m.’, and ‘(7)11.41 a.m.’ by ‘(8) 11.39 a.m.’. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Order No. 16 and Barbados Jubilee Honour Bill. The Bill is listed at first reading as ‘The Barbados Jubilee Honours Bill, 2016’, but is debated as the ‘Barbados Jubilee Honour Bill’ and cited on passing as the ‘Barbados Jubilee Honour Act, 2016’. The second-reading debate opens with Miss Bradshaw’s speech after the lunch suspension; no Order heading or opening speech by the mover appears. Printed as in the source.

Q9. First Reading of Bills. The Minister’s name is spelt ‘Hon. C. P. SINKLER’ here and ‘SINCKLER’ elsewhere in the report. Printed as in the source.

Q10. End of the report. The record ends with Mr. Speaker’s remarks before putting the question on the adjournment, followed by take-slip ‘H:No.C43 (20) 3.16 p.m.’ and ‘Insert s21 juliette’; the question on the adjournment and the closing procedural sentence are not in the source. Please confirm.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 22nd November, 2016 at 10.15 a.m., with Mr. Speaker, His Honour Michael A. Carrington, in the Chair; prayers were taken by Reverend Mark Harewood. Hon. S. A. Lashley laid the National Cultural Foundation Annual Reports for 2009 to 2012. The Municipal Solid Waste Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2016 and the Barbados Jubilee Honours Bill, 2016 were read a first time, and Standing Orders were suspended on the motion of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce.

Under Order No. 16 the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. J. D. Paul in the Chair, on a Resolution to grant \$33 111 620 under Supplementary Estimates No. 1 2016-2017, Head 21, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. Hon. C. P. Sinckler explained that it brought to book advances made by the Government as shareholder to LIAT (1974) Limited from 2012-2013 to 2015-2016, as the Auditor General had recommended; under accrual accounting only BDS\$2.8 million would fall in 2015-2016, and close to \$100 million in earlier advances was still being traced.

Mr. R. St.C. Toppin, the Member for St. Michael North, contrasted the \$33 million with conditions at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and in policing, and withdrew a remark about the Auditor General’s Report after a point of order. He argued that LIAT had been subsidised for 42 years without profit and urged Category 1 status for the airport. The Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart, replied that no new money was involved and defended LIAT as essential to regional integration: its projected 2016 loss was \$9 million against \$57 million in 2015, it moved 733 000 people in 2015, and its 112 weekly flights were 52 per cent of all flights from Grantley Adams International Airport.

Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, the Member for St. Lucy, compared LIAT with the Transport Board; Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw sought updates on the ATR aircraft and the proposal to base LIAT in Barbados. Mr. K. D. Symmonds

said the Opposition was entitled to know the Government's intentions for LIAT, and withdrew at the Chairman's direction a remark about Hon. R. L. Sealy rising 'on his hind legs'; Mr. Sealy, on points of order, denied that moving LIAT's headquarters had been proposed. Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe supported the Resolution.

Hon. R. L. Sealy rejected a low-cost carrier model, saying some 60 per cent of LIAT's routes were social routes; staff had fallen from 1 200 to 669, the ten ATRs had arrived and Barbados's equity contributions were up to

date. Head 21 stood part, the Resolution passed, and the Sitting was suspended until 2.30 p.m.

Afterwards Miss Bradshaw supported the Barbados Jubilee Honour Bill and its eleven categories, regretting that the Opposition had not been involved in planning the 50th Anniversary; the Prime Minister replied, and the Bill passed as the Barbados Jubilee Honour Act, 2016. Mr. Boyce moved the adjournment until Tuesday, 6th December, 2016, listing Independence events; Miss Bradshaw and Mr. Speaker added congratulations, and the record ends before the question was put.