
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

RESUMPTION

MR. SPEAKER: Good morning, Honourable Members. It is good to see you here so bright and early. Yesterday when the Suspension was taken, we were on Order No. 20, and with that we shall continue. Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter this Debate and also to congratulate the Minister of Finance on his deliverance on Monday, and of course the provision of hope for Barbadians through these Estimates to ensure that the vulnerable groups in this country continue to be protected and cared for in relation to our social programmes. Mr. Speaker, I have the responsibility for the Ministry of Public Works, but I certainly would like to speak to a matter before I go into the Ministries because I have listened throughout this country for a couple of years to commentators and to the Opposition and their operatives giving this false notion that in relation to the Democratic Labour Party and its housing programme, no small contractors were employed. Mr. Speaker, I do recall that in this said Parliament we debated a \$40 million loan, I think from First Caribbean, and that loan was geared towards the employment of small contractors. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I did some research and when I looked at where the contractors were employed by the National Housing Corporation, they were at Lancaster 1 and 2, Parish Land and Marchfield, totalling about 30 small contractors. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I did not get to you to ask for your permission to call out the names of the small contractors but I certainly have them here. MR. SPEAKER: No, no, do not.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: I do not have the authority and I would not do that, Mr. Speaker. Certainly the evidence is here in relation to the small contractors who

were employed by the Ministry of Housing and Lands during that period. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, they stretched throughout Parish Land, Lancaster 1 and 2 and Marchfield, and they were employed. In fact, at Lancaster 1 and 2 they employed about 15 to 20 well-diggers to dig the wells up there. Sir, small tradesmen and workers and contractors got work under the programme. Mr. Speaker, I believe too that in trying economic times -- I believe the Minister of Housing would trumpet this on the next occasion when he gets up and speaks on a housing debate -- in spite of challenges, we were able to convey some \$5 lots to people in St. John and other parishes. The Member for St. John is nodding her head in approval. It is not a pie-in-the-sky promise; it is a reality where we understood that there was a challenge in relation to low-income groups getting access to land and becoming part of the property-owning class. The Government intervened at the time and we developed \$5 lots throughout the island. In fact, my information is that there are now 47 lots as part of that programme. Under my tenure, I know that we had acquired a whole set of lots but I understand now that the lots in Vineyard are ready -- 47 lots -- to be conveyed to Barbadians who can now afford to purchase land at \$5 a square foot. I think it is 3 500 square feet of land. I just want to put that on the table. Mr. Speaker, I want to move to my Ministry and to really take off from the point where the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter yesterday spoke in relation to the Transport Board and the fact that we have to look at a privatisation programme. Mr. Speaker, I certainly believe that history has shown that the private sector was involved in public transport in this country, and small, black businessmen and women controlled public transport before the Transport Board Act was passed. We can look at the history and see why there was a move from private transport to public transport, and the myriad problems that existed. In fact, the private sector at the time made numerous complaints about declining profitability. In fact, there were frequent calls for bus fare increases. They talked about high operational costs and inadequate infrastructure for their assets, and they threatened to shut down transport. The State then intervened through Parliament by passing

the Transport Act of 1955. Mr. Speaker, I am all for the integration of private transport into the public transport system. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I would say that we have an informal integration at this moment. After passing the 1955 Act and nationalising the public transport, there was an advent, I believe in the early 1980s, of a small Suzuki van that came into public transport. Then, through an Act of Parliament -- I think it was the Member for St. George North who then brought the legislation -- their role in public transport was recognised. From then, through the said Member for St. George North the Transport Authority Act came about. Mr. Speaker, the reason why I support integration is because we have had challenges with the public transport system. Informally they are actually working well, Mr. Speaker; they move thousands of people every day but the issue that I have is that, in order to fully formalise the integration process -- I always say this to the Chief Licensing Officer -- if you return to the days of private players into the public transport, you must have comprehensive monitoring and inspection. As the Member for St. Michael East said, if you assigned a route in the old days to a private operator, then that private operator would go half-way into the route and turn around. Even today it happens. Mr. Speaker, my view is that when the Road Traffic Act was passed, we never contemplated that there would be an increase in all of these private vehicles involved in public transport. What has happened is that we brought a Road Traffic Act to the Parliament and we called these monitors, or spies as they were called in the old-time days -- we now call them transport inspectors -- put them under Section 2 of the Road Traffic Act and gave those inspectors limited powers; that is, only of reporting and monitoring. Where you have breaches and violations of the Road Traffic laws, and they only work from 8:00 o'clock to 4.30 p.m., so where there are beaches and violations of the Road Traffic laws after 4.30 p.m. then there is no system in place to monitor them and, in fact, it was the Minister of Finance who spoke about the road taxes they are owed. We have that period in between there that a gay abandoned -driving up and down without any sort of compliance with the Road Traffic laws. I support the integration and it is done through the ??? project, Mr. Speaker, that we implemented in this year and our view is that we have now to look at our legislative programmes in terms of bringing proper standard into the public transport system. That would entail a comprehensive overall of the legislation be it the Transport Authority Act and the Road Traffic Act empowering the Transport Inspectors and of course working in tandem with the Royal Barbados Police Force and this is no reflection of members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, they are stretched so they need to be complimented and they need to be given a system where personnel have the powers to assist them and also the use of technology too so that we can really capitalise on a proper system and when we move toward the formal and expand the integration process that we have scheduled service, proper monitoring and proper inspection because

not only does it go to providing a reliable and efficient public transport system but it also ensures that there is safety in terms of the vehicle owners complying to standards. I just want to make that point, Mr. Speaker, but we have a public transport system run by the Barbados Transport Board and we want to ensure that system is reliable and efficient because only the vulnerable groups depend on public transport. It is the man in the street, for example, the maid, the gas station worker, the agricultural worker, the nurses, public sector workers and general workers that depend on public transport but, Mr. Speaker, this is not the only time that public transport has been faced with challenges and particularly in an economic situation where the Minister of Finance is challenged and where we have to ensure that we deliver and make these social programmes accessible and continue at the standard that they are accustomed to that we have to make sure that the social services reach those vulnerable persons. When we have a debate about whether Barbados Transport Board should have a marketing arm and have a revenue generating arm in terms of ??? service that clashes with the fact that the philosophy behind the establishment of the Barbados Transport Board. We have to balance this in providing the social good and, of course, not depending on the Ministry of Finance to run the operational cost of the Barbados Transport Board. Mr. Speaker, we have time and time again, and I have said it, there is a document that speaks to the state of affairs at the Barbados Transport Board and, of course, the fact is that have been troubled with high maintenance costs and throughout the history of the Barbados Transport Board, in fact, that is one of the characteristics of the Barbados Transport Board that we have to seek to drive down the maintenance costs. I must say that when I take a glance at the report by PricewaterhouseCoopers SRL that look into statutory ...

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: That has been reduced, Honourable Member for St. George South who never ...

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Sorry about that. I am guided by you.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, in spite of what has been thrown out there, ... I sometimes listen to the call-in programmes and even some of my former clients call the call-in programmes too. Some were suspects in capital offences because my view is once you are under the Section 2 of the Judges' Rule then you are deemed a suspect but the suspect keep on calling the radio station saying the Barbados Transport Board need to reduce its maintenance cost and then over there you would hear that too but the report that look into statutory authorities said bus maintenance cost have fallen since 2014 and it has

been a combination of key facts that we were able to reduce the maintenance cost:

1) we have identified alternate suppliers with cheaper part 2) changing the frequency of high cost break down, and 3) reducing the overall number of repairs undertaken.

Mr. Speaker, yes, it is a fact. It is in the report and the report is here but we would always have ...

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, we have buses that are very senior in the fleet. I have the breakdown here. In fact, they have run from 1966, 2001, in fact that the last time buses were purchases, Mr. Speaker, in public transport was in the year 2006, but we have the Leylands those buses are still up and running but the challenge we have is that we have to identify and we continue to identify suppliers with cheaper parts, we are seeking to work with alternative suppliers to ensure that we drive this cost down. Couple with that, Mr. Speaker, in terms of meeting the daily costs, I came and I found a marketing department that are involved in the traffic service and that too has been challenged in terms of the unavailability of buses and that is one of the revenue generating arm of the Barbados Transport Board. Mr. Speaker, we decided that the same way, and I know that some people believe that it should be left to the private sector and that the private sector should be only involved in traffic services but if we have to get revenue to meet some of the cost I certainly would lean to that. We must look to get some other assets to be involve in the travel service, Sir. Indeed, the same way how private companies can be involved in traffic services, in fact, and have locally constructed buses, Ince and Company, we have asked asked a local company, L & M, to build one of the same buses for us so that we can go back to the travel services so that we would not have to be totally dependent on the Ministry of Finance so that we can have some money coming in generating revenue on its own.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to speak to the Transport Board. Mr. Speaker, we have looked at developing the Mangrove Project. Sir, I must say that we have identified alternative suppliers. There were some buses that were bought by, I think, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East that we had servicing the disabled community. Through the efforts of the personnel at Mangrove we were able to source an engine that costs \$30 000 from an alternative supplier for \$5 000. We want to get those buses back on the road very shortly to assist the disabled community. I know that they marched on Saturday but this Government still cares about the disabled community.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Yes, we are going to get there, you do not panic.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch on a number of other issues. Quite recently, Mr. Speaker, there were a number of fatal accidents and I recall reading in the Press that this Government is to blame for them, I did not know who made the statement, but I did not respond because as far as I am concerned such a statement could only come from a clown prince because I do not know how you could have a causal connection between road fatalities and a Government causing somebody to die without even looking at any information from the Police and making a wild, wild statement like that.

Mr. Speaker, we have established a Road Safety Council and during this year we are seeking to promote and encourage drivers and pedestrians to be aware and to also acknowledge what is required of them in terms of ensuring that we do not have these accidents so frequently. In fact, Barbados still has the lowest rate in terms of fatal accidents and other accidents in the Caribbean, and that is why the Barbados National Road Safety Council and other stakeholders would be involved in a programme throughout the year.

Only recently, Mr. Speaker, through Cabinet, a Pedestrian Partnership Programme was launched which involves bringing the private sector to work with us in terms of the crosswalks. In fact, only recently a company contacted the ministry to say they want to get involved in the programme to adopt a pedestrian crossway and that they will provide the paint while we provide the labour. Sir, that programme was launched. The corporate sector in Barbados is coming forward. Sir, since we have had these fatal accidents a whole set of companies have come forward and are showing an interest in getting involved in this programme and we welcome them because it is a partnership and we will work with them.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the other area that I want to touch on is the area of roadworks and then I want to touch on the River Terminal.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. If you would give me a next half of an hour that would be great.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is provision for that in Committee. You go ahead.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, throughout the year we have had complaints in relation to the road infrastructure and highways. Our response to this

is that the Cabinet very urgently brought a programme to mill and pave to rehabilitate a number of roads throughout this country, and we have started. We have started Whitepark Road, Halls Road, another area in The Pine, we are going to St. Philip and to Gall Hill No. 1 and 2 and Thorpes, and there are a number of other roads that we are going to seek to rehabilitate and mill and pave under the Mill and Pave Programme. Mr. Speaker, Brighton has been done.

Mr. Speaker, there are other programmes under the Caribbean Development Bank, that is, the Bridge Improvement Programme and the CAF Programme that is now with the Special Tenders Committee. I do not want to interfere with their work because that process must work and when that is finished we will launch the CAF Programme to further deal with roads in this country. I think that the CAF funded programme is about \$30 or so million.

The Ministry of Transport and Works has approached the rehabilitation and mill and pave and the improvement of road infrastructure and highways in an aggressive manner. In fact, somebody said to me that the way how we went about the aggressive pothole patching programme that they cannot find many potholes in Barbados, so I said that I have to take a look at it.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Honourable Member for St. George North is troubled because this programme will be coming to St. George very shortly. I know that he is trembling in his boots, but I do not want to be distracted.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make one last point. We have had problems with the collection of road taxes and last year during the Estimates when my Head was called we said let us do an electronic vehicle registration and launch a programme. That programme is on its way. It has gone to the Special Tenders Committee and we are waiting until that is completed so that we can have an efficient collection of road taxes through the use of technology and through the impending road traffic amendments. In that legislation, we have put in a provision to ensuring that before the Barbados Revenue Authority issues a licence plate that certain documents must be had and that we are working on a special license plate during the interim period before the EVR is brought into the process. Certainly Mr. Speaker, once we bring in Electronic Vehicle Registration we have to do a further amendment to the Road Traffic Act so that that will be recognised and would garner the court of law. Mr. Speaker, certainly hopefully in June we should be bringing the amendments to the Road Traffic Act and inclusive to that is the fact that persons who park in spaces

marked for disabled persons will be an offence under the Laws of Barbados.

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

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I thank and I do support these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and we will continue to ensure that there is safety on the road, that the public infrastructure is properly maintain. We also hope that the Opposition would support some of the initiatives and some of the proposed amendments to the Road Traffic legislation. I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I first would want to say that in these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure year that one has to examine them against the signs of the times. It is important for us therefore to compliment the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East who has spoken on Monday afternoon and has really put the right perspective on these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. The Honourable Member felt that the whole question of debt needed to be profiled and that we need to tackle that debt first and foremost.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to this Honourable House that we have really to begin the conversation about which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West spoke, a conversation that is eight years behind time. this Government came to office in 2008 and eight years after we are now asked to begin this great conversation but of course Mr. Speaker, it is better to start late than never. I also want to say that all of us are in this together and if the conversation is to start then we cannot have a situation where one side is throwing things at the other side, there must be a levelheaded. We do not want to hear things like blood will run in the gutter. I do not believe the Honourable Member said that. I heard it but I do not know if it is true because that Honourable Member is always levelheaded. I personally have not heard it but I have heard people talking about it. I think if the conversation is to start that we need to start somewhere and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central said we need to have that conversation.

Mr. Speaker, we need to have that conversation against the sentiment and we have to agree that an angel has fallen, not that an angel has come down from heaven. What do I mean by that? That is where I will begin my conversation today, but a country that was once regarded as one with good credit ratings, good investment grades where this country displayed exceptional economic performance. This country was an angel. Mr. Speaker, we have to agree, as it was not I who said that, the great United Nations Chief

around 2000 said that the country was punching above its weight, that the economic indicators were good and that we were displaying good and exceptional performances. When that gentleman landed at a well-paved Grantley Adams International Airport the field was well manicured, you see a country with number one airport status in this hemisphere.

Mr. Speaker, further, when you come through Barbados you see that we were looking at high-rise housing; new buses were being bought; a four-lane highway was on the horizon and people were smiling because they were making money; unemployment was at a mere 7 per cent; people's houses were being repaired; we had set up and instituted both the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission. Mr. Speaker, we have to find out why this angel has fallen. This angel has fallen because we did not have this conversation. Today, because the angel has fallen, we are experiencing sustained declines since 2015, culminating in a loss of investment grade status, and I want the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to hear this. Mr. Speaker, it is not good, I do not feel good that we have fallen but we have. Mr. Speaker, a few nights go as I opened my Whatsapp, I was traumatized with this story from the Jamaican Observer which highlighted that the great Barbados has fallen.

Mr. Speaker, I do not feel good about this and therefore we have to do something about it. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West came here on Monday and asked a series of questions about what can the Honourable Member do. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member has thrown his hands in the air and said that he cannot get it done, that the Cabinet has gone through this and that the Cabinet cannot get it done, that they have tried and tried chief economic council after chief economic council and they cannot get it done; that he has looked all around and they cannot get it done and so let go to Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that you would agree that the Standing Orders of this Parliamentarian would change. We have to change the Standing Orders to allow those persons... Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said that the same advisors who are advising us are advising them. Mr. Speaker, we want to see the civil servants here, we want to see the various Statutory Boards that represent the economy coming here so that we can interact with them. I am sure that you are aware of how Committees in the London Parliament function, that the Economic Committee or Council meets where their Parliament will gather together and will discuss certain problems that are facing them. We have to have that conversation. Before we have the conversation I would like each Member of Cabinet to look at certain things. I would like the Prime Minister, who I know reads a lot, I want him

to read John Maynard Keynes, the Keynes theory, but if the Prime Minister had read it -- I do not want to say it because it may be unparliamentary, Mr. Speaker, to say he does not understand it. I think he understands it. Why then -- I cannot believe it, John Maynard Keynes, in an attempt to understand the great depression advocated increased Government expenditure and lower taxes to stimulate demand and burden the global economy out of the profit. That is what John Keynes did, and if John Keynes did that who is the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West? If a great economist who the whole world relied on, who felt that in order to get out of the depression you have to increase expenditure and lower taxes. Mr. Speaker, this is nothing new. It has been done before. History has a way of repeating itself and the Prime Minister and the Members of Cabinet always heard that you have to go back to history.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by saying that John Keynes would have said increase expenditure, which would increase the deficit, lower revenue, which would also increase the deficit. He said by doing that it took the country out of a crisis. All it would have done, Sir, is to increase the crisis.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thanks for the elucidation. Honourable Member please continue.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member does not read, so he does not understand the theory. The theory of John Maynard Keynes is of a great economist whom the world relied on for the investment theory. He said in order to create investment you have to create savings. Savings equal to investment. That is what we have learned in macro economics, savings equals investments. In order for us to get out of the depression we have to spend.

Mr. Speaker, if he wants to go further...

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. This is why the country is in a crisis.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member what is the point of order.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member is misleading the Housing. Saving does not equal...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member that is not a point of order. You will get your chance to explain another time. Honourable Member please continue.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Yes, Sir.

I know you understand what I am saying. Mr. Speaker, if we want to have a practical conversation I am sure, Sir, you are aware of a man called Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan is reckoned to be one of the most popular and one of the Presidents of the United States that helped to stimulate the economy. In the 1980s after a President had failed, I think it was Jimmy Carter, after President Carter failed in the early 1970s he lasted for about 5 years, President Reagan came in with the supply side. President Reagan came in and stimulated the economy by increase spending across America, infrastructure. New infrastructure came into being. He not only did that, he lowered the taxes of the middle class as well as the upper class. In fact, Sir, a number of Democrats in the United States voted President Reagan. I had a cousin who told me that the first time for a Republican was then, because he gave people hope. People have hope. When he left the office people want the President to remain for another 4 years. It is a fact, because he increased -- not only this, he understood the whole concept of nationalization as well. He gave people hope, hope in terms of the Democrats as well as the Republicans. Sir, not only this, this is a practical experience.

The conversation must continue, because

I want the Government to understand not to employ the theory known as 'Kelmanomics', 'Kelmanomics' will bring big problems. What the Government has introduced was 'Kelmanomics'. That is what the Government has done. The Government is in trouble because they listen too much to Kelman, 'Kelmanomics'.

Sir, I am saying that President Reagan ...

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute. You mean the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, Kelman, 'Kelmanomics'.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: I really do not mean the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: 'Kelmanomics'. 'Kelmanomics' refers to ideas of aristocracy where you put 'Kelmanomics' in its right perspective. It refers to where you have these grand facilities without money and you are not giving the rest of the public the opportunity to participate in certain things.

Mr. Speaker, not only this. We saw what the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, a Prime Minister of Barbados did against the same background. When we took over in 1994 this country had a 22% unemployment rate and going further. Not only this, Sir, people had lost hope. Persons had a salary cut of 8%. One of the slogans we had

was, we are going to put people back to work, 30 000 people, Jobs Number 1 was Jobs. Therefore, Sir, we have two practical experiences where a country was put back to work. We have to understand that people ask at that time what are you really doing. We pointed out to them that is only through when people can spend, and the economy will get back on its true footing.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying to you that in your constituency and all our constituencies where people cannot spend. Therefore, the economy will not generate what we expect it to generate. I have seen for the very first time in St. Michael people without light and people without running water. It is not your fault, Mr. Speaker. It is the fault of the policies of the Government. The Government must relieve the economy and that is why we say that you cannot now, Mr. Speaker, it is a practical thing, you are spending \$75 in paying debt.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, you have \$100, out of every hundred this country earns, they are spending \$75 in debt repayment. That is all we are saying. Sir, do you know that if that was your personal situation you would go to the bank and say, I want you to help me restructure my debt. That is what we are saying. The Government has now taken 8 years -- I thought that I would be able to speak to the Minister of Finance today because we want to be able to bring this fallen angel back to its prominence. All of this are in this together and we cannot have a radio host -- I only started my speech this morning about 9.00 a.m. when I heard the host on the radio speaking about what can we do? What more can you ask the Government to do?

I believe that we have to ask the Government to increase spending in certain areas. We want to be able to look at our debt careful to see what can be done for the productive sectors. Let me say this, Sir. Even though the Honourable Member for St. John said -- I heard her yesterday morning on the radio. She has a very good radio voice I must say, and I told her this -- she felt that a credit downgrade is not a big thing, that a downgrade does not measure quality, it does. The moment you have a downgrade everybody looks at your GDP. Everybody now start looking at your GDP for the very first time. Therefore, 19 downgrades are not good. We have to be able to pull this country up. Therefore, whatever measures we can introduce, we have to work together to ensure this country gets back up.

Sir, I cannot believe when a Jamaican is asking what is wrong. Who got fired? Has anyone been fired? Has anyone been fired for this? They told me that a whole Government lost because they had problems, and the former leader called a convention and a new leader is taking over the Opposition Party very soon. What has happen? Who was removed? Has anyone been removed in the last 7 years? No. I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that

if this was a company and you have lost your way and you have had downgrade after downgrade, you would have to explain to the shareholders why surpluses are not being made, and if you cannot make a surplus you have to go, in a private company and we are seeing this in a \$4 billion economy.

You cannot have your debt, which is about \$10 billion now for a small economy, and nothing has happened to the management. The management has to sit down and analyse situations on behalf of the shareholders. We are the shareholders of this country. We are the policyholders. We want to know why after 8 years this Government has caused an angel to fall. An angel has fallen, but nobody brought her into this whole exercise.

Sir, I am saying we have to look at it very carefully. Unemployment -- I heard Honourable Members speak about under employment yesterday. We have people who are working for less than \$100. I went to a constituency where a man said to me, "I have to tie every day to make a living" and I held my head in shame. The man said so to me. I said to the man, "That is not good." He said to me, "In this village the policemen do not come but we have to survive." You have to steal food and you have to do things. Sir, I took it upon myself -- I am not the MP for St. Michael, but in ...

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: This is serious. He said that to me.

I took it upon myself, because I recognise I have some family in that particular community. I took food last Sunday down to that community because I know the situation is so bad in certain places. It is different from the countryside where you can get a breadfruit, a yam, a potato and so on. We have to be able to increase production.

I am saying, Mr. Speaker...

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, do you recognise the reason we have problems, because the various sectors do not receive on time. The reason why the Ministry of Transport and Works can now talk about a pothole patching programme, when the angel was flying we were not talking. We were spending. In 2007 we were spending \$200 000 in the Ministry of Transport and Works. We were spending \$30 million in St. Philip alone, and now the Honourable Member is talking about pothole patching. We were doing a four-lane highway. We have now have from a situation where we are not patching potholes aggressively. We were building tenantry roads all over the place.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Agriculture was spending, but I do not blame the Minister of Public Work.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: On a point of order. He was building four-lane highways but he was not paying for them. So that is the problem we. So you are misleading the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is for elucidation. Honourable Member please continue.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, in 2007/2008 we were spending money, the agencies of Government, Transport Board. The Honourable Member said that we were able to establish the Transport Authority, which we did. We were able to spend money on health. The world came here in 2007 for cricket at Kensington. People felt Barbados was really batting well. Kensington, where the whole world came here for cricket and we were able to relocate people out of Bridgetown. We were able to give people hope.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central could not talk about 4 000 on welfare. In fact in those day there was less than 1 000 on welfare. Less than 1 000 were on welfare, Mr. Speaker, and people were working. Today we have a situation where the Welfare Department cannot handle all the claims that come to them, they cannot.

Sir, we have a situation in your constituency where people go to the Welfare Department and cannot get any help. They cannot get any help, I am telling you.

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. When we came to office in 2008, the Barbados Labour Party had an allocation of over \$30 million to a role much larger than 4 000 reporting to the Welfare Department. Over \$30 million they used to allocate to the Welfare Department. As a matter of fact, Sir, the welfare workers got on better with their duties if the Honourable Member for St. George North would stop calling down there harassing them.

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order. Honourable Member please continue.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central knows because I call him occasionally. I must say he usually responds, and I want to also thank the Honourable Member for St. Lucy at this point in time who responded to me two weeks ago when I had lady who is not working, nobody in the house is working and they could not relocate their home. We had to find a spot for them.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member you five more minutes.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, we were allocating \$30 million to the Welfare Department to help people pay for light and so on, but they were very few. We were providing opportunities both rural and urban. People were building in this country. Sir, wells were being dug for poor people, toilets and all sorts of things. We did not have to come to a minister for these things. I am saying to you, Sir, and I have said it before to our leader, that we need to have a special vision for St. Michael. The only vision for St. Michael is to put people back to work, to ensure that people live decent lives and in decent homes. That is important. We have to do these things. Sir, we cannot do it when we are paying \$75 in debt. Right now the Government has no money but we are saying there is a way.

Sir, I have pointed out three important events that happened in this world. I have pointed out what John Maynard Keynes did. I have pointed out what President Reagan did. I have pointed out what the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter did. I am saying to you that we do not have to go very far in history to do it. The Government has to stop being lazy, get up, go to work every day of their life and do some work. The Government has to get and do work. All ministers need to go back and stop bothering the Minister of Finance for money. The way to get money is to look at your debt. The way to get money for the various sectors -- in agriculture the reason the factory broke down recently was because there is no money. There is no money to do anything. We believe, Sir that the productive sectors could go further if there is efficiency and prudence within governance and we are here to help. Mr. Speaker, we believe that the productive sectors can go further if there is efficiency and prudence within governance, and we are here to help. We hope that this great debate will continue where we can put a case to help productivity and cut back on this thing. We want to see this angel rise again. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

MR. SPEAKER: I am obliged. The Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter this debate just for a few minutes on a couple of points. I come right after the Honourable Member for St. George North. By the way, I went to the launch of the National Dominoes Competition on Sunday night, sponsored by Mount Gay, and around ten o'clock was in the company of the Member of Parliament for St. George North, who said to me he has given up two things for Lent: consumption of alcohol and telling lies. The first one I have no evidence of, the second one there is quite some evidence he has not been successful in that part. Mr. Speaker, the truth of the matter is that as I listened to the debate, I think all sides can agree that we continue to have our challenges as a society and as an economy. The debate can continue as to how we got here. I thank the Minister of Finance, my colleague

from St. Michael North West, for being pellucidly clear in respect of where we are at now, and giving his own perspective of how we have reached there. A lot of debate has centred around the state of the national debt, and quite frankly, it is uncomfortably high, Mr. Speaker. None of us can deny the fact that the state of our debt currently is not at the level we wish it to be at. Mr. Speaker, this is not meant to be an excuse but maybe my own understanding and explanation of the situation. If we do not face the realities, then we will certainly make mistakes going forward. The debt as it stands now is not debt that was incurred to build the Argyle Airport in St. Vincent. It is not debt that was incurred to build projects in St. Lucia. Generally speaking, the debt that we face now in Barbados, which is pretty much like an albatross around our necks, is debt that has been incurred by successive Governments over time. This is not casting blame on the former Government. I think all Governments, including the Democratic Labour Party Government which I am part of, went into debt financing with the intention of ensuring that we maintained a level of stability in our society and that we are able to spur economic development wherever possible; but we cannot run away from the facts. Under a previous Administration, even in times of plenty, debt was incurred and money was borrowed; whether it was money borrowed to shore up the foreign reserves of the State, or to do major capital works, or to adjust or manage current expenditure. Likewise, as a Government faced with the deepest and most prolonged recession since the Great Depression of the late 1920s to early 1930s, we have had our fair share of challenges which have resulted in us borrowing. As one looks back now, the jury is still out. Perhaps we could have instilled a greater level of discipline on the fiscal side. Perhaps we could have reduced the size of the Public Service by a deeper trajectory. Perhaps we could have done many other things. One never knows. There is always an argument across the political divide as to what can and cannot be done. Mr. Speaker, we are currently at this juncture, we are at a crossroads and we have to determine which direction we are going to take forward. There is no sense crying over spilt milk. We simply have to look ourselves in the mirror and say, "This is where we are at now as a society and as an economy. What are the things we need to do to take us forward?" History is the greatest lesson, and if we do not from time to time reflect upon how this society and economy have evolved and the things we have done and not done, we perhaps would be prone to make the same mistakes. One thing I would say which I hold steadfast to, Mr. Speaker, even though I am perhaps labelled as the most private sector-oriented politician in Barbados today: I hold steadfast to the view that Barbados is not just an economy; it is also a society. When we talk about these figures and mention the figures, we must understand that they can have positive and severe negative consequences on individuals in society as well. As we reflect upon where we are at now and the 2016-2017 Financial Statements and positions in Barbados, the non-

interest expenditure by the State is some \$2.631 billion. What is non-interest expenditure? Wages and Salaries which, at the 2016-2017 Financial Year, stood at \$721 million; Goods and Services which were \$411 million; Transfers and Subsidies \$1.159 billion, and Capital Expenditure \$340 million. These bring a total of \$2.631 billion in non-interest expenses. That is what the State would have spent or is projected to spend up to the Financial Year ending March 31. What does that simply mean for the average person, Mr. Speaker? It means that if we take a population the size of Barbados', which is about 275 000 people, the State is spending some \$9 567 per annum on each individual. This has nothing to do with what you make in your income and so on. Sometimes we forget and do not really appreciate what the State chooses to provide and the degree to which the State chooses to provide goods and services. Some \$9 567 is projected to be spent in 2016-2017 on each person in Barbados, assuming a population of 275 000 individuals. Mr. Speaker, when we therefore look at Wages and Salaries, which is the category that is often talked about, it was \$721 million in expenditure last year, and I believe this year it may be around the same or a little higher. It is a significant amount. If we are to cut wages and salaries, the only way they really can be cut, apart from what we did many years ago, is to reduce the size of the public sector. Is that something we are prepared to do? Mr. Speaker, my view -- and I have been very consistent on this -- is that I hold steadfast to the view that the size of the public sector can be reduced, but I wish it to be done as we increase the size of the private sector, because massive unemployment in Barbados brings with it serious social dislocation that can affect us maybe two and three generations down the line. It is all right for individuals to say cut wages; but cutting wages means cutting employment in the public sector, and we all know the consequence as Members of Parliament. When I traverse my constituency, whether it is Paradise Heights, Wanstead, Warrens Park, Warrens Crescent, Haynesville, West Terrace, Husbands Heights, Oxnards or wherever, there are pockets of individuals who have not yet been given a chance to find meaningful employment, or they feel that they are under-employed. When we cut in the public sector drastically, we are adding to that level of frustration. There are times in an economy when it has to be done -- I will not deny it -- but it cannot be done in isolation without reflecting upon some of the things that need to be done to quickly curtail such development, so Wages and Salaries is a significant category. Mr. Speaker, I note the concern on the point being made by the trade unions today as they call for wage increases. They have a right to do that. I cannot quarrel with that. When I say "have a right", that is what is expected of trade unions; to call for salary increases. I note that they are now threatening to take industrial action. I really hope that commonsense can prevail upon the management and leadership of the trade union to realise the fragility of our economy, and not to engage in any activities which can cause further dislocation in this

economy and society. If there is an issue or feeling that they are not being met on our side, then our side has a duty to engage with them and to have that conversation. I certainly am not going to fool myself into believing that any 23 per cent increase in salary is palatable and acceptable in our context. I think trade union leaders in Barbados today, in their quiet moments when all the noise has settled and they lie down at night and rest their heads, will realise that what they are asking is grossly unreasonable. Mr. Speaker, the other major expense in relation to non-interest expenditure is Goods and Services. The other major expense in relation to non-interests expenditure is goods and services and that, in the current financial year, is earmarked to be \$411 million and we do not need to dwell on that but we know that is really all of the goods and services that the state is called upon to provide. My view as we look for solution because it makes no sense engaging in conversations in here in the Estimates debates just about who did this and who did that. The country is asking for solutions. The Minister of Finance could give some, the Leader of the Opposition and her team would give some, the Prime Minister and the rest of us would give some as well.

I have said my part in terms of the wages and salaries but I will tell you this, going back to the wages and salaries issue, it is not just about cutting numbers, it is about increasing efficiency in the public sector in Barbados. I am satisfied that even with the numbers we have now in the public sector with a 10 per cent increase in efficiency and productivity we can make a transformational positive difference in this economy and society. For me it is not about numbers of employment alone, it is how do we get each officer who goes to work every day to give of his/her best. What are the deficiencies in the system, not the individual officers, because if the system is bad you cannot expect officers to produce at optimal level? If the system does not recognise and give support to full engagement of information communication technology to deliver on services within the public sector, then we are going to continue to face, not just a high wages bill, but the unit cost of production is going to be continuously high within the public sector which then translate into frustration and real economic losses in private enterprise and the non-Government sector as well. We have, therefore, for example, to reduce the wait time in Government departments across Barbados. We have to ask ourselves: what are the services being provided by the State today manually that could be done electronically? What more bills can I pay to the Government?

Let me say that I am grateful and fully supportive of the fact that today we as a Government has been able to allow individuals to do their tax filings online, pay their land taxes online and most interactions with the Barbados Revenue Authority can now be done online. In the Corporate Affairs Intellectual Property Office we allow

people to do their searches and to pay some of their fees online as well so there is a march towards e-governance, an e-government within the system, but I am afraid that the march is perhaps a little bit too slow, but it is also calling for a change and a transformation in culture throughout the public sector that says we must be more customer friendly, that we must appreciate and understand how our actions or failure to act can frustrate economic activity elsewhere. These, Mr. Speaker, are not issues that you can just glimpse at when you pick up your Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue on the State side. They are buried deep in it because these are things that sometimes we do not quantify in dollars and cents in our economy and society.

The other issue, Mr. Speaker, and the major expense which the Minister of Finance and Opposition MPs have also reflected upon is transfers and subsidies, \$1.1 billion for 2016/2017 and perhaps it is going to rise in this upcoming financial year because we have created, Government after Government, a whole sleuth of parastatal organisations, statutory entities, private companies owned by the State. That is a tremendous financial burden to the society and the state. Of course, many of them were created with all good intents and purposes but I say we have come to the point in this part of our development where we have to revisit the purpose of all of them. We have to be bold and say some of these entities need to be merged, closed or otherwise dispense of. It is not sustainable. One can do a quickly cost benefit analysis in some of these entities, one can look at the level of duplication and I know that we as a Government have wrapped our minds around these. The Prime Minister is certainly very engaged elsewhere on the matters and the Minister of Finance but we have to look at the whole sleuth of duplication that takes place across some of these parastatal organisations and even within the Central Government as well. We have to look at shared facilities. When you look at what we are spending in rent, for example, it is astronomical. When we look at what we are spending in transportation within many of these parastatal organisation is phenomenal and sometimes even though there are subject to the financial rules of Government or they have their own, we have concerns. Like the Minister of Finance and others have constantly said that all of these entities needs to deliver financial statements on time. If you cannot get financial statements on time from statutory entities then you cannot, as a shareholder, make an informed decision in respect to the particular corporation which you are tasked to lead and direct. These are the kinds of issues, Mr. Speaker, we have to address in this society with a sense of urgency. It does not mean all the time displacement of workers but if it has to happen it would have to happen, but it would have to happen after we have considered all of the facts. If the decision have to be taken then the decision would have to be taken but I am not one who is going to say that is the first option. When we look at the duplication of some of these entities you may find that

we are able to save millions of dollars. When you look at merging and consolidating some of them, when you look at what you pay the CEOs and the Consuls and the other officers and whatnot by consolidating efficiencies of scale you get a reduction in expenditure. This is where the real dollars and cents and number crunching comes into play.

I hold the view, Mr. Speaker, for example, that the State does not need to manage every asset that it owns. That is my view. Sometimes you are able to take an asset, for example, the Hilton Hotel, the State owns the real property but the State does not manage it, it is leased. Can that be done for other State assets in Barbados? Will you get a better sense of management and increase efficiencies and avoidance of wastage throughout the system if we are able to take some of our State-owned enterprises and privatise the management of them? We have to dispel this believe in Barbados that privatisation or transferring of assets and management to the private sector means that you are empowering those who are already empowered. There is opportunity for workers today to move to the point where they can become owners of capital and managers of some of the same enterprises but there is a malaise within our perception or culture within our society that says once something is owned by the State and managed by the State nobody has to focus on efficiencies. The new Barbados must dispel that. The new Barbados that we have to speak of must look for a leaner and far more efficient public sector than we have ever had going forward.

Mr. Speaker, still on the issues of transfers and subsidies it is simply just costing the State too much and some firm decisions will have to be taken. There are not difficult decisions they just have to be the decisions because it cannot continue as it is. There are too many State agencies that are duplicating their efforts, that are not focussing on efficiencies, that are not deploying the latest in technology, that are not focussing on a profit motive, and a profit motive does not mean that everything you do is about making profit, it means that you are operating on the fundamental principles of good business practices behaving as though the person who comes before you ... If you have to repair somebody's house do it in the most efficient manner. Do not feel that you have to go and spend \$30 000 to repair a house that you know if you had to do it yourself would only cost \$15 000. It does not matter who you are doing it for.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: I am going to focus on my point.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you cannot get on like that. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph would have his time to reflect on these matters.

The other issue, Mr. Speaker, is in respect to capital expenditure. The State obviously has to continue to do these things. We talk about the state of the roads, the state of Government buildings and the truth of the matter is that the State being the largest actor in the economy has to continuously find the moneys to invest in capital not just to fix things but also to procure new things along the way and that is something we cannot run from but if the revenue is not there to do these things then certainly in many respects capital expenditure would not be given the level of priority.

Mr. Speaker, part of the expenditure side relates to domestic and external interests. I see that domestic interest for 2016-2017 was \$561 million and external interest was \$176 million therein. As I looked at the figures in respect to going back from 2007 to 2008 I noted that there has been a paradigm shift pretty much away from the high external interest to domestic interest which really speaks to our source of financing the State more domestically than let us say externally, but debt is debt. For those who are macroeconomists, central bankers and the Ministry of Finance officials, we know that external debt management issues are very critical and we know why we shift sometimes to domestic financing in terms of its impact upon the foreign reserves or lack of impact upon it et cetera, but at the end of the day the cumulative total is still, in my mind, quite a bit high, and I did mention up front in respect of why the debt is the way it is. Mr. Speaker, we can beat ourselves up and say whether we needed to incur all of it or if we could manage it better down the line but it is what it is today and the issue is what do we do about it going forward because if we spend the whole week in here in an exercise of talking about the past and the current situation and do not give an insight into the future I am satisfied that we have not made good use of our time in this Honourable Chamber.

We have a situation today, Mr. Speaker, where according to my own figure for 2015-2017 the State would have been called upon to pay about \$2 680 per person in this financial year in debt, that is what the State is paying in debt financing, and we need to get that down. The issue is how do we get it down. All sorts of points were put forward such as debt refinancing. That is an option that has been on the table and must remain on the table. Some talk about debt re-profiling and some say debt refinancing. Mr. Speaker, at the individual level from time to time we find ourselves with a car loan, a mortgage, credit card debt and student loans debt and when you look at it the interest rates between them may varied from 4 per cent at the lower end to 13 per cent at the higher end and none of them may be on the reducing balance and at the end of the day you may be making \$6 000 a month and spending \$5 000 in debt financing on a monthly basis and that is where in the simplest of terms you sit with your bankers, I know it is a little more complex at the national level, and say look I need to consolidate, I may need now to take my debt and

stretch it another 5 years so instead of 10 years I have 15 years to pay, I bring my interest rate to about 6 or 7 per cent, get it on the reducing balance and my monthly payments now go from \$5 000 a month down to \$3 500 per month and that gives me plenty of breathing space in which then to make my capital investments or to have at least some kind of trala that I can then invest in other economic activities to keep the family going but it also bring a peace of mind and you sleep a little better at night. In principle, it is not dissimilar at the international level. In corporations from time to time we have to do the same thing, refinance our debt, consolidate our debt. At the national level it is also like that except that perhaps at the national level it becomes a lot more complex because some is domestic, some foreign and there are jurisdictional and legal issues that you have to weigh in on that does not make it a simple as it look. There is also the reputational damage that also must come into the equation.

Sir, I do not want anyone to believe that debt refinancing or debt re-profiling is not an option that the Government has to pursue or has not considered. I just feel quite frankly that it is a matter that we have to engage the national population with because these things seem very simple but when you really get into the guts of it, it can become a little bit more complex, but I am not dispelling it. I am saying that the issue of debt refinancing or re-profiling as some people call it, is a matter that must be on the agenda right now, we cannot dispel from that.

Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of points I wish to touch on very quickly before you tell me my time is up.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, and that will be in five minutes.

Hon. D. O'N INNIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the 15 minutes you said I have left.

Foreign direct investment is also critical. There are people who wish to invest in Barbados, I have seen it almost on a weekly basis, but we have to do better at facilitating that investment. We have to have a faster turnaround time in Barbados for interacting with investors whether they are domestic or foreign. It is absolutely necessary to make things happen in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, as we look at the macro economy, we also have to be bold enough and say that our current method of financing healthcare is simply not sustainable, but this is a conversation we must have with the country. My fear is that if we leave these things until election time comes then the real substantive issues will get lost in all of the noise and all the political cross talk and what not.

As a Government let us sit down with the country and say that our current method of financing social services

in Barbados is not sustainable. We have to get a little bit leaner and far more efficient in Barbados in these areas. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, in my ministry we are doing our part. We have seen an increase in the international business sector in Barbados up by 13 per cent when measured in terms of the number of licensed entities but we can do better and I have tasked the staff to do better. I have asked the staff in Invest Barbados, which is the promotional arm, to do better, to look into non-traditional markets, have a faster turnaround in terms of product creation for the market, have a higher level of service, whether it be in Corporate Affairs, the International Business Unit, the Financial Services Commission, the Central Bank of Barbados, whoever they are, because at the end of the day there must be a paradigm shift in our thinking that says that we want to be the wealth management centre of choice in the western world.

Mr. Speaker, right now all the indices will make the people get very depressed. We are worried about the debt, we are worried about the credit rating and we are worried about all of these things and we have all rights to be worried, Mr. Speaker. I cannot stand here and say all is well or we should not worry but I would like us to spend more time focussed on how we can really pull this country up in a sustainable manner and not make promises that we cannot deliver on not to continue doing things the same way because we have been doing them this way for the last 40 or 50 years. Barbados deserves better and Barbados has to get better.

I am satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that these Estimates must be looked at now through the lens of not just the numbers but what the implications are, and I invite each one of my fellow Members of Parliament that as they speak to the issue to be very realistic and very honest with our constituents and with the country and not make promises we cannot deliver and let us commit as a team of 30 individuals tasked with leading the affairs of this country to put Barbados first at all times.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

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

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I remain at this juncture the youngest parliamentarian certainly in this Chamber. I have had the benefit of free education in this country, I had the opportunity to travel overseas and to live and also to work in the United Kingdom, I only have one passport, I do not have the ability to go and live in any other country and for me Barbados from a child has always been the place that no matter how far I go I would always be here to serve my country and to do my best to my fellow Barbadians.

I would not be here, Mr. Speaker, without the good people of St. Michael South East but I also would not be here without the good men and women across Barbados who continue to support and to certainly encourage me in my political endeavours. For me I do not see the role as a representative simply of St. Michael South East or as a representative certainly of the Barbados Labour Party but as one who represents all Barbadian regardless of whether they are Barbados Labour Party, Democratic Labour Party or whether they are undecided voters or even whether they are ... Barbadians and so I believe that in coming to public life certainly in coming to be able to spend time in this Chamber and certainly in the Other Place that the opportunity to be able to serve at this level is one which I take with the utmost seriousness and utmost sincerity. It is one tht I believe that having the opportunities to be here that all of us, certainly myself, we have a responsibility to the people of this country to do what is in the best interest, not only of this generation but of future generations.

Mr. Speaker, we also have a responsibility to respect the political diversity that exists in our country; to respect people who may not share the same opinions that we do; to respect the fact that there are people who particularly this latest generation are born not just of only Barbadian parents or of African descent but that there are persons who have lived, worked, whose parents have contributed to Barbados and who themselves also must play a part in the future development of this country.

Mr. Speaker, in this hallowed walls I believe we have the ability to bring about change. We have the ability to achieve a system of Government that reflects the changing society in which we live, one that preserves the things that we as Barbadians hold dear and to demonstrate to the world that we are capable of managing the affairs of our country. It is not a position that I take where we are not supposed to not take on board things from international agencies or from observers looking in in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, having gone through secondary education in Barbados I am a proud Barbadian but I do believe that we will not always have all of the information available to us in this country and that sometimes there will be times where we will have to look to others outside to be able to give some insight into what it is that we are doing. All the answers cannot be found on this little rock.

Mr. Speaker, we have more students today coming to the fore, coming out of the university with degrees in management, economics, law, politics and Government and even in law than ever before. We have the average man in the street who now has access to social media who is able at the tip of his fingertips to be able to access information in terms of what is happening across the world and he is able to be educated faster than any print media in Barbados can certainly educate him, but we have a problem, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some of our politicians still believe

that they can conduct themselves as though it is business as usual. There are some who seem to think that we either still have an uneducated population or that despite the strides that have been made in free education that you are speaking to educated fools, your morning words and your evening words, as my grandmother would say, do not add up.

Mr. Speaker, what is now pervading across Barbados is an intellectual tension, not the tension spoken of yesterday by a Member on the other side that there will be bloodshed by the time of the next election faces this country but it is an intellectual tension where Barbadians are questioning not only their governing structure, they are also questioning the very people who are here to govern. Mr. Speaker, gone are the days when the electorate could simply be fed a diet of unfulfilled promises or where the finger pointing across each side of the political divide without addressing how you will make a change and bring about a difference is now at an end.

Mr. Speaker, therefore on Monday when the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs called on the Opposition the Barbados Labour Party to tell him what to cut, should it be healthcare, education, wages and salaries. The Honourable Member made a plea to the Barbados Labour Party and perhaps if I had not sat in this Honourable Chamber since 2013 and I was for the first time listening to the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs I would genuinely believe that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs was asking the Barbados Labour Party Opposition for advice but also that the Honourable Member intended that once given that advice, the Honourable Member was going to take that advice of Honourable Members on this side to heart.

Mr. Speaker, I have not been here as long as other Honourable Members but I have certainly been here long enough to know that social media does not lie, the newspapers do not lie and having been in this Honourable Chamber I am well-aware that Members on the Barbados Labour Party side and increase the Leader of the Opposition has time and time again, offered advice, offered solutions and offered a way forward for the Democratic Labour Party Administration. Mr. Speaker, from as far back as the CLICO International Life Limited issue the Barbados Labour Party invited the Democratic Labour Party Administration to investigate and to bring about a forensic audit of CLICO International Life Limited.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member also called for a judicial management of CLICO International Life Limited. That took, I believe, another two years before anything got going and in the interim several persons who would have invested in CLICO International Life Limited would have obviously lost out on several of their policies. Many people have died and gone on without being able to access those policies. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the

Opposition has spoken at length to the business community because when in this Honourable Chamber the Honourable Member's voice was not heard by the Democratic Labour Party the Honourable Member took to speaking to the business community, inviting them to listen to alternatives that the Barbados Labour Party would offer them in relation to how do we bring ourselves out of this current crisis. In her November, 2014 address to the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry the Honourable Member pointed out that first of all, Barbados must unlock access to affordable capital once more. Why, Sir? Mr. Speaker, Barbadians are still hurting and access to capital has been something that Barbadians have complaining of time and time again.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party has said that the Democratic Labour Party has continued to tax and tax businesses in this country and that it is almost placed businesses in a position where whatever little finances or resources that they have they have held onto those resources because they do not know when the next tax is coming. When people sit down to plan for their affairs they do so, not expecting that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs is going to come on the Floor of Parliament and announced another budgetary proposal and not know how that is going to affect businesses that have planned almost several months or a year in advance for their affairs.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition also told the Barbados Chamber and Commerce that the Barbados Labour Party will also apply a laser-like focus to restoring the economy to growth and also most importantly, and I think this is something that the Democratic Labour Party needs to take note of, that we will change the way in which we govern, how we do things, now we relate to each other and who we involve in the equation, granted the Democratic Labour Party has sought to include and to embrace through the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs. I can only say through the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs because I know that it has not been embraced by other Members of the Cabinet and certainly by the high-ranking members of the Democratic Labour Party, but certainly including the former Right Honourable Prime Minister of this country I would like to think that was an effort to certainly take on board what the Leader of the Opposition has been inviting Honourable Members on the other side to certainly do in relation to the affairs of the country.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, also spoke at the Barbados Labour Party Annual Conferences addressing the rank and file of the Barbados Labour Party. The Honourable Member spoke at Press conferences on the state of the Barbados economy, following several downgrades and the Honourable Member called on the

Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and also on the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados to issue monthly rather than quarterly reports because of the state of the finances of this country.

Mr. Speaker, as reserves continued to fall and the sectors failed to perform and the fiscal deficit became more and more uncontrollable, the Barbados Labour Party Leader called for an Eminent Persons Group, that was at the end of 2013. To that, Mr. Speaker, the Right Honourable Prime Minister responded to the country and certainly to the advice of the Barbados Labour Party by indicating that the people in his Cabinet were eminent enough, that he could call on the likes of various Cabinet Ministers to advise the country because they had faced an electorate and that within his Cabinet there were persons who were competent enough to be able to lead Barbados out of the current economic crisis.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party Leader did not stop there, the Honourable Member set up a series of people's assemblies because when it was clear that the Democratic Labour Party would not listen to the Barbados Labour Party nor to all of the independent economists in this country we went to the people. We went to the people across the length and breadth of Barbados asking to hear their voices on the solutions for this country. Out of that episode of going across the country and listening to people, we were able to framework a Covenant of Hope, which we have launched in this country. We have launched it not as a manifesto to the people, but to explain to the people of this country what the Barbados Labour Party will stand for and what the Barbados Labour Party will fight for; something which, I believe, has become necessary in this country since there are so many disillusioned persons across the length and breadth of Barbados. We did not wait until we were the Government. We spoke to the people, as the Democratic Labour Party indicated back in 2008 that it would do; that it would speak to the people, that it would have regular meetings with the people, and that Ministers would talk in a manner that explained what was happening in their Ministries and not just speak to the electorate on the eve of an Election, or that they would not just come to Parliament to defend their portfolios in an Estimates or Budgetary Debate.

Mr. Speaker, where the Barbados Labour Party Leader also led from the forefront was that in every Estimates and Budget Debate, she picked apart the Minister of Finance on fiscal strategy for this country; showing where the deficits would not be reduced, showing where the expenditure was not being cut, and showing where there were loopholes in the revenue that Government said it would collect. Mr. Speaker, she told you on Monday and she told the entire country and the world once again that the Barbados Labour Party firmly believes that what needs to happen in this country is that the debt situation of this

country needs to be addressed. The Government of Barbados needs to address the situation with our creditors, but unfortunately I believe the people of Barbados have lost faith in the Democratic Labour Party's ability to negotiate on their behalf. There should be a discussion with the creditors, who would wish to hear how Barbados would wish to extend the issue of its debt, and who would wish to hear how, instead of defaulting on its loans, Barbados would want to re-profile its debt in a way that makes it easier to meet a number of the payments that are going to be due in the coming months. Just as the Minister of Finance and those on the other side denied, dismissed and behaved as though for the first time they are asking us on this side to offer solutions, I would not be surprised if, in the wrap-up of the Minister of Finance and in the remaining speeches, the same approach is taken to the solutions offered by the Barbados Labour Party Leader and certainly by Members on this side time and time again. Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party is not serious about a national conversation. They cannot be serious about a national conversation when, even within the halls of Parliament, we cannot get parliamentary questions answered by Ministers of Government. On the first day of the Estimates, we asked the Leader of Government Business and the Prime Minister, in the presence of the Leader of the Barbados Labour Party, not to go through an Estimates which all 30 of us in this Chamber know is totally flawed, is an exercise in futility, does not reflect the current situation of this country, and does not reflect fairly what we all know to be a situation where you have two committees now set up by the Prime Minister to report back to the country as to what suggestions are to be made about what to do with the economy. We know the Estimates are a joke on this occasion, and we asked Members on the other side to consider going immediately to the Heads, and limiting the speeches of Members on this side to at least four so that we could move expeditiously into the Heads and perhaps start the national conversation on both sides in this debate. The Prime Minister indicated to us he was in agreement, but up to Tuesday morning we were unable to get a response from the Leader of Government Business. Mr. Speaker, I have great difficulty in this exercise where on each occasion that these issues are raised, Members on the other side take some delight in saying, "We asked you last year" or "We asked you ten years ago." The situation we are in today does not merit that type of attitude and, more than anything, the people of Barbados do not deserve the same position that has obtained time and time again from a Democratic Labour Party Administration that believes it is business as usual in this country, Mr. Speaker. The Democratic Labour Party has tried to play down the people of this country protesting against disgust of an Administration that does not address the issues facing the economy. Mr. Speaker, Democratic Labour Party Members would stand in this Chamber and, to my disgust, refer to people who have exercised their democratic right to walk on the streets of this country in

protest against this Government and bad economic policies as “characters”. This Democratic Labour Party referred to people in this country as the “Blue Box Cart people”; with no regard for the fact that the average Barbadian, black, white, Indian or otherwise, has a right to exercise his and her democratic right to protest in this country. Then we were to hear yesterday that the Barbados Labour Party should be charged for child abuse from a Member on the other side? A young man at the age of 13 stood on a platform at a rally after protesting against this Government, and spoke to this country with his mother on one side and his father on the other side, and expressed as a young person the future of this country; his own disgust towards what he has seen being done to his father as a businessman and to other Barbadians. I know the problem. This Democratic Labour Party has difficulty with that 13-year-old because that 13-year-old spoke better than Members on the other side, and he has given hope to people in this country who feel hopeless right now under a Democratic Labour Party Administration. Mr. Speaker, it is for this reason that I do not believe that people who will make statements about ordinary Barbadians in this country in such a derogatory way should be given the responsibility of leading Barbados out of this crisis. People who will refer to protesting persons by saying, “We are going to have to crack some heads and we are going to have to shoot some people”; these are not the people who should be allowed to lead this country out of this current economic crisis. The people who are leading this country now want us to believe that we are at a juncture in our history where we must not pay attention to international credit rating agencies. We heard from the Minister of Finance that we pay for the credit rating agencies. They do not pay us to write on us. We pay them, and all the time when they have rated Barbados at the highest level, we had no problem. I did not hear the Democratic Labour Party then. The Democratic Labour Party did not come to office and revoke the payments to international credit rating agencies; so now that the angel has fallen, to which the Honourable Member for St. George North alluded, all of a sudden the Prime Minister would want us to believe that we must have a difficulty with persons from the outside who do not look like us having a say in the affairs of this country. Again, I say to the Democratic Labour Party: The propaganda has to stop. The people of this country deserve better. I do not believe that the Democratic Labour Party Administration understands the seriousness of the economic crisis in this country. The fallen angel referred to by the Member for St. George North was the subject of an article in the Jamaica Observer. A ‘fallen angel’ in finance, for those who do not understand, is where a rated entity which once carried a high credit investment grade and displayed exceptional performance has since experienced sustained declines in ratings, culminating in the loss of its investment grade status. That is where Barbados was, and if the Democratic Labour Party is satisfied to preside over an Administration of inefficiency and mismanagement, the Barbados Labour

Party and the people of this country are not prepared for you to take us through or to take us out of this mess. The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter spoke yesterday in all sincerity in perhaps his last Estimates Debate, and spoke of a Barbados in which the Government of Barbados may very well have to seek the advice of the International Monetary Fund. I say to this country, I have no faith in the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Administration to negotiate anything for me and the people of this country because by your own inertia you have shown this country for the last nine years that you are not capable of putting in place any structural adjustment programme home-grown or otherwise to be able to lift the burden off the people of this country or to be able to grow this economy. What gives you the right to be able to come here with an Estimates book, talk pretty and call on the Opposition and ask us for advice when you have not taken your own advice. You set up a Competitiveness Commission led by the Prime Minister of this country. What has happened to it? Nobody can report on the Competitive Commission. Not one person can report on it, whether it has met, what has been the result of it, Barbados is no more competitive when the Prime Minister took up the presidency than it is now. What has happened? If the behaviour of the Prime Minister is anything to go by in terms of the way in which he responds to the people of this country, the Competitive Commission will perhaps not hear more than a couple words from him. That is the state of affairs in this country, Mr. Speaker.

The Democratic Labour Party (DLP) set up an Infrastructure Committee led by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West. I believe it was to silence him because after he told the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) the same thing the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) told them, that also the social entitlement programmes of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) came to office and implemented those programmes should not have been implemented, he was given a position, hushed up and in his own words, he admitted projects were happening in this country and they were not passing through him. That is what the Minister said. He threatened to resign and he has not resigned yet but we would come to that because it is no longer good enough in this country to speak out against your Government, to speak out as Members of a Cabinet, to speak out against the policies of an Administration in which you are in bed with and then ask the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) to take you out of the mess that you find yourselves in.

The Honourable Member who spoke before me is great at the grandstanding and pointing out all of the issues that are wrong in this country and in the business community. He is great at pointing out all the flaws from the Prime Minister back down, but do you know what is the difficulty? The difficulty is that people like myself who has done politics and Government understand that the Prime Minister has the power to discipline people like him

because when you speak out against your Cabinet, when you speak out against your Government and your Government policies, you are making a mockery of politics and Government in this country and the Prime Minister knows that and I am disappointed in the Prime Minister of this country for that reason because he knows better, Mr. Speaker. It is not sufficient to talk about integrity legislation but cannot get the Integrity Commission set up. It is not a priority anymore for this Administration all of you got what you wanted. Why is it not proclaimed, Mr. Prime Minister? Mr. Speaker, I want Members on the Other Side to answer this because these are critical to the governance of this country. If I am to believe that you are capable of taking us through any programme for a recovery, I must believe that you have the balls to be able to do the things that are right but over the course of the last nine years this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Administration has not shown that it has the guts, that it has the ability to now only say, things are wrong but actually to act on the things that it has said that are wrong in this country. None of you have demonstrated it and I can pick ministry by ministry across the Floor and I can go through where pronouncements have been made on the Floor of Parliament, projects are going to start, nothing then happens. The people of Barbados are supposed to believe that you coming with these Estimates now are the saviours of the Barbadian economy. That you are interested in anything more than your gratuity, that you are interested in anything more than preserving your positions in political office.

Well I say to you, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP), one thing that I was shown on Saturday at that rally was that the Leader of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) understands the politics of inclusion because not only where political spokespersons speaking at that rally, but you had a diverse cross-section of Barbadians speaking. When I hear people asking: What is going to happen next in this country? What is the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) going to do? I am going to tell you what we are going to do. We have a leader that understand what it takes to lead a country. That participatory democracy requires that even if it means asking the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance on the Other Side when we were in Government, what do you think about this policy and that she is prepared to do it. Not one Member yesterday would give way to the former Leader of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) and Honourable Member for St. Peter to have extended time. She called on it. It does not matter what he has said about her or Members on This Side. We have a pedigree in this country that understands that you do what is fair, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order the Honourable Member is misleading this House. One of the first statements the Honourable Member for St.

Peter made when he got up to speak was that he was going to be brief. The Honourable Member from early signalled that he did not need his full time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Furthermore, the rules do not allow for it so I do not understand. Honourable Member, you continue.

Miss. S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, the public has already determined for themselves what happened in here yesterday. They have decided for themselves but if this Administration were serious they would not be coming asking us about public sector restructuring and which ministry to cut. I heard the last speaker talk about public sector restructuring now as though this is some recent discovery. Back in the 2013 Budget the Minister of Finance stood up in here when he was slashing, cutting and laying off people and told the people of this country that he had a team put in place that was investigating into the public sector reforms, that he had a team put in place, a unit was going to be set up which recognised that there were several agencies that were duplicating the processes of Government and that those agencies were going to be reviewed and revamped. This is 2017, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have four minutes left.

Miss. S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is 2017, do not now come on the eve of an election and behaviour as though with recent discovery you have now realised that we need to cut certain things in terms of our public sector. We are not the Barbados Government, you are the Barbados Government and all the people of Barbados have been asking you to do is to govern. That is all we have asked you to do, but every time you come with a pronouncement, a position, you do not follow through and something as serious as were our financial is at this juncture in our history, 19 downgrades later, Barbados being in one of the top 20 countries in the world that is in so much debt. Do all of you understand what this mean? It is not business as usual. When we are at that juncture of our history we need people in positions that will not only stop the talk but will also walk the walk. I do not have the confidence in this Administration whether it is in relation to levelling with us and telling us what our creditors are owed in relation to tourism or investing in international business are now waiting again on the eve of an election to come with a \$50 million proposal for the Small Business Sector but only give them \$10 million. These are things that people can see through. Why cannot the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Administration understand this? We do not stand here and speak these things because we have nothing better to do. People do not protest because they have nothing better to do. Each of you have failed to follow through on the things that have become important to the people of Barbados and to reduce

the public debt and unless the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Administration recognises quickly that time is not on our side, that we are falling down a slippery slope and one which needs leadership, one that does not require Members of this Chamber to dismiss the views of others on the Other Side but to engage in serious conversations. Allow the committees to work. We have Joint Select Committees that have never met in this Chamber in the years that I have been in here. Why are they there if they cannot function as a Parliament? Mr. Speaker, I have difficulty with accepting these Estimates. Members on This Side have perhaps perused the Estimates, Members on the Other Side have spoken to programmes that are coming on stream. I had the Errol Barrow Park Road fixed two weeks ago only because we had a mass canvass in St. Michael South East and Members of the Democratic Labour Party decided to rush to assist the people in that area because I spoke about it. Elections are looming but the people of this country will not be fooled. You heard the Honourable Member for St. John complaining. She has complained about the polyclinic and about the roads in St. John. Do you think it is right that your own people are complaining that they cannot get things done in this country and they have to come into this Chamber to complain for you?

Mr. Speaker, we are in a perilous, perilous state, and I want to end my presentation by calling on the Members of the Democratic Labour Party to recognise that at this juncture in history this is not about them, this is about the people of this country and this is about the future generations. Good governance is actually good politics in case many on the other side have not realised this. I know the Prime Minister is smiling because he understands it. He may not implement it but he understands it. We need decisive action to be taken by the Members of the Democratic Labour Party otherwise I urge Honourable Members on the other side not to waste time but to call a general election and let the people of Barbados decide on the mandate that must be given to be able to make the decisive decisions that are necessary in this country and bring closure to a Democratic Labour Party Administration that has gone so far from its core that we can no longer recognise a Democratic Labour Party Administration.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give support to the Appropriation Bill, 2017. At the outset, Sir, let me say to you that since the education Head will be the first to be called after the second readings that I will leave most of what I have to say about education under Head 77 when it is called.

Mr. Speaker, I want to address a lot of what is happening both within the House and in the wider community. We know that tensions tend to be raised as you approach an election. In a democracy, if you look at a five-year tenure, and in this instance we are four years into the election of a Government and the work of that Government, both sides want to capture the attention of the electorate. There is nothing wrong with that. In a participatory democracy the Government puts its programme before the people, the Opposition puts its criticism of that programme before the people and they do not go any further than that outside of grandiose statements of persuasion, so it is easy now for the Opposition with the alignment that they currently have in the House and those potential candidates and possibly Members of this House to smell blood, but there is nothing wrong with that. The smell of blood is normal and natural in a democracy.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Just give me a chance to speak. I do not interrupt anybody. I might interrupt you, you are not people, anyhow.

In this manner you will get very heightened discourses, some of it tending to be a bit over the edge. The society, I think, to some extent understands that and therefore sometimes before they go to bed they laugh, they smile and they get the humour from whatever it is that they would hear on the platform. I did not participate in any march on Saturday. I wanted to go and join the Life IN Leggings march because I believe that what they were marching about is a legitimate position to take to bring the eyes of Barbadians, the eyes of the Caribbean and the eyes of the world on conditions and circumstances which persons or some persons in our various communities faced.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael Central with responsibility for the care and regard of young people in this country drew to this House's attention what he considered from his vantage point, and being aware of the laws of Barbados and the Conventions and other engagements that we have signed, the use of a 13-year-old youngster on a political platform that was a bit unusual particularly surrounded by his parents. Under the laws of Barbados your parents have a responsibility for you. Within the context of Barbados nevertheless it would seem strange because of the exploitative nature of politics that you would expose a 13-year-old youngster to that public glare. In a democracy at 10, 12, 13, 18, 80, 95, white, brown, at-risk youth or a person with challenges, you have a right to express yourself within that democracy and therefore I am not here to condemn the 13-year-old youngster neither am I here to condemn the parents. My only point within the politics of Barbados is that that would appear to be exploitative, that is the only point I would make.

What has become even more disconcerting is that again within the context of comparison the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East compared Barbados to the country that used to be called Zaire, the Congo. I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East understands what has taken place in what used to be referred to as the Belgium Congo, I am sure that he understands, but yet he has not distanced himself from the comparison of Barbados to one of the more difficult countries on the place of earth to be, possibly outside of Iraq now and Syria, one of the most desperate circumstances for people and Barbados can be compared to that. The massive exploitation of young people, 5-year-olds, working in what is called the diamond mines and the blood gold mines being assaulted in the most vicious way to satisfy the greed for moneys ... to the western world. Anybody who says, and I do not question their love... You could question mine because that gives you the right and authority but I do not question yours. If you say you love your country I accept that but if I say I love my country you do not accept that, that is what is happening in Barbados, but I return to the main point.

Mr. Speaker, even some unemployed persons would never compare Barbados to the Congo and to what is happening there but these are the politics of desperation, these are what we are now seeing in our country, the politics of trying to persuade people that we are surrounded by nothing else but darkness. Mr. Speaker, Barbados occupies a unique space in Caribbean sociology and in Caribbean civilization and in Caribbean politics. It has been like a sore thumb in the midst of this region and even though others pretend sometimes that they love us, we know that they are waiting for very opportunity once if you stump your toe in the region that there is going to be celebrations somewhere.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. George North and I heard other Honourable Members on this side saying that the Honourable Member means well but that is because of the generosity of our hearts but I am not going to walk around and say that this body means well, an individual who is a 'craftitian' of the tactics and give you more blows than anybody else but referred to Barbados as the fallen angel. That was used by Right Honourable Member for St. Peter in just drawing a reference. I would not have used such terminology because my understanding of the fallen angel was some ones, because they were more than one, who questioned the authority of God and was cast down into the bottomless pit of hell, there to suffer eternal torment and therefore by using that particular reference the individual, in this case the Honourable Member for St. George North, tend to be suggesting that Barbados is in the bottomless pit of hell.

Mr. Speaker, I have read quite voluminously in the politics of Jamaica, I like Jamaican, I think they are

relatively nice people and are quite giving but there are always people in one's society who orchestrates givings behaviour. I would have thought after following the trajectory of Jamaica since the late 1970s up until this time and the problems and challenges that they have undergone, and having seen unlike Guyana who has taken a slightly different posture, and reported that the angel has fallen. well, if you consider Barbados to have been an angel and you looked up to it and now it is fallen, Jamaica looks north, Jamaica does not look towards the Caribbean and so I do not mind all of the talk that they put out. We do not shut off our goods from coming to Barbados, in fact, we go into our supermarkets and we purchase because those are brothers and sister, many of them coming across the Middle Passage, first to land here and then to be distributed. I do not mind them, that is why we are not progressing in the region. The exchange rate to the Jamaican dollar today is about JMD\$120 to US\$1. Those who have been political leaders in this country have fought desperately to protect the Barbadian dollar.

Mr. Speaker, we have set the Barbados currency at a nominal rate of US\$1=BD\$2 but let us understand the point made by the former Right Honourable Prime Minister, we say the exchange rate is US\$1=BD\$2 about both depreciation and appreciation of the United States of America dollar affects what we do in Barbados, therefore this is not a time for grandstanding, Government have challenges regardless.

Mr. Speaker, let me point to a few things, I am not a supporter of the Barbados Labour Party, that is known. I have never been and will never be but I respect their right in a democracy. Honourable Member for St. Michael East, I understand your position but I do not hold it against you, I still consider you to be a friend so leave it alone. I do not carry those kinds of bloods in my bloodstream.

Mr. Speaker, these are facts and so they stand like truths, in its thrust in the previous 14 years previous to 2008 the Barbados Labour Party went on a development phase particularly infrastructurally because they considered that there were going to be some things good for Barbados. Let us stop some of the foolishness that you do, these are some of the projects that you brought on stream: Glendairy Prison had a fire. We had to go and build a prison in St. Philip. We are still paying that debt today and for the next 25 or so years we will still be paying that debt. We brought the US\$200 million prison to book and so we have to honour that. Further, there is nothing wrong with the project. We also did work at Tamarind Hall in the constituency of St. Joseph at a cost.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: We, the country, did the Supreme Court Complex under the aegis of the Barbados

Labour Party. That was a cost that was brought to book under the accrual system. These are shifting sands, I am not complaining, it was there, I went to the opening I visited modern facilities for judges, lawyers, witnesses, and criminals. We built the Coast Guard station. All of these are costs, they are not free, nobody went into a barrel and said to build that or the next, all of these things were done through the public-private-partnerships model and all moneys were borrowed from somebody somewhere.

Mr. Speaker, we did the ABC Highway which was done by SSSS Construction Limited. These things are needed and are necessary but there is a cost attached to them. That cost has manifested itself strongly during the last nine years, we have to be paying that.

Mr. Speaker, the Barrack Building was built under the Barbados Labour Party. There were some issues, somebody went to court, they had an arbitration exercise which was contested and not paid because maybe they could not meet the payments at the time under the last Government. There were issues under us as well and so it transitioned overtime. An arrangement was worked out where that situation was put to bed, but you had to pay for it.

The magnificent structure, Kensington Oval, built at Fontabelle had to be paid for. What is the noise about? Whoever was in Government under the accrual system, B or D or cat or fin, had to pay for it. It fell to us as a mean lot to meet and to honour those commitments at a time of severe difficulty, particularly in the western world. Our tourism product fell flat for a number of years, because if you go back and you saw what happened to the stock market in the western world; they buckled. There are houses, millions of them, still in the United States (US) where nobody is living. There are people who are now speculating on them, buying them up, refurbishing them and, and as a result of the growth in the US economy as it is, selling them and putting them back on the market. There were millions of houses. We had this massive implosion.

Barbados is a peripheral state, regardless of what Kofi Annan said, regardless of how people think about us, and there is a reality that confronts every country such as the one we have. We do not have the trading power and we do not have the persuasion power. Barack Obama, we still love him, did not look in this direction. He did not look in this direction. There were no great enterprises to help this part of the world that has been friends of the United States for a long time, because they looked inward. They looked at their own survival, so let us stop pretending that these things happened; but I understand this is the nature of politics. I understand that. The Honourable Member for St. George North, I am speaking about him because sometimes he says some deceptive things. He said that for the first time in his life he saw people without light or water in

Barbados. I came up in rural Barbados. The Honourable Member is about four to five years older than I am. Yes, he was a teacher with some respect at Grantley Adams Memorial. I know that so I give him that and would never take it from him; but this is hyperbole. Outside of a few in this Chamber -- a few -- everybody in this House had a shed-roof. Aside.

Hon. R.D. JONES: I said outside of a few. Then they built on and built on, and when water came to their villages outside of the standpipes, they laid some pipes and turned on the tap first in the backyard. Do not test me about these things. I understand the reality of growing up poor, vulnerable and naked in Barbados. Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: When the Honourable Member says it is the first time he encountered this, I would ask the Honourable Member for St. James Central, who I still consider a friend, to tell him that a thinking, educated people who have gone through the hardships of growing up in Barbados would know that this is a lie. What possibly he could have been saying is that within 17 years of the 21st Century, everybody possibly should not be in these circumstances, and that we hope -- when I say "we", I am talking about those who are put to govern -- would eliminate or alleviate those hardships of those persons who might exist with these conditions. The hyperbole has now ignited in this country. There are people who have been tradesmen across Barbados, coming from that culture. All of a sudden, some of those tradesmen are no longer trading, according to them. Maybe that is good. Do you know why it may be good? It means that we might have migrated from that particular condition, and whoever has been the Government of Barbados for over 60-odd years in the modern times should be complimented and congratulated for the work that we have done. Mr. Speaker, we are at a juncture now when there are difficulties at our doorstep. I am one of eight; the second child from my parents, who have died. One parent died at age 45 and the other at age 52. I am older now than they were, and I came up under their tutelage. I never heard my father once say, "Oh, poor me." Do you know what was discussed? How many more chickens we could afford to rear, how many we were going to put somewhere and how many we were going to sell. I came up taking the sheep out into the pasture. I do not wear that as a badge of honour but that is the reality; going to the edge of the terrace and cutting the sour grass to feed those Blackbelly sheep. I came up rearing pigs, and those who have reared pigs would know that is not an easy exercise because it is not a matter of simply cleaning the pens but also getting rid of what is in the cesspool. That is the reality, but today because of the political divide and the pervasiveness of that political divide, we now are telling people in this country that you must stoop, bow and bend because you have a master called the political class. We have weakened the people of this country, and I say "we" all-inclusive. I am not releasing mine and blaming yours.

We have bent the backs of the people. Rather than govern, we have used this thing of needing to get back into power every five years to weaken this country. Unless there is a liberation from that particular behaviour, the slide will continue unabated. The time has long passed when the kinds of gymnastics that are being played with the minds of people must stop; the gymnastics of marching. This Democratic Labour Party-led Government has not had an easy time from the Barbados Labour Party. The undermining, the calling of meetings in St. James, and telling tourism people not to invest. Not all Caucasians support the Barbados Labour Party, notwithstanding all of them who crept out of their homes on Saturday. I applaud them because they are part of Barbados and this democracy. Show your democratic face. When you are persuaded that one party only makes it possible for you as a group to benefit, something is wrong; that somehow in our democracy you must tag the Barbados Labour Party for your uppermost survival, something is wrong. Something has to be wrong. People better wake up. The reality is greater than you understand. What were we building the \$2 billion in foreign exchange on? Massive sale of land along the West Coast particularly, and along the South Coast. There were people who were willing to pay \$2 million and \$3 million for 6 000 square feet with a hip-roof house on the coastline. "I will give you \$5 million," they said, and then built \$30 million villas. Contractors had work, because that is what was happening to Barbados. I am not quarrelling against it; I am just pointing to the truth. These were foreign direct investments flowing into Barbados. I have four minutes, Sir? MR. SPEAKER: You have five minutes left.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Thank you for the extra one. These were foreign direct investments pouring into the coffers of Barbados, and we were pretending that we were earning foreign exchange. Unsustainable reality. Barbados is only 166 square miles, we only have this amount of kilometres of white, sandy beaches. When you sell all of that what else do you have to sell? We cannot sell our ladies. What else do we have to sell? If we cannot exist on the intellectual capacity, the cognitive structures of our people to manoeuvre through these avenues of difficult, if we cannot fear at the foundation of the re-development of Barbados must be our agriculture. At the foundation, every great society and civilisation has had at its base, its agriculture. You can go as far back as Nubia, Egypt, Ghana, we used to call it a different name then, agriculture was at the base and out of that agricultural revolution and diversification grew, mechanisation and industrial complexes, but we, in Barbados, allowed others to tell us abandon agriculture. We are suffering as a result of following that advice. They told us to go to international financial services and there was a time in this country when between \$500 to \$600 million in Corporation Taxes were in fact, flowing into our coffers, crisis came on and that dropped from \$500 to \$600 million to \$200 million and

every time we go forward the OECD says, hold them fellows back, there are money launderers down there. If we do not believe that at the basis of that is racism, something is wrong with us. You are flying too high, you are punching above your weight so come down a peg and we then have to fight every step of the way to reassert the position of Barbados, Cayman Islands and all of the other countries who followed the examples of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the same OECD and other leaders across the white world. That is what happens. That is what they do, they pull you down. I do not believe that what is happening in Barbados can continue and will continue because I am buttress here that if I give of my last drop of blood that the land that nourished me I will not, Sir, step aside and abandon it to those people who as play pens to play with their minds, to tell them, wait, you know those other Bajans are no good. We are the only Bajans that are good. By extension you are also saying that you out there cannot be any good other because we ran along the same highways and byways. We sat in the same schools. The Honourable Member for St. James Central occupied the quadrangle with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, made noise every day at the University of the West Indies (UWI) but yet they came out as great intellectuals even though they were noisemakers. What today separates them but politics? Nasty and dangerous because human beings made it so when you and he broke of the same bread and tasted of the same nectar. Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I know, I was there.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: No, he did not get a lot of the nectar. It was the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. I knew. I stood back and watched them. Pretenders as great orators so I learnt a few things.

I am wrapping up here, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East said something that I think is one of the most dangerous statements made in this House to date. What gives you the right to bring Estimates to this country? Did you hear that? I do not understand, Mr. Speaker. This is still a Government in governance therefore in a democracy we have a right by law to bring Estimates - the Honourable Member does not have to participate - but the right is put in law. When 31st March comes and 1st April comes in Civil Servants and looking to be paid, security guards, the police, janitors, maids, horse and mule carts and drivers thereof are looking to be paid but then the arrogance that has really now become manifested in their bosoms because as the Honourable Member for St. Andrew said, oh, we have put 30 000 on the streets. All of a sudden the inflation by 400 per cent.

I deem, Sir, in support of this Appropriations Bill with that gnawing feeling of intense intestinal pain that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, in a democracy, has said, what gives you the right to bring Estimates in this country? The undermining, Sir, of the same principle of democracy that the Honourable Member was so loudly speaking about.

I thank you, Sir, for giving me of your ears and time and I applaud the Government of Barbados through some of the most difficult of times and trying of circumstances to keep bread and meat on the plates of Barbadians. I bow, Sir.

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

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise not to confirm or deny the participation of any nectar, but to share a perspective or two, Sir, on these Estimates.

Mr. Speaker, it is perhaps best to begin on the note of recognising that because of the political climate in the country and obviously the temperature is rising, one would expect that, what the English call the Silly Season appears to be upon us and the responses have become a little bit more acute in nature and Honourable Members, Sir, are demonstrating an intension to get into the cut and thrust of the debate with even sharper tongues.

Mr. Speaker, there are a few things that we have to be careful of, in my view. The first one, Mr. Speaker, is let us be fair, frank and faithful to the good things that have come out of Barbados. When we have a situation where a young man at 13 or 14 years goes, accompanied by his parents, and irrespective of what his political view is, or the posture he adopts in terms of philosophy, is able to eloquently articulate that position for the first time before thousands of people gathered around him, Sir, it speaks well for the product of the young people in Barbados and for the education system of the country. Let us not forget, Sir, that it was not so long ago that there was a young man who, at age 13 or 14, and he told me so I presumed he told Honourable Members over there as well, that he would collect bottles in the George Street Auditorium and pack chairs in the George Street Auditorium and share of his own political views - Mr. Speaker, if I could be sheltered from the Honourable Member - and from that process aided and abetted by another great Barbadian the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, he then emerged to be a leader of the land. Sir, I want to believe that with the benefit of a little more thought on the matter that the Honourable Member who spoke the language of child abuse and so on may wish to revisit that position that he took.

I also feel, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that in a post-colonial developing state we have to be mindful of the things that come from a Parliament such as ours. The first black Secretary General of the United Nations was Kofi Annan. His achievement is something stellar and significant. It is a very unfortunate thing when it can come from this Parliament that his visit to Barbados for the purposes of opening United Nations House, which was about collaboration, efficiency and the improvement of the region to be able to deliver developmental services not only for member states in the Caribbean but also at an internationally agreed level, and the comments he made about Barbados punching above its weight could be taken out of context and set up to reflect the suggestion that Mr. Annan felt that Barbados needed to be brought down.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. No one said that that Kofi Annan was suggesting any such thing. The Honourable Member is misleading the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not remember it being said. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Thank you, Sir. Sir, the impression that I got was that was the interpretation to be given to it and I believe I am entitled to the interpretation but that is not the point.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. While I understand that impressions are gained, I want to assure the Honourable Member that he gained the wrong impression, he did not listen properly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well, thanks for the elucidation.

Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. As I said that really is not the point. The point is that as we proceed in this debate, I understand that there are clearly lines drawn and I appreciate the fact that these lines have to be drawn at this point because the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has made it clear there are clear policy decisions that have to be settled upon as Barbados goes forward. What I do not believe, Sir, is helpful is for us to create the impression, I am trying to choose my words carefully, that we are losing sight of the larger picture. My friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central who just spoke, gave an example - and I did not hear the alleged comment - that

Barbados was characterised alongside the Belgian Congo, and left there hanging there with nothing else, again one can get the distinct impression that Honourable Members of this Parliament are descending into a pit which we ought not to be descended into.

Sir, I think what is more important is for us to understand the context within which comparisons are being drawn between Barbados and other places.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: I am not trying to soft-soap anything because I did not hear the comment but what I am trying to say is that there is a context within which Barbados is now being compared to other places around the world and it born out of a heartfelt concern held by Barbadians bred and born, and I am one of them, Mr. Speaker. That view that I have and that others have is not necessarily going to coalesce with the view that Honourable Members on that side have and for very good and plain reasons because Honourable Members on that side are presiding over a situation which by their own admission or by the admission of some in their ranks is a failure.

Mr. Speaker, the point is that if you pick up an Ease of Doing Business Report, for example, you see that Barbados' position out of 148 countries is 119 but then you look at Jamaica and you see that for the ease of doing business Jamaica, which is critical for a struggling economy to be able to become more competitive and promote growth, out of 148 countries is at position 64 and you look next door at St. Lucia, upon whom we have rightly or wrongly tended to look askance, and see that out of 148 countries St. Lucia in the ease of doing business is at 77 and when you look at a place like Antigua, which has historically been accused of being riddled or crippled by a corrupt regime, and you see that for the ease of doing business there now Antigua is at 102 and when you look at all of the countries within CARICOM you see that Barbados is the lowest place on the totem place and that Barbados is at 119 two points beyond war torn economies like Cote d'Ivoire and Rwanda, it is not to deprecate Barbados or it is not to verbally urinate on the land of my birth but it is to state a fact about which I am increasingly becoming more and more uncomfortable, so that whatever was said, and as I said I did not hear what was said about the Belgian Congo, I do know that comparisons being drawn not only in here but across this island and worse yet around the world about Barbados' performance is not born out of a dislike for Barbados or Barbadians, it is not born out of ill will towards Barbados or even born out of ill will towards the Democratic Labour Party, it is born out of genuine concern for the state of affairs and about the figures that we are seeing.

I also make the point, Mr. Speaker, that all of this is taking place within a context that must not be escaped. The national debt under the watch of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet has doubled from what it was in 2008. That is an unfortunate but unescapable fact. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I said in the last Budget Debate we have come to the point where we may as well say blessed are the youth for they shall inherit the national debt. That now, Sir, is a grim reality. It is the single biggest problem facing Barbados now. If we cannot manage the repayments, and I will speak a little bit more on that, then, Mr. Speaker, it makes it impossible to hold the level of employment at any statutory corporation and in the central Government, it makes it impossible to deliver goods and services to our people and it makes it impossible to pay ourselves so we might as well face this issue square on and accept that is a core issue as we go forward in this debate and quite frankly as we go forward in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, another inescapable reality about the state of affairs in this country is that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has presided over a deterioration in the fiscal position in Barbados to the point where in 2017 this country's economy is in fact smaller than it was in 2013. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the deterioration was not over the last four years because in 2013 the economy was smaller than it was in 2008 and that means that the summed total of goods and services we are producing in Barbados is shrinking even as we are taxing Barbadians at a higher rate than ever before so we are in fact paralysing economic performance by over taxing a shrinking economic base. Mr. Speaker, there are those who would tell you that cannot make sense.

Mr. Speaker, the other inescapable fact that gives context to the situation we are in is the point constantly made by the leader of the Barbados Labour Party about the perilous state of our foreign exchange reserves which are today one-half of what they used to be in 2008, and on top of that we had the issue of the printing of money which I think even the other side has now come around to Christian understanding and accepting to be scandalous. The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs said it smells bad, it looks bad, it tastes badly but only two weeks ago the Honourable Member committed to continue to do it.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that you have heard it all in this Honourable House, the need to face the situation of the debt and to reprofiling it. Mr. Speaker, on that point of debt let me make another observation, on December 31, 2016, the Central Bank Third-Quarter Report became available and the domestic debt owed to private individuals was \$4.9 billion. That, Sir, represented 53 per cent of this country's Gross Domestic Product. The gross Government debt including borrowings from the Central Bank, inclusive of that which is being borrowed from the Central Bank, the so-called printing of the money is \$9.2 billion.

Mr. Speaker, that is what Barbados has to repay and we have to get very real about this because this debate, Sir, is about the next stage of this country's development, how is it possible to carry Barbados forward with the standard of living that we have become accustomed to, with all of the goods and services available that we have become accustomed to, when you have shrinking performances in terms of your inability to earn foreign exchange and you have an increasing debt burden to the point where you are now at a debt percentage level of 108 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product. Mr. Speaker, the debt situation is what has given rise to each and very successive downgrade.

Mr. Speaker, the Right Honourable Prime Minister will tell you that the downgrades do not matter. Sir, one of the early things that I would want to say about this debate is that the country, if it is to come out of this, it has to wake up from the slumber in which it is being encouraged to remain. The downgrades do matter because they do have two severe implications. The very first implication is that for Barbados as a sovereign State. Every loan that we pay, if you go to the Term Sheets of the Credit Suisse loan which was about half billion dollars, all of the Term Sheets that we have nowadays carry with them a provision that in the event of a downgrade the interest rate goes up.

Mr. Speaker, the truth of the matter is that as a result of the last downgrade Barbados will now pay additional interest to the tune of \$5 million because we have had another downgrade and so it does matter as every downgrade makes it more difficult for us to get ourselves out of the hole. Mr. Speaker, on top of that entities of a commercial nature which are registered to do business in Barbados will find it more and more difficult to access loans on the international capital market to pursue the same growth agenda that Barbados needs in order to get itself out of the financial difficulty which it is in.

Mr. Speaker, you have not given me leave to call anybody's business but any one of them that you could think of that want to do business outside of Barbados, that we want companies in Barbados to establish a commercial presence in St. Lucia, in the Bahamas, to do like what Sagicor did and go not only Pan-Caribbean but to be able to establish themselves on the British Stock Exchange and so on. Mr. Speaker, it cannot happen if it is that with every successive downgrade the company finds it more and more difficult to access financing, so that the downgrades themselves are a hindrance to the economic growth that Barbados needs to have.

Mr. Speaker, the downgrades are born out of the persistent debt that we have locked ourselves into and therefore Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter and indeed the Honourable Member for St. Philip

West are perfectly correct when they say that the debt in Barbados is the first and foremost issue that this country and this Parliament must be addressing and that that debt must be reprofiled, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I mean, you know, part of the problem facing this Government is the inability to make decisions, born out of politics, not necessarily a lack of understanding on the economy. the problem that we have in Barbados is that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and the Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management continue to be at war; the problem that we have in Barbados is that the Right Honourable Prime Minister cannot make peace between his Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and the Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management.

Mr. Speaker, George Belle who is not a member of the Barbados Labour Party, who does not hold a seat in this Parliament, who is a university lecturer speaking independently on the country's economic and political situation has said that the problem transcend economics, that the problem if of a political nature and that it requires a mandate. Mr. Speaker, it must require a mandate because if the Government is paralyzed by fighting between each other...

Mr. Speaker, as recently as two weeks or so again the Barbados Workers Union that cannot pay its bills tries to get Cabinet's permission to get photovoltaic so that they would be in a position to use that energy to help to offset some of the bills that it has to pay. Sir, that was denied. Mr. Speaker, the difficulty is that the ongoing internecine war that is taking place in the Cabinet of Barbados that cannot be brought to heel is now beginning to cripple...in fact, not beginning, it is now crippling the performance of the country.

Mr. Speaker, in that context the current exercise become farcical really because we can go through the whole week of these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure but if Government itself has paralyzed and hamstrung its ability to perform we are not going to get very far. The other issue that we have to confront is that there is a real policy choice, not the artificial policy choice put by the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs but a real policy choice. We have the annual Appropriations exercise on one hand and you have the Central Bank's performance on the other. We come here, we engage in an Appropriations exercise and then we leave here and the Central Bank of Barbados accommodates the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs by printing money.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I maintain, if you look at the Tables that have been made available you will see that the debt held by the Central Bank of Barbados today is \$1.183

billion in 2017. When the Government took over in 2008 there was no debt held by the Central Bank. This Government has printed \$1.813 billion and that is why we have this challenge because you can come here and could go through all these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, they mean nothing at the end of the day if Parliament sets an arbitrary figure of \$2 million but then the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs is given free rein to run up as much expenditure as he wants via the printing of money.

Mr. Speaker, right now the printing of money is inextricably linked to the problem indicated in the same 2016 Report when the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados itself has now come around to accepting, and I quote:

“Government’s dependence on Central Bank to finance its deficits limits the Bank’s ability to influence interest rates appropriate for Barbados circumstances.”

Mr. Speaker, so that the Bank itself in its own report is now saying that the Government’s reliance on the Bank...

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. The Honourable Member is attempting to give the impression that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs is somewhere ‘licking’ out money when the clear facts have been laid before this Honourable House as to the priorities. In his presentation already, he has indicated that the Minister of Finance has not been able to adequately even pay local suppliers, so I do not know what this “lick out” talk is that he is on about. Sir, he wants to give the impression as if there is some kind of mismanagement. That is not true, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: No Point of Order found. He is entitled to state his views. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: I am obliged, Mr. Speaker. To help the Honourable Member, I want to refer him, when he has the opportunity, to the Central Bank Act, CAP 323C of the Laws of Barbados. At Section 48 of that Act, Sir, it is made very clear that whenever the amount of credit being extended by the Bank to the Government or to any of its agencies, including statutory boards, begins to threaten the monetary stability of the country, a number of steps are required by law. The Central Bank Report of December 2016, which I just referred to, speaks to the same issue of Government’s over-reliance on financing from the Central Bank now beginning to fetter the Bank’s ability to do the things the Bank needs to do. The Report said that, not me. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, what are the requirements triggered by law? What should have happened for this House to see and benefit from? Sir, the Bank is supposed to

submit a Report to the Minister drawing the attention of the Minister to the situation. We do not know if that was done. I assume the professionals in the Bank did their job. Then, Sir, they are supposed to help the Minister by analysing the causes of the situation, which they have stated in the Report, and then after that they must recommend to the Minister the steps needed to remedy the situation. If the Minister does not agree, he is mandated by law to issue an Order to the Bank indicating that it is his policy and that this Order is also required by law to be gazetted and laid before this Parliament. Sir, no such Order has been laid before this Parliament. Nothing has been gazetted, and certainly the consequential Ministerial Statement has not been made to the House, Sir. Therefore, Sir, we can only assume that either the Bank failed in its professional duty and its legal obligation to properly advise the Minister -- which I do not believe it did -- or alternatively that, for a yet inexplicable reason the Minister of Finance has not done that which he is mandated to do by law; which is to bring an Order to the House. MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have five minutes in which to conclude.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Therefore, Sir, I say to you that a lot of what we heard is a lot of false choices, fear-mongering and scare-mongering. What is required in Barbados is basic. It is management. All the questions that the Minister of Finance asked about what we will do and what we will cut and so on, were raised to the Government of Barbados by the Leader of the Barbados Labour Party as far back as 2013-2014, Sir. She issued a Press statement entitled ‘Fifteen Questions for the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister’. It is a Press statement, Sir, and in the Press statement look at the issues which were raised. I will make it a Document of the House, so that the Prime Minister and his Cabinet yet again can be told about it. She asked the question: “Will the Minister indicate how he will offset the panic that has ensued as a result of the arithmetical cuts announced and the huge accumulated deficits already existing at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Transport Board, National Housing Corporation and other statutory entities?” How now is it a surprise to the Government that this has not been a concern of the Opposition? She went on: “Will the Minister confirm that money owed by the Government to normal, everyday creditors is in fact in excess of \$750 million and rising?” Seven hundred and fifty million dollars owed to creditors, Sir; not accounted for between then and still not accounted for now. How was this a surprise to the Government? “Will Minister Sinckler agree that the printing of money in an environment where foreign exchange is not being earned and where our reserves are falling at a precipitous rate is not only reckless but will endanger the economy and monetary stability of Barbados?” Mr. Speaker, this was asked by the Honourable Member, who is the Leader of the Opposition, in 2014, but in 2017 it has come back to haunt us, and not an answer from the Government, Sir. They say the Opposition was not doing anything. The next question,

Sir: "In these circumstances will the Minister state how much money has been printed by the Central Bank via Treasury bills?" Sir, we now know that it adds up, between the bills and the debentures, to \$1.8 billion. Mr. Speaker, it goes on. The next question: "Will the Minister indicate whether he has formally received the Report from the Central Bank pursuant to Section 48 of the Central Bank Act" to which I just alluded and explained, Sir? Not a word has come from the Minister. The final question was to the Prime Minister, who of course is never heard to speak. "Will the Minister indicate what is the anticipated increase in the cost of borrowing to Barbados, given this last downgrade by Standard & Poor's, and will the Prime Minister indicate what his position is on the increased costs to borrowing for Barbadian companies and Barbadian projects which rely on access to international capital markets?" Sir, what we see today is not only farcical. This is the output end of lawlessness that has pervaded and paraded itself in the form of Government for the last four years. It is an exercise of financial and political recklessness, Mr. Speaker; shameful political lawlessness where a Prime Minister could not rein in renegade Members of his Cabinet, where a Prime Minister cannot bring discipline and enforce fiscal and financial discipline over a country that is being crippled and brought to its knees, where a Prime Minister has failed to save Barbados by removing the Minister of Finance as only he can do, Sir; where a Prime Minister has sat in silence and watched the situation decay and get worse and worse in spite of repeated downgrades, and asked the silly and almost immature question -- a juvenile question, Mr. Speaker -- "what do downgrades matter?" Sir, it is a recklessness that could have been avoided, and I agree wholeheartedly and I encourage this House to embrace the words of Dr. George Belle and accept that this is a political difficulty more than an economic one. It has to be resolved by a mandate, and I urge that the mandate be given, we go back to the people and give the people of Barbados a chance to save themselves, Mr. Speaker. I am obliged, Sir. Asides. SUSPENSION Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for lunch until 2:30 this evening.

Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE: 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. RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken we were on Order No. 20 and to that we shall revert. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to make my contribution to this annual exercise of the presentation of the Estimates to this Honourable House and

first of all I would like to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Finance for what I consider to be and most observers consider to be a very comprehensive presentation of the facts related to the Government's finances on both the expenditure and both on the debt side. There are some lessons to be learnt from this exercise and for sure one of the lessons that must be learnt is that the country is going through a very difficult time and that the fallout from the financial state of the global economy has indeed affected us in a certain and profound way.

Barbados is a small open economy. We always say that and we always acknowledge the fact that Barbados depends upon the circumstances of other developed countries to continue to bolster its economic activities and its successes and during the last several years all of us would have to accept that many countries developed and developing have suffered through enormous economic challenges which have had profound impacts on their respective populations.

Mr. Speaker, we have watched how great countries struggled during this time. Great Britain had to take stringent measures to rebalance its economic circumstances, the United States of America (USA) has had to do the same, Greece has had a torrid, torrid experience that affected its people in certain and profound ways, Spain, Mr. Speaker, we watched on our televisions and on social media and other places, - by the way, I do not believe that social media is a pervert of the truth as I heard in here today, that social media does not tell lies and newspapers do not tell lies. If I want to rely on a document of truth, I would rather place my eggs under the Bible because that is an infallible truth. That is a place where you can find historical evidence, Mr. Speaker, that nations the world over have had their periods of struggle. The Barbadian struggle is nothing new to our population. Go back to Egypt under the leadership of Joseph and understand when Egypt was going through a profound famine, how nations from around the corridor of Egypt journeyed there to get grain. As a matter of fact, the real "historics" of that story is that the man who was rejected turned out to be the saviour of those populations including members of his own family. I am not going to deal with any marches because we have seen what matches did to the Irish Spring. We have seen what has happened to Syria, to Egypt and to the Greece. People have the right to march and this Member of Parliament applauds all of those who took the courage to go out and make a statement. I am not sure what the destination of that statement was or is but they went out and they made a statement. Greece is one of world's most civilised historic countries and they fell in shambles and are still trying to recover in spite of all of the heroics of their leaders they are still having difficulties, Mr. Speaker. I have watched on my television how scores, hundreds and thousands of Spaniards lined up to get bread. I have seen it happen in Venezuela, all of these countries

that are being held up as bastions of recovery and democracy they have all gone through their challenges and they have all spoken to the people and say we have to get through this together because at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, it is a one Barbados for all Barbadians and not a one Barbados for the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) or a one Barbados for the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) or a one Barbados for the third parties that are now rising up that were characterised as Chihuahuas. It is not about that. It is about how do you keep an emerging democracy a developing island that still has its reputation in tact the world over? How do you keep Barbados stable during these times? I have to applaud the Honourable Minister of Finance. Everybody may not agree with his views and ideas but he has to be congratulated for being beaten up in every corner but staying focussed on what needs to be done to help Barbados through this difficult time and I have no doubt that we will come out of this.

This notion of a “fallen angel” -- and I heard an explanation this morning to define what a fallen angel is -- I would advise that Member of this Honourable House to go to the original language, the original text and see what “fallen angel” means and nowhere in the original text, nowhere where I have searched have I found fallen angel to be attached to any economic circumstances. I have found “fallen angel” to be attached to a demonic “descent” from the portals of glory. It is there for all to see, it is there for all to read and I will not join with any persons with any newspaper article from any territory in the region. I will not join with them neither will I join with the Honourable Member for St. George North to suggest that Barbados is a fallen angel, it is unbelievable. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, in spite of the fact that Barbadians are not lining up to buy bread, that Barbadians are not lining up to buy grain and that Barbadians are not lining up for shelter, there was nothing in the expositions of the Opposition to compliment Barbadians for their will and their survival and tactics for their ability and to be resilient in a time like this. I do not know why some people believe that Barbadians for the first time are going through difficulties. Mr. Speaker, I have surmised that those who have been born on the side of privilege cannot understand what ordinary Barbadians go through and have gone through in this society to be able to make it to this day. I heard my colleague from Christ Church East Central spoke today and I remember as a youngster in St. Andrew and as a primary students at St. Saviour's Primary School how difficult it was for us to put food on our table. I remember those days. I remember the days when I could not afford the school meals because there were so many of us from the same house, and I would not frown on any Barbadian... I keep hearing this thing about people starving, that their bellies are into their backs and that people cannot do this, but that is not the Barbados I know and I will not join with anyone on that side or on this side who project Barbadians as starving people. I know that there are certain islands in the Caribbean where

residents are still scrimmaging through dump heaps every day trying to find something to eat, but they are not characterised as fallen angels. I therefore want to make it abundantly clear that I support the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs' efforts and that I intend to do whatever I can from where I sit in the Government to make sure that we get from strength to strength and move forward with this.

The global conversation in the last five to ten years has been around the principle of the future we need. Mr. Speaker, I am happy that the Democratic Labour Party spent 14 years in the wilderness as they say and we did not had to spend \$3 million to drag out Bajans who are disgusted. When Barbadians are ready to change the Government, they use their vote to do so. We do not have to go and set up a call centre and call people and when they refuse to listen to us to curse them and call them pigs and all kinds of foolishness. We did not had to do that, Mr. Speaker. We honour our democracy. We allow our democracy to work. We will never come in this House and tell a political party in Opposition or in Government that they do not have the right to bring an Estimates to the people of Barbados. We talk about the preservation of democracy. We talk about working towards preserving the planks of our democracy. Our democracy has set in train for many years now under many different leaders the opportunity for the change of Government when the people of Barbados believe it is time to change the Government and we are not going to be presumptuous to tell Barbadians that they do not have the right to determine whether or not they want a change in Government. That is their prerogative, that is their right, that is their democratic right to do that. We were called a one-term Government. When the one-term passed and we were re-elected we were told that we could not last a month, and then they moved the goal post to two months, then they moved it to a year and the goal post keeps moving and moving. I understand that the goal post has now moved to August when the people of Barbados are supposed to go to the polls.

The truth of the matter is that if I have a population of 270 000 and I want to make a point about changing the Government and I want to make a point about moving Barbadians closer to an election and I decide to organise a march I would want to think that... Let us give them 15 000. Fifteen thousand has not really told the story.

I heard my colleague from St. Michael Central being criticised because my colleague in his presentation noted the fact that there is extraordinary bias in certain sections of the media and then to be told that well we do not believe in freedom of speech. Well, if they practice freedom of speech to pillory the Government every single time they turn on the knob of their radio station, that is their prerogative, but it is also our prerogative to tell them when we know that they are bias in their views. The newspaper

do not tell lies and social media do not tell lies, these are perfect media outlets which propagate views with an intention of swaying public opinion.

Mr. Speaker, let me say this I believe that Barbadians are in full control of their political destiny and when they see it fit to remove the Government that they put in place nothing stands in their way as far as this Government is concerned, but we will continue to do what we have to do to move this country forward, we will continue to do what we have to do to make sure that our obligations are met as a Government and we will continue to push those themes of resilience and accountability because I heard somebody spouted off in here about an implementation deficit and the fact that the Government is not implementing, but let me say that - and many of us on this side do not like to say it and do not want to say it - a lot of the challenges in implementation in the Government is because of a broken public service. There are public servants out there who do whatever they can to obstruct the Government's ability to carry out its programmes. Mr. Speaker, let me say this now and let me say it clear, I intend to fight through those kinds of challenges because at the end of the day I am accountable to the people, I am accountable to the Cabinet and I am accountable to the Parliament, but I have my own challenges and I make no bones about it. I have had my challenges with solid waste management. We have gone through a whole series of conversations on that. I believe that the solid waste management programme of the Government has to go in a different direction and I believe that to achieve that there are changes that have to be made at the top of that system. Let me say that now and let me say it clearly, it cannot be business as usual, Mr. Speaker and we cannot continue to do things the way we used to, we must have every single skill that is required available at our disposal to ensure that we push forward a sustainable solid waste management programme.

Mr. Speaker, we came here and heard repeatedly how dirty Barbados is, how nasty the country is, that wherever you turn you see piles of garbage. Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, at one point in time there are some people in the journalistic field who took old pictures and reprinted them to make their point. Well, the country spoke, the Government listened and what we have done is that we have put a programme in place to assist with the collection of waste in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that the programme was implemented and that it has impacted in many areas. I am also happy to report that while that was happening the Sanitation Service Authority was able to increase its daily rolling stock to up to 24 trucks per day, up from seven trucks.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the six months for this private waste haulers programme is creeping up upon us, I assure the country that we will review the programme. I

assure the country that we will reflect on the way forward and also on how the Sanitation Service Authority in-house remedies have worked and I assure the country that we will continue to work to make sure that it does not get back to the way it was. Mr. Speaker, there are some people who like to pronounce on how clean or how dirty the country is, I drive around Barbados perhaps more than a lot of people in here and I can tell you that there is a remarkable improvement in the collection of waste around the island today. Sir, it is not perfect, we are getting there, but what we are learning is that when order is imposed and householders accept the conditions of those orders that things begin to look better.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the members of the Sanitation Service Authority. I want to congratulate those persons who collect waste on both a daily and nightly basis around this island. I want to congratulate every driver and collector of waste. I want to congratulate them all for their efforts because I know that many of them have had to fight back the criticisms and sometimes the enticements of certain organisations to drop their hands, to drop their tools and to allow things to run out of whack.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say today that we have crew of workers who work from St. Lucy all the way up to St. Philip and every day. As a matter of fact, now I hear some people are telling me that they are getting collections twice a week, while some are getting three times per week, and moving waste from every nook and cranny around the island but Mr. Speaker, we have had to sit down, buckled down and challenged some of the establishments in the Sanitation Service Authority and have them understand that it is the Government that sets the policy, not the management, the Board carries out the policies of the Government and therefore I am demanding that they continue to work with the Government, that they continue to exercise the level of dedication that is required in the finance department, in the management departments, et cetera. Mr. Speaker, in every single department of the Sanitation Service Authority they have to buckle up and get the job done because we will not accept mediocrity as part of the template of our work, but I want to thank those persons who are doing extraordinary work.

Mr. Speaker, I could spend more time, I could tell you that the Sanitation Service Authority has just benefited from the conclusion of a study done by the South Koreans on a Route Optimization Programme. I can also tell you that there is also work completed relative to fleet management. I can also tell you that there is work that has been mandated for the installation of two hydraulic lifts at the Sanitation Service Authority to assist the mechanical workshop in executing its work there. I know that that programme has run up against some stumbling blocks but I am saying today from this Parliament that that is a

programme that must go forward and that whatever that is required to be done will be done on that score.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Mr. Speaker, I know that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has found \$3 million to give to the Sanitation Service Authority to help with the execution of that programme and I know how difficult it was to find it but the Honourable Member found it because the Honourable Member recognised that the collection of waste in Barbados is connected to the health and wellness of the citizens of Barbados and therefore the Honourable Member made it his business to assist us in getting those funds.

Mr. Speaker, we need more funds, there is no question about it, the Sanitation Service Authority has a revenue-generating stream and we believe that there needs to be some revision of that revenue-generating stream, that there needs to be better management of that generating stream and that there needs to be higher levels of accountability relative to the utilisation of the revenues generated in that regard. Mr. Speaker, I know that the Sanitation Service Authority, only one entity in the Ministry of the Environment and Drainage, has come a long way in trying to correct the challenges that it has faced over many, many years.

Mr. Speaker, let me say with certainty that I am not daunted by the pronouncements of those who want to see the Government fall. Sir, so badly do they want to see the Government fall that I would not be surprised if there is not another march next week. I would not be surprised to see other agencies that are supposed to be guiding the development of the work culture of this country working hand-in-hand with workers and the State to ensure that the best possible conditions prevail, if some people in those quarters get themselves carried away by this current climate.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say this, I call on the unions to continue or to start to make their contribution to the upliftment of the work culture in Barbados. I urge them to spend more time in dealing with work ethics. I urge them to spend more time in dealing with industrial relations. I urge them to spend more time in helping those workers who pay their annual dues to be able to get something out of those dues. I am calling upon those workers' representatives to step up to the plate and to address the issues where you have workers who only give 30 per cent of their workday to the Government, yet demanding 100 pay. Mr. Speaker, they are aware of it and they need to step up and to call sessions with their members and encourage those members to be fair on both sides, you demand what is yours but you give what is demanded of you because that is only fair. I

believe that if that is done at a more frequent level that we will be able to see an improvement in the area of efficiency and in the area of dedicated work in both the private and public sectors towards the upliftment of Barbados. Barbados is no fallen angel. Barbados is not a part of that order. That is an order; that is what Paul described as "principalities and powers". Barbados is not part of that, just to remind you. If Barbados is not careful, I also join my colleague in saying that, the trajectory which Barbados is on will end up in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned to my colleagues yesterday, and I will close on this, that some person went and posted on my property yesterday a huge sign laden with profanities, and with the big, bold letters "fed up". It is the only house on my street that it happened to, and it was there for everybody to see. I am a politician. I do not go and post signs on anybody's property without permission; that is the first thing. Do not do it. Do not post signs without permission. I certainly am not going to do it to my good friend from St. Michael North; a decent man. I want to make the point in here. You can laugh, you can scoff, but I want to make the point in here today that I am prepared to defend my property and my person at all costs. I am not going into anybody's yard. I am not going onto anybody's property, but any time that I am in my house or coming towards my house and any such activity is going on, Denis Lowe is prepared to defend my person and my property. Only last week I had members of the Royal Barbados Police Force come in my street and express concern about the surveillance which they are doing. Look. Listen to me carefully. MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you need to wind up.

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: Yes, Sir. Barbados is a free society. Anybody is free to do what they want to do, but there are still laws that obtain. There are still rules that obtain, and all I am saying is that all of this hyping and all of this winding up of people that is going on in this society, Mr. Speaker, do not be surprised if down the road we see things that we never thought we would see in this island of ours. Thank you, Sir. MR. SPEAKER: I am obliged. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I noted with great interest the almost priestly presentation of the Honourable Member who just sat down. I want to say that I sympathise with him that somebody trespassed on his property and put a sign saying that they were fed up. I do not know the circumstances, and I do not know what they were fed up with. It could be any number of reasons, but it should not have happened. I want to say to the Honourable Member that the Barbados Labour Party stands beside you, and we would stand with you to protect your property from any kind of trespass whatsoever. However, where we do not stand with you is the apparent rage that Members of the Democratic Labour Party now seem to have over the

exercise of Barbadians of their freedom of speech. I am not surprised, because it was the exercise of that freedom of speech in the early 1990s that was the signal of the downfall of the then Sandiford Administration. Therefore, for them this is what they would say, I think, in Hollywood: *Déjà vu* all over again. The people of Barbados took to the streets in the early 1990s as a protest, Sir, against what was happening in Government, in governance and against the Erskine Sandiford regime. They have taken to the streets in disgust in 2017, and I fully expect that the same signal which the people of Barbados sent back then is the signal which they are sending now, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party seems to have forgotten all of the things that happened when they were in Opposition. Mr. Speaker, I well remember being in Cabinet and in Parliament and hearing the now deceased Prime Minister and others on that side present in this Chamber accuse everybody on the Barbados Labour Party's benches, back and front, of being corrupt. I heard them accuse every single one of us of having vast bank accounts in the United States. Mr. Speaker, there were threats of forensic audits. The only forensic audit that has happened in this country since is the CLICO forensic audit; and what it tells us, Sir, is that those were just mouthings of the Democratic Labour Party which were intended to do no more than inflame the passions of the electorate. Mr. Speaker, at that point in time there were signs of industrial unrest, and I well remember again the now deceased Prime Minister, the Member for St. John, pontificating that the Barbados Labour Party had to go because the unions were against us and all kinds of stuff. Mr. Speaker, how is it now that when the shoe is on the other foot, no Member on that side is saying, "Be fair?" Is it not funny? Mr. Speaker, there is almost a hypocrisy that is attendant in humanity, where when circumstances change, the very things that they condemn now they would have condoned. Is it not funny, Sir? Mr. Speaker, the beginning and end of this debate should be summed up in a few words: Bad governance leads to an impoverished society. Plain and simple. Sir, every single country in the world that has been afflicted with bad governance inevitably sinks into an impoverished society; impoverished financially, impoverished emotionally and, yes, perhaps even impoverished spiritually. What is apparent to all the rest of us, but what nobody on the Government benches seems to be able to see or to recognise, is that there is a growing number of people at the bottom of what you could perhaps call the Barbadian heap. The mantra of the Barbados Labour Party has always been that we should make poor people's lives better, we should stop poor people from being poor. We wanted to ensure a better life for our people. That is what we have always stood for, and we have demonstrated it on every occasion that we were in Government; but what has happened now is that that heap of Barbadian people at the bottom has been growing at a rate that is frightening, Sir. The Member who just spoke is worried about somebody putting a sign up on his yard or paling or whatever it is saying that he is fed up.

He fell short of saying the Barbadians are now demonstrating some mannerisms that were not previously here. Somebody put a sign up but we have videos put out there by the police of young men running through streets firing guns, people are being shot by high powered firearms in Holetown, all over Barbados today. There is hardly a day, Mr. Speaker, that you do not see a news story about gun shots in this place or the next. That is what the Minister should really want to talk to us about but he wants to talk about somebody putting a big able sign on his fence saying that they were fed up.

Mr. Speaker, Barbadians have recognised that the safety that had been put there by the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) in our 14 years of Government has now been removed and what is happening is that the people at the bottom of the heap are now more disadvantaged and more impoverished. All that they have now, Sir, are fading dreams. We have an education system, and the General Secretary of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) boasted about it saying oh we have built new schools but somehow the educational system is in disarray. Mr. Speaker, our young men and women have been deprived of the access that they hitherto enjoyed to free university education. Access to medical care that was once something that we boasted about is now also illusory and good Lord, the last thing that happened is that ...

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: If the Honourable Member does not know what illusory means he could google it, Sir.

The cost of healthcare has skyrocketed, the cost of medicines have skyrocketed and what has happened now, in the front page of the paper this week, VAT on medicines.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. In the delivery of healthcare in Barbados which is still free to all Barbadians. The Honourable Member knows this but he wants to score some political point.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well. Yes, Honourable Member.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, now VAT is now on non-prescription medication. You have a headache - which is not surprising given the economic crisis we are in - the Panadol, whatever, now you are paying VAT on it. I understand, Mr. Speaker, that the invoices from the Barbados Water Authority now have a section to record VAT on water. Now I happened to know that the VAT Act says that water is not VATable but I have to ask the question, how the BWA, who would know, could print millions of invoices with a provision for VAT but if VAT

is now on Phensic, Sir, well it should not surprise us that VAT is now on water.

Our national wealth has shrunk and Sir, Barbados is not only broke but we are broken. The Democratic Labour Party (DLP), the Government, they are holding fast to delusions of success and prosperity that they do not dare face people on these issues but in all of their speeches they want to tell you, my ministry is doing wonderfully well. I want to compliment so-and-so on a wonderful performance. Oh we have just fixed roads, we are moving aggressively to fix potholes, everything is going well but how come the rest of us cannot see it, Sir? It is because the Government has delusions of success and prosperity but the problem with delusions, Mr. Speaker, is that they only experience by the body who has seen them, invisible to the rest of them. We listened to minister after minister with his high sounding words, praising each other, patting each other on the back but the Minister of Finance is the boy on the burning debt because he is the one, while the others compliment each other, whose back they cannot reach and whose back they do not want to touch because he is the one who has to explain to people what it means to have 19 downgrades in nine years. That is the burden that he has to bear, not a fellow is helping to bear it with him.

It reminds me of the words of Yeats, Sir, where he said that the worst are fully of passionate intensity. That describes the Government, they are the worst but we hear in their speeches passionate intensity coming out. Mr. Speaker, here is where the problem lies. The problem is that having said that Barbados is not just an economy it is a society they have wrecked the economy, and the society is on its knees. We are not only broke we are broken but I do not entirely blame Cabinet, I have to blame them for what I consider to be a glaring paucity of skills. I cannot blame them alone because in our constitutional theory we have an animal called *primus inter pares*, first among equals. Who Chairs Cabinet? Who, by virtue of his office, represents a beacon of leadership not just to Cabinet but to Parliament and to people? That is what being Prime Minister is.

I always remember the Honourable Member for St. Peter shortly after we lost the Government in 2008 standing in this Chamber in a chair up there saying, talk all you like but the buck stopped at me because I was the Prime Minister so I blame the sleeping giant who I regret to say has provided no leadership to his Cabinet, or for that matter, to the country. The buck stops with him and from the time he sat in that prestigious chair, he ought to have behaved in that fashion because the Prime Minister is the one who has presided over every single fiasco that the people of this country has been visited with since he became the Prime Minister but it suits them to blame the Barbados Labour Party (BLP). Oh how hollow that sounds now, years later and the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) is still being blamed. We are being blamed, not only for the

things that we did, we are being blamed for the things that they had to do, they things that they want to do and the things that they are going to do. If we are going to be blamed the best thing to do is step aside and let us do the doing.

Mr. Speaker, for example, if anybody in Barbados needed one, it is his Government that conceived the idea of building high-rise buildings in two places, not high-rise buildings because we built London Bourne Towers. A successful project, not a hint of scandal, not a cost overrun and happily occupied by Barbadians in the City of Bridgetown but as a monument to this Government's ego they decided they were going to build Valery. I remember all the talk about cost overruns when we were in Government. This Government decided to build Valery, awarded a contract for a high-rise buildings at Valery for a cost of \$15 million but then the price went up, not by an extra \$1 million or \$2 million, but by an extra \$7 million and not a word about cost overruns. That was a monument to their ego because the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development has had to admit that the per unit cost of those buildings, prices it out the reach of low-income earners for whom it was intended. If you thought that was enough, Sir, they needed another monument to their ego and they decided to build The Grotto.

Mr. Speaker, I love to hear when the Government talks about the wonderful public servants. Of late they are not talking about them anymore. To hear the Honourable Member who just speak you would feel that they are a bunch of vagabonds, hoodlums. Maybe one of them even went and put a big able sign on his fence, but nobody says so about the Accountant General, so they decided to build this monument to their ego called the Grotto originally approved by Cabinet for \$18 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General in his Special Audit at paragraph 7, this is a document of the House for those of you on that side who have never read it, says that the management of the Corporation did not go to public tender with these projects even though the...

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: I would like to begin again Sir. It is impossible to have an echo before. It says that the management of the Corporation did not go to tender with these projects even though the expenditures exceeded the \$100 000 threshold then applicable under the Financial Rules, but the Honourable Prime Minister presides over this. The tendering process would have advertised the project to a larger pool of potential developers therefore facilitating greater competition in the selection process. It did not go to tender, a contract was awarded for \$18 million, but a year later the price was increased unilaterally by the contractor to \$27.8 million, an extra \$9 million was

thrown in. Seventy-six (76) units were built at a per unit cost of \$355 000 that did not go to tender when we all know from the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development position that low-income housing is in the region of \$125 000 a unit, but they built at \$355 000 a unit. Mr. Speaker, the buck stops at the Honourable Member for St. Michael South. Having had no money to pay the Corporation - and want to get in here talking about debt - that Government ... the Housing Credit Fund of \$27 million in total breach of the law.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Sir, contrary to an opinion of the Solicitor General's Office, a legal opinion...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, are you quoting when you said ...? Is that a quote from the Report which you referred?

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I thought that you directed and that I acquiesced.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph were ordered expunged from the record by Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Contrary to a legal opinion of the Solicitor General, the Government unlawfully took \$27 million from Housing Credit Fund declaring it to be a dividend and paid the contractor. That buck stops at the Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Mr. Speaker, the starkest contrasts between the Government as it exists today and the Government as it existed between 1994 and 2018 is that the people of Barbados at every turn can see the fruits of our labour and their labour and the fruits of their tax dollars. I could start with my constituency Tamarind Hall, I could talk about the new prison, Kensington Oval, a new Supreme Court Building, a new Coast Guard Headquarters, a new airport virtually, a new Hilton Hotel, a highway and on and on and on, but this Government borrowed in excess of \$5 billion, and what do we have to show for it? The Grotto that they could not pay for and had to take the Housing Credit Fund money against the opinion of the Attorney-General. Well, I assume that the Solicitor-General's opinion was approved by the Attorney-General, that is how it used to happen in my day. It used to come to me so I assumed the Attorney-General knew that they could not take it but somehow Cabinet decided to take it. Mr. Speaker, that failure also stops at the Minister, but you know what there was a plan to build a \$500 million factory in my constituency, and we would be glad for the few jobs, to grind 8 000 tonnes of canes and burn miamossee.

Sir, I know why the Honourable Members on that side object to the term fallen angel you know because the notion of an angel is that it soars above all of the

happenings and all of the varied day to day existence of people. The angel is up there on white feathery wings and so when the Honourable Member said that Barbados has not fallen like any fallen angel, it comes back to delusions of success and prosperity that bear no resemblance to what people are down here suffering.

Sir, the Honourable Prime Minister said that downgrades only matter if you are borrowing money. Well, that is a luxury that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs cannot afford. I have not heard him try to correct the Honourable Prime Minister and I assume that it probably happened behind closed doors. It may well be that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has spoken to him harshly, but I want to remind Barbadians that perhaps the oldest public company in Barbados formerly the Mutual later to become Sagicor was burdened and fettered by the fact that as a public company their ratings could be no higher than the ratings of Barbados as a sovereign nation and they had to leave our shores and go to Bermuda. I do not know a single Barbadian who is happy about that, but the Honourable Prime Minister said two things: Nothing surprises me anymore and that downgrades only matter when you are borrowing money. Well, you know what the matter is, Sir, downgrades matter precisely because you want to borrow money.

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

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: My colleague referred to it in passing, but I took the trouble of going to the specifics because that is the other situation in which I believe the Honourable Prime Minister misspoke himself because when we borrowed \$225 million from Credit Suisse in 2013 one of the conditions of the loan - and I am going to quote it for you, Sir, and this is from the Resolution that came to Parliament -- is that in the event of a downgrade of the Government's foreign currency debt by any institutional or regional credit rating agency below BB the applicable margin shall be increased by 50 basis points for every subgrade downgrade below such subgrade or decreased by 25 per cent. Mr. Speaker, all this fancy language means that whenever we get a downgrade we have to pay more interest but the Right Honourable Prime Minister could tell the country that downgrades do not matter unless you are borrowing, but I know that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs winced when he heard that statement because the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs also recollects the First Citizens loan of \$25 million which had in an identical clause, but it seems as though the Right Honourable Prime Minister was not seized of that particular information. Mr. Speaker, the other thing is that any institution in the country can only get an interest rate higher than the sovereign rate, so that when the interest rate of the Government goes up because of these downgrades then the Barbadian enterprises will suffer.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados today is a very far cry from what it used to be. The Democratic Labour Party and their representatives in this Honourable Chamber -- because I do not think that they represent the people, they represent the party.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I was elected to this Honourable Chamber by my constituents, many of whom I now know to have been former supporters of the Democratic Labour Party. Mr. Speaker, they do not want to admit that Barbados is in peril and so they come to this Honourable Chamber with an Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure document that is unjustifiable, it presents a picture that is unsustainable.

Sir, I do not even want to talk about the fact that the people of my constituency need a new bridge at \$2.5 million and that the Ministry of Public Works and Transport allocation for that bridge is only a fraction of the cost, I think it is about \$250 000, but for us who are under the wings of that particular fallen angel, for us who wake up and read Bloomberg laughing, not literally, but publishing articles about our country that we have never seen before and the headlines in Jamaica, in Guyana, in England, in the Organisation of Eastern Developing States we are now well and truly the laughing stock. Mr. Speaker, Barbados needs to be retrieved from this situation. Sir, I know of no constituent who takes any comfort from the passion that the Democratic Labour Party are showing today because as I repeat, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs said on Monday, "We will swiftly move to do this" but what were you doing for the last nine years? Do you think that you are in the nine years before you begin to swiftly do something? The horse has already long left the stable, has already broken his foot, has already gone to the veterinarian, has already gone back into the stable and has already left again. Mr. Speaker, potholes are being aggressively formed and aggressively mended by an aggressively-minded Minister who really needs to aggressively pay attention to his Ministry.

Mr. Speaker, today is the Ides of March and for those who have had the good fortune to have read Julius Caesar -- I know the Right Honourable Prime Minister has, the Right Honourable Prime Minister would know that it is the day on which the Senate assassinated the leader of Rome, the Emperor of Rome, the Senate assassinated the person who was at the helm of that famous State because there were some people who were telling Julius Caesar that the angel was falling, but it was Julius Caesar's own people who were telling him. Mr. Speaker, the Ides of March represented the start of the Roman civil war and a change in the political futures of that State, but that change was marked by violence.

Mr. Speaker, I have known the Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development for a very long time. I am happy to say that I have enjoyed his friendship over the years. We used to drink and eat together as we belong to the same service club and still do, but Mr. Speaker, it alarms me when that gentleman who I ordinarily hold in the highest of regards would make a comment to suggest that Barbados was at the point where we would have our Ides of March and that blood would run in the gutters. Mr. Speaker, I would want to say to the Honourable Member and to give Barbados the assurance that the peaceful exercise which brought about a change in Government in 2008 is going to be the exact same peaceful exercise that will bring about a change in Government whenever he at whom the buck stops should decide to call the General Elections. I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Rt. Hon. F. J. STUART: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to make my intervention in this annual debate on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, 2017-2018. The Estimates, of course, are in essence the Government's budget, the record of what the Government intends to spend, on what Government intends to spend it, and how Government proposes to come by the moneys which it intends to spend. Madam Deputy Speaker, in short the Annual Estimates are the story of how the Government intends to allocate the resources available to it and how the Government intends to allocate its resources reflects invariably those things which our nation values as a nation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, ever since Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure were introduced in this Honourable House in the early 1960s in their modern form, they have had a particular structure reflecting those things which we value as Barbadians, and after 1966 those things which we value as a nation, so that invariably because over the years we have valued education very highly the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure always reflect priority being given to education at the nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Madam Deputy Speaker, because this nation values very highly the health of our nation the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure invariably reflect expenditure on health, both at our premier healthcare institution, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital but also at the more localised institutions, the polyclinics across the country. Madam Deputy Speaker, because we value law and order very highly, the Estimates reflect the importance we attach to law and order, which for us is not just a matter of keeping the peace; but for us it is also a developmental issue because we connect law and

order to every other aspect of what we do in the society. If there is no law and order in the society, then healthcare, education and all the other things that we enjoy in the society then become imperiled. The Estimates would invariably reflect as well our spending on social care. As has been generally accepted now, it took a little time to sink into the minds of those who question the wisdom of our doing it, but it has always been the policy and philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party, and of course very well-articulated by the late Honourable Member for St. John, that "Barbados is not just an economy, but also a society". Therefore, social care features very prominently in the expenditure pattern, the expenditure profile, of the Government of Barbados. There is also the issue of youth, the issue of culture, the issue of sport; all of which have to do with investments in the human capital of Barbados, investment in the future of Barbados. Because we believe firmly in the sustainable development of Barbados, our expenditure will also reflect the value we attach to spending on the environment and matters related to environmental sustainability.

Tourism is the lead sector and lead foreign exchange earner in the economy, and our Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, our Budget, reflect the importance we attach to the role which tourism has played and is playing in the leadership of our economy. Therefore the expenditure on tourism speaks for itself. The international business and financial services sector, the second sector in the economy on which we rely for foreign exchange and for revenue, also attracts our attention and is valued very highly by Barbadians and by the Government. Therefore, our expenditure in those areas will also be manifest. We have to have a proper public transport system; Barbadians expect that of us. We have to have credible and usable infrastructure, and therefore there is an appropriate allocation of expenditure on public transport and our public infrastructure. I could go from sector to sector, from Ministry to Ministry, to explain and to justify the expenditure contained in this year's Budget and in every Budget that we have had since we came to office in Barbados in the year 2008; but whenever we have come to the House with Estimates, including in the year 2008 -- the first Estimates we had to introduce after coming to office -- we have heard that they were the wrong Estimates. Even though the ones in 2008 were not Estimates substantially prepared by us, they were still the wrong Estimates. I want to begin by saying this; I understand very well the nature of Westminster adversarial politics and I am sure that Honourable Members on this side of the House understand the nature of Westminster adversarial politics. I certainly do not come to this House, and I do not think that any Honourable Member of the House of this side comes to the House, expecting to hear how well the Government has done in any area, how well it is doing, or to attract to any sympathy for its shortcomings. The nature of the system that we practise requires the Opposition to not hold up the

Government's strengths to public examination and scrutiny, but to identify the Government's weaknesses and to hold them up to public scrutiny and examination; weaknesses as perceived by the Opposition. I sat over there for a few years myself, and I know that routine very well, and I therefore do not get unnerved or in any way perturbed. Aside. MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Right Honourable Member. I am sorry for the interruption. Rt.

Hon. F.J. STUART: I was saying, Mr. Speaker, that I do not get unnerved or perturbed when the Opposition party performs the role it is supposed to perform. It is a role which I believe was identified some time in the 19th Century by Sir William Harcourt; the role of the Opposition being to oppose and to oppose and to oppose again. I understand that very well, and I also understand that it is not the role of the Opposition to tell the Government how to do its work. Oppositions have never accepted that responsibility. I very well recall a Report done by the late C.L.R. James on the political situation in Barbados in 1958. I was reading it recently, and the Government of the day, the Barbados Labour Party under the leadership of the late Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams, under pressure from the Democratic Labour Party in Opposition at the time, was asking the Opposition, "What would you do? How would you do it?" C.L.R. James wrote that it was really not the role of any Opposition to tell the Government how it would do anything. The role of the Opposition is to just oppose the Government. That continues to be the reality in Barbadian politics. I have heard this over the years. Not everybody has read C.L.R. James' essay. Not everybody has even read Sir William Harcourt, but you hear this all the time: What would the Opposition do? I understand the Opposition has to oppose the Government, and I said it does not unnerve me because when I was in Opposition, I saw that as my role. Mr. Speaker, the bottom line though is that the Budget of 2017-2018, this Budget which we are discussing, is being presented to the House in a particular context. When we came to office in the year 2008 in the middle of January, it was after the Western economies led by the United States of America (USA) had gone into a global financial crisis and for the entire duration of this Government's terms in office, first term and now second term, we have had to govern within a global context which has to be defined by that fact. The International Monetary Fund's outlook for the year 2017 screams the language that the Western economies have been coming back to normal but far too slowly and they have continued to be zigzags in the way back to some kind of normalcy in the Western economy.

Economies like Barbados and the economies in the CARICOM area have never been central to anything going on in the global economy. Barbados has continued to be a commercial capitalist society basically on the periphery of the world economy. That was true when Errol Barrow

delivered his first Budget in this House in 1962 and it is true 55 years later that we are caught up in the world economy, we are affected by external trade and the movement of external goods and services therefore we have to analyse and evaluate what we do within that context. I do not believe that shouting at problems or just describing them is another way of analysing them. I believe and I have always believed in the politics of explanation and what happens in Barbados given the structure of the economy we have created for ourselves is invariably affected by what is happening in other parts of the world.

Our economy used to be led by sugar. In the year 1946, for example, sugar was earning all the foreign exchange we earned and we needed most of it and was leading the economy. It controlled most of the employment that we depending on and so on. By 1980 all of that had changed and sugar found itself on par with tourism and on par with manufacturing, basically, although tourism was earning most of the foreign exchange and, of course, manufacturing was contributing about 10 per cent or just over 10 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product. Today manufacturing has declined, agriculture, including sugar has declined and the economy is now being substantially led by tourism and international business and financial services, but whether led by tourism and international business and financial services or otherwise, it is by those two we are led, we depend on what happen in other parts of the world. As a result of that, because we have cultivated certain taste as a people over the last 50 years of our independence we have had to skew to direct our economic activity in a particular way. We have had to try to earn as much foreign exchange as possible to support the imports which we need for the continued development and upkeep of Barbados.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. George North this morning trying to deliver a lecture on John Maynard Keynes. It was a little undigested Keynesianism. Keynes was in the 1930s and when Keynes wrote the decolonisation process had not yet started so countries like Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and so on did not figure in Keynes' calculations. He was a post-World War I economist trying to evaluate the Great Depression and dealing only with economies like Britain, the United States of America (USA) and so on. He could not have had in his contemplation economies like Barbados because the decolonisation process did not even start yet but I understand what the Honourable Member was trying to say and, of course, in dealing with the economy of the United States of America (USA) or the United Kingdom Keynes could have afforded to talk about Government intervention and significant expenditure and so on because both the United Kingdom and the United States of America (USA) are countries that have hard currencies. They do not have to depend on the conversion of their currencies to any other currency to do international trade. We, though, every time

we pump money into the economy, we have to calculate that money would be converted in to US dollars and will support imports and the creation of jobs elsewhere but I understand the point the Honourable Member was trying to get. Our GDP significant depends on consumption and the Honourable Member, I believe, was trying to say that we should try to stimulate as much consumption as possible. I understand that.

The question though, Mr. Speaker, that this country has to ask in the year 2017 is this. As I said, I understand opposition politics very well, I know when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was temporarily removed from where that Honourable Member is sitting now and was seated where the Honourable Member for St. Michael East is seated now, one not one occasion or two but on quite a few occasions, speaking in a manner that was clearly not intended to reinforce anything that the person who had ousted her was saying, she was telling the House that the problem we have to resolve in Barbados is that we are running a Government which we cannot afford. That was not said once, or twice, or three times, it was said on many occasions seated further down on the Front Bench of the Opposition and the Honourable Member is right. That is the big irony. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East when she was saying it, she was right. We have, for some time, over the last 50 years been cultivating a kind of Government that we really cannot afford. We have established and entitlement superstructure which can no longer comfortably be supported or maintained by the financial infrastructure which we have in Barbados. That is a reality and that is which the dialogue has to be about. I do not get into all of the infertile cross talk and the trying to score a point here and score a point there. I heard the Honourable Member say it on many occasions, she just said it from her seat and it is still true and she is still right, but I agree with that, that is how it is and that is the discussion we have to have in Barbados.

We have this post-independence, well it started pre-independence, entitlement superstructure in Barbados and for a while we were able to maintain it, it served us very well, it helped us to create the kind of middle class we have needed to push Barbados forward, it has education, human resource development and health at its centre although in the area of health, if I am to be guided by what our chronic non-communicable diseases (CNCDS) are, Sir Trevor Hassell said to me recently in a consultation we had, that is an issue which we are going to have to confront and confront very squarely. I spoke about it at the United Nations and I spoke about wherever I have gone that it cannot be sustainable for Barbados going forward over the next 50 years of independence if whenever you see 10 Barbadians in any group, seven of them are suffering from some chronic non-communicable disease. That is a threat to the very development of Barbados but these are the questions which we are going to have to answer and that is

what the national debate is going to have to be about. The fact that we have this entitlement superstructure and the fact that the financial infrastructure has narrowed and is now having profound difficulties supporting that superstructure is what the politics of Barbados going forward over the next 50 years has to be about. There is no side-stepping that or no circumventing it. We can score all of the points we want or we can postpone the discussion if we want to but it is a fact which we have to confront.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at Government's revenue, for example, over the last 10 years, you would see that it has basically plateaued over those years. There is a culture in the society that people are overtaxed so people do not want to be taxed anymore. I hear about the fallen angel. Only last night I was rereading a clipping I kept from 2007 that was written by a very esteemed and respected columnist in one of our dailies in 2007. We are not supposed to use newspapers in the House so I will just have to paraphrase it but it exists. This esteemed columnist in 2007 wrote a column entitled very attractively "Virgin or Harlot" and he discussed the Barbados that he was living in at that time and went through the 1990s when the Democratic Labour Party was in office and when Erskine Sandiford was Prime Minister and when we went through all of the difficulties coming out of the global recession of the early 1990s, it was not just a local recession, and he said that he could live in that kind of Barbados although he knows things were very, very rough. He went on to say but there is a new Barbados now, which he tied to the Government of the day, in which he is beginning to feel like a stranger because the development of the country and the earning of its foreign exchange is now being made to depend on the selling of Barbados' land. He said that if under Erskine Sandiford Barbados was a virgin, under the Administration in 2007 Barbados had become a harlot. The column is entitled "Virgin or Harlot". We go through these peaks and troughs. That was after the property transfer tax of 10 per cent chargeable to foreigners on every purchase of land was abolished to make it easier for foreigners to own land in Barbados for purposes of attracting foreign exchange and foreign investment to Barbados. The Property Transfer Tax Act, which required persons who were foreigners and wanting to buy land in Barbados to pay not only the purchase price but an additional 10 per cent, was amended, and the foreigner trying to buy land in Barbados could buy it more easily and the explanation given was that it was supposed to attract the earning of foreign exchange.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: On a point of order. The Right Honourable Prime Minister is misleading the House. The reason that was done was to bring Barbados in conformity with the World Trade Organisation...

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order. Honourable Member, please take your seat. You could come in and make that explanation later on.

Hon. F. J. STUART: This is not intended to be an argument, it was a fact. The Honourable Prime Minister has said so as well. I do not get into infertile cross talk, let us talk to the country because we are at a critical moment in the country's history.

Mr. Speaker, a number of issues therefore have surfaced in Barbados over the last few years. A critical issue, appropriately belaboured by the Opposition, is the issue of Barbados' fiscal deficit. We are spending more than we are earning, that is a fact. Deficit budgeting is not a crime, it was introduced in this country by the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow when he was Premier first and then Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and then Prime Minister. His argument was that if you did not do it that way the acceleration of national development could not take place, but the caveat that was always entered was that the deficit had to be a manageable deficit, you should not spend so much more than you earn that you distort the national finances and so on. He also argued that you should always aim for a surplus on your fiscal accounts. That has not been happening but the context within which we are operating and have had to operate ever since 2008 and from the last quarter of 2007 and on is that we have had to run larger than usual fiscal deficits because we have had to run larger than usual fiscal deficits because as a small highly personalised and thickly integrated nation we have been trying our best to keep as many people as possible being employed. Mr. Speaker, in 2000 Sir Courtney Blackman wrote a report for the then Government of Barbados, that report advised the then Government of Barbados that if you are paying thirty-six cents out of every dollar you were spending on wages and salaries that that was unsustainable. Out of total Government expenditure Sir Courtney said the Government of Barbados in the year 2000 was spending thirty-six cents out of every dollar, 36 per cent. Mr. Speaker, he said that we were riding on the longest period of American post-war prosperity, in fact, he said the longest period of American continued prosperity in history and that whenever that changed that we were going to be forced into a recession and that we were going to have to retrench people in large numbers in the public service. Sir Courtney thought that between 2000 and 2010 that Government should reduce the size of the public service by 10 000 public officers.

Mr. Speaker, he was not advocating and he made it very clear in the report that he was not trying to say that you should just send home people like that, that by attrition and other arrangements can be done, but he felt that the central public service should be reduced by 10 000 public officers if you are going to deal with that thirty-six cents out of every dollar of Government expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, that did not happen, far from that happening the public service was further enlarged. Mr. Speaker, up to recently I believe that one of the daily newspapers did an article on that report and so we find ourselves in a situation where we continue to spend more than we earn and in the context of the fact that it is not only a question of spending more than we earn but that we have had to deal with a reduction in what we have been earning. This country has depended for many years on the contribution on the International Business and Financial Services Sector in the area of corporate tax revenue for substantial revenues. On my last advice, for example, in 2008, if I may start there, we were earning as a country, according to the information shared with me by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, \$447 million in corporate taxes. In 2016-2017 that figure was down to \$234 million, but that has happened over a five-year period so that we have lost corporate tax revenue, as the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados in a presentation to the Social Partnership said, about \$1 billion in corporate tax revenue over the last five years, so our expenditure obligations have not changed, we are still committed to those expenditure obligations but the amount of money at our disposal to discharge those obligations in a \$9 billion economy suffered a tax hit over the last five years of \$1 billion or a hit of about \$200 million ever year and of course it had foreign exchange implications as well.

Mr. Speaker, the question is where are we today? I am indebted to the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs for spending the time he has on the structure of our expenditure because you hear, O, Government should cut expenditure and there is nothing wrong with that request, Government should either cut expenditure or raise revenue if you want to deal with a deficit, but if you decide that expenditure cuts are where you want to go and you look at where some of our most critical expenditures take place, what do you find?

Mr. Speaker, when the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was a part of the central civil service it was thought that it could be more efficiently managed and taken care of if it were given a chance to manage itself. It was therefore converted to a Board, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board was established around the year 2004 and I well-recall the then Right Honourable Prime Minister making it clear, he accompanied I believe by the then Minister of Health. I speak subject to correction but I think the then Honourable Member for St. James South was Minister of Health. The Right Honourable Prime Minister made it clear that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was going to be run by a Board and that transfers to the hospital would be capped at \$115 million per year, not another cent, however else that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital wanted to get money it should go and get it, for example, user fees or whatever else, but transfers to the hospital were to be capped at \$115 million.

Mr. Speaker, the record so shows that in the financial year 2004-2005 \$115 million were transferred to the hospital. Mr. Speaker, do you know something? By financial year 2007-2008, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was getting \$138 471 024. Mr. Speaker, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was capped at \$115 million in 2004 but by 2007-2008 the hospital received up to \$138 million. Sir, that is not a criticism because we can only talk about healthcare and about controlling healthcare spending if only rich people used to get sick, but poor people get sick too and they need the kind of service and assistance rendered by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, so I am not critical of any Government that transfers money to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because poor people in Barbados get sick as well and at the centre of our development has to be the health of our people, along with the education of our people. In fiscal 2012-2013, if this Honourable House thinks that \$138 million in 2007-2008 was bad, the transfer to the Hospital was \$212.5 million. Now in fiscal 2015-2016, we have managed to get it back down to \$161 million. When you are talking about cutting transfers, and you are talking about the QEH, that is the reality you are dealing with. Now, and I want to applaud the Honourable Minister of Health, we may well have to begin to talk about the hospital earning more for itself. The truth is this story: Given the fact that our expenditure super-structure has remained unchanged and is in fact growing whenever it changes, but our financial infrastructure is contracting, if we are to support these entitlements, some serious decisions have to be made. That is why I do not run from this debate. I have been following Barbadian politics for I do not know how long, but it is the first time in my lifetime that the country seems ready for a serious discussion on the way forward in Barbados. That is why I spent a whole year with the country talking about the first 50 years of Independence, so that everybody understood what we did and why we did it. The next 50 years are going to be a completely different story; but if you did not understand the foundations, you would not be able to understand what is to come after.

The story I told about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital could equally be told about the Sanitation Service Authority. In the 2000-2001 Estimates, transfers to the Sanitation Service Authority were \$23 million. In the year 2015-2016 transfers to the Sanitation Service Authority were \$56 million. In the case of the Barbados Tourism Authority (BTA), which has been restructured and is now composed of the Barbados Tourism Marketing Incorporated and the Barbados Tourism Product Authority, transfers in that area have been consistent, and even though we have restructured the BTA, that has not resulted in any enlarged expenditure, but the expenditures have continued. In the case of the University of the West Indies (UWI), transfers in 2001 were just \$60 million. By 2013-2014, actual transfers were \$139 million. In one year, I believe it was 2009, the commitment of the Government had to be

around \$197 million. From \$60 million in 2001 to the figures I just gave, that is a huge jump, and that makes for a national discussion to take place. We could look at any other State-owned enterprise, as we call them, and we see that pattern. We are in a situation where, even though our revenues have contracted, our expenditures have either grown or our expenditures have remained at a fairly high level. How do we deal with this? Something as structural as the asymmetry between when we spend and what we earn has to be what the national discussion is going to be about in Barbados. Of course, as a result of the fiscal deficit, Government has had to borrow, and that is what the discussion in the House has been about; and appropriately so. It is a discussion that takes place in the Cabinet as well. We have to borrow and we spend too much of the revenue we earn on debt service, and that limits our capacity to do other things that we want to do in the economy to stimulate it. The Government has managed, thanks to the determination of the Minister of Finance, to lower the deficit. The deficit is coming down and is projected to come down even further over the next financial year. Mr. Speaker, that is the issue in relation to deficit problems in Barbados, and there is no divide on either side of the House on the issue of whether we are running a Government that we cannot afford or not. There is consensus on that; that we have to bring our revenues and our expenditure into some kind of balance again, and it is going to require either finding ways to increase our revenue or finding ways to bring down our expenditure. This is not a debate from which the Government will run, because both political parties over the years have contributed to this structural expenditure that we have here in Barbados; both political parties, both Governments over time have contributed to this. No Government could have predicted what would have happened in the last quarter of 2007, and no Government could have predicted that the Canadian Government would have passed legislation in the year 2007 that would lead Barbados to have to fight for its comparative and competitive advantage in the international business and financial services sector by effecting some tax changes that would result in our losing \$200 million in tax revenue every year. I am ready for the discussion. I am ready for the debate. I cannot be shamed in all of this, because I believe in the politics of explanation. Things do not just happen; there is always an explanation behind them, once you can explain what has happened, why it happened, and the inevitability of its happening. I have never underestimated the intelligence of ordinary people in Barbados. I could not do it, because most of my relatives fall into that category, and they are not foolish by anybody's standards. That is Point Number 1. Point Number 2 has to do with the foreign reserves. We hear how low the foreign reserves are. Barbados depends on foreign reserves because of the high level of imports upon which we depend as a nation. Even when Barbados commits itself to being more productive by stimulating the productive sectors, even the inputs that we need for that stimulation

have to be imported for the most part so we lose even when trying to show up and to stimulate our productive sectors a lot of the inputs that we need, we have to import and we of course, import the food we consume. In fact, I think it is the late Professor Gordon Lewis who used to always say that one of the axioms of Caribbean development is that we consume what we do not produce and produce what we do not consume.

The issue of foreign reserves, let it be made clear, Mr. Speaker, that Barbados has never really earned all the foreign exchange it has needed to meet its commitments as a nation from day-to-day, from week-to-week, month-to-month, year-to-year. We have had to borrow a lot of the foreign exchange we have needed, we have heard talk about borrowing for a rainy day and floating this bond and both Governments have done it. We have needed to enlarge our foreign debt in order to sustain our national development. One of the most stunning statistic for me over the years has been that when the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) left office in 1976 our foreign debt was just over \$50 million. When we came back in 1986 it has increased by 1 000 per cent because we have needed to do this to sustain the kind of development that we have wanted as a nation and both Governments have had to borrow. We have to put ourselves in a position where we borrow less and try to earn more but a side of the equation that we do not discuss when we are discussing foreign reserves -- and I noticed that this has now become an ingrained habit -- we always talk about earning foreign exchange but we never talk about saving foreign exchange because our consumption patterns have been so concretised and so crystalised that we do not want to contemplate changing our consumption patterns. I always recall the statement of the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow about Barbadians commitment to conspicuous consumption and to quote him "having champagne taste with mauby pockets." Of course, his colleague in Guyana was even more poetic and he said that we in the Caribbean have "Cadillac mentalities living in bicycle economies". That is another asymmetry which we have to deal with.

It was drawn to my attention recently by one of the local economist who shared some research with me that Barbados has the fourth highest number of cars per capita in this hemisphere. We do not produce cars here in Barbados. When I met with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Port-of-Spain, June two years ago I said to him, look, if you were to come to Bridgetown outside of the buildings you see around you, you would not be able to determine whether you are in Bridgetown or whether you are in Tokyo because of the number of Japanese cars you would see. I said that we established diplomatic relations with you since 1967 and the only fingerprints of Japan that I see in Barbados is the large number of Japanese cars of every variety. Japan has to do better than that for Barbados and he committed himself to doing something about it. Step

number 1 is that he established since then an Embassy here in Barbados with a resident Ambassador and we are intending to build on that relationship, but it is not just a question of earning foreign exchange so that we can change cars every two or three years. I have owned two cars in my life. I kept both for 13 years and the one I drive now left by my late sister, may she rest in peace is 13 years old too.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: No, no, no. My personal car, M15 was 11 years old when I changed it. These are things which, as a nation, we are going to have to look at. I am not criticising anybody's style of life or anybody's standard of living. I respect that very highly but I am saying that if we are going to commit ourselves to this quality of life, it comes at a price. If we are talking about saving foreign exchange, well let me deal with earning foreign exchange first. We have seen how over the years we have tried to earn foreign exchange and this Government has taken two steps, one in the direction of earning foreign exchange and the other in the direction of saving foreign exchange because since 1965 when the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) passed in this Parliament the International Business Companies Act, laying the foundations for an international business sector that was an idea which time had not yet come and kudos to the Barbados Labour Party (BLP), when the ideas then came they pushed it in the 1970s and it has never looked back since but we have not developed any new sectors in Barbados since then and this Government took the decision and yes, I can say to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph -- I enjoyed his speech actually -- yes, the buck stops here. We took the decision to pass a Cultural Industries Development Act and establish a Cultural Industries Development Authority. The buck stops here, yes, and that is designed to earn foreign exchange, to cash in on the talents of our people and to earn foreign exchange.

From the point of view of saving foreign exchange,...

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I do not know what all the noise is about. What is all the noise is about? Can somebody tell me what is happening, Mr. Speaker?

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: What is happening? What is the buzz?

From the point of view of saving foreign exchange, I brought and piloted in this House a New Electric Light and Power Act because Barbados is now on the trajectory of creating a renewable energy sector with clear targets in mind that will shield us, Mr. Speaker, from the slings and

arrows of an outrageous oil market as we saw around 2011/2012 when we had to spend horribly large sums of foreign exchange importing fossil fuel products. Sectors take a little time to build. We pass the International Business Companies Act in Barbados in 1965 but not until 1978/1979 did the sector really take off because sectors take time to build and the same thing is going to happen, not necessarily taking the same amount of time but the same thing is going to happen with the cultural industries and, of course, with the renewable energy sector. The late Professor Oliver Headley, may he rest in peace as well, did a lot of work in this area, and I think that his lecture, the Sir Winston Scott Memorial Lecture, which he did some years ago entitled "The Sun Will Still be Shining When All the Oil is Gone" should be compulsory reading for all of our politicians who are interested in this area.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Yes, it is a very, very important lecture "The Sun Will Still be Shining When All the Oil is Gone". Mr. Speaker, that is what the Government is committed to. We are not only committed to trying to earn foreign exchange in the offshore petroleum sector because we are not turning our back on fossil fuels, but what we want to do is to use a lot of the earnings that we get from fossil fuels not only to build the renewable energy sector but also to contribute to the nation's social and economic development in other areas. We want a judicious mixed of the two until such time as we can go even further with renewable energy production, but that is a foreign exchange saving matter, a foreign exchange saving issue and a foreign exchange saving policy instrument, so we are not only concerned with earning foreign exchange through our young people and the cultural industries but saving foreign exchange through our renewable energy sector.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of foreign exchange management, I do not think that we can continue to borrow our way out of all of this. I am not an impractical idealist or any doctrinaire dreamer in terms of foreign exchange earnings. I know that in the real world when businessmen and citizens want to buy imports and they go to a bank and they cannot get foreign exchange, it will upset them, but we also have to pay some attention to not only the foreign exchange we earn but how we spend it and on what we spend it because we cannot continue to support jobs and industries in other parts of the world while our own products here in Barbados are made to suffer from neglect.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central does a stalwart job in trying to promote the consumption of local foods and all of us must commit ourselves to this. We cannot continue to have on our supermarkets shelves ten and 15 different types of sweet biscuits, none of which we produce here, or 10 or 15 different types of detergents, none of which we produce

here. We have to begin to spend our foreign exchange prudently and make sure that we consume as much as possible of what we produce so that we can make our development a little more sustainable.

The foreign exchange has fallen in recent times. It is not the first time it has happened. In 1981, in one year, the country lost \$49.2 million in foreign exchange and a veritable crisis had developed in the country and the then Government under Tom Adams had to go to the International Monetary Fund in search of balance of payment support. I was in the Public Gallery when he made the announcement in his speech in this House here. Then in 1991, we found ourselves in a similar situation again and we had to seek International Monetary Fund balance of payment support because our foreign reserves had been down to about two weeks of cover.

That brings me, Mr. Speaker, to this whole issue of the International Monetary Fund because one of the things about Barbadian politics, and I have to confess that both sides have to plead guilty when you are dealing with all of this... We too over the years have thrown the three letters IMF at the country without explaining our relationship with the International Monetary Fund and leaving people scared. The Barbados Labour Party has done the same thing. Let me put all of this in perspective because I think that the country needs to understand this. First of all, it was the Democratic Labour Party in December 1970 that came to this House with the Resolution, the aim of which was for Barbados to become a member of the International Monetary Fund. Barbados joined the International Monetary Fund under the Democratic Labour Party. The Resolution was not supported by the then Barbados Labour Party Opposition. Mr. St. John who was the leader of the Opposition voted against it, Mr. J. M. G. Tom Adams voted against it, Mr. Bolden voted against it, Mr. Craig voted against it and one or two others voted against it. The Government got no support from the Opposition when we joined the International Monetary Fund in December 1970 when the Resolution was passed in this House. Mr. Speaker, for that very reason I want to make the point that Barbados joined the International Monetary Fund, the International Monetary Fund did not come and steal its way in into Barbados. We joined it because we thought, and the then Prime Minister explained it very, very lucidly, and we still do now, that there were benefits to accrue to Barbados from being a member of the International Monetary Fund. We had delinked from the Eastern Caribbean Currency Authority, we were going to set up our own Central Bank around 1972 and we took the decision to become a member of the International Monetary Fund.

Mr. Speaker, Mr Barrow in the speech he made in that debate made some interesting observations. I do not want to delay the House with all of this but these things will bear repetition sometimes. In the debate on December

11, 1970 here is what in part Mr. Barrow said: "Now, as long as we continue to go in for conspicuous consumption of certain goods and follow the standards enjoyed by people who are living in countries with wealthier economies such as North America we will be going in the wrong direction. We have to keep a close watch on our balance of payment position if we do not want to call somebody to rescue us from our financial difficulties. Anyway, we should not feel ashamed if we should run into balance of payments difficulties. The United States of America had balance of payments difficulties last year, and he is speaking in 1970, the United Kingdom also experienced balance of payment difficulties and for five or six years they had been under stress and strain. The Bank of International Settlement and the International Monetary Fund have saved the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In a small open economy like that of Barbados, I respectfully submit, that we have even greater need for an institution of this nature."

Mr. Speaker, that is why we joined the International Monetary Fund and "Tom" Adams understood that in 1980, Erskine Sandiford understood it in 1991, that you can run into balance of payment difficulties and if you run into those difficulties, and the imperatives say that you can best deal with them by having an International Monetary Fund programme then you do that. Barbados has not opted to do that but I want to get out of people's heads the idea that when you shout the letters I.M.F. that you are talking about some wild animal somewhere that is hiding in the bush and that if a country passes along, that this wild animal might come out of the bush. I told the International Monetary Fund that in Samoa in 2014 when we were at the Small Island Developing State conference and I was asked to say a few words at a breakfast meeting. We were discussing building developments through partnerships and they wanted to know how they could be a better partner. I made the point in the remarks that I made that unfortunately the Fund had attracted for itself an image which was out of keeping with its real mission as a genuine partner for countries that get into balance of payment difficulties from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard all of the talk in Barbados, I heard Right Honourable Member for St. Peter yesterday saying that we should go into an International Monetary Fund programme and so on. I spoke to the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry in January and said that there will be no panicky resort to the International Monetary Fund by the present Government of Barbados. if the stage is ever reached where it has to happen, as with the case of "Tom" Adams, as with the case of Erskine Sandiford, this Prime Minister will have the courage to look the country in the face and say here are what the facts are, here is what I think we have to do for the good of this country, but that is not an agenda item of the Government at this stage.

Mr. Speaker, that International Monetary Fund issue, along with another word that is thrown around as a scare tactic for people, is the word devaluation. It is not explained but is thrown around. Again I spelt out what all of this is about when I addressed the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry in January. I heard the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter yesterday talking about delinking from peg of the United States of America dollar and attaching the Barbadian dollar to a basket of currencies and so on. Let 100 flowers bloom and 100 schools of thoughts contend, but when all is said and done the analysis is going to be done by the Government and we will take the steps that are necessary for the protection of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, our peg to the United States of America dollar has served us well ever since 1975; it has made our business transactions certain, our business people have been able to rely on it, our citizens have been able to rely on it. It is true that the dollar of the United States of America has been strengthening against other currencies in recent times but that has happened before and that can change as well, so you cannot react to events as much as you should respond to events by making sure that rather than reacting, in this case the actors are in control, when you respond you are in control and you take the decisions that you consider to be in the best interest of the country. Mr. Speaker, I am not fazed by any of this, I am ready for the debate with the country. I am ready for it and we are going to get there.

Mr. Speaker, the other issue that has been thrown around, I have heard it in this Honourable House throughout this debate, the issue of the printing of money. The printing of money results from the running by Government of deficits that are unsustainably large and in Barbados in recent times we have been running unsustainably large deficits and we have had to resort to Central Bank's financing from time to time, in fact, fairly consistently in recent times. Mr. Speaker, let me say this, because as I said we like to behave as though Barbados is some place cordoned off from the rest of the world and that a lot of the things that have happened here have not happened anywhere else. Mr. Speaker, I know that in the United States of America during the crisis that the Federal Reserve was printing money to deal with the fiscal deficit of the United States of America. I know that. I know that a lot of the debt incurred by the United States of America during that period when it was having too large deficits, a lot of that debt was taken up by China and Japan even before the Federal Reserve got in and they have had to deal with that.

Mr. Speaker, I also know that Mario Draghi, I believe I was either in Brussels or Paris when it happened, when Mario Draghi said that although the European Central Bank had frowned for a while on what we call printing money but what they call "quantitative easing", the

stage had been reached where they had to do some "quantitative easing". These things are not new, they are not desirable in the context of our overall macroeconomic aspirations but sometimes they become necessary, and you only have to ask yourselves if they are not done what would be the consequences to the society. Mr. Speaker, a Central Bank does not finance Government debts because it is wicked, because Government has to pay public officer, Government has bills to pay. You should not have to rely on Central Bank financing for those purposes but I am saying that given the context in which we have been operating over the last few years in the wake of this crisis, in the wake of losing \$1 billion in corporate tax revenues, we have had revenue challenges while our expenditure has been fairly consistent and we had to do this. This is not from everlasting to everlasting, it is not designed to be from everlasting to everlasting, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, the Government, all of us have been trying to reduce that fiscal deficit so that we can get ourselves out of that difficulty and get the public finances back to normal and the report card this year shows that we have made significant programme in that regard, so I listened to the debate, I listened to all that was said, and I know there are as many economists in Barbados today now as there are people. The legal profession has always suffered from that. You have as many lawyers as you have people, and you have as many economists as you have people. I think that the level of national receptivity for a debate of this kind is now very high. I think the very fact that we have been talking about it so much has put the country in a position where it wants to hear more, learn more, understand what the facts are, understand where we are now, how we got here, and how we get away from here, and where do we go. I think that we have to have that debate, and I am ready for it. I do not have to take private lessons from anybody on matters economic. I do my own reading and my own research, and so on. I follow what is going on in other parts of the world, and I accept the best advice that is available to me on any given day as the Prime Minister of Barbados.

The best interest of this country has always been my concern and has always been the concern of this Government, and that is going to continue to be so, but we have to have a national conversation on the fact that we have an entitlement super-structure built over the 50 years of Independence or the last 55 years, and we now have a contracted financial infrastructure. The question we have to ask as a country is: Can that financial infrastructure continue to hold up the entitlement super-structure we have and allow us as a nation to go to the next level of making Barbados the socially balanced, economically viable, environmentally sound and well-governed society that it is the aspiration of this Government that Barbados become? That is the question we have to ask. We are not interested -- and I want to make this very clear -- in reducing anybody's standard of living. We are not interested in

undermining anybody's quality of life. We just have to plot the way forward based on the facts as they appear to us today, and based on the realities as they have been unfolding over the last few years. The world in which Barbados became independent has changed. Barbados became independent during the Cold War period, when even our strategic significance in this region was important. That whole world has changed. A unipolar world in which mature industrial capitalism now reigns and in which finance capital, not linked in any way to production of anything but just the smart use of money, is the capitalism that we are dealing with today. It is not the old production-based capitalism of the early Cold War period. In the context of that new world, we have to decide what decisions we are going to make here in Barbados for the better and more sustainable development of this country. That is the debate this country has to have. It is the debate that both sides of the House have to have, because these are not questions from which anybody can hide anymore. We hid for a long time. The realities are with us, and we have to talk these issues through and come to conclusions. Mr. Speaker, I have contributed my own set of thoughts to this debate. I hear a lot of what is said by Honourable Members on the other side. I remember 2008 when the late Honourable Member for St. John was Head of Government. I remember hearing in this House that the people of Barbados cannot wait for another five years, and then I heard they could not wait for another four years, and then I heard they could not wait for another three years, then I heard they could not wait for another two years, then I heard they could not wait for another year. They waited, and when they had a chance to decide, they decided. After 2013, I heard, "The people of Barbados cannot wait for another five years." After we completed the first year and after all the People's Assemblies and calls by responsible persons in this country for the violent overthrow of the Government....

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a Point of Order.
MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: The Right Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. I know of no responsible person who has called for the overthrow of any Government in this country. I do know of a Minister calling for heads to be cracked and for people to get beaten, and I know of another Minister who called for blood to go in the streets. MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, no Point of Order. Right Honourable Member, please continue. Rt.

Hon. F.J. STUART: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East must know that there are things which she knows that I do not know, and there are things I know that she does not know. That is normal. Asides. Rt.

Hon. F.J. STUART: After the first year, the people could not wait for another four years, and there was a march. After the second year, they could not wait for another three years, and there was another march. After the third year, they could not wait for another two, and now they cannot wait for another one. The people of Barbados cannot be dragooned, coerced or hoodwinked into the kind of political -- I better steer clear of that word -- deception that comes from the Barbados Labour Party. That time is going to come. It came in every five-year period since universal adult suffrage was introduced in this country in 1950-1951, and it is going to come again, and we are going to have the debate not only amongst ourselves in here; we are going to have the debate with the people, and the people are going to decide. They are going to decide. Just take it easy. In the meanwhile, the Government has its work to do and we will continue our efforts in this regard. I felt that my obligation in this speech was to explain to the people of Barbados where we are and how we got here. What the Government has been doing in that regard I want to applaud the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West for the efforts he has made in bringing the fiscal deficit down and I want to assure the country that we continue our efforts in a very difficult global environment. The coincidence of a world in which there is financial turmoil, a world in which there is climate change and a world in which terrorism roams the coincidence of these three things all happening at the same time paints a picture of the kind of world in which we live in the year 2017. It is a turbulent world. It is a world that is trying to settle down. It is a world in transition from an old order to a new order but Barbados has to manage this process, it is managing it mercifully, our children are going to school, our people are going to work, our buses are running, our people are getting medical care at both the hospital and our polyclinics, people are sleeping comfortably in their homes at night because there is the maintenance of law and order and the society is getting on with its life.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I do not know why you are so agitated. The Honourable Member has not seen me agitated for the whole afternoon.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us have some order, please.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You is getting very agitated. You will have a chance to speak very soon and tell the Anansi stories you are accustomed to telling, take it easy.

Mr. Speaker, I give this Appropriation Bill my fullest support and as a Government we look forward to continuing to work for the people of Barbados, work on the

challenges which have been highlighted and are agreed upon on Both Sides of the House and it is my confident expectation, Mr. Speaker, that we will get these problems wrestled to the ground. In that connection I want to say thanks to the Members of the Cabinet for the commitment and the “stipulativeness” they have shown over the years in the face of very stubborn problems. I want to say thanks to the people of Barbados for their patience and their understanding and I want to assure them that their country is in good hands.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I must say that having listen to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South I am somewhat scared because I cannot believe that a Prime Minister could come in here and speak in terms of which he spoke about buses running, about people working, people paying their bills, hospital service, I cannot believe it. They came in here and introduce measure with respect to education at a time when they did not even give those measures time to sink into the average Barbadian. One would have thought that when you look at education alone and university education in the measure that they implemented taking that just as an example, Mr. Speaker, they did not even come and say well, let us set up some fund whereby those persons who could not access education would be able to get a loan to go to university and now he came in here talking about everything is alright. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member reminds me, I was left yesterday to go to a funeral in Trinidad and I must say that I was somewhat surprised at the gravity of the problem that we have here in Barbados because the people in Trinidad seem to more about the seriousness of this problem than we did. As he spoke, it reminded me of three books that I have read: “The Leader Who has No Title”, “The Leader who had No Balls” and “The leader who had no clue.”

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: If you want me to make those documents of the House, I would, but it is obvious, Mr. Speaker, ...

Asides.

Honourable Member for St. Joseph He is not even in touch with his own Cabinet because the Honourable Member for St. James South ...

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Do you see that? The Democratic Labour Party (DLP) at the moment is divided into three fractions and the Honourable Member for St. James South, is the Leader without no title.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I will not be distracted.

In the same way that he has been dismissive of the sentiments or the pronouncements of Standards & Poor’s and Moody’s, his Minister of Small Business has been dismissive of him and when I heard the Honourable Minister of Small Business spoke earlier this week I was saying maybe he has gone a little bit too far. I have not heard the Honourable Prime Minister and I am more than disappointed and it is fairly obvious that he does not know what is happening in this country as I speak. Maybe he is not aware of the people who were sent home and who is out of work. It casts us back to 1991 when I was in this House when a former Prime Minister who spoke of gloom and doom came to this House and spoke in terms as though all is well saying, oh, you only have to send home a few people in order to balance the books, but this Prime Minister comes to this House and is trying to make us believe that all is well, totally dismissive of everything and everybody else, the economists who have made their dire pronouncements about the economy of Barbados, Mr. Speaker.

My mother, a few years ago, was diagnosed with a problem. She had a perforated ulcer and the doctors, at the time, told us that she had to get an operation. If she did not get the operation she definitely would die but if she got the operation her chances were 50/50. It is fairly obvious that we are in that situation now and the Honourable Prime Minister does not even understand that the time for that debate has come and he comes in here to tell us that debate must come. What debate is he talking about? The debate is already here and he is not aware of the fact that we have gone passed the debate. I do not know if he was influenced by the Minister of Finance who was influenced by Georgie Porgie on the call-in programme on Sunday in speaking about the march and insulting the people who attended the march stating that people were paid to march. This is an insult to the Barbadians who have been the prop of this country. That is synonymous with the type of insults that came from the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs who was influenced by Georgie Porgy in that discourse. I saw people marching on Sunday that I never expected I would have seen marching. Mr. Speaker, if I have one criticism to make, it would be that the Barbados Labour Party should not have been on that call-in programme at all.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how I could have any confidence at all in the Prime Minister of this country

anymore. In times like these what builds a country up is the confidence that international investors placed in the country. Anybody listening to the Prime Minister today would no longer have any confidence in this country. Any international investor listening to the Prime Minister today would not have any confidence in this country, none whatsoever, Mr. Speaker.

I really do not know what to say, Mr. Speaker, especially when you look at the Estimates themselves. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East branded them as a total failure, and it is fairly obvious that when the Prime Minister got up to speak he realised that there was not anything that he could defend. He dismissed devaluation and said that when they get to that point they will deal with it. He was very dismissive. He ignored the comments and the sentiments of the Member for St. Peter with respect to the delinking of the US dollar and with respect to the printing of money. He just glossed over it. Mr. Speaker, when you link this with the presentation of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs...

This is the first time I have been in this House since I do not know when that I have ever seen a Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs hold his hand in the air and admit failure. In this respect, Mr. Speaker, I must commend you to the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East supplemented by the comments of Honourable Members on this side, in particular the presentation from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East spoke to the difficulties that we have had in this Chamber in dealing with the Government not just with respect to matters coming before this House but with respect to the type of support that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs spoke to.

The Honourable Member for St. James South could come and talk about cooperation now but they have introduced legislation in this House where it has become difficult for the business sector to operate in an environment where they would feel that they are not being victimised, for want of a better word, with certain tax measures. The amendments to the Barbados Revenue Authority Act is a classic example. The amendments which we have asked for which they refused. They failed to cooperate with us on many matters which came before this House. One wonders whether or not there is any discussion with the Attorney-General when they bring matters before this House. It started long ago even before this term, even with respect to the appointment of a Chief Justice where they brought amendments to this House to appoint a particular person to be Chief Justice of this country. We have sought cooperation with them. When they brought matters pertaining to foreclosure suites, the Judicial Sale of Land Act, we got no cooperation. That never happened in the past but all of sudden they want cooperation from us

and from the business sector that they have blasted and at the same time they are begging the business sector to bring in the foreign exchange.

Mr. Speaker, I really cannot believe that at a time like this that a Government that is sinking, a sinking ship, could be behaving in this manner. Mr. Speaker, I will go back to the march with respect to those persons who would have attended the march and who were afraid to attend the march. The estimates that they put on it is 13 000 but it was more like 30 000 to me because it was a bigger crowd than any crowd I have seen at Kensington Oval but I would accept the 13 000 people if they say that.

Mr. Speaker, I watched a programme on television on Sunday night and what scares me is that one of the panellists on the programme who has chastised this Government left right and centre was scared into admitting that this problem is nothing to do with any fiscal deficit, this problem has a lot to do with the management of the economy. It is a political problem. We have a political problem. If you allow an individual, let us use the example of somebody who is a gambler, and they are working for a decent salary and they squandered the money on gambling week in and week out, you now have to deal with the financial problem that they have created in not paying their debts, so you are going to have to sit down with them to find out how they could manage their debt for the future without going into what has happened in the past.

Mr. Speaker, the problems that we are facing has a lot to do with bad management. This is not a situation where the Government was going along from month to month to month from 2008 to the present time trying its best and doing their utmost to make sure they make ends meet. We know what we mean when we talk about making ends meet because most of us come from households where our parents had to make sure they did not spend unwisely but this is not the case. How could a Government that is interested in good management of an economy could be introducing new measures, millions of dollars in constituency councils and introducing free bus fares at a time when we were having problems? I mean no one wanted to stop them from introducing policies that would redound to their benefit with respect to their social programme but it is something that we could not afford. How could they be involved in a Barbados water Authority building at a time when we were having serious problems with water distribution throughout Barbados and in a Sanitation Services Authority building? These are examples of bad management. These are examples of someone who is squandering their birthright, and now we are in a situation where out of a revenue of \$2.7 billion we have to service a debt of \$1.7 billion. We have an education bill of \$500 million and a health bill of \$400 million, and the health bill and education bills combines are more than what we would need to service the debt of this

country. Sir, they have contributed to this and it has completely nothing to do with any financial management. Now they are asking after ignoring us and I think that the speech by Leader of the Opposition and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East could be good reading for members of the Democratic Labour Party, after ignoring us for such a long time the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs is now coming to this Honourable House with his hands thrown up in the air.

Mr. Speaker, you would have thought that a Government who would be calling on us at this particular point in time for cooperation could be considered to be a caring Government, let us look at the areas of neglect and you only have to come to the constituency of St. Andrew as a good example where there is a total neglect there. There was a situation in 2014 where you had bad weather thus making it difficult for people to move from place to place, where that bad weather wiped out a few roads and a few houses and they did absolutely nothing in order to alleviate the problems of the people in White Hill.

Mr. Speaker, we had a situation where in 2015-2016 they came to us with the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure where certain amounts were allocated but nothing has happened. In last year's Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure nothing happened; in this year's Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure nothing happened. They are not a caring Government. Mr. Speaker, to make matters worse, land that was an acquired by this Government for the same purpose that that catastrophe created, they took that land and sold it for commercial purposes. Mr. Speaker, it was not sold to anyone like you or anybody else in here and so it begs the question.

Mr. Speaker, this is the first time in the history of this country that land was acquired for residential purposes and then was disposed of, the land at Lancaster.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. If the Honourable Member wants to criticise the Honourable Member for St. George North the Honourable Member is free to do so but the land which the Honourable Member is speaking about was acquired by the Barbados Labour Party and was turned commercial by the Barbados Labour Party in 2004 and they requested of the same gentleman the land at \$65 per square foot.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, there is no point of order found but thank you for the elucidation. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, when land acquired for any purpose by Government it must come to Parliament. In the past whenever land was acquired for one purpose and was utilised for another

purpose, that comes back to Parliament but there is no legislation with respect to that. This land was acquired for residential purposes, for persons affected by land slippage in areas like White Hill, it was acquired for persons who might have lost their homes or plots as a result of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, which was acquired at the time for people who could not afford to pay as much as \$5 per square foot for that land. This land was subdivided in 2014. It does not matter when it was subdivided but that was the benefit of the Honourable Member but Mr. Speaker, I have the conveyances for those two spots of land which I will make them documents of this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to mention this every single time I get the opportunity, until this Democratic Labour Party Government resigns. Mr. Speaker, that land was acquired for residential purposes and they changed the use of the land. Sir, this debate is not about Chefette or C.O. Williams, I will come to that but it is not about them, but the land was acquired for residential purposes. You want to have people in White Hill... that is why I was so angry just now when I heard the Right Honourable Prime Minister talking about people are living in decent houses and has refused to go to White Hill.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Andrew were ordered to be expunged from the Record by Mr. Speaker.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed at what the Honourable Member said about people in Barbados living in proper houses because the Honourable Member has not visited White Hill. Mr. Speaker, this land was acquired for them and you take the land that was acquired for poor people in Barbados and us sell it to the biggest landowner in Barbados for a profit. That is the point. If I were in C.O. Williams' position I probably as a business person making a business decision, that does not mean that Government should be complicit in that business. Sir, they made a profit while the people in White Hill still need this land, because they have not yet been resited. The people of White Hill were also promised new roads but they have not got them. They have not even organised a town hall meeting for the people in White Hill. I cannot believe that a Cabinet would sit down and would allow a transaction like that to go through. I cannot believe it, it is outrageous and one of the worse things I have ever seen in governance in this country.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at it even if all of those things were done, even if you had come back to Parliament -- I know if it had come back to Parliament that it would not be passed - but let us assume that it had passed, there are certain provisions that you would have had to make with respect to traffic management in the area. You have people in that area who are making applications to improve

their houses to an “upstairs” house and they cannot get permission but Chefette has now come and has got permission for a three-storeyed building, in an area where there will be serious traffic management problems. There was no Environmental Impact Assessment Study done. I am the Parliamentary representative yet the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development did not even have the decency to consult with me. I mean, it is one of the most ridiculous decisions. Those are the type of decisions I have to mention because that shows the type of management of this economy and supervised by this Government.

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

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: The Minister of Finance comes in here every year and he either does not say anything or he glosses over it, but CLICO is a serious problem, and he is trying to tell us now that he is putting aside \$25 million and the CLICO policyholders would get their money, and that the investors would get their money. No, we are far away from that. I think the delays now have even called into question the quantum of the amount that is needed. The only ones who have benefited from this are the people who are actually working in the companies that are being set up as the Judicial Manager, and as I said already, that money could have gone elsewhere and an entity like the National Insurance Scheme could have been the conduit to satisfy these claims. There are a lot of issues that are still to be settled. The assets are dwindling at the same time that the amounts which are owed under the Executive Flexible Premium Annuities (EFPAs) are likely to go up. He did not tell us whether or not they will be paid interest, and that is why he needs to come to this House and say a little bit more. He did not tell us what the position is with respect to the Eastern Caribbean (EC) territories, because for the EC territories I think it is about \$300 million. It is even more than what is owed to the Barbadian investors. There was a threat from the Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves of St. Vincent to bring an action against CLICO with respect to the present arrangement, because the arrangements only apply to Barbados. I think the Minister needs to explain to us. On another note. I only have a few minutes. He came in here in a hurry talking about the Barbados National Terminal Company Limited (BNTCL), and about people blocking. A Minister should not be talking about people in Barbados blocking a sale to the BNTCL. That company is owned by the Barbados National Oil Company Limited (BNOCL), which is owned by the taxpayers of this country. I know his efforts to get some foreign exchange, and I can understand that, but we need a little bit of transparency. Far from getting transparency, you cannot come in here.... I represent some of those people, the matter has been referred to the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) and the FTC is going to adjudicate on this matter, and on the direction of the Minister of Finance, without any

hearing.... I want him to deny that. If the former Minister of Finance in our time had this to deal with, he probably would have dealt with it the same way but because of the cooperation, the communication and the transparency, we would not be in this situation. You have Barbadian investors who are interested and only want a hearing, but the BNOCL has submitted information to the FTC and the FTC is going to adjudicate on the instructions of the Minister of Finance. Deny that. Get up and deny it. The FTC is going to adjudicate on the sale of these shares without a hearing and without giving these investors the opportunity. MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time has expired. Anyhow, let me hear the Point of Order.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: On a Point of Order, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He says that the BNOCL has submitted their documentation to the FTC on the instruction of the Minister of Finance. I play no role in that exercise whatsoever. I have not given anybody any instructions. I have no legal authority to give anybody any instructions. It does not fall under the Ministry of Finance, and as far as I know, it falls under the Office of the Prime Minister -- the Division of Energy -- but even then, neither the Right Honourable Prime Minister nor the Minister in the Prime Minister's Office with responsibility for Energy has any role to play in instructing BNOCL to go to any FTC. That is part of the law. If it is a merger, you have by law to submit the proposed sale agreement to the FTC for review. There is no need for any instructions from anybody, so the Honourable Member, who is a senior attorney-at-law and who I assume has read the law and knows what the position is, is really misleading the House if he in fact has said what I just heard. MR. SPEAKER: Thanks for your Elucidation. Honourable Member, I give you one minute to wrap up.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: One minute. I heard him say in this House that he is in charge of the Ministry of Finance and the buck stops with him. A Paper prepared by the Ministry of Finance has been submitted to the FTC. I have seen the Paper. I believe he is the Minister, and I do not even deal with economic matters. It is really outside of my territory; I just do not deal with it, but I have seen the Paper, and he is the Minister of Finance. I want him to get up and deny that he has seen that Paper, and I want him to tell this House whether or not those people who have expressed interest in these shares had the opportunity. Not only that; he should not come in here as Minister of Finance and accuse those investors of trying to block -- the word he used, “block” -- as if the sale was ongoing and somebody had filed an injunction in the law courts in the same way that they did.... MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, yes, your time has expired.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: On a Point of Order, Mr. Speaker. MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member. Good.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: No, no. No, on a Point of Order. MR. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: On a Point of Order, Mr. Speaker, Sir, if I can. MR. SPEAKER: Go ahead.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Right. The Honourable Member is again misleading the House of Assembly. At no point in time in any speech which I gave in this House of Assembly did I say that any proposed investors for the sale of the BNTCL tried to block. I did not say that, and the Record will show it. If the Member wants to contend, I will call for the Record of the House. MR. SPEAKER: Very well, Honourable Member. Thank you. Asides. MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I have ruled on the matter. That is the end of the matter.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, he is saying.... I mean this is a question of fact. MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have the right to call for the Record when I wish if I think it necessary.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: You do not think it necessary even though he is misleading the public of Barbados? MR. SPEAKER: No, I do not think it is necessary. Honourable Member, please take your seat.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: I will take my seat but I think it is an unfair Ruling. MR. SPEAKER: That is all right. You are entitled to it. He says that kind of thing all the time. No matter. It does not matter. You go ahead. Next. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Mr. R.St.C. TOPPIN: I know that this debate has now dragged on for some considerable time, and I propose nonetheless to make a few comments, not perhaps using all of the time to which I am entitled, but I want to begin by making two observations before I get into the substance of my presentation, really. The first one is that as it is obviously the well-established custom that no-one on the Government side speaks after the Prime Minister, except the person introducing the measure, the silence of the Minister of Agriculture speaks volumes in this debate. It is very deafening, and his silence and refusal to associate himself with these Estimates speaks volumes, Mr. Speaker. Secondly, I want to say that I have heard during the course of this debate comment by some Members -- perhaps I should say several Members on that side -- in relation to a very successful march that was held in this country last Saturday. That march seems to have aggravated and irritated and annoyed several Members on the other side. In fact, it seems to have outraged them. I wonder why a march would outrage them, but in fact a meeting was held between seven or eight Ministers and about four candidates from the last Election at the home of the Honourable Member for St. James South, and that would not similarly outrage them.

That is what I am wondering about and that meeting was held during the absence from Barbados of the Prime Minister who had first gone to Interseasonal Heads of Government Meeting and therefore after to London to meet with some confines of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) and as he was meeting with them, they were meeting among themselves to discuss his political fate. I am wondering why no one on That Side at all has expressed any outrage about that but is expression outrage about people exercising their democratic right in this country to stage a very, very successful march. Mr. Speaker, we had a march, they seemed to have been planning a coup.

Mr. Speaker, I want, therefore to begin my presentation by complimenting the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and Leader of the Opposition for a very sterling and concise contribution to this debate. It really set the tone for this debate and was a far cry from the presentation of the Honourable Minister of Finance who came over really as a belligerent wrong and strong child, who initially did not want to admit that he had taken the cookie from the jar but who was eventually forced to admit to his wrong doing because his mother just said to him, but son, I saw you take it. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, while very little from his speech is going to resonate in any positive way with Barbadians, what we can at least extract from his presentation if nothing else was an admission, even if he did not intend or realise it, an admission of the failure of his policies and the Government's policies at the macro-economic level over the course of the last seven to eight years or so. Mr. Speaker, they have simply used the wrong medicine so that we have a Government now who has exhausted its capacity to tax, they have sent home thousands of people, it has borrowed through the skies, it has refused to increased wages and salaries now for seven years for civil servants, it has printed money like it is going out of style, yet growth has been non-existent or negligible, our reserves have fallen to now below the minimum acceptable or safe level and our debt is currently out of control. We are limping along in an economy where after seven wasted years in tourism, that is the only sector that the Government seems to be heavily depending on and yes, there has been some growth in arrival numbers and certainly a record year in terms of arrivals in 2016 but less tourism spend in 2016 than for either 2007 or 2008 as far back as that time. Mr. Speaker, the ship is sinking. Captain, whoever the captain is after that meeting at the Honourable Member's house, Captain, the ship is seeking and really the Minister's presentation on Monday amounted to no more than an admission of failure and a pathetic plea for help but that plea for help comes only after the paste of the slide into the deep hole is increasing and I want to say, it is one thing to say that we on This Side should do things for the love of country, that it true, but you cannot help someone who does not want help and you cannot help someone who insults you when you offer to help. I remember very well some four years ago in this very Chamber, March 2013 in

the same Estimates debate of that year, no less a person than the same Minister of Finance, who is now asking for help, perhaps at the time gloating over his then recent electoral success and victory, he wish his acid tongue not only again rejected the offer of help that we had made, but he very insultingly told us that if we have any suggestions to make to them then we have to put those suggestions in writing and submit them to him for his consideration. He did not want help then, although he needed it then, he wants help now, or so he says. Quite frankly I do not think that they are really looking for hands to help them to pull this country out of any whole. They seem to be looking for hands to hold on to so as to pull as many people as possible into the hold, but, Mr. Speaker, on a very serious note, the fact is that this Government is not really accepting responsibility for its actions. In fact, I wonder if after the presentation of the Prime Minister, if that party really believes that there is any problem at all because we have an Estimates, not only his presentation but these Estimates that were produced and laid in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, that gave no hope or no cause to rejoice to anyone because after all the complaints and concerns that have expressed about Government expenditure in these Estimates we see that Government is proposing to, in fact, spend for the coming fiscal year, even more than it is spending for the current fiscal year although that is the cause for concern at this time. After a six-hour presentation by the Minister of Finance we still do not know how this increase expenditure level is going to be financed and what hardship that portends of Barbadians who are already reeling under the weight of this Government and its policies. How is it going to be financed, Mr. Speaker? How is it going to be managed? How is Government planning to bring things back under control? Rating agencies, Mr. Speaker, are looking on and it has to be the case that after 19 downgrades in nine years, the Government has to be recognising or at least some of them, have to be recognising the seriousness now of downgrades. We are now at junk status, Mr. Speaker. We are fourth from the bottom of 130 countries that have been rated globally in terms of their credit ratings. Barbados is 127th out of 130, fourth from the bottom in terms of our credit rating globally. Then too, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that the 1.6 per cent growth experienced by Barbados in 2016 is below, well below, far below the 3.7 per cent growth that materialised for the overall Caribbean economy in 2016, less than half the growth rate experienced by the Caribbean economy and similarly, Mr. Speaker, the growth projected for Barbados for this year, 2017 is again hovering around half of the growth rate projected for the Caribbean economy again for this year, 2017. Where is the light at the end of the tunnel that people want to be seeing? What is the Government doing about it? You would think that rescheduling or the refinancing of the debt seems to be a fair obvious first option, not that that alone will solve the problems that this Government has inflicted on us but is an obvious option at this stage but that has been put to the

Government by members inside of the Government itself, ministers over there have put that, economists and Members over here have put it, independent economists in Barbados has put it as an option but the Government continues to ignore it. Mr. Speaker, what is the game plan because with every passing day things in this country are deteriorating beyond recognition? I really do not know in which world the Prime Minister is living because in every sense, conditions in Barbados are really atrocious. If you look at the physical or the infrastructural appearance of Barbados, that is atrocious. If we look at the roads, you see the roads of Barbados, despite an on-again, off-again pothole patching programme, roads in Barbados continue to be in a deplorable state. Mr. Speaker, I want to put in a plug again for the road in Well Gap, Cave Hill because that is not a road that is a subject to or can be assisted by patching. As I said in the letter I wrote to the Minister of Transport and Works that road has to be completely re-laid so the work that has been done in Well Gap, Cave Hill is a farce and it is only a matter of time, indeed a very short time, until that road reverts to the condition it was already in before the nominal cosmetic work that was done on it. This is a major artery in and around St. Michael and there is no short cut to dealing with it.

Bridgetown is a dilapidated run down joint. A study that was commissioned by the Barbados Chambers of Commerce and done by a company called "Tourism Consultant International Inc. show us that over 80 stores in Bridgetown are actually closed down, some with actually chains on them, and that is a hell of a lot of stores to be closed in your capital and that problem is not being addressed in any meaningful way by the Government. How is the Government trying to facilitate the reestablishment and the reopening of these over 80 businesses in Bridgetown that are in fact closed?

Further, Mr. Speaker, Barbados is one of only two major urban cities in the region, the other being in Curacao, that have the designation of UNESCO World Heritage Site that the Barbados Labour Party worked so hard on and laid the foundation for Barbados to acquire and this Government is doing precious little to use that prestigious designation to make serious money for this country particularly the earning of foreign exchange coming from tourists which is something that we in this country needs very badly at this time. Bridgetown is just languishing in a deplorable condition like a place of no real significance.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only the physical infrastructure, there is also the human suffering that is taking place in this country. The Prime Minister can pay his bills so he can say that everybody can pay their bills but that is not so. There are a lot of people in Barbados who now have to decide which bills they are paying over the course of any given month, if it is the water this month or electricity, and if you pay the water this month you cannot

pay it next month, you cannot pay the school fees, you cannot send school the child or you cannot pay the bus fare. You have to juggle things in this country to make things meet now.

Mr. Speaker, what is worse, and I hate to have to say this but it is true so I will say it, there are a lot of people in this country now who cannot afford to buy anything to eat, that is a fact. You only have to move around Barbados. If you go into a drive-through to a fast food outlet or if you go into a supermarket car park or in a gas station or anywhere, people are coming up to you now like never ever before asking you to just to give them a little something so that they can buy something to eat, that is the reality, that is the state that we are in. I am not talking about parros either, these are people who are coming to you who really cannot...

There was a time in Barbados when somebody would say man I ain't got a cent and that would mean I do not have a cent on me but they got a little five cents put down somewhere like under the bed, in a plastic bag or in a bank or something, but nowadays when somebody tells you that they do not have a cent they mean literally that they do not have a single cent. A fellow came to me the other day, he had to go and get a job interview, and asked me for \$2 to go and catch the bus to go and do the job interview. People in this country do not have anything at all and it is not only the very poor.

Mr. Speaker, let me just expand a bit on that because in relation to the food point, this is not coming from my head, the Barbados Economic and Social Reports from as far as 2011 are quoted as saying that the Welfare Department continues to notice an increase in demand for food vouchers. The 2012 Report says the same thing, that the Welfare Department continues to notice an increase in the demand for food vouchers, and then they got specific and say there was a near 20 per cent increase in food vouchers disbursed in 2012 compared to 2011. In 2014, the said Report said that food continues to be the highest category of assistance in kind granted. During 2014, over 6 000 applications for food were made at the Welfare Department. The 2015 Report says the same thing: food continues to be the highest category of assistance in kind granted. During 2015 again over 6 000 new applications for food were made to the Welfare Department. That is what this country has come to now, people in Barbados cannot now afford to buy food.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: I got them, Mr. Speaker, from this Report. If the Honourable Member that calls himself a Minister of Social Care and Community Development will read his own reports then he would understand a bit better

instead of talking about blood. He is not the Minister of blood.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only the poor, the middle class of in this country is also reeling. You are getting calls now from people you would never expect to get calls from who are also asking you for help. I know of that oh too well. I have gotten calls from people who I could not possibly tell no. I really did not have it comfortably to part with but I could not say no to them, but these are people who are solid, solid middle class people who you would never ever believe would actually make a call to you for financial assistance but they are.

The middle class in this country arguably has been perhaps the hardest hit by the measures of this Government, that is a fact. We have in this country now a situation where the poor is getting poorer, the middle class is struggling to make end meets and fighting for its own survival, the unemployed are now becoming institutionalised as the working poor, the economy is in shambles and Barbados is going down the drain with just a few people benefiting from the actions of this Government at this time starting of course with the Members of the Government in this Chambers because they found it possible at this time to decide to restore their salaries to the original levels despite all that was happening in this country, so some of the few that are benefitting from the Government's action are to be found right here on the Government side in this very Chamber. Mr. Speaker, the question is: After those facts, where is this light at the end of the tunnel that people are looking for and when are we going to start to see it?

Mr. Speaker, I say quite frankly that if this Government cannot take us forward, then the time has come for this Government to step aside and allow others who will put their shoulders and brains and their competence, because that is what is lacking now in this country, competence in leadership, to take over and take this country forward. I am not restricting leadership only to the Prime Minister, I am talking about the leadership of the Democratic Labour Party Government.

Mr. Speaker, I am not saying that it is any easy task now to take over the reins of Government in this country and get solutions overnight. When I go canvassing I do not make those sorts of comments to constituents or anybody who asked me. I cannot tell anybody if the Barbados Labour Party is elected to Government today that milk and honey is going to flow tomorrow because that cannot happen now. This country is in a deep, deep hole but the quicker that you get the best team on board the quicker the turnaround is going to begin and the quicker the country is going to get out of the mess that this Government has put it in. The turnaround is not going to come if Government fails to recognise the need to stop putting the majority of its

eggs, if not all of its eggs, in one single tourism basket that is seven years behind where it is supposed to be and is grossly underperforming. As I said earlier, you had a record year in 2016 in terms of arrivals but tourism actually spend \$400 million less in 2016 than it spent in 2007 or 2008 so we are really just spinning tot in mud. Numbers are relevant. The Minister would conveniently want to tell you that they are not relevant or relevant depending on what point he wants to make or how it suits him, but the numbers are relevant. They have to play the right number games. Mr. Speaker, then too you cannot have a tourism sector where you behave in such a way in relation to projects where you do not maximise your revenues, where there is a lot of secrecy, lack of transparency, unanswered questions and the like, you cannot be dealing with your assets willy-nilly. Mr. Speaker, all those things cause financial problems for a country.

Mr. Speaker, only two weeks ago in this Honourable House we dealt at length with the behaviour of this Government at the Barbados Port Authority where we were able to show how a large number of large contracts were being dished out to one person without the tendering process. Mr. Speaker, if you do not tender you would not know if you were getting the best deal, you have not even give yourself a chance to find out if you can get a better deal, so that when you are operating like that you throw up your debt obligations and expenditure levels which causes havoc and difficulties on the economy of any country and we are talking about Barbados. Mr. Speaker, we have dealt with that but I would just wish to say that there is more to come in relation to the goings-on at the Port, do not think that what was disclosed two weeks ago is the end of the story, so stay tuned.

Mr. Speaker, also there is the 'sale' of Time-Out at St. Lawrence Gap. Mr. Speaker, we talk about the same name and the same face at the Barbados Port Authority. Mr. Speaker, Time-Out was not sold to the same name or the same face but was sold for BD\$7.3 million. Now, you have a situation where Clifton Hall Great House, a property in St. John which is inland, in the countryside of Barbados, with only six bedrooms, also it away from the action is on the market for sale and the asking price is US\$3 995 000 or say BD\$8 million. Mr. Speaker, this Government takes a 72-roomed property, an operating entity located near the sea in Christ Church and sells it for BD\$7.3 million. Sir, that is not a sale, that is a giveaway.

Mr. Speaker, I just happened to catch the eyes of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, but it is a GEM property and so Government will decide to cut off its nose to spoil its face and so would decide that it would sell an operating property located near the beach for BD\$7.3 million when the asking price for a six-bedroomed place in St. John is BD\$8 million.

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

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, what is there about these deals that we are missing? We will probably get to the bottom of that in due course.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. Time-Out-at-De-Gap is not a beachfront property. The Honourable Member described it as being on the sea. Sir, I understand that the Honourable Member may not know tourism well but it is not on the beach. Mr. Speaker, \$7.3 million is what the property was valued at and it was sold to the tenant who had a first-refusal option under their tenancy, so that everything was above ground on that sale. I am just saying that it was sold for what it was valued. Mr. Speaker, you cannot compare a Great House to a hotel, you have to look at what is relevant to the sector. Mr. Speaker, it is foolishness, Gordon Seale got the Old Amaryllis Hotel for \$7 million, that is a 100-roomed property on the sea.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your point is taken. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, you know very well that sale prices are negotiated, nobody has to sell anything to anybody for any given price because they have a first right of refusal. Does a right of refusal gives you the right to get rid of something at a giveaway price? You have to start negotiating. Mr. Speaker, that is just another case of one of the same names, same faces around the Democratic Labour Party Government again.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the Four Seasons Project. Sir, this Government went and insanely got itself involved in \$120 million in debt and with guarantees for that project that we told them not to get into. We told them that I think it was in 2011 but they still went ahead and the guarantees got call. Mr. Speaker, the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados in what was his last speech before he got fired said that Government was going to be earning \$40 million from the sale of the Four Seasons Hotel. He did not mention the other \$80 million at all. I want to know if it was that the Government feared that the former Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados was going to say something that he should not have said that caused him to be fired, because you have to explain to us how \$120 million could become \$40 million.

Mr. Speaker, mathematics was not my best subject at school, it was not, but I still passed it and I know that \$120 million does not equal BD\$40 million, it cannot in any equation at all, so I want to know what has happened to that other \$80 million. This is about the third time that I have asked this question, not in here, but I am getting no answer and so I want to know what has happened to the

other \$80 million because that is a debt that the taxpayers of Barbados now also have to pay, it is not a joke.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the Hyatt Hotel, which is where I will end, we know that the Government has decided that it is not going to consult with anybody, that it is not going to do any Environmental Impact Assessment Studies. Mr. Speaker, my comments are not to be taken in support of or being against the hotel, but the City is already grappling with a serious sewerage problem and the Government is refusing to do any Environmental Impact Assessment Studies. Can anybody give the assurance that in the context of the City already grappling with a sewerage problem that the addition of a 15-storeyed building with a large number of rooms will not compound the problem in relation to sewerage and that there would not be more sewerage floating around the streets of the City of Bridgetown? Mr. Speaker, there is no Environmental Impact Assessment Study being done, so I would want to know if in the context of there being problems already with sewerage in the City how is the additional sewerage from this project going to be handled? Mr. Speaker, more importantly I want to know about the land...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time is up, please wind up in one minute.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I just want to know about the land that was owned by Government, the Old Harbour Police Station at Bay Street which was vested in the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. Sir, the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. is 100 per cent Government owned. I have not heard, and maybe this has a simple answer, what has happened to that land. Is it now an injection of equity by Government? Has it been leased? Has it been sold to the contractors?

This contractor is the same fellow from the Port Authority. I was fascinated by the fact that you could have a private sector local contractor signing a contract with Hyatt and the Government not be present at the signing of any part of the contract, but the Government owns the land. Up to now, I have not been told that the Government has divested itself of the land; or if so, how? If it has, please let me know, because this individual seems to be very powerful. I want to know what has happened to that land, Mr. Speaker. I am indebted to you, Mr. Speaker. MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member. Asides.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker. I want to take the opportunity as I wrap up this debate -- I am not going to be too long -- to thank all Honourable Members who participated in the debate. Of course, Members of this side acquitted

themselves quite admirably in putting the Government's case in support of the Appropriation Bill and the Estimates which accompanied them. Of course, as we move to Heads, we will get more specifically into the various Ministry types that we are going to discuss, and so we will hear a lot more about those programmes; but I think generally Members acquitted themselves very well. When I started this process of speaking on the Appropriation Bill and spoke during my introduction to the Bill, I established a number of points which I think, unfortunately, our colleagues from the other side either could not come into connection with or deliberately determined they were not going to discuss. The latter I think is more the case, because it would expose in them and from them very clearly what their positions are to the public of Barbados, which they want to, hopefully, successfully conceal until after the General Election, whenever that will be called. The serious national conversation that we hoped they would have participated in initiating, they were not clearly not interested in doing that; instead, they preferred to continue with the political rally which was held at Jubilee Gardens only a few days ago. They preferred to continue to make all the political points that we have heard from time to time, of course tinged with a little comic relief. That was brought largely, as usual, from the Member for St. George South. You can at least rely on him to relieve a little bit of stress from his speeches, and then the Member for St. Andrew who also has now clearly taken up the opportunity to invoke some laughter into the Debate; if not only by the points he makes, certainly by his antics. We thank both of them, because politics sometimes can be a little stressful and you do get something to laugh at. We were given that today. The Leader of the Opposition, of course, is in campaign mode. That is not new. We know that. The Honourable Member has been in campaign mode now for two terms of office, and certainly since the last Election, and it has only intensified. I know that the Leader of the Opposition knows better and can do much better but, unfortunately, the lure of retail politics is just too strong and too dominant in the personality for the Member to ignore that call and get into serious debate. Hopefully, at some point in time before the next General Election, the Member will discipline herself enough to be able to add some value to the debates which we are having. I make those points very seriously because I laid out a number of very serious facts before this House of Assembly; very serious facts. Yes, I would have tinged it with some editorialised opinion but the facts are bare and bald for everybody in the country to see. Indeed, since Monday people have been talking, I am told -- because I do not listen to them -- on the call-in programmes saying "We now understand what the major challenges are, where Government's money is going, how it is really being spent, where the bulk of it goes." That is what they say. I did that specifically because I believe the time has come, if at no other point in time in the history of Barbados, for us to have that frank conversation with the public in a way that is

dispassionate, and that we do so by laying out the raw facts to people. Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I am not allowing myself.... You just have to pretend that the Member for St. Michael North is not here. He speaks, he says things, and they are usually not presented in any logical manner or in any manner that the average person can understand; and therefore to waste the intellectual muscle to actually try to understand what he is saying is a waste of energy. Therefore, we do not bother with it. Do not bother with it. The Honourable Member is a disturbed person. He has been disturbed from the time he had to leave the Cabinet of Barbados under cloudy circumstances. He says he had been fired. He left the Cabinet under cloudy circumstances. Each time he speaks in here, he speaks about corruption and about lack of governance and transparency. He has not told anybody why he was fired or left the Cabinet, and that has been in the Honourable Member's craw since that time. Nobody over here fired him. Nobody over here fired the Honourable Member. I do not know that anybody over there fired the Honourable Member. The Honourable Member exited the Cabinet, and he seems to believe that the rest of Barbados is responsible for the fact that he was put out of the Cabinet. I do not understand why he would want to.... Just ignore the Honourable Member. The fact of the matter is that we presented certain facts, and the Members of the Opposition have not taken the opportunity, even though they know them. Quite a few of them were Members of the Cabinet, and the ones who were not at least have heard it before. They never took an opportunity to come into any type of relationship with those facts. Yet, they said that I came in here and said I cannot get the thing done, and that I want advice from them. I never said that. What I said was that I wanted to know what the Opposition's position is on the issue of fiscal consolidation and economic management and so forth. Do not keep describing problems to me because one person with an idea is worth more than a thousand people with criticisms and opinions. That is what I said, so tell me what is your position if we going to the poles in a hurry and you want to have an election tell us, what your programme is? You know all of the problems and how to fix the problems in the Barbados economy, tell us what the solutions are that you have. If you want to bring down the deficit, tell me which areas you are going to cut. Are you are going to cut wages and salaries? Well you cannot cut those. You are going have to send home people. If that is your choice then tell us that you are going to send home people. If you are going to privatise social services in Barbados, the transportation, maybe health, probably sanitation, if you are going to privatise those things let us know.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Re-profiling, I do not know what that term means. I do not know how you does re-profile a debt. You have to tell me what you really mean.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I am not talking about any debt. You are the person talking about re-profiling debt so I would like to know what that means.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Tell me what you are going to cut, Madam Deputy Speaker. You said cut subsidies and transfers. Do we cut welfare grants to the indigent and the poor? That is not the position of this Government. If you want to cut subsidies to the Barbados Transport Board so that the elderly cannot get a little bus ride, the children cannot get a bus ride and workers cannot get to work, tell us that do not just march. You produced a whole document called the "Covenant of Confusion". Tell me what in the "Covenant of Confusion" are you specific policies? Let the public know what the policies are. We are waiting with bated breath to hear what is the Barbados Labour Party's strategy for "saving the Barbados economy"? We want to hear what it is. That is why when the lady, a Miss Undecided, asked the Honourable Leader of the Opposition on the radio, but we heard all of these problems, we know what the problems are, what is your solution? Tell me what you would do in the circumstances? The Leader of the Opposition said, "You have to trust us you know. We are a 70 year old political party." Being a 70 year old political party is not a policy. Tell us what the policy is.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: The march is your policy? Madam Deputy Speaker, did you year that? The march is their policy. Do you know that they said that there were DEMS in the march? It was true. The Honourable Member for St. James Central was there. He is a DEM. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East was in the thing and she was a DEM too originally. A lot of people do not know when she was jumping up on the truck next to Uncle Errol in 1986. Everything was Uncle Errol. She was up on the thing cheering with Uncle Errol. Let everyone know that and with Uncle Philip. A lot of people in Barbados do not know that the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East had her origins in the Democratic Labour Party (DLP). I know all of them. The Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown, my friend, yes, he was a DEM too. Come out of a good DLP family, good stock and first expressed an interest in running The City for the DEMS but we gave Toddy the nod and then Arthur, you know. I do not understand it. All of a sudden now, we cannot get anything

out of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP). The time coming up, apparently, according to them, for elections. All we are saying is tell us what specific policies you are going to implement. Tell us how you are going to cut this expenditure. Do not tell me about re-profiling any debt tell me how you are going to do it because that is only one part of the equation. Even if you re-profile debt, according to them and whatever that means, that is only one part of the equation because if you borrow from somebody and you are having challenges paying them and you to them and say I want you to take a haircut and I want you to reschedule my debt or I want you to do whatever you want to do. Not me, I am not saying it, but I am saying this. As a Government, or if you are an individual or a company, let us put it that way, you will have to demonstrate what measures you are taking to ensure that you get your house in order too. It is not a free pass so we cannot promote that as any free pass for people.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: That is your position. I am not saying it, but if that is your position then tell me what other measures you are going to take. A lot of people in Barbados are shocked since Monday because when they talk about subsidies and transfers they are talking about people's pensions, they are talking about salaries, they are talking about the University of the West Indies (UWI) that Members of the Opposition have said that they are going to restore the tuition fee. They are talk grants to the non-profit organisations like the Diabetes Foundation, the Diabetes Association and the Cancer Society. We are talking about the core of the society.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: We said that on Monday? They do not want to hear it because it is a debate. It is a debate that they do not want to engage because the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) does not want to genuinely engage the country in any constructive conversation. They want to go around to constituency to constituency seeking out persons who may have fallen through the social safety net or may be having challenges to then parade these things all over the place as though the country is falling apart and everybody is suffering. Madam Deputy Speaker, could you imagine that when Barbados' economy was at its super best this last Government, the last Administration discovered poverty in St. Michael North West. They were spending money on all kinds of things and never knew that poverty existed in Barbados but they waited until a bi-election came around, sauntered into St. Michael North West in Black Rock and declared, but we did not know that they had so many poor people living in Barbados and stood up in here and said this week they have not seen people so bad. They are people in Barbados who could not pay their

light bill, they had people that could not buy food, they were people who could not pay their rent.

Madam Deputy Speaker, are you aware that under the last Government there was a slush fund called the Poverty Alleviation Fund, the principal purpose of which was to pay light bills, water bills, child support and all kinds of things in Barbados when this country was supposedly growing at a super rate, but they now discover poverty? People are now having trouble paying light bills in Barbados when they created a whole fund and used to pay them on a monthly basis for people in an administration in which they were allocating close to \$30 million a year to the Welfare Department but apparently it is only under the Democratic Labour Party that all of a sudden poverty has reared its ugly head. The level of political hypocrisy is stifling.

I am saying that if you want to have, as we have asked, for a national conversation that any responsible Administration would enter into a national conversation. A national conversation could never be too late once the country still exists. You can have a national conversation at any time.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Too late. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph delivers these speeches, he speaks very late or last, he comes in very piously delivering this fancy speech...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Yes, I pay a lot of attention to what you say because it usually contradicts what your leader says so I listen to it very, very carefully. I listened to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North too because he has been pleading with me both on his feet and off his feet to drag me into a debate on Four Seasons Hotel. Every time he speaks, he wants to hear about Four Seasons.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: You hold on, you are going to hear about the Four Seasons Hotel in here. I know that is what you want because you want to get at the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, but I am going to protect her from you. I cannot protect her from the public but I am going to protect her from you.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: You wait. You want this Four Seasons debate bad because your time is running out.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, address the Chair please.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member's time is running out. He promised a whole lot of people including the Honourable Member for Christ Church West who unfortunately is not with us, and I wish her well wherever she is, I wish her all the very best, all kinds of things including do not worry, you do not talk, we will take care of this. Unfortunately for her she believed him. You do not talk too much, you do not speak, you leave it to us. They were her advisors and now they have all run in the opposite direction because they feel apparently that the Government is going to change and the just-in-case politicians are all running under the Leader of the Opposition. One was even heard to deliver of himself, do not touch my leader. It nearly kill the Honourable Member for St. Peter, Madam Deputy Speaker. He nearly dropped off the earth. He could not believe it. Do not touch my leader. I do not mind all of this political hypocrisy. Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is not fooled by any of it. If there is one thing I can tell you about her political skills when it comes to revenge... The Honourable Member is just waiting on them. Hell has no fury. The Honourable Member is just waiting on all of them who got out there and slaughtered her and removed her as Leader of the Opposition. She is waiting on them. She is plotting and planning for them and the time will come when she is going to get her turn in them and that is what got all of them.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: You do not worry. Your time is coming shortly. They are going to deal with you. Oh yes, this is the one for the Urban Development Commission. They are going to deal with you man, they have not forgotten you. You were at Duguid's house. I was not at Donville's but you are at Duguid's. You better leave me, good. You was in Belfield yesterday.

Asides.

Madam Deputy Speaker, do not let us get side-tracked with these things. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East saying that I should not bring Estimates to this House of Assembly, that nobody wants to hear the Government, all of the election thing. We are in an election mode. I try my best to counsel the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East but she is really beyond counselling. At least one of the senior Members over there should have pointed out to the Honourable Member that it is a legal responsibility of the Government of Barbados under the Financial Administration and Audit Act of Barbados that a Government has to bring an Estimates otherwise the hospital cannot get money, schools

cannot open, the Transport Board cannot run, the civil servants will not get pay, so you mean the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs should not bring the Estimates to the House of Assembly. I mean even if you call elections tomorrow you would still had to bring an Estimates because if the Government dissolves and there is no Estimates the country cannot run. Could you imagine that a member of the legal profession, whom I am advised did law at Cave Hill, even though it is some suggestion that she might have done the law at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, and at one of the law schools has not taken the time to read the law sufficient to know as a parliamentarian that you have to bring Estimates to the House of Assembly?

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, do not be distracted, please.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker. I had a lot of time for the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, that time has clearly ran out ever since and therefore I do not really bother. I think that if you want to be taken as a serious parliamentarian the first thing you have to do is to read the relevant legislation that governs activities in the House of Assembly, know what Estimates are, know what is the purpose of them and know what is the legal responsibility of the Government before you speak.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, it is amazing, we have a saying in Barbados that the pot should not call the kettle black. Can you imagine that the last Administration imposed increased water rates in Barbados; increased taxes for transport vehicles; imposed a secret tax that people only learned about down East Coast Road. This Administration had to come to office and validate taxes that were collected in Barbados by the last Administration. Without any legal authority taxes were imposed on fuel and moneys were sent to the National Cultural Foundation to finance Cropover, which again was another illegal act.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. I have been in this Honourable House longer than anybody else and I have never ever seen any matter coming to this Honourable House in the form of a secret tax and therefore the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House and I believe the Honourable Member should let us know what he is talking about. Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that the Honourable Member is slightly rattled now because the Honourable Member was on one level but has now moved to a different level but the Honourable Member should tell us what is a secret tax, the Honourable Member can also talk about the march.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, no point of order found. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, of course, that is no point of order. The Honourable Member wants me to go after Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. I am not doing that, you are still hurting because you were fired from his Cabinet but I keep telling you the point, it was revealed to members of the Barbadian public that the Government imposed a secret -- that is what you all called it, not me -- on fuel and that those moneys were then shepherded out of the Barbados National Oil Company into financing...

Hon. Miss

M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member, regrettably, is misleading this House, rather than focusing on the substantive issues that the Right Honourable Prime Minister has said that have brought us to a critical juncture in this country. Madam Deputy Speaker, May I for the record show how the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Ma'am, when the Barbados National Oil Company Limited chose to impose a Cess, as this Government has also chosen to impose a Cess at Barbados National Oil Company and the Barbados National Terminal Company Limited it was a decision of the Board to be able to put a Cess on the price of its product. It has nothing to do with a tax on anybody's income, a Cess on the price of fuel being sold by Barbados National Oil Company is not a tax on people's income or property publicly, so that if you want to call it euphemistically a secret tax you are wrong and whoever said so is wrong.

Now, the bottom-line therefore is that if we want to talk about a tax that is being delivered and taken without lawful authority is the National Corporate Social Responsibility Tax for which there is no legislation in this country.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you may not make a speech at this time.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, following the interruption, the point I am making is that, I have never called anything a secret tax. In fact, I did not even know anything about it, I was listening to my radio and I heard the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs say that a secret tax was placed on fuel -- I did not know if it was a Cess or whatever -- and not on anybody's income and that the money was used to finance the operations of Cropover through the National Cultural Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, there are two challenges with this, that is why the political hypocrisy I speak about of the

Barbados Labour Party, that is why Barbadians have very serious difficulties in trusting this Administration.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Madam Deputy Speaker, it might be ignorance for the Honourable Attorney-General because the Honourable Member does not know the definition of ignorance. Ma'am, the use of the words political hypocrisy is unparliamentary and I am asking that those words be withdrawn and struck from the record, unless the Honourable Member is referring to the policies of the Democratic Labour Party?

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: First of all, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have never accused anybody in here of political hypocrisy.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I have not heard your ruling on that.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please withdraw those words.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I withdraw the statement. Ma'am, not political hypocrisy, that is too strong a word, political deception is a better word. Ma'am, the political deception of the Barbados Labour Party on these points, because we heard people come in here and got up trying to give the impression that this Government was doing something illegal in relation to the Housing Credit Fund, to which I am going to speak very fully and soon enough. Ma'am, in a couple more sittings I will get to that point and we will deal with that. I will bring all the facts to this Honourable House to demonstrate that we acted on proper advice.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party Administration accused this Government of taking money out of the Housing Credit Fund to pay this body and the next body and the third body. They collected money, as so said by the former Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, secretly and took the money out of Barbados National Oil Company Limited, which is a private company, not a fund, operating under the Companies Act of Barbados, with a Board and transferred that money to the National Cultural Foundation. Madam Deputy Speaker, what would you consider that to be? Would you consider that a legal act? By what authority was that done by the last Administration? Ma'am, the Barbados Labour Party cannot come here and accuse anybody of anything when they were the chief purveyors of illegality.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: What are you talking about, did you not listen to my speech? All of those were factored into our numbers, all of those are already counted in our numbers, stop trying to mislead the Honourable House of

Assembly. I am not bringing them here unless I counted them in.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please carry on with your speech.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Do not come here with that. Similarly, do not come here and tell people about how somebody took land that was designated for one purpose, that we sold it to somebody. There are all of these wild things that are being thrown around.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. Ma'am, the only person who spoke to that was myself and it is a fact that land which was acquired for residential purposes at Lancaster was disposed to a private/commercial entity at a profit and in accordance with convention that purchase should have come back to Parliament for its approval. Madam Deputy Speaker, it is not a situation where it is land that had been acquired and it was land which was left over because the land is still there for that particular purpose, so I do not know what the Honourable Member is trying to say.

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Madam Deputy Speaker, I will tell you what I am trying to say. First of all, the Honourable Member is wrong. I am not going to argue with the Honourable Member on the law because the Honourable Member is a senior lawyer in Barbados and I trust that the Honourable Member knows better when he speaks. Ma'am, the National Housing Corporation is a statutory corporation and when Parliament vests land in a statutory corporation, as a statutory corporation it can then dispose of that land without coming back to this House of Assembly. Ma'am, that is a known fact.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: ... Madam Deputy Speaker, Fact No. 2: This said Honourable Member for St. Andrew, when he was Minister of Housing and Lands, came to this Parliament and acquired land for particular public purposes as pursued by the Government of Barbados, entered onto the land as the Crown, put sites and services into the land such as water, road and all those kinds of things, and then that land was given back, sold back. I do not know, but it was put back to the person from whom the land was taken. This is the same person, by the way, who he is in here pouring scorn on. It nearly killed a Senator from The Other Place who -- I will get the speech -- expressed total shock that it had actually happened.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: On a Point of Order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I demitted office as Minister of Housing in 1999, and while I was Minister of Housing certainly no land that was acquired was handed back to any person; so if that happened it would have had to happen after I demitted office. I do not

know what the Honourable Member is talking about at all. I mean it is nonsense. Aside.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Ma'am, the Honourable Member has a very short memory because he knows very well what I am talking about. I am not going to go down there. I am not going to go into Ms. Skeete's land and all of that. I am not interested in that. You are immaterial to this Parliament and to politics in Barbados.

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: On a Point of Order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member, by mentioning Ms. Skeete, is probably referring to land which was acquired at Lancaster for recreational purposes, and the original acquisition was done even before I was Minister, so I do not know what he is talking about. He might be referring to the fact that I might have been president of the cricket club at the particular point in time, but I had absolutely nothing to do with the acquisition.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you for that Clarification.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: I am not troubling the Member, though, because I actually like the Member for St. Andrew so I am not bothering to trouble him. Let us get away from there. Let me say, in bringing this to a close -- because I do not want to drag this on any longer -- that we have presented Estimates here which we believe give us a platform to do the things that we need to do, have the conversations we need to have with the public about the serious issues, to bring everything into focus, to work our deficit down even further, and to bring finally some level of sustained discipline to the public finances of Barbados. I think that now we will separate, as they say in Barbadian parlance, the sheep from the goats. This is not the end. We are going to continue to put this case to the public of Barbados, and we are asking -- not begging -- we are saying to Members of the Opposition, "It is time for you to speak up or shut up. Let the public know what your position is on these critical issues, because the Democratic Labour Party is going to be allowing the public to know what our position is on those issues."

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: On a Point of Order. This notion of alternative facts has taken hold of the Minister of Finance's mind and actions. In this very debate, in this very Second Reading speech, I placed on record the Barbados Labour Party's approach to cutting Government's expenditure, which is the only thing Government has control over. It is a plan which the Member for St. Philip West, who has not spoken in this debate and has singularly stood out by not speaking in this debate, put before this very Cabinet. Now if we want to stop the "gallerying", then we will know that the Barbados Labour Party has said, "Let us re-profile \$1.7 billion of our debt." If we can do that,

that is four times what we spend on social protection, twice what we spend on education and social protection. That is how we will get out of this hole. Instead, we are hearing a lot of “gallerying” and back-and-forth. Let us go outside and have a gallery if you want, but not inside here. There are too many people suffering.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of Order taken. Asides.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Oh dear, oh dear. Madam Deputy Speaker, a few fine words from myself have caused this disruption in the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition is going to burst a blood vessel shouting and barking across the Chamber. Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. A party divided among itself with no plan to rescue Barbados, with a terminology picked up from somebody called re-profiling. Nobody knows what re-profiling is. I know what profiling is in the United States; they profile black people. Are you asking us to profile somebody? Take it easy. This Government is going to continue to present a concerted plan.

Madam Deputy Speaker.... Asides.

MADAM DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, stop being disruptive. Permit the Member to make his presentation.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: The fact that the Member for St. Philip West has not spoken seems to be hurting you more than it hurt anybody else. If you want to go in at the house of the Member for St. Philip West, please ask for an invitation. I do not understand. Every time she jumps up. You speak about the Member for St. Philip West more than you talk about anybody else over there. I do not hear you talking about the Member for St. James Central. I know you want to get back at him, but I will protect him from you. Asides Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: We will present the facts to the public and have a mature conversation with them. It is clear the Opposition does not intend to have any conversation with the public other than to bully and harass them into an Election. When the time is right, we will join you in that Election and we will fight you every step of the way. I know you all have some Nigerian troops lined up, but do not worry. We will be fighting only with Barbadians. Only the people of Barbados; not the Boko Haram. No. Time, time is coming when all will be revealed in Barbados, and the public will see the depths to which the Barbados Labour Party has fallen in order to win an Election. Soon enough, dear Lord. Madam Deputy Speaker, with those few words, I wish to beg that this Bill be read a second time. The question that the Bill be read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let us have some order as we wait. The Honourable Attorney General, let us have some order. Honourable Members, let us have some order please. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew let us have some order please. The Honourable Member for St. Philip South, let us have some order.

The House divided as follows:

Ayes: Hon. F. J. STUART; Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE; Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE; Hon. R. D. JONES; Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK; Hon. M. A. LASHLEY; Hon. R. L. SEALY; Hon. S. D. BLACKETT; Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE; Hon. D. O’N. INNIS; Hon. C. P. SINCKLER; Hon. S. A. LASHLEY; Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN; Mr. J. D. PAUL; and Her Hon. Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON (15).

Noes: Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY; Miss. S. J. O. BRADSHAW; Mr. G. W. PAYNE; Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN; Mr. G. A. CLARKE; Mr. D. D. MARSHALL; Miss C. Y. FORDE; Mr. T. A. PRESCOD; Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS; Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC; Mr. E. G. HINKSON; and Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND (12).

The Bill was passed.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES (RECOMMITTED)

Mr. SPEAKER: We shall now revert to Government Notices.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I want to give notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$19 737 478 for the Consolidated Fund and to place at the disposal of the Government to Supplement the Estimates 2016/2017 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates number 12 2016/2017 which form the Schedule of the Resolution.

I also want to give notice of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$50 359 504 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 number 13 2016/2017 which forms the Schedule to the Resolution.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (RESUMED)

Further consideration of Government Business was postponed.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, with that we have come to the end of Government Business for the day and I beg to move that the Sitting do now suspend until tomorrow Thursday, 16th March, 2017 at 2:00 o’clock in the afternoon.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until Thursday, 16th March, 2017 at 2 o'clock a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

Q1. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Opening. The source opens without the convening sentence (Pursuant to the adjournment ... met at ...). The date is taken from the heading of the source.

Q3. Order No. 20, Hon. D. O’N. Inniss’s speech. After a short ruling headed ‘Mr. SPEAKER’ (‘Honourable Member, you cannot get on like that...’), about 950 words continuing Mr. Inniss’s speech follow with no speech heading of their own, so they print under the Speaker. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 20, before the luncheon suspension. The heading ‘SUSPENSION’ and Hon. J. D. E. Boyce’s motion to suspend for lunch until 2.30 p.m. are run into the last paragraph of Mr. K. D. Symmonds’s speech, and the question and the word ‘RESUMPTION’ into the seconder’s paragraph. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 20, Mr. G. W. Payne’s speech. In the exchanges between Mr. Payne and the Minister of Finance near the end of Mr. Payne’s speech, the Speaker’s rulings (‘MR. SPEAKER: ...’) are run into the Members’ paragraphs rather than given their own headings. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Order No. 20, second reading and division. The source records ‘The question that the Bill be read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division’, and then ‘The House divided as follows’ (Ayes 15, Noes 12) and ‘The Bill was passed’, without saying what question the division was on. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Suspension. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce moves to suspend until Thursday, 16th March, 2017 ‘at 2:00 o’clock in the afternoon’, but the question is recorded as suspending the Sitting until ‘2 o’clock a.m.’. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Order No. 20, Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance’s name is spelt both ‘SINCKLER’ and ‘SINKLER’ in speech headings. Printed as in the source.

The House of Assembly resumed on Wednesday, 15th March, 2017, with Mr. Speaker in the Chair, to continue the debate on Order No. 20, the Appropriation Bill, 2017 and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, 2017-2018. Hon. M. A. Lashley, Member for St. Philip North, who has responsibility for Public Works, said the last buses for public transport were bought in 2006 and described a Cabinet programme to mill and pave roads. Mr. G. A. Clarke, Member for St. George North, said Barbados had lost its good credit ratings and investment grades and coined the term ‘Kelmanomics’; he drew points of order from Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce and Hon. S. D. Blackett, none of which were upheld.

Hon. D. O’N. Inniss, Member for St. James South, gave domestic interest for 2016-2017 as \$561 million and external interest as \$176 million, said the State was paying about \$2 680 per person in debt financing, and said that debt re-profiling was an option the national population had to be engaged on. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, Member for St. Michael South East, spoke as the youngest parliamentarian of an intellectual tension in Barbados. Hon. R. D. Jones, Member for Christ Church East Central, supported the Bill. Mr. K. D. Symmonds, Member for St. James Central, referred the House to section 48 of the Central Bank Act and the Central Bank’s December 2016 report on the Government’s reliance on Central Bank financing; Mr. J. D. Paul raised two points of order. The Sitting was then suspended for lunch until 2.30 p.m.

After lunch Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe, Member for Christ Church East, said the Minister of Finance had found \$3 million for the Sanitation Service Authority. Mr. D. D. Marshall, Member for St. Joseph, criticised VAT on non-prescription medication and said that, contrary to a legal opinion of the Solicitor General, the Government had unlawfully taken \$27 million from the Housing Credit Fund as a dividend to pay a contractor; certain of his remarks were ordered expunged from the record by Mr. Speaker.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart, Member for St. Michael South, described the Estimates as the Government's budget and referred to the lecture 'The Sun Will Still be Shining When All the Oil is Gone'; Mr. E. G. Hinkson's point of order on a measure taken to conform with the World Trade Organisation was not upheld. Mr. G. W. Payne, Member for St. Andrew, questioned the use of acquired land for other purposes without reference to Parliament. Mr. R. St.C. Toppin, Member for St. Michael North, cited the Barbados Economic and Social Reports from 2011 on rising demand for food vouchers and questioned the vesting of the Old Harbour Police Station land at Bay Street in the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc..

The Minister of Finance, Hon. C. P. Sinckler, Member for St. Michael North West, replied under Madam

Deputy Speaker, challenging the Opposition to say what it would cut and what 're-profiling' meant. His speech drew points of order from Mr. Payne and the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, and he withdrew the words 'political hypocrisy' on the Deputy Speaker's direction. He then moved the second reading. The House divided with 15 Ayes and 12 Noes, and the Bill was passed.

Reverting to Government Notices, Mr. Boyce gave notice of Resolutions granting \$19 737 478 and \$50 359 504 under Supplementary Estimates Nos. 12 and 13 of 2016/2017. Further Government Business was postponed and the Sitting was suspended until Thursday, 16th March, 2017.