
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, March 16, 2017

House D 7D Seq 1 2.09 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Good afternoon, Honourable Members. This Sitting is resumed. Honourable Members, when the Suspension was taken yesterday we were on Order No. 20 of Government Business, but we want to revert to Papers.

PAPERS

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Excise Tax Amendment Regulations 2017 and the Needham Point Holdings Limited Annual Report for 31st March, 2014.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (CONT'D)

ORDER No. 20

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

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee of Supply.

HEAD 77

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

\$283 564 862

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, as we begin the consideration of Head 77, let me at the outset give thanks to all of those persons in the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation who would have given of their time and effort over the past year to the realisation of the goals and objectives of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation in meeting the needs of a vast student population, relatively speaking but that is in relation to their various talents and abilities. I believe that we have been relatively successful in satisfying our mandate.

As you know, at the bedrock of great societies stand also education because it is my belief that without a nation being adequately and properly educated that we cannot meet the full development needs of that country. Barbados stands tall among nations of the world going back a long time and covering many changes and in those changes have been imbedded successes, therefore, as a country we should stand proud, notwithstanding the challenges that we would meet over time including challenges of behaviour, discipline, lack of parental support by some parents and industrial relations issues. Many of those issues can sometimes act to impede the adequate delivery of education but we have ventured forward over the years and last financial year we ventured forward thus with some successes and this year with the resources being provided in our Estimates for the children, teachers and those who work with the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation we will meet, hopefully, all of those objectives that we have outlined. I do not think that we are dissatisfied with the allocation. Yes, always we would like a little more, every ministry would like a little more but we

try to work with what we have and we try to respond to the delicate nature of the economic circumstances of the country at this time. We have not had to cut anything in education by and large. We have cut the cloth to suit our size and we have tried to ensure that we are not bloated in anyway.

As has been stated under the non-statutory appropriation, \$283 564 862 have been put to our disposal but this is part of a wider sum of \$486 523 856 that the Ministry of Education has to administer across all those areas which fall under the Ministry of Education. You are dealing with issues of teacher training, which is Erdiston Teachers' College, basic educational development which is nursery and primary education, secondary schools where because of their Boards of Management, the transfer of funds, tertiary education, University of the West Indies, Barbados Community College, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Hospitality Division of the Barbados Community College and those areas which fall under special services such as the School Meals Department, the Media Resource Department, et cetera. In other words, Mr. Chairman, all of the areas have been covered this year.

I am going to just draw your attention to what can be considered, what we call the revised Estimates for 2016/2017 as we conclude that year which stood at \$478 902 785 and this year \$486 523 856 and we will get into explanation on all of these. I intend to approach this matter quite systematically over the next few hours and listen to the interventions of those who are making contributions on this. I wish to start, Sir, with basic education development in starting at nursery and primary education but more particularly are nursery education.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation long recognised under its various name changes education, of course, being the major part of that name and that has not changed, that over several decades, nursery education has been pivotal to the realisation of meeting the needs of what can be considered a vulnerable age cohort. Those persons between the ages of 3 to 7 with 3 to 4 year olds being educated in what we call, either nursery classrooms in primary schools or fully dedicated nursery schools.

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We have to date several nursery schools but among the most recent, in other words in the last eight years, we would have had the Maria Holder Nursery School at Sharon, St. Thomas, the Thelma Berry Nursery School at St. David's, Christ Church and the Olga Millar Nursery School at Six Roads. The two more recent acquisitions would be the Maria Holder Nursery School at Gall Hill and the Maria Holder Nursery School at Oldbury. I believe that

some Members on this side and maybe on that side would have toured and would have seen not only the quality of the infrastructure and the pedagogy within those two particular schools but right across the schools that I would have mentioned.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Pedagogy just simply means the teaching and learning environment that exists within those schools.

We have to express thanks to the Maria Holder Memorial Trust because since 2008 they have come on board, particularly with nursery education, and have made a commitment to build some six nursery schools not counting the Maria Holder Nursery School. Those six would be in addition to that first roll out at Sharon in St. Thomas.

Mr. Chairman, coming in the financial year 2017/2018, we should have another two or three of those nursery schools being started. We have signed off the donation letters to the effect that the nursery school at Government Hill would be reconstructed on a new site and we will be able to allocate the existing plant to the Charles F. Broomes School to be used by them. We would also have a nursery school in the constituency of St. James South which should commence this year as well to be followed by a nursery school at Deacons Farm and one at Sayers court. These would give us hopefully, once there is no rapid acceleration in the birth rate, even though I have advocated that in another place and in this place as well, the kind of space which would accommodate our nursery age cohort in this country, of course, working along with those in the private sector because we recognise that those in the private sector also have a contribution to make at the level of early childhood care and education. Mr. Chairman, to date, I cannot say the amounts of money that have been spent on this area. Suffice to say that when you look at the quality of the infrastructure you know that the investment is quite significant.

Sir, added to this, we have been training early childhood educators through the cooperation again of the Maria Holder Trust in conjunction with Wheelock College and with the cooperation and support of Erdiston Teachers' Training College and our Higher Education Development Unit. We are now in the third cohort of that training. I believe we have trained some 60 or so persons to date with an additional 30 being trained. Some of the first cohort in what I will call training group number 1 are studying for their Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education. They must be complimented for what I call the commitment to lifelong learning and the commitment to ensure that they remain fresh and constant in the acquisition of knowledge to impact on this very tender and vulnerable age group.

Why is it important to concentrate on this early age group? In the past, and I am talking about the past even up to now, these 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds many of whom could not afford to go to privately led early childhood education were left out in the cold and as usual the public sector stepped up to the plate, that we must have equity, fairness and justice within our society and within this social democracy that we have, that no citizen, even young citizens, should be left out of what this great country has to offer, and therefore our concentration on early childhood care and education.

At Erdiston Teachers' Training College you would find, even though I will deal with Erdiston Teachers' Training College more in-depth as we get to tertiary education and teacher training, that there are two courses, I believe those courses would be merged in the next academic year, a course within the general interest programme level 1 and level 2 of early childhood care and education and a course in the evenings for teachers in the schools, one general interest for those in the community of teachers if they want and one specifically dedicated to teachers essentially teaching the same thing at the various levels, so the possibility exists that they would be merged in relation to capturing the numbers and streamlining the resources allocated to the teaching of early childhood care and education.

I wish to compliment and commend all of those teachers of our three, four and five-year-olds who have dedicated their time. It is a joy, Mr. Chairman, to go into one of those schools and see how the intellect of those young students revolves, how they excite you and the level of their enthusiasm and therefore sometimes then you start to wonder ten years or seven years down the road what became of that excitement, that enthusiasm for learning and that joy of learning or for learning. Mr. Chairman, that is something, of course, to be investigated but it is an important area that we will continue to focus resources, attention and training and deliberately construct new ideas, new vantage points and new viewpoints to ensure this foundation of our education system continues unabated.

Mr. Chairman, I want to move on to primary education. We know that there are challenges in this area. I just want colleagues to note, notwithstanding the challenges, that there are some amazing strengths in primary education in Barbados. Between the nursery and primary schools I believe that we have between 71 and 74 of those schools in Barbados. There have been complaints that there has been a drift from the rural sector of Barbados into schools in Christ Church and St. Michael, particularly St. Michael, and as a result of that drift you will have some challenges in relation to what you call the output of some of the rural schools. Of course, that comment comes from persons who do not understand the dynamics of our education. One of the schools that continues to shine in Barbados is a rural school. That school is ...

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Hon. R.D. JONES: ... They continue to be so equipped. Recently through the kind gesture of the People's Republic of China, we were able to secure some BDS\$10 million to this effort. You will find, only over last week, all of our schools, including some within the private sector and tertiary level institutions, were retooled. We will continue to be retooled hopefully through the direct intervention of resources through the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, but also through other donations from other sources to ensure that they can use the mobile technology through our tablets, i-Pads or other tablets using the Android system -- you will find a lot more of those around -- or through laptops or desktops. This equips them for the assessment that is being done by the Caribbean Examinations Council, where today a lot more of the examinations will be done by e-marking. A lot more of the submissions of the students' work will be also done through the technology. That particular gift came at an opportune time as students move towards May and June when those exams are being held, so that all schools will be able to have their students work at those pieces of technology along with those that were in the schools before. I cannot be profuse enough in thanking the people and the Government of the People's Republic of China for that kind gesture. I wish to state that this technology is to be used in our schools, and they are appropriately marked. If you see any of that technology on two feet out into the highways and byways of Barbados, you would know that somebody appropriated that technology by some nefarious means. It does not belong out there. It belongs within our schools to be used by our students. That technology is appropriately marked and coded, and we will be able to find it wherever that technology roams. Today, with the sophistication of other technologies, you can track it wherever it goes. If it leaves St. Philip and journeys to the airport, we will be able to find it. If it leaves St. Lucy and journeys to the new or potential airport in St. Lucy, we will be able to find it. If, at some time in the future they get legs, as I said, we will be able to find that piece of technology. It is for the use of our schools, it is for the use of our children, and it is for the use of our teachers. This adds again to what I call the modern time, the future that lies before us, where training is not only in the simple use of technology but the adapting of the technology for effective integration of learning within our schools. This is my first instalment, Sir. I hope that we are able to systematically go through what has been happening in

education. A lot has been happening, and I wish to share that with colleagues. I wish to bring colleagues on both sides of the House to the understanding of the dynamics and the reality of a quiet reformation of education taking place in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, with that I beg to move that Head 77 stand part. MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise in this my first intervention of what may be a few under this Head of Education budget. Yes, we take note that the allocation under this Head for this year is similar to what it was last year. I think there is a difference of about \$8 million more; not that much different. Within the last few years under this Democratic Labour Party Government, the general allocation has been around half a billion dollars a year. I believe it was just over a half billion in the first term of this Administration, but of course like everything else, even in terms of the social sector which the Government cut immediately after the Election, it is now below half-a-billion dollars a year. In the first 34 years of our sovereignty as a nation, successive Governments spent about US\$15 billion on education, and under the Administrations of the Right Excellent Errol Barrow and the Right Honourable Tom Adams about 22 to 23 per cent of the Government's budget used to be spent on education. That is now down to about 16 to 17 per cent, Sir. That 22 to 23 per cent in those days helped create the society that we now are, in terms of building up our human resource capacity, in terms of taking many people of the majority race of this country out of poverty and into the middle economic class, and in terms of making Barbados what it used to be known as in the world in terms of a brand name and the leading developing country in the world; the leading black-ruled country in the world up to certainly four years ago. Now, Sir, I think one of the basic problems that we have in this Ministry is that there is no vision, no defined vision of where we want to lead Barbados; and that can be said of the whole Government. Countries that intend to progress in this world have always defined a vision of where they want to go. Sir, the frank truth is that the Right Excellent Errol Barrow had a vision of Barbados in terms of educational development and independence of people, and he took it a step further. Before him, of course, the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Herbert Adams had a vision to empower the majority black race in Barbados and make us equal partners in our own country, which we more than ever helped develop. Coming afterwards, the Right Honourable Tom Adams saw the development of Barbados in terms of an international business community and in terms of mathematics and science, because he was a top mathematician himself. There are major defects of this Government, whether those on the other side agree or not, and they really and truly can choose to disagree. They do not have to listen to us. For nine years they did not listen to

us but now suddenly, according to the Honourable Minister of Finance, they now want to listen, having realised themselves that they have been failures. One of the problems is that this Government, as a whole, and the Ministry of Education as part of this Government, has not defined any concept or vision -- certainly not any that has been communicated to the people of this country -- of where they would want to see Barbados, where they would want to lead Barbadians

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in the next 5,10 or 15 years in terms of development. The Ministry of Education has certainly failed in this respect. We should be in a position where the Minister of Education is able come here today and say, "The goal of my Government even at this late stage is to make Barbados the entrepreneurial capital of the Caribbean, and my ministry sees itself as the primary product in achieving that. Therefore, from early childhood education, from primary school, we will have as part of our curriculum a system training young people, training 4 and 5 year-olds to become entrepreneurs, so when they become adults they can employ themselves, they can create their own businesses, they can employ their families, and they can employ people in their districts." Rather than a situation where we graduate from the University of the West Indies with Management degrees and still looking to Government for a job, or looking to the private sector for a job, in most cases afraid to take the step to form their own businesses largely because we have not been trained in the skills of becoming entrepreneurs and employers of ourselves. Sir, the Ministry of Education has to take primary blame for that.

Mr. Chairman, yes, we have come a far way in terms of education. Some people would say the Right Honourable Prime Minister has said so on many occasions in here - You know he is a historian in here, more than anyone else - Even under colonialism the education of the majority of people was taken more seriously than in other Caribbean islands. Before the establishment of the churches in 1968 education was tied to the Anglican Church, the main church of the country. Certainly in those days near to every church, as we know, there was a school, some kind of school. I believe it was 100 schools or some kind of figure like that in colonial times in Barbados. Of course we know that under slavery and post emancipation period, the education of the Barbados was geared towards the plantation and making you fit and proper for the plantation. We took that then into the post 1937 period under the Right Excellent Sir Grantley building on education. Certainly from the 1950s starting with free secondary education at the Princess Margaret and the now Grantley Adams School, West St. Joseph, St. Leonards School and Parkinson. In fact they had free secondary education before the Right Excellent Errol Barrow became head of this country.

Sir, we know that the Right Excellent Errol Barrow built on that and we moved to free full comprehensive secondary education, although something unknown to the majority of Barbadians that when the Barbados Labour Party took office in 1976 under the Right Honourable Tom Adams, the majority of secondary school students still had to pay some fees to go to school.

Asides.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: That is a fact. There were many schools, including the one that some of the Cabinet Ministers on that side went to, The Federal. I believe the same Honourable Minister of Education went there. You had to pay tuition fees at about 20-odd schools in 1976. The Government may have supplemented some of that by payment of ...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member keep quiet.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, I did not interrupt the Honourable Member. The Honourable Member got in here, when he spoke yesterday, saying that he does not interrupt anyone and immediately as I ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member just stick to the topic and let's get on.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: The fact of the matter, Sir...

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. In fact, even though I have the greatest respect for the Federal High School, I did not attend that school. In 1976 I had not graduated.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member please continue.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, the first Minister of Education in the Tom Adams Government, now Sir Louis Tull, who my Parliamentary colleague here is a fit and excellent successor in St. George South, verifies the fact that when he became Minister of Education in 1976 the majority of children going to secondary school in Barbados had to pay tuition fees. They had about 20 schools stemming from the Modern, Federal, Washington, Metropolitan, Arlington -- I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Thomas called all of them -- Lynches, about 20 schools, where children were still paying fees. So this thing about free secondary education under the Democratic Labour Party is not correct. Mr. Chairman, what happened, those fees may have been supplemented to some extent by the Government, subsidized they called it, but they had to pay.

Sir, the issue here is, though those administrations had a vision of where they wanted to leave Barbados, sadly speaking, this present Democratic Labour Party administration has no such vision. In a time of economic depression in the country, 9 years, largely because of the mismanagement of this Cabinet we should have had that kind of vision. That is what countries with progressive political leaders should do. If the vision was not for us to become the entrepreneurial capital of the West Indies, our vision then should have been to become the scientific and technological hub of the Caribbean. Therefore, we should have been creating science parts here as the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter said on many occasions, especially when he was leader of the Barbados Labour Party. He said we should have been creating scientific and a technological hub.

Mr. Chairman, what we got instead of...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member your time has expired.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: Can I just finish, Sir?

What we have instead, Mr. Chairman, is just words and rhetoric from the Government of Barbados and the ministry on this particular issue without any translation of those words and rhetoric into real action. I would, of course, come back under this Head, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, I am struggling to understand the contribution of the Honourable Member for St. James North.

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I sought to outline, and hopefully systematically, so that we get more from this Estimates debate than this hodge podge, this mat or this matting approach being introduced by the Honourable Member. For the Honourable Member to suggest that we have no goals in education is really a construct that is unbelievable. We have plans, we have directions -- if the Honourable Member has not availed himself, of thoughts, thinking or the documents from which these are captured, I am so sorry...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment. Honourable Member for St. James North, what are you rising on?

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member said in here he would make these documents to which he had just referred available to this House. He has not made them available up to now.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member no point of order. Please sit. Thank you very much, proceed.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Lets put it to rest. I do not intend to waste time on this Head. I intend to get on with what the good work that the public servants within the Ministry of Education and all of those involved in pedagogy have been doing in education in this country.

I touched the smallest arm of that spark. There is a view and one that I am so scared of, from the time a little child leaves home and enters a learning institution that child must take onboard every single thing that a society can think of, or a group of people can think of. So education is about the world of work. Education is no longer about humanizing people, giving them a sense of purpose a sense of direction, or any of these things. What we have now is, the Honourable Member for St. James North introducing very early in our three-year-olds and our four-year-olds the whole notion of entrepreneurial behaviour. No longer should our little people play, enjoy themselves, build good friendships, share with each other, do all of those things that are important to the development of that self-actualisation of young people. You should learn at 3, 4 and 5 years old how to be a capitalist, how to be a businessman, how to manipulate people to gain their own ends. That is not the foundation or the basis for education. Those things emerge over time.

In fact, if I step forward a bit even though I have not yet started to look at secondary education, you will find that at CAPE assesses something known as Entrepreneurialism as a subject at CAPE level. We do as well Management of Business in our school system. We do Accounts, Office Procedures, EDP, all of these things signal to develop an enterprising people or an entrepreneurial people, but we should force, push or direct our little people who need to enjoy life with the burdens that adults themselves should have. Let our little people enjoy life. Maybe the reason why the Honourable Member is pushing this kind of view point is, because maybe he is still struggling to understand a portfolio placed at his disposal. Yes, I recognise the early influence of his mother, who was a great teacher, an education officer, she has been trying to give him some pointers, but he has been mismanaging an understanding of these things.

I wish also -- if we do not get an understanding of what we are talking about in relation to the payment of fees, we are going to confuse a nation. Barbados has had from immemorial a twin system long before the public school system evolved or morphed into what you see now, there were private entrepreneurs who developed education in Barbados, private entrepreneurs. Going back before the riots when the system was starved of spaces for 14 children, because by and large the church establishment led

by the Anglican Church followed by the Methodist, the Moravians and the Catholics, you had persons who left the classroom and went into the plantations as young work groups, persons picking pond grass and bringing that pond grass out of the fields to the hedgerows or into the cart roads. What happened in Britain, we saw the comprehensive schools started to emerge. Therefore, you had the Richmonds, St. Leonards Boys and St. Leonards Girls carrying two cohorts every day for a whole set of years, morning students and evening students, because the capacity was not there.

Also, you had to meet the needs of paid institutions in the private sector. So you had the great schools such as the Modern. I believe the Honourable Member for St. Thomas might have gone there -- I believe she went to the Modern, an outstanding school in the educational psyche of Barbadians.

We had the school by Mr. Cox, Metropolitan, which is still around. That was a paying establishment. The Modern offered a whole series of scholarships. We had a school by Mr. Joy Edwards. I believe Mr. Joy Edwards had more scholarships to his establishment than people who were paying, the Arlington and the Federal. This is the history of the emergence of education way back in the 20th century. So it is not that you were paying fees. When we use the notion of paying fees, we are talking about the public sector. Within the Ursaline Grammar School there were students who if they did not get a Vestry Scholarship or any one of those scholarships which existed, had to take an exam to get one of those. You had to pay fees to those schools. If it was 25 cents or a shilling, or whatever was the currency during those days. By and large because the majority of the population was a poor and vulnerable population many of those students could sometimes ill afford to pay.

Sir, the great revolution, and I want to make this point, the Right Excellent Errol Barrow, as he is called now, Cameron Tudor as they examined the evolution of the Barbadian society in the halls of discussion wanted to make the great forward, not make the great forward by keeping a substantial of your population out of school, or going to school up to age 14. Therefore, the decision was taken, (1) some of the better education was taking place in those 8 or grammar schools, as they were called, Harrison College, Queens College, Coleridge and Parry, St. Michael School, The Lodge, Alexandra, Alleyne and Combermere. All of them paying establishments outside of a scholarship. The decision to take the payment of school fees off the agenda freed up and gave the opportunity for greater equality and equity within the educational system of Barbados. There was still not enough space. So, yes, Grantley Adams was built under the Barbados Labour Party, nothing wrong with that because the vision was there but the roll out and conception and the vantage point from which different

people at different time stood, took advantage of the need to provide this education.

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One of the philosophies built up in the Democratic Labour Party is that we would put a secondary school in each parish so that is why you had school being named after parishes. St. Lucy in the early 1970s, in 1971, St. James, St. George, all of these schools were named after the parishes. Do you understand where I am going? In the 1990s, the last to be started was St. Thomas, now called Lester Vaughan. The infrastructure was put up but the catastrophe of the economic difficulties intervened and it was completed and called the Lester Vaughan Secondary School after the relocation of the St. Leonard's Girls' School to the site there in St. Thomas. This is the history. The movement of Queen's College from the Elsie Payne Complex to Husbands in St. James. The school in Kingsland, Deighton Griffith; three schools being constructed at the most difficult time, two completed, one incomplete and that was the new school now called Lester Vaughan and the Barbados Labour Party Government completed that school. We have today many of those school have gone because the public sector continue to roll out, continue to build out, continue to say outside of the petty fees you pay, and on average the petty in nearly all of our secondary schools is between \$135 and \$155 a year which includes games fees, book fees and one or two other incidentals. That is what it is. There have schools still today in this private sector where school fees can go as low as \$800 to as high as \$5 000 per term and they give good education. The attract some good teachers but Barbados is a democracy and allows for institutions running in parallel all under the national coverage of the national curriculum, what syllabi we put out in the Ministry of Education, all of that happens so it is not fair to suggest that it took 1976 or 1976 coming ... What happened in 1976, for the Honourable Member to understand as I close for a while here, is that when the Barbados Labour Party came to power after 1961, many of the schools were still carrying children in the elementary sector to age 14. I believe the former Honourable Member for St. George South, Mr. Louis Tull, came on board and created pre-vocational centres, senior schools, all age schools, in order to cater to the 14 to 16 age group. That is the reality of what happened in 1976 and going forward because even after the great leap forward, there was still work to do as there is still work to do now. That is why we are working and developing the bedrock or the foundation of nursery education. The project never stops. The project continues to evolve because it is dynamic.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, it is quite obvious that the Honourable Member for St. James North is not aware of the educational background of Barbados because when an Honourable Member can get in this House and give the impression that the educational revolution started after 1976, it shows an aspect of educational ignorance that should not be tolerated in this House. If one looks at the Estimates, one would see the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the University of the West Indies, the Barbados Community College and the Barbados Community College Hospitality Institute and everybody knows that all of those things occurred prior to 1976. If you in this day and age could come and tell Barbados that the educational revolution started when Tom Adams, whomever he is, became leader of this country, it shows that person is not part of Barbados or they are educationally not known to facts as it relates to education in Barbados. When one considers that you are not now speaking about secondary education, you are now at the stage where even tertiary education has been put in place, it tells me that the Honourable Member is either trying to score cheap political points or the Honourable Member is depriving himself of knowledge because when you can have a situation that between 1961 to 1976 that you move from primary, you moved from secondary and you moved from tertiary and an Honourable Member can get up in this house and give the impression that after 1976 there was an educational revolution, it tells me that the facts stated by the Barbados Labour Party are not facts. I am very glad that the Honourable Member for St. James North has perpetuated that view because when one listens to what he has stated, it is clear that he is not in here to give the truth but he is in here to give facts that are not facts.

Asides.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: You can call it alternative facts or not but what I am saying is that when the Honourable Member picks up his Estimates and he looks at the break down and he can see the University of the West Indies and he can go on to make that point, it tells me that something is wrong on That Side.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make the point that, yes, we have to make some adjustments to our educational system. We are at a stage now that if we do not make the adjustments we will get diminishing returns on our educational system. It is not a discussion for the nursery schools, it is not a discussion for the secondary schools, but it is a discussion for the tertiary institutions. I want to make the point today that we in the educational system must understand that we are not here just to supply a degree for the sake of a degree but the money given by the Government of Barbados to the University of the West Indies, Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and Barbados Community College, et cetera, must be spent to ensure that it goes to the development of Barbados and not just giving

a degree for the sake of a degree. It must be given to help increase the productivity of the country.

I also want to make a call to the private sector of this country that they must play a part in the educational system in this country, especially at a time like now. We must see those organisations recognising that tertiary education should be used to have a working relationship between the tertiary institutions and the job market of today. That is, they must be prepared to help finance the tertiary education in this country because they are going to be the biggest beneficiary if we are to move this country forward. I am saying that the same way it can be done in Canada and those other countries there is nothing wrong when one considers the social revolution and the educational revolution that occurred between 1961 and 1976 in this country that we should not be just producing degrees for the sake of producing degrees. Degrees should be work related.

House D 7D Seq 7 3.18 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I want to congratulate the Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation for divorcing himself from the traditional application when it comes to educational applications when he made the bold step of asking the Government of Barbados to allocate The Hope Plantation to further our agricultural offerings. I want to thank him for that because if we are going to be able to sustain our country, our people and our educational base, then our educational system must cater to the productive sectors of this country. I want to thank him as well because what he is doing at The Hope is a great thing because once that educational base is taken to a higher level it means that we could easily educate our people to help with the productive sectors and to take it to another level.

I also want to thank him for asking the Ministry for which I am responsible to acquire the land at Nestfield, and I hope that project will soon be an application and that we can take it to another level because if there was a time that we needed an institution like that in Barbados the time is now right especially when the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited is deeply involved in the renewable energy sector. Mr. Chairman, I make this paradigm call to the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited to recognise what the Government is about to do in Nestfield St. Lucy and to have a relationship so that they too can finance those students and the building of that institution at Nestfield so that they are guaranteed to have workers to help push the renewable energy sector to higher heights.

I want to thank the Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation for those creative thoughts. Mr. Chairman, that is why I also believe that places like the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic... The Honourable Member spoke but he does not understand how far-

reaching the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow was. In 1986, I remember this well, before we knew anything about reconditioned cars in Barbados, the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow was asking that we recondition our cars and stop buying so many imported cars and use the educational system at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic to train people to recondition our own cars. Nobody listened to him and by 1991 the first set of reconditioned cars was discussed and after 1994 when the Barbados Labour Party came to Government and instead of using our educational system to advance an industry, they decided they were not going to take the mouthing of the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow and they were going to deplete our foreign reserves by allowing people to bring in cars used by other persons when they could have taken the cars that we had and build an industry using the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. Mr. Chairman, that is the type of foresight you get coming out of the Democratic Labour Party. I keep telling my comrades all of the time that whenever we have a good idea not to leave it to the Barbados Labour Party because they will mash it up, and that is one good example and that is why I am calling on my comrade to ensure that he puts The Hope and the institution at Nestfield because if he leaves it for the next 25 years when the Barbados Labour Party comes to Government they will mash up that too and I do not want that to occur.

Mr. Chairman, it is clear that between 1961 and 1976 the educational system had progressed at a rate that have not been seen anywhere else in the world. The amazing thing about it is that when that occurred the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow was able to do that off of the earnings of the sugar plantations. It was only agriculture he had. It is true that he was able to present to this country the importance of the international business sector, which regrettably he did not advance more and he allowed the Barbados Labour Party again to come and touch it and you know what happened to it: They put it in place and used it in the wrong way. Mr. Chairman, when one speaks about development and using the educational system in this country to advance our people, it is no doubt that the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow and the Democratic Labour Party has been able to use that system to advance the people.

Mr. Chairman, we are about to create another social revolution that, as I said previously, we are about to tie education with the job market because what we will be doing is ensuring that the private sector is so bound to the educational system and the offerings from the educational system that they will be forced to help finance the educational system because they would understand that we are educating people to come to the workforce. The same way that it occurs in Canada, it will occur in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy to be able to speak on behalf of the Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation because he had demonstrated without a shadow of doubt that he understands what has to happen in this country.

I also want to say, Mr. Chairman, that we are not only focussing at the tertiary level because you would see that a renewed interest has been shown in nursery education, that is, that we have recognised that the country has to be more productive. As a small developing country we cannot afford to allow the parents to be home looking after the children when we need to increase the productivity in the country so we have been able to build nursery schools to allow more parents to be at work while their children are being kept in the nursery schools and being taught how to build a foundation.

We have even gone further because as much as they badmouthed us we have been able to develop the summer camps and the constituency councils to ensure that the young people of Barbados have more than one way to be offered educational opportunities, that even in the vacation time that educational opportunities are offered while the parents are happy working knowing that their children are safe and sound and being protected.

Mr. Chairman, I acknowledge your notice to me, but I want to end by saying that country Barbados is safe. Yes, we are going through a crisis but we have to understand that this country and the people of this country have demonstrated that we have progressed. The best way to know how a country has progressed is when those who have been educated before are now capable of using the resources that were given to them by the country to educate their own people.

Mr. Chairman, I have heard people speak about many things but we cannot allow the system to enslave people and to give them the impression that they have not progressed. The best way to ensure progress in the country is the ability of one to be able to educate one's children, but the Barbados Labour Party believes that the way you show progress is by having a car at everybody home.

House D7D Sequence 8

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

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Chairman, as I rise to enter this debate I would like to take a different approach to what I just heard from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, because we can spend the entire afternoon on this Head speaking about what the Democratic Labour Party did, about what the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow did, about what "Tom" Adams did. I can lift a few

documents and rehearse Edu-Tech. Mr. Chairman, I think we ought to raise the level of the debate, like I signaled to the Honourable for Christ Church East Central. I think that once we go into the Heads that education is very critical to the development of our people and we ought now to raise the level of debate, we are not about who did or did not do what because both parties would have done tremendous work in education. I am one who will stand here and say that, under the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, "Tom" Adams, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter and probably others before but where are we now and where do we ought to go?

Mr. Chairman, one of the overarching principles that I believe we ought to be focusing on as we speak about education are the goals that we set ourselves in terms of transforming this country into a fully developed society in the shortest possible timeframe. Mr. Chairman, at present we are challenged with the lack of resources and we have to look critically in the Ministry and at other key stakeholders to see how best we can expand the tools and modernise the methods by which our children are taught in our schools. I think that is where we ought to go with this debate, we ought to look at how we expand the tools and modernise the methods by which our children are taught. Mr. Speaker, yes, we have challenges but I would want to list some of the things within the next ten minutes that I would want us to work together on as Members of the Government and Opposition for the betterment of our educational system and not for the betterment of the Barbados Labour Party or the Democratic Labour Party but bearing in mind that our children should be our primary focus in terms of our educational system at all levels.

Mr. Chairman, there are quite a few things I believe we ought to be looking at and I will start at this whole aspect of our teenagers. We are seeing a lot of deviant behaviour within schools, it is increasing. Mr. Chairman, I do not want to say that it is because of the Democratic Labour Party that we are seeing it, the reality is that it is here with us right now and what we ought to do as we see this level of deviant behaviour increasing in our schools. Mr. Chairman, we have a number of boys and girls who for some reason or the other are expelled at secondary school because of misbehavior. We have some of them on our roads, some now entering the juvenile court system and we know where they are heading when this happens, it ends up most of the time with these young men and to a lesser extent women on the 'blocks'.

Mr. Chairman, as I traveled around St. George I would have had several discussions with teachers about some of the issues in the secondary schools, and I will speak to the primary schools at well later in the debate, but teachers are saying that it is tough for those children who want to be educated, for example, there may be a class of about 22 children where out of that number there are 16 or

17 who are interested in learning from 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m., while there are the other seven or eight children for whom you cannot create a special class but they are in the system and they present a challenge to the teachers.

Mr. Chairman, I am one who support teachers wholeheartedly in this country, I think they do a wonderful job with the limited resources that they have and I want to take the time out to compliment all teachers and to say thank you to teachers in this country for doing such a wonderful job with the children. Mr. Chairman, having said that we know we have challenges and those students who are expelled and/or put out of the school, probably based on how the system is set up and there is no debate... As I said, I am not blaming the Democratic Labour Party this afternoon, but we are looking to improve our society, because we talk about a society and an economy and that starts with our children. Mr. Chairman, I pose the question, though I may not have the answer. What are we going to do with our children who for some reason display some level of deviant behaviour in the secondary school and they end up on our roads and on the 'blocks'? Mr. Chairman, I spend a lot of time talking to guys on the 'blocks' and to a lesser extent to some girls, but do not let us lose sight of some of the girls who leave school as well because some of them end up being teenage mothers and that too poses a problem in this society. I am not saying that people should not get children but when we look at what is happening today with our teen pregnancies, then we ought to begin to take stock of what is happening at our ministries' level, at our Governmental level, at the home level as well, and in the schools.

Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Youth Service is a wonderful idea. I am one who believe that we need to expand the Barbados Youth Service. Mr. Chairman, while sending a child to Dodds or to the Government Industrial School does not solve the problem that we have in the school, we need a lot more guidance counsellors as well in our school system. I think we ought to start there because when you have those, for example, seven deviant persons and put them out of school...

Mr. Chairman, I am hearing that we do not have guidance counsellors. This is not destructive criticism but constructive criticism, we need to invest more in guidance counsellors. Once we have done that and we are still seeing those coming out of school, then we need to expand our Barbados Youth Service. Mr. Chairman, I have seen a number of young men and women gone into the Barbados Youth Service who came out to be wonderful young men and women. I am one who believe that we need to expand the capacity of the Barbados Youth Service to take in more of the deviant children. Mr. Chairman, this should not be seen as a punitive measure but as a way to bring them back into the system as decent young men and women. I am one

who is calling for reform in this area and to expand the Barbados Youth Service.

Asides.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: The Honourable Member for St. Philip South, I am not saying it is that way, I am saying that more emphasis has to be paid in that area of addressing deviant behaviour by having more guidance counsellors in the schools and expanding the Barbados Youth Service. I know that is the area of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central and we ought to pay some attention there.

3.50 p.m.

I also have a difficulty and I know we have some beautiful schools in this country, some lovely schools that have been built. There is one in St. George South, and the Member for Christ Church East Central likes to say it is in his constituency but it is in the constituency of St. George South and I claim the school: Blackman and Gollop Primary. It is a lovely physical plant, with lovely teachers, lovely students, and a lovely environment. I enjoy spending time at Blackman and Gollop. Yes, I spend some time at the others as well, including the Ellerton Primary and the Workman's Primary and it brings me to the point that I started to make before I drifted to the whole excellence in terms of physical plant. We have some plants that need refurbishing urgently. We need to focus in that area.

When I look at the Estimates 2017-2018, I see less money budgeted under Head 77 for the primary education domestic programme. I am not sure if that is where you capture funds to refurbish the schools, but I am just asking and perhaps the Minister, the Member for Christ Church East Central, in his speeches, can explain to us where that money is captured and what are the plans for refurbishing the plant. I was reading recently -- I do not want to drift to Health because we will get there shortly - and I heard that hospitals now are paying more attention to the physical plant, because they are saying that with a good physical plant comes better health care. That is a hypothesis or some theory that has been levelled at us in the United States. People are looking at going in and improving the physical plant and having a nice plant. Some are going to single rooms for patients and so on; that is how hospitals now are being built in the First World countries. I am just using that to say that if we have a well-refurbished infrastructure, I think the whole education curriculum would be utilised in a more efficient manner. This brings me to the challenges. I cannot stand here for 15 minutes and not mention some of the challenges within St. George South, which sent me here. When you look at St. Jude's, even though it is in St. George North it probably captures 60 per cent of its enrolment from St. George South. That plant is in a deplorable state, and I am asking the good Minister, the

Member for Christ Church East Central, to pay some attention to St. Jude's Primary. I am not saying you are not doing so, but I would like some more work to be done. We have health issues developing from a poor plant, and we have to be mindful that when we have schools where teachers and students are going home sick on a regular basis, that is not conducive for learning. If you have 200 students, you can check the stats for those who would have been home sick recently; teachers, parents and ancillary staff from that plant, so we have to do something with that plant sooner rather than later. I am also going into my "backyard" as well; Ellerton Primary. Recently I would have spoken to the Minister on the issue we would have had at Ellerton Primary, and indeed that is one time the Minister and I would have worked as parliamentarians -- Minister and Opposition Member -- to ensure that we got a speedy recovery so that the students could have returned to school. We are spending too much time away from school because of challenges with our physical plant, and I am not putting the blame on you, Minister, but I am saying we need to look at these things swiftly. We spend too much time doing the reports and then someone has to get back to you. It takes too long, and at the end of the day we are losing valuable time among our children and among our teachers; teachers become demotivated and, you know what happens when people are demotivated in a physical plant. They are human beings. Do not say they are there to teach. They have to be comfortable. They cannot be seeing a rat running through a school and feel comfortable. They cannot be seeing the ceiling falling through and feel comfortable. These are things which we ought to pay attention to. I would like some attention to be paid to those two schools within my catchment of St. George South; and I know there are others because other Members will probably speak to them here or quietly speak to the Minister. These are things we ought to pay attention to. I do not believe we should cut two areas, and I will speak to the healthcare sector later, but there are two areas which are valuable to this country's development: Education and Health. When I come to this Honourable House, I am not going to stay on my feet and talk about when the Member for St. Michael North West says what to cut. I am not going to jump up and say cut this and cut that, because we have to be mindful of our development and the pace at which we are developing, and do not make it slower than it ought to be. These are some of the issues that I wanted to introduce to the Minister, and I know the Minister will, as a former teacher, understand some of the issues I would have raised. MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you should wrap up.

Mr. D.G. SUTHERLAND: Okay, I will come back but just let me raise one more point. MR. CHAIRMAN: I think you have run out of time, Sir.

Mr. D.G. SUTHERLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central.

Hon. S.A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much. I join this Debate at a very interesting point, and I first of all would like to compliment the Minister and his team at the Ministry of Education for continuing to provide what I believe is a very critical aspect of Barbados' development: our educational system. That system is one that is very pivotal to our social and economic advancement, and certainly any debate or discussion on Education will inevitably collide with some of the key social challenges faced in Barbados. Mr. Chairman, some of these challenges are not new but they are real, nevertheless. I was heartened to note the tone of the debate so far; in that Education is really very apolitical. There is really no politics in Education, but there are serious aspects of the educational model and educational focus which we have to confront as a Government and certainly as a Parliament. The last speaker, the Member for St. George South, would have raised a number of issues which are within the school system. He mentioned the issue of deviance and I am sure that already there are several programmes. The Minister will speak to the 'A Ganar' programme, which is a highly interventionist-structured programme aimed at containing deviance within the schools, and there is a significant partnership between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth. This partnership is seeking to root out and certainly bring some control to the whole question of deviance. Mr. Chairman, I would also like to say that I believe the reality of how we finance these key areas of our social development perhaps is now coming through to the Parliament and, by extension, the Opposition. The Member for St. George South indicated his reluctance at cutting either the budget allocated to the Ministry of Education or the budget allocated to the Ministry of Health. I think that is a very significant commentary because both Ministries command, I believe, some of the largest allocations within the national budget. This is because not only this Government but previous Governments have placed a significant focus on the importance of education and health, but they certainly have to be managed by some significant allocation of financial resources H:No.D7D (10) 3.47 p.m. and in these Estimates we have debated by and large, much of it has been associated with, to me, misdirected political innuendo and crosstalk in relation to how we look at the management and allocation of our resources but certainly when we come face-to-face with some of the challenges which we have to manage and give leadership to, we recognise that we have to provide the resources. The whole question of the Barbados Youth Service which the Honourable Member for St. George South mentioned, a very important programme within the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth. In fact, the programme has certainly been very successful in providing direction to many of our young

people who may have left school at an early stage. They may have been the victims of various issues. Many of them are traceable to their communities and their homes but those issues by-and-large when we look at them must be addressed therefore, it becomes the responsibility of the Government to come up with programmes that will chart a path for our young people and the Barbados Youth Service is one of those programmes. I certainly agree with the Honourable Member for St. George South that the programme should be expanded. Indeed, one of the critical aspects of that programme is the residential phase of the programme. Currently we are only able to manage on an annual basis the residential phase of 80 young people. We would like to expand that but with the challenges faced in terms of finding a permanent home for the Barbados Youth Service over a period of years, we have had to manage based on available resources and that residential phase was in abeyance for about two years and we were only able to get that programme restarted at the Paragon Base of the Barbados Defence Force last year. What I can say to the Parliament is that in these Estimates we have been able to have an allocated made to beginning on the path of obtaining a permanent home for the Barbados Youth Service, but again one of the underlying factors here is that these things require resources. They require financial resources and this programme, though very useful would require a very bipartisan approach in relation to how we are going to strengthen the programme and that is why I say that certainly matters dealing with the development of young people, matters dealing with how we are going to tackle the issue of deviance, what kind of programmes we should maintain, and the Barbados Youth Service programme is not a programme that any one Government can lay claim to. The programme has been supported by both Administrations and I am happy to recognise that both Governments recognise that this programme is useful and must be sustained. In fact, the programme is so multidimensional that many of the young people who are involved in that programme are exposed to a number of important disciplines. They are able to have a second chance at taking their CXC's, they are able to be involved in a job attachment programme in which many of them are able to secure permanent jobs, both within the public and the private sectors and indeed the programme also teaches some very important life skills. We would have heard recently of the young man who was able to rescue a tourist on the beach by using the CPR that he was trained in terms of the component of the programme which is done in collaboration with the Coast Guard. It brings to the fore, Mr. Chairman, the fact that when we are considering education we have to look at it in a rather holistic way. Education for life remains one of the underpinning philosophies which certainly has informed the educational development module pursued by the current Government of Barbados and I was a bit disappointed when the Honourable Member for St. James North in his introductory remarks lamented the fact that the Ministry of

Education did not have a defined vision of where the Ministry of Education is taking this important sector and, in fact, he said there is no defined vision that the Government has at all. A very reckless statement. There was no evidence that he was able to deduce to connect with that. It is almost as though he did not even connect with the rudiments upon which the educational system is based. We have always been proud to boast that Barbados has been able to establish one of the most successful educational systems in the world. In fact, there are institutions and there are professionals who have been able to make that statement. They have come and they have seen the quality of the educational system in Barbados and they are the ones who have given Barbados kudos. I therefore pour scorn on the statement made by the Honourable Member for St. James North because it is really belittling the efforts of what has happened so far in relation to how we have built a very proud educational product and system and we should do nothing to tarnish what is really a success story. The educational system in Barbados is a success story and even although faced with fiscal challenges we have had to cut and contrive, and we have had to find innovative ways to deliver quality education. We must not use our partisan political approaches to pour cold water on what is really valiant efforts at all levels of the system. It is not only the Ministry of Education that is responsible for this, they direct the policy but I must say that I would like to certainly congratulate those who are within the education system who are largely responsible for the success stories over the years. I believe that particular kudos should go to the members of the teaching profession who often come under heavy fire from various persons but there are the ones who have to manfully and womanfully take control of our schools along with our principals and the various boards or management and based on what the Minister of Education has reported there are quite a number of success stories that we can look to. Of course, our system of Education is not static and as we look to how we are going to reposition our economy, we have to also look at our educational system. We have to ensure that the system remains a tuned and relevant to the times and that even as we are focussing on then need to create productive jobs and of course to strengthen the entrepreneurial focus of Barbados we have to find ways to reform our educational system and I think that is where this debate really should go. Those areas in our education system can benefit from reform that makes it more relevant to some of the major planks of national discussion in terms of levels of productivity ensuring that our country can become more productive in relation to delivering the services both social and economic that we have become accustomed to. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that one of those areas would have to be how we are going to find innovative ways to give more meaning to both the areas of sport and the area of the creative sector at a very early stage and we are doing some of that work but we need to probably look at doing even more.

House D 7D Seq 11 3.57 p.m.

Maybe there is a case for recognising that many of our young people will at an early age identify with key areas, whether it is becoming a sports person, an athlete, or whether it is becoming a musician, someone involved in the various genres of creativity, and find ways perhaps to define early streams for specialist training and not necessarily wait until our children get to maybe at a very senior level within the schools. There may be a case for even developing specialist schools that deal with the creative arts, for example, that deal with sports in particular, and that deal with areas such as agriculture. We know that the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation has a very important project which is about to be embarked upon at The Hope in St. Lucy which is being funded through resources provided by the People's Republic of China.

There are very modernised approaches that we have available to us. Technologies have gone to the level now where we have to see more technology at work within our schools. Mr. Chairman, I was very happy to see recently through another donation from the People's Republic of China that many of our schools are now benefitting from additional resources in terms of computer equipment and so on but our schools have got now to be transformed into more technologically-based institutions of learning. I believe, if we are placing emphasis on new areas for economic expansion, that our schools have got to be linked into that and that is why I have made the point before that if we are going to establish emerging sectors in a very rapid way so that they can impact on our economic development, then we have got to make that a key focus within our schools and we have got to be able to manage our curriculum. We have got to look at the whole question of curriculum reform in a way that strengthens the broader economic goals that we have for Barbados. Even as I know schools are hard-pressed in terms of delivering the current curriculum many would say that they cannot do some additional things because of the very tight demands on the current curriculum but I believe that we have got to get back to the drawing board and look at certain key priorities of curriculum reform and reinforce them by technology and other areas that can give us the kind of expansion and specialist arrangements that would be critical to dealing with some of the things that we are seeing coming out in terms of our educational system, and the issue of deviance and how young people can become much more enthused would have to be addressed within those areas.

Mr. Chairman, I certainly will come back again to address some other areas but I think that those are the areas I believe should be pivotal to a debate in 2017 on education.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: I wish, Mr. Chairman, to first express my congratulations to teachers, staff members of schools across this island, stakeholders and community organisations, including the churches and other groups, which have come together to extend a helping hand to our children of this nation.

I believe that we as a people must not become complacent at the strides that we have made in this society when it comes to education. Yes, we have all been able to boast of a high quality education and we see it as we move around from day to day, however, there are some deficits which I believe require urgent attention if we are to take advantage of this very costly exercise, and, as was said by the Honourable Minister, where many other countries in the world not only in the Caribbean do not have this kind of facility.

As the Honourable Minister started out he began with the kindergarten stage or the early childhood departments. I am not one of the persons who at this time wish to lend support to any additional subjects being added to the curriculum of our primary schools unless it is something to do with drama, another aspect of creativity, if that is not happening in the way that it was before because as little children you will recall opportunities where we fanaticised. Some of us did not have the resources. For example, children in St. Thomas seldom went to the beach because of the dire situation in which we grew up with little or no money and living far away from the ocean and therefore we would fantasize when it came to writing compositions about a day at the beach but because of our parents and their interests in ensuring that we took advantage of our education they insisted that we read books. Many of them, even though they did not know how to read and write so well, made sure that education was at the top of any agenda for their children to be empowered and therefore from reading books and so I was able to fantasize a day at the beach and to talk about bathing suits, sand castles and things of that nature. Mr. Chairman, I do not think that we are as creative as we should be in all of our schools at this time and we are not seeing our children fantasizing in the way that we would like. We are not seeing them use that creative ability. Even when it came to mathematics we were able to do mental arithmetic and add up numbers in our heads in a quick way and so on, but now when you to supermarkets and so on and there is any challenge with the electricity or the technology some of the cashiers and so are at a loss and when they have to take out a book and start to add up you have to assist them because they have been so entrenched in using the computers or the calculators that it really makes a tremendous challenge for them, and so I am glad that the Honourable Minister would have started at the early childhood or kindergarten level

and come forward because these are the children and the little incubators that will suck up what is good and what is bad like wet sponges.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say I am happy that as a part of a Government the vision was to look at the EduTech reform in 1996. The White Paper on Education Reform, I should call it that, has helped to put Barbados on the cutting edge. While we were getting excellent examples and outcomes in our schools across the island and in our tertiary institutions, the EduTech project that had in components to teacher training and civil works and so on made a tremendous difference in what has happened. Mr. Chairman, I am happy that the Honourable Minister could refer to the children's advancement in mathematics and so on and make the comparisons because learning would have become more meaningful and easier and it has helped to put the whole of Barbados on the cutting edge, so the infusion of technology into the system for me is paramount and we must go forward using it as effectively as possible.

Mr. Chairman, while we know that at some levels children are using their laptops, the tablets and cell phones and so on for other negative activities, I believe that it is about time that the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation come up with some kind of creative policy to show how children can go home and do their homework on their cell phones or on their tablets on their laptops if they have them. The Honourable Minister is speaking all of the time about a Chinese donation and once that kind of technology is taken into the homes I believe it would empower our children even more because we know that there are a lot of children who do not have access to the technology. They are being given projects at school but sometimes they have to go to neighbours and friends, and there is nothing wrong with that... We have always been a cohesive community where we went to other persons. As a child we did not have electricity until 1972 or 1973 but there were people in our community who had television sets and many of my sisters and others in the community would go to the house in the village with the television sets and look through the windows and watch the various programmes. D7D Sequence 12

Mr. Chairman, that is how I believe our community should continue, with the caring and sharing aspect of things.

Mr. Chairman, the vision that came to the fore through the creative ideas of the officials in the Ministry, particularly the staff of the Ministry and the policy that the then Government came up with worked towards developing programmes for children at the kindergarten stage to be able to enter school. I thought it was a brilliant idea because having gone into the classrooms and having seen children who had gone to nursery school, or parents who had worked with their children where by the time they

had reached the primary on the September before their fifth birthday -- because that is what happened at the school where I was because there was no capacity to accommodate children who were younger -- lot of children came in with deficits, some had speech challenges, some used a lot of the dialect, many of them did not know how to social, many of them were not properly toilet trained and the Ministry felt that it would be integral for us to give our young children a chance to come into school to be given the opportunity to learn how to speak, to draw, to socialise, et cetera.

Mr. Chairman, this has been a tremendous success because our primary schools at that time in the late 1990s early 2000s were retrofitted to have nursery departments adjoined to them. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member mentioned a lot children coming to urban Barbados to be in schools, a lot of that has to do with that is where their parents were working or many of them felt that certain schools in Barbados are so prestigious that automatically if the child had gone there that that child would be coming out at the highest level because of the fact that the school could create a brain. I do not believe in that at all, all children are different in relation to their learning styles.

Mr. Chairman, therefore, retrofitting the schools and putting in the kind of furniture that would be appropriate for nursery children in the existing schools made a tremendous difference. There was also that vision to build nursery schools or to refurbish schools that were abandoned to create new nursery schools became a very important aspect of it because we acknowledge, Mr. Chairman, including other Honourable Members here would know that there are children in the communities who are so poor that they would not have been able to access that education at some of the private nursery schools where at that time people were paying between \$85 and \$100 per week, in circumstances where parents could not afford it and therefore in opening up the avenue at our regular primary schools to put on those units and then to start to construct and refurbish those schools it gave an opportunity for more children to be allowed and so the St. Boniface School was refurbished, the All Saints School was also refurbished for nursery education, there is one at St. Giles, one in St. Philip and I know the Honourable Member spoke to the one at Sharon because all of that information was in the pipeline and \$1 million was left in the budget to construct the Sharon School now known as the Maria Holder Nursery School. That too has been well-embraced and is now a popular school and I hope that more poor people's children will get a chance to attend there because the quality I witness in the school is so high that even middleclass people who perhaps could pay are bringing their children and are giving them a wonderful educational foundation and I want to commend the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation for carrying on this particular project.

Mr. Chairman, I know too that primary schools were constructed. I heard some person last weekend saying that the Barbados Labour Party did not build a single primary school but I know that the Hilda Skeene Primary School was constructed during that period; the Ignatius Byer School, once St. Clément's Primary, the All Saint's School. That school is an excellent one because a wing was added to it for special needs children to be given the training and for the mainstreaming that is critical because Mr. Chairman, you might know that there are some children who might be able to speak well and perhaps write but yet they have some psychological challenges in relation to mathematics and so where they would be excelling they would be drafted into the regular primary school while they would stay with their special groups to be able to receive their education.

Mr. Chairman, the George Lamming Primary School was almost near completion by the time we demitted office. The Blackman Gollop Primary School was the vision too because of the condition of the South District Primary School where the Paper was laid in Cabinet and brought to this Honourable Chamber and of course this Government continues to look at extending the project, which I think is very critical and so I am happy to see that happening.

Mr. Chairman, of course, the private nursery schools were not left out at that time because there was also communication with them. There was also the sharing of the curricula, sharing of the equipment and so on, because there was no point in bringing all of these children into nursery school and then it would be to the detriment of those who used their nursery schools before for a living and therefore they would have gotten some kind of subventions, equipment, toys and so on to keep them afloat, because as we know there are some people who would never want to come to public schools, as I would never want to go to the private school if I could avoid it as well. Mr. Chairman, I want to say how happy I am to see that happening at that level.

Mr. Chairman, the issue, though, I have of special needs children is still staring us in the face, there are too many of our children who have challenges, many of whom would not be able to go to any school. Mr. Chairman, I am extremely concerned about the level of support that is being offered to them where some of them may be able to receive Welfare grant or hampers but there are others who really deserve the necessary stimulation and the kind of one-on-one assistance which I would want to lend my support to. Mr. Chairman, of course more of them needs to be mainstreamed, and I think that is critical but that teacher training has to go hand-in-hand with that because not all teachers are trained to deal with special needs children.

Mr. Chairman, I want to encourage the Honourable Minister, if it is still not happening because you hear

people talking all over the place, on the radio, when you meet them in Bridgetown, their concerns are that these children have become so evil that they wonder if religious or moral education is still being taught in school. Mr. Chairman, I can say that the schools in the neighbourhood where I live still practice the scripture reading, et cetera, though it is not at the same level because children nowadays have their tablets and can download the Bible and so they do no longer bring a Bible to school, but I believe that that is critical.

Mr. Chairman, because of the interest of time, the other point I would want to make has to do with my dislike -- and I am speaking personally -- of screening children, it leads to an even more psychological problems with some children, more so than they had ever had. I find that a lot of schools that had gone into the mix-ability groupings have now gone into screening children and therefore a teacher would sometimes come -- and it is so unfortunate to say -- Combermere and higher, nothing less in this Class 4. Therefore it create a general fear as though if one does not to go Combermere or any of the older grammar schools that you are nobody, so that children go into some strange bind because of the learning and it impacts on them. Mr. Chairman, I have a tremendous difficulty with that still happening in our schools.

Mr. Chairman, I will later ask the Honourable Member to tell us what plans are there for the Caribbean Examination Council. I believe in it, but I am only one person, neither do I have a small child. I believe in it because according to what I have witnessed over the many years, it is the safest and surest way, that the Member of Parliament's child can sit next to the Member of Parliament's janitor, maid, the neighbour next door, the person working in Woolworth, the person working in the agriculture sector child because of the fairness of the situation. Mr. Chairman, where the difficulties come in a madness called lessons. Mr. Chairman, too many of teachers are teaching lessons in the evening with numbers that are bigger than their classes, then those children who cannot afford to pay for those lessons are therefore left out.

Mr. Chairman, I will close at that point and then I can always come back again to be able to further clarify that point. I wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, I rise to make a contribution on this Head. I also want to commend the Minister for his work at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation. The Honourable Member spoke about the quiet but significant reform. I think that is an apt way to put it.

4.19 p.m.

I think it has appropriately introduced the debate. It was a very measured, solid contribution, and I think the tone for the debate has been quite good. The Member for St. George South gave certainly the best speech I have ever heard from him actually in here. It was an excellent presentation. He expressed his views and spoke for his constituents and, like a good Member of Her Majesty's loyal Opposition, he offered some criticisms as well. It was not that he was praising the Government. He did what he had to do. I thought it was a very good presentation, and that is what we hope to see, and maybe he should use that as a template for his future contributions in the House. I think that he would go well. He spoke about the condition of our school plants. Who can disagree that we need to have better school plants? Who can disagree that we need more counsellors? We have one guidance counsellor each in most of the institutions. Some have two; the larger ones, I think, but we definitely need more guidance counsellors. Again, good suggestions.

Clearly, of course, to do all of these things you need more money, and I think that is what I wanted to talk about a little here. Government, in introducing these Estimates, made the point about discussing the question of how we spend our money, and going forward, some of the "sacred cows" we have had which we have to look at differently. That does not necessarily mean you are going to cut, cut and cut. For example, in the case of Education we are spending in the vicinity of \$500 million. That is 5.5 to six per cent of our GDP, and it has been there for some time. As I understand, the same Member for St. George South -- dare I say he speaks for everyone in here -- does not believe it should be cut necessarily, but the question is, "How can we spend that money, the \$500 million, more effectively so that the country and the society get more out of it?" The question also is: Can you get what you have now by spending less in different ways, or can you get more than what you are getting now by spending the same amount? Of course, some invidious person would try to suggest, "Why do you not go for both? Try to cut the spending and still get more out of it." That, I think, is where we need to position this debate. I was not trying to be naughty towards the official spokesman, the Shadow Minister, the Member for St. James North. Again he referred to free education several times in his presentation. There is no such thing as free education. There is a cost; somebody has to pick up the cost. I think that is the discussion that we have to have going forward; if we want to continue having the very high quality of education. We hear about it; the secondary school system in Barbados is literally rated among the best in the world. That is an awesome claim that a country like Barbados can make, and that is of course because of the emphasis we have placed in investing in it and, clearly, going forward we have to make sure that is protected at all costs. I know the issue of tertiary education and asking the

persons receiving it to contribute the tuition has been a big, vexing issue. I personally do not have any difficulties with it and I might make the point that this is not a position I have come upon only because I am part of a Government that has done it. I have a very vivid recollection in 2003 after I was elected to be part of an Opposition: I was interviewed by Katrina Marshall, who at the time was working for Starcom. Like I guess any journalist would ask, she asked "how do you feel about education?", and I expressed the view then -- this was in 2003 and a Government was in office which I was not a part of and which was flushed with all sorts of VAT receipts and so on -- that we do have to look at the question of how we deliver education and the role of the State and the cost issues. I made it very clear that it was a personal view that I had, and that there would come a time when parents who could afford to contribute might be asked to give a little more. We have an absurd situation, in my view, where there is an extensive and impressive School Meals Department for primary schoolchildren. It is very impressive. You get a snack mid-morning, a hot and very balanced meal at lunch, and nearly 25 000 of these are served daily, and this has been going on for many years, as I understand it; but when you get into secondary school, guess what? You do not get anything at all. I understand there is nothing systemic in place. What I can understand and can appreciate is that when you get into secondary school, you are a little more mature and you would not want necessarily to be lumped in any position of lacking basic nutrition from your home, et cetera. We understand that, and I know there have been programmes where principals have been given the capacity to offer stipends and so on to some children who might need it. I know that is something which has been going on for a while. As a matter of fact, when the Leader of the Opposition was the Attorney General and the former Minister of Education, the point was made then that there is a system to assist in that regard. I can understand and appreciate that because the truth is: What is the point in having free education and you cannot afford uniforms or other things that surround you? It is not only about the education element, and that was why I felt we needed to have a discussion on it. That is all, and I still believe that we need to have that discussion, being very clear that the State is there for those who truly need and deserve the assistance. I know the minute you put something out there and say it needs to be discussed, that is suggesting that you are saying you want to kick the ladder down; not at all. Far from kicking the ladder down, we are reinforcing it. Even, for example, in terms of the University debate, textbooks cost a lot of money. If you are studying medicine, there are all the bits of equipment which you have to buy. Again, there is no such thing as free education; there never was. It is a matter of who is going to pick up the costs, and I think asking persons who can pay to make a contribution is entirely fair. As I understand it -- I am speaking about tertiary students here now -- there is something called the higher education financial support programme, which I

think has given \$2.2 million in grants to either pay the tuition or part of the tuition for students who deserve it. Again, there is nothing wrong with that. Mr. Chairman, keep in mind that the Government is still picking up the tab for the economic cost, which is the real big one here. The tuition element is much, much smaller; so I do not think that any fair assessment can suggest that the Government has abandoned the programme of allowing people to have access to quality education, or simply saying that those who cannot afford to pay are left out in the cold. There are avenues for them, and that is the point and that is the correct direction we are going in. I think that at the university level we are trying to strengthen the whole education programme, and even at the nursery level as well. Seq:No.D7D (14) 4.26 p.m. I think that this Government and this Minister of Education who has been in that position for the entire life of this Government does not get enough credit for that. We are up to 11 nursery schools now and growing. Clearly it was an area that needed to be addressed. We all speak of those critical years, those formative impressionable year as an infant and even just there earlier. The psychologist tell us all the time it is critical and so you have a scenario where you have 68 primary schools and a couple of comprehensive ones and yet here it is we only had a handful of nursery schools. Now we are up to 11 and growing and I think that is important because we need to strengthen the education realm at that level. Of course, the reality of working mothers and grandparents in the workforce longer, you do not have that support base as you may have had in the days of yore so I think that is also a very positive and good development and again it speaks to the determination that the quality of the education we are offering. An education is preparing our young people for life, not preparing them for an exam. I think that the Government gets it and it is working steadily in that direction. I also wanted to mention in that regard that some credit needs to go for what is occurring with respect to the mathematics results not being so positive that is unfortunately not a new development that has been going on for some time. Dare I say perhaps one of the reasons that the teachers or the teaching that is available for those subjects is in need of some attention is because many of those teachers themselves probably struggled with the science and the maths when they were coming through the system so I think it is very good that the question of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and how our teachers can be improved in that department, an extremely positive development. There is a programme funded by the IDB. We had a presentation on it that deals with those skills. The question of the quantitative mathematical element because it is extremely important in the context of building out the services-based economy of the future and having those skills. I think it is good that a deliberate effort has been made to wrestle that particular beast into the ground because it has been a bug bearer in our education system for quite some time. I believe the credit should go to the Ministry for doing that.

I believe very strongly as well that the whole issue of preparing our young people for the industries of the future are also important. Even during my second ready speech, I drew reference to the plans for the hospitality institute of the Barbados Community College to expand it out in terms of the numbers to be trained. The facility is to be expanded. As you know there is a small hotel and restaurant facility that attaches to that Institution that is to be expanded. I think that is a very good thing. If we are expanding our rooms considerable we would need competent and quality workers to participate. The other thing of course, remember education also as a service so you can also help train. If your facility is appropriately outfitted and large enough there is nothing to stop young people from other parts of the Caribbean or other parts of the world from coming here and paying to be trained. It is nothing at all wrong with that, it happens elsewhere and it is a source of foreign exchange. It is a form of tourism in itself. As I understand it, the Estimates make provision for \$8 million to go to the Hospitality Institution. The costs are just about \$8 million to run the institution and the revenue they take in is just over \$1 million so they are looking for just under \$7 million in order to run the Institute. Clearly if the revenue stream was increased that would also be financially very beneficial to the institute but also it would be good to have a wider cross-section of young people as well from various parts of the Caribbean because that in itself, the cost, fertilisation and the networking and so on can only augur well for the whole student experience so I think the plans there are spot on and I want to again encourage it because it dove tails perfectly with what we are trying to do with our tourism sector in terms of making sure that we expand it out but we need to have the people who can step up to the mark and take advantage of the opportunities. I am conscious of your signal and I just wanted to again, make the point that we have a very good education system but I think that in the course of the discussion of how we are spending our money, I agree it need not be about cutting but it certainly should be a discussion about how we could get more out of what we allocate because it is a significant commitment, 5.5 to 6 per cent of your GDP, that is what all of us have been spending because it is not a party thing. We have to look at it and see what we can get out of it and I wanted to end on that point and I again look forward to a continuation of the very high standard of the debate that has been taking place so far on this Head.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, thank you. The debate has now been joined in terms of yes, the consensus on Both Sides how best we can maximise the financial resources that are spent on education in this country. Certainly as my colleague the Honourable Member for St.

George South has said and if I can glean from what the last speaker the de facto Deputy Prime Minister said, education should not be cut in terms of the financial resources. The fact of the matter though is that it was cut three or four years ago by the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) regime. There are some things that we should hold sacred and education is one that should not be cut. We have declining school plants as has been mentioned by my colleagues and certainly primary schools in my constituency, the Gordan Greenidge Primary School and St. Albans Primary School, there is need for refurbishment. We have a situation where I am sure in all of the constituencies if not most, or most if not all of the constituencies of all Honourable Members, teaching have to take some materials to school because of the lack of resources flowing from the Ministry of Education to those schools, whether it is toilet paper, cleaning materials, whatever. This is something that is new now to the educational culture of Barbados. I think we need reform to have a defined policy on refurbishment of school plants both secondary and primary and we should be more proactive rather than reactive. I know that the Honourable Minister would get up and say that during summer vacations hundreds of thousands of dollars is spent to refurbish some schools but clearly they seem certainly from our side, there seem to be no defined proactive policy in terms of refurbishment of school plants and the environs and the upkeep of them so every other month we hear about some school plant breaking down, whether it is Lawrence T. Gay, Combermere, whatever and this should not be happening because it is downtime for students when this happens

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Clearly, it is not good to hear in our proud educational system that the water is off where children at the Grantley Adams Memorial School, for example, lost tremendous amount of time because of water problems in certain areas. That should not be the case, Mr. Chairman. These are our youth that we are talking about.

In terms of what the Honourable Minister said about not exposing young children to entrepreneurial skills early, the fact is that, the first five years of your life, and I think we agree on principle, are the main years for development. I think that 90 per cent of your brain power is formed in the first five years of your life, and this is the age that you are most amenable to development. Yes, it is true that our young children should be given the chance to develop their social skills, their interactive skills, their independence, their self-esteem, their self-confidence and a spirit of voluntarism. All of that should be inculcated in our primary school children.

The primary school stage is also where they are best able to learn in terms of drama, music and foreign languages. I know again that it is going to be said that

Spanish is taught in some primary schools but I do not get the impression that there is any defined and sustained teaching of Spanish or French as a foreign language. We have said this many times. This is something that needs to be done. It cannot be that the future of our youth going forward is that we only speak one language. We are surrounded by Spanish territories in Latin America and South America. We are part of a clearly narrowing global system and it is important that our young people who are able get conversational training in terms of a foreign language, whether it be French or Spanish, and the primary school stage is the best age that these issues can be done.

I know that my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, mentioned the issue of curriculum reform. She does not think that it is too necessary at this stage but the fact of the matter is that we have not had curriculum reform in our educational system since 2000 when that Honourable Member herself was Parliamentary Secretary under the ministerial leadership of the Leader of the Opposition, and therefore the question still has to arise as to what is the ministry's policy on this. Is there going to be no curriculum reform until the time for elections when we are concentrating on science, technology and music.

We want to develop a new cultural industry. The Honourable Prime Minister and Honourable Members on the other side spoke on this during this debate that we need the creation of new economies in this country. My colleague, the Honourable Member for St. George South, spoke in terms of the development of energy as an industry, but these things do not happen by happenchance, these have to be planned in terms of strategic moves and this could only be done largely through our educational system and through the development of our youth. What is the policy?

Yes, again the Honourable Member for St. Thomas raised it in terms of the Common Entrance Examination. The Common Entrance Examination is a relic of our colonial past. Most of the former British colonies have moved away from that. The question arises as to whether one day should determine to some extent the future eight years educationally of a child. Certainly, I know that this was mooted under the last Barbados Labour Party regime. Should we expand that to have a series of tests rather than a one-day test when you might be feeling psychologically down or you might be sick and then that determines your future eight years? The fact of the matter is that many of our young people fall out of or into the trap arising from the Common Entrance Examination. If they do not do well, they get stigmatised and put into particular streams. Mr. Chairman, this is not good because we have to look after the most vulnerable of our society, those who are not high flyers. While our educational system has been great, it is one of the best of the world in terms those who are

successful, the high flyers, but we also have to be mindful of those who are marginalised by our educational system.

Mr. Chairman, I know that the Honourable Minister may very well bring facts to show that what I am saying here is not true that about 40 per cent or maybe more than 40 per cent, we do not know the figures and we would hope he could bring them, of children leaving secondary school leave without certification. I know it would also be said that the Ministry is trying to deal with this in a way by bringing Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQs) to the sector but where are we in terms of that educational reform that we are not deeming young people on the verge of adulthood failures because they leave the secondary schools without the necessary certification.

Mr. Chairman, as I have said in the Second Reading debate on a different issue, the World Bank has no brief for the Barbados Labour Party or axe to grind for the Government, but the fact is that their figures show that 6.1 per cent of all the students who sit CXC's do not get four CXC's, and again that is something that has to be of concern. You know that Honourable Minister well, because you sought to respond to it. You responded to it feebly and did not counter what the good lady of the World Bank said.

Mr. Chairman, we have to be mindful of the marginalised of our society as the Honourable Member for St. George South said because these are the students who will get into problems and who society later on in life will have to pay a high cost for if we do not mind their development early on.

The issue has arisen on both sides about the need for guidance counsellors/psychologists in all of our primary schools. We have people graduating in sociology and psychology a dime a dozen in the university, why have we not develop that. To me that would have been a better spend of money, because again we are talking about how to maximise the spend of money, than the 72 odd guard huts that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas speaks about a lot. Rather than building them, you could have employed the psychologists and the guidance counsellors because children do come to school with issues arising from their homes and the teachers may not be fully trained to deal with these kinds of problems.

Mr. Chairman, I join Honourable Members in giving tremendous kudos to the teachers who are working under tremendous pressure having been promised, of course, duty-free cars in the 2008 Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party but far less than getting duty-free cars they have not even been given an increase of salary for nine years now and still they are working tremendously hard under extremely difficult conditions. Four hundred of them had to fight tooth and nail to be appointed after being promise their appointment for two years by the Honourable

Minister and then only 400 odd and not the 700 that had been promised have been appointed, so tremendous kudos to the teachers, they are the heart and soul of our country. Mr. Chairman, these are the issues that we have to confront.

We have an Education Act, we are speaking of reform, that has not been reformed or amended in any way since the early 1980s. I think it was the 1981 or 1982 Education Act.

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The Honourable Member has promised some amendments to that Act but we have not seen any Bill whatsoever to that effect. Mr. Chairman, clearly there is a need to reform the Education Act to clarify the roles of the various stakeholders in the system. There seems to be a clash in terms of that as we have issues arising every now and then between the role of the principal, the Board of Management and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation. This needs to be defined better in an amended Education Act to reflect the modern approaches to education, its management and its administration.

Mr. Chairman, the Education Act which we presently have speaks to a National Advisory Committee at section 6, it speaks to the fact that it should be a standing National Advisory Committee. Mr. Chairman, clearly that is not the case. Mr. Chairman, yes, we had an Education Advisory Committee a few years back in the first term of this Administration, a lot of the recommendations that that Committee had put forward have not been implemented in that 2010-2011 report. Where are we with a standing body as the Act speaks to? Where are we in terms of reform in terms of the Teachers Service Commission? Mr. Chairman, we have raised this point already, the Honourable Member really needs to take the opportunity to sit, even if it is for the benefit of the teachers unions across the island because in 2011, I believe it was, the Honourable Member said that a Teacher Service Commission would have been put before Parliament very soon and that he had consulted other Teachers' Unions on the issue, yet we have heard nothing about that, certainly since I came to Parliament. Mr. Chairman, the 1974 constitutional amendments made by the then Democratic Labour Party Administration sets out a Teachers Service Commission as a separate and apart from the Public Service Commission under which teachers appointments and disappointments now fall. These are all issues which we need to speak about.

Mr. Chairman, I will deal with the University of the West Indies education in another intervention but the issue is having now by their actions of imposition of tuition fees lessened the numbers of Barbadians attending the University of the West Indies, one would have thought that

a Government would have used the opportunity to enhance technical and vocational education at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic by putting more funds into that institution, by fulfilling its Democratic Labour Party Manifesto promises as were given in the Throne Speech of putting a polytechnic in the north. I see the Honourable Member for St. Lucy there and I wonder what is the Honourable Member's position on this.

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

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, all of that has not been done and so the question is, what is the Ministry's policy on technical and vocational development? I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, I could join the Honourable Member and create a shopping list or a repetitive list of this, that and the third. It is not going to be my intention to so do, outside of creating certain clarifications and then returning to the core of what I want to be my presentation. Mr. Chairman, let me clarify a few things, the Honourable Member for St. George South looked into the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and saw what is referred to as the domestic programme, that naming culture has been in existence for a long time. Mr. Chairman, it is now \$3.9 million, up from previous year before, is done on what is called the normal routine maintenance of schools. There is also the summer programme which some 18 to 20 school are looked at every year.

Mr. Chairman, I remember sometimes it takes to bites, from summer to summer, to being a school up to scratch because you have only about eight weeks before you can have schools ready for the start of the new term, so that a school mentioned, for example, St. Silas Primary, Orange Hill, would have major work over the last two summers, 2015 and 2016. I would know because there are excellent principals and teachers at that school. We would have worked assiduously to ensure that whatever we encountered there would have been dealt with and so we have had that at the St. Silas Primary.

Mr. Chairman, we have had major work done over time because I believe the school at St. Alban's Primary School has a relatively new block done under the Edu-Tech Programme. Sometimes when you say that a school is bad all that it might need might be some paint to bring it out, but the St. Albans School would have had a major new block put down by the previous Government while the existing block was majorly refurbished, so maybe what can happen -- and if Honourable Member for St. James North is

looked at well along the coastal strip maybe the Honourable Member can do a bit of mobilisation because the Honourable Member can also encourage community work to have paint put on that establishment.

Mr. Chairman, I know that major work has been done at St. Silas' Primary School in 2015 and 2016 and I visited that school in the summer of 2015 on completion of the work. I also visited, along with the Parliamentary Secretary, the Permanent Secretary, persons from the Project Unit and others to that school in the summer of 2016. In fact, when the workmen were closing up the project I was able to at least have two of the breadfruits from the tree on the western side of that School. This is to show you that I am extremely familiar with the school and with the work done. It was the school where the former wife of a former Minister of Agriculture was Principal. I know every school in this country, I know every principal. I would not say I know every teacher and I know the work that is being done there. Mr. Chairman, I have been in education for 37 years, not only in teaching but now in Administration and so these things do not miss me.

Mr. Chairman, even though it has had work done on it over time, St. Jude's Primary School is a problematic school because it is constructed in the main of coral stones, but major work has been done there. We brought in the environmental people and did the appropriate solutions and now you would find that there are hardly any complaints. There are also the prefab units to help to ease any pressure on that school.

Mr. Chairman, you would know what the problem in relation to Ellerton Primary School was and if you look at Ellerton today... Yes, you did show some interest, I would not deny that, but we have done major work there. There were issues in relation to the birds and to the infestation of rats coming from the heavily wooded area. Mr. Chairman, that wooded area which was removed and I hope that it has not grown back. There was also an issue in relation to a stench coming from the south where some animals were being fed. I do not know who lives below the school but I am told that the father of the Honourable Member for St. George South actually lives to the south of the school and that he is an excellent small farmer.

Mr. Chairman, I would not say that rats like food and therefore would partake of some of the grain and feed. I am saying I do not know if that is the case because all along that strip with your assistance rat bait was put down, so do not tell me not to go there. You do not want me to acknowledge your commitment to Ellerton Primary, it is in the heart of your constituency? You lived right there for a good time of your life, so do not let us deny these truths.

5.01 p.m.

Let me clarify, and I am going to share again statistics with you, the Honourable Member for St. James North. One understands statistics by looking at the lowest number in a series. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas, I know, asked the planning section to provide her with statistics when she was there and kept herself familiar with those statistics. I am just going to use 2015 and then I am going to use two other years to share with you what you have repeated out of, I guess, parroting someone's misunderstanding of the dynamics of Barbadian education. Before I do that, I have said to this House and in other places that in 2016 Barbados was rated as the ninth best educational system in the world.

Aside.

Hon. R.D. JONES: The ninth best. I have the statistics and I have the Document. It is not the 22nd. It is the ninth best educational system in the world, so do not contradict that. MR. CHAIRMAN: Address the Chair, please.

Hon. R.D. JONES: We started with schools in places like Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Qatar, Singapore, Korea and Japan, et cetera, and in there was Barbados at No. 9. There were three countries rated at Number 9. Asides. MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please continue your speech and ignore....

Hon. R.D. JONES: It is the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report for 2016. Let us deal with the facts. I do not know what document he is reading from. I am reading from my information. MR. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment. Honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: On a Point of Order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. In fact, I have the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report of 2016-2017 here, and it ranks Barbados 22nd as to the quality of its education system, 20th in terms of maths and sciences, and a decline.... MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, but the Member is reading from his document and you are reading from yours. When you get an opportunity, rebut that. Please take your seat and let us go on. Thank you very much.

Hon. R.D. JONES: I am past that. The notion of deconstruction is heavy on the breast of the Member, Sir, so everything has to be deconstructed. Now let us deal with the issue of 6.4 per cent of our students getting four or more subjects at a May-June sitting. Sir, in 2015 I have 22 secondary schools but 21 of those actually do mostly CSEC (Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate), with Alma Parris as an alternative secondary school which does not do as many so it is not within the matrix. The first school, and that is the school at the base, in 2015 with students passing four or more subjects in the May-June sitting, had 16 per

cent of its students with four or more. If your school at the base in the system gets 16 per cent or more, you have to reason that you could not have 6.4 per cent of the students only getting four or more. At that time, that school was Frederick Smith Secondary. In fact, let us go to the middle. If we go in the middle we had Coleridge and Parry and Alleyne with 65 per cent of the students scoring four or more. Unfortunately, what the lady had as she presented was extremely inaccurate. Let me finish the first point. At the top of the pole you will find that schools like Queen's College, Harrison College and St. Michael would be scoring 91-96 per cent with four or more; so I gave you the top, the middle and the bottom. Let us say for argument's sake -- I am helping you here because you are making heavy weather of an incorrect statistic, 6.4 per cent -- that you had 4 000 entries in the May-June exam and you only had 6.4 per cent, that would give you about 250 children only who would have had four or more. You would therefore see the almost irrelevance of that particular statistic. If you had 250 children in 2015 only, Community College would not have one child in it because their standard is four at one sitting or five or more at two sittings. Look at the statistic, consider the statistic. Some of those children also go directly to the University of the West Indies (UWI), so there would be no children at the UWI. That is why I am saying rather than reciting a litany or a shopping list, look at the facts. That was 2015, which is just about a year or two ago. Let me just share another one with you so that you understand rather than just reciting litany. In 2008 when this Government came to power, we had 13 per cent for one school and, as you follow through the system, it went as high as 98 per cent. One can almost guess what that school is; it was Harrison College with 98 per cent with four or more, Queen's College with 97 per cent with four or more, the St. Michael School with 91 per cent with four or more, Combermere with 87 per cent with four or more, Deighton Griffith, Lodge, Alleyne, Ellerslie, St. Leonard's Boys' 40 per cent and upwards; 41 per cent with four or more. These are the facts. These cannot be hatched in any addled egg. For one final one, let us go to 1996, and if you remember the tragedy of St. George so it did not score four or more. Deighton Griffith had just come on the stream so it started with nine per cent with four or more; a new school now emerging and now in the 70s. Graydon Sealy had 15 per cent with four or more. The Lodge School went through its struggles, and had 52 per cent with four or more. You still had Queen's, Harrison and Combermere all in the 90s with four or more. Please, I am asking you not to repeat what satisfies you because it is suggesting something about Education. In 1996, we were not the Government but these are the figures, the facts; so in 2015 when greater numbers were in fact writing the exam you were still having an increase in numbers at the base. Significant value-added is being added to Education rather than this 6.4. I hope the Honourable Member understands the point. If 4 000 students are writing the exam, ten per cent of that would be only 400; so 6.4 per

cent would have to be about 264. There would be no students at the Barbados Community College. You would not have a student at UWI; so please engage the brain. No, no. This is Barbados. Man, engage your brain rather than making cheap political points. Anybody from far and away can come and tell you anything and you want to destroy your country? Stop it. Stop it. You say you went to HC (Harrison College). It still rules the totem pole based on its collection of students there, and I applaud it. They do excellent work. Man, let it shine out. These are the facts. If you have the absence of statistics, I promise you not to give you any because you will misinterpret those as well. Just please stop it. Do not let us drag our nation down to satisfy these narrow, partisan political foolishness. The facts are here, and I will move on. H:No.D7D (18) 5.05 p.m. The quality of the work being done by teachers even among those students who have issues with learning it brought out and deliver to this country great work and I can share more with you. The firmer point, Sir, the students who, I would not say four or more, because some students spent two years in a lower fifth and an upper fifth and when you combine those scores you will find because one plus about 72 per cent of our students. In fact, under the leadership of the Minister who had responsibility for education between 1994 and whenever she concluded her service there the numbers actually went up from about 57 or 62 per cent to around 66 per cent, 69 per cent and at one time 70 per cent.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please conclude.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you, Sir. They have not fallen. Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. Miss. S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise to just make a brief intervention into the Head of Education.

I want to start at the outset by placing this intervention certainly in a context. Having spent the last three days debating the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure we are now asked to consider firstly the Head of Education and I believe we will get on to the Head of Healthcare. We are doing so against a background where even after the conclusion of the Minister of Finance's wrap up yesterday, I think the country is no clearer as to what the position is of the Government as it relates to how they are going to, whether it is cut expenditure or how it is that they are actually going to produce growth in the Barbadian economy.

These Estimates has been prepared against the background where two weeks ago the Minister of Finance announced to this country that at least for another year there will be a continuation of the printing of money. We then heard in the Estimates on Monday that the Minister of Finance was now taking the position that according to him, the policy is not a sustainable policy to continue to print

money, it does not work well, according to him, it does not look good, it does not smell good and it is not good for the country. We agree on This Side that is the position but after the wrap up yesterday I think it is not clear to the country still the Government's position is in relation to these Estimates. You have the Prime Minister of this country indicating that there are two committees that have been set up to advised the Government of Barbados in relation to the way forward. It means that these Estimates have been prepared against a background where, whatever is in here could very well change over the course of the next few weeks when those two committees report to the country. We have a situation where we have heard of the economic council that was to advise the Government of Barbados, again we have heard nothing further on that since the establishment of the two committees by the Prime Minister of Barbados and so the context in which we are even reviewing these Estimates, I am just begging the question, Mr. Chairman, perhaps it would not be a better exercise on the part of the Minister of Education to perhaps indicate to the country what are the priorities in the Ministry of Education in the event as we have now found ourselves in a situation where what may be in these Estimates may perhaps change over the course of the next week, the next few days and certainly over the course of the next few months. I start there, Mr. Chairman, because we have said on This Side that basically these estimates are pretty much farcical. They present a picture which, in some cases, of increased revenue, increased expenditure and in some cases of lowered expenditure but the reality is that if as the predictions are not just locally amongst local economists and certainly all of the observers looking in on Barbados that there are going to have severe cuts made to education and to healthcare. That is what is being predicted. If it is that we are to go into any kind of structural adjustment programme, certainly with any international organisation it is clear that this Administration would have to re-examine what is in these Estimates. What concerns me is that back in 2013 when the Minister of Finance indicated that he was cutting the ability of persons who wanted to pursue tertiary education, it was against ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Just a moment. Honourable Members, please, please, please. The cross-talking we are trying to restrict that. Thank you.

Miss. S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Sir. It was against a background, Mr. Chairman, that primary education, primary schools, nursery schools, secondary schools, the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic were costing less in terms of expenditure than the cost of the expenditure that as being placed on the University of the West Indies. It was against that background that the country was told we had to cut the budget of the University of the West Indies because if you total all of the expenditure and all the other areas, we were spending more on the University of the West Indies and it

was not sustainable. Mr. Chairman, I have concerns that if, in fact, Barbados is in the perilous state that we find ourselves in that children who today in my constituency certainly and in others that are now facing situations where parents are having to choose which children to send to school on certain days, whether they can allow all of their children to participate in school extra-curricular activities, whether they can afford the cost of providing paper to the school because in a lot of cases the school does not have the paper, whether they are able to provide the extra-curricular activities for their children that these Estimates are being considered against a background that, I believe, the Minister of Education needs to level with this country as to whether any decisions have been taken in terms of what are the priorities for this Administration.

It is a fact, Mr. Chairman, that you have a situation now where, I believe the emphasis has to be on early childhood education. It has to be placed there. We have several children across Barbados who are coming out of school without certificates and without skills. I heard one of my colleagues indicated, and it was supported by the Other Side, that we needed to expand the Barbados Youth Service. I take the view that while you may expand the Barbados Youth Service greater emphasis has to be placed on providing at the early childhood level, persons within the school system with the necessary tools to be able to identify problems and challenges from our children at an early age. Children do not become deviant at the age of 16. They do not become deviant at the age of 21. In many of our children, you can identify the problems from almost as early as nursery school and so I think it is expedient that even in this debate that we focussed our minds on what may be the priorities that lie ahead in this country, in relation to a decline in our foreign reserves as we know even up to today they continue to decline, that there will be pressure placed on the Government of Barbados in terms of making serious decisions about what to spend on and what not to spend and that we find ourselves in a situation where it cannot be business as usual. We cannot come here and talk about what the Barbados Labour Party did and what the Democratic Labour Party did. Against a background where it is clear, that any further structural adjustment programme may indeed result in a low of jobs. I have not heard the Minister address that at all. If it is that we are going to talk about these Estimates, I believe that those are things that the country Barbados wants to hear. Are jobs going to be affected in the Ministry of Education? Are people going to be sent home? Is it going to affect the distribution and the allocation of resources to the Ministry of Education at a time when children in our system are already finding difficulty to be able to attend school and be able to take in the necessary learning to be able to give them the opportunity to be productive citizens in this country. Mr. Chairman, this is a very serious, serious juncture in which we find ourselves. I recall a couple months ago there was a young lady who is a blogger, a

young entrepreneur and I believe she has taught in the system already as well and she highlighted through perhaps not the politically correct way in which many people would agree that she should have voiced her opinion on the school system but she highlighted issues within the school system that I believe we cannot ignore and she highlighted issues that related to the fact that there were children who were coming to school and whom the parents seems to have neglected in terms of their education at home and expected that teachers were supposed to basically fulfil the obligation to train those children and to teach those children outside of the course of what they had to do. It also raised the issue that teachers are under pressure in our system. There are children, particularly at those young ages who are experiencing severe problems because sometimes the parents are not working and so it is very difficult for the parents too to spend time with the children because they are trying to be able to provide for their families but at the same time there is also cases where there are severe problems because sometimes the parents are not working and so it very difficult for the parents to spend time with the children because they are trying to be able to provide for their families.

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At the same time, there are also cases where parents had neglected their children as well and they are sent into a school system where the school teachers are expected to be able to provide the necessary educational support for these children. You are dealing with classrooms that are still very large in this country, Mr. Chairman, and children who are entering the school system with a lot of educational deficits and a lot of challenges.

Mr. Chairman, I am one that believes that there needs to be guidance counsellors in our primary schools. I believe so because again children do not start to be deviant at secondary school and so the interventions have to happen from an earlier age. If it is that we anticipate that things are going to get tougher in this country, I think that we have to have a laser-like approach to dealing with early childhood education and certainly giving the future generation the ability to have the greatest exposure to the best resources that are possible in our country.

We have to engage and deploy the resources at the primary school level and at the nursery school level. Let us not wait until things get out of hand and we are not able to nip these things in the bud. Too many of our children are falling through the cracks. They are being promoted in the school system without passing at a high level to be able to move on to the next level, and we are going to see more of that. Given the way in which the country is going we are going to see more of it, we are going to see more children falling through the cracks and I would hope that one of the priorities, certainly coming out of this debate for this

Ministry, would certainly be to allocate the limited resources that are there but certainly to review the resources that may have to be altered over the course of the next few weeks and months to ensure that early childhood education plays a pivotal role in certainly addressing some of the deficits that I anticipate are going to come.

I am obliged Mr. Chairman.

On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.35 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 5.35 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

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RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, Honourable Members, this Sitting is resumed. When the Suspension was taken we were on Government Business, Committee of Supply. We shall now revert to Government Business.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (REVERT)

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of Government Business.

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

(1) To grant the sum of \$1 312 739 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates, 2016-2017, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 14, 2016-2017, which form the Schedule to the Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, under Government Business we were on Order 20, Committee of Supply, and to that we shall now revert.

Mr. SPEAKER VACATED THE CHAIR. Mr. CHAIRMAN ASSUMED THE CHAIR.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee of Supply. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Committee of Supply (Revert)

Hon. C. P. SINKLER: Mr. Chairman, as I spend a few moments on this particular Head, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation and his team at the Ministry for an outstanding job in the most difficult of circumstances. I believe the Honourable Member is by now the longest serving Minister of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation in Barbados. I am not sure about the Commonwealth, but if the Honourable Member is not the longest serving Minister, he is one of the longest serving Ministers of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation, being himself an educator by profession and coming into the Ministry at an extremely challenging period when we were buffeted by the winds and the waging waters of a global recession that has had its impact on Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I make that point because it is generally considered to be easier to function in circumstances when there is much money around, when there are a lot of resources available at your disposal to do programmes because in a country such as Barbados, a small open developing country which is reaching for a greater level of development status, you tend to have -- I would not say grandiose ideas because that puts a colour on the ambition that is not exactly fair -- but you tend to have fairly big ideas as to how you can improve or enhance, where you have already protect your systems, policies and programmes in an area like that of education. Mr. Chairman, it is important that you do that because of course in a country like Barbados where, as I would have said earlier in this Honourable House, there is not a vast expanse, deposit or catchment of natural resources, your most significant resource is your people and therefore education is as important a resource, as important an input or intervention as perhaps any other input that you can put into the society and its people, save for the health of the nation.

Mr. Chairman, to have come into a circumstance where the conditions were nothing short of hostile for the Minister of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation to be hearing from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs that though we understand "X" idea, though we understand "Y" programme by way of ambition and intent but that because the resources are not available and at our disposal to give to you, then you have to adumbrate your ambitions to the extent where some programme may have to be shelved, while others may have to be redesigned in order for them to fit within the available resources, as scarce as they are. Mr. Chairman, the Minister

and his team, I believe in the last nine years, have taken hold of the circumstances confronting them and have successfully defended, in the first instance, the provisioning and access to that provisioning of education resources to the population of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I say this not as any boast but as a pure reality when one looks at the things that have been able to be achieved or that have been achieved in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation. Mr. Chairman, the Minister has and will get enough time, I hope during this debate, to iterate those things which have happened in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation and in education policy as it relates to the provisioning for that ministry, whether it is in nursery education, primary education, postsecondary, secondary and tertiary level, whether it is in the systems that are necessary to allow for the provision of those services at an administration, technical, communications or human resource level. Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation has really been, almost like a bulwark in the fight for Barbados to maintain a high level of delivery of social services in Barbados and this is simply a reality.

Mr. Chairman, if there is one legacy and I remember having a conversation with a former editor of a major newspaper about this when he had written an article in the newspaper asking about the legacy of the current minister, he was making the point that you can point to the legacy of the former Education Minister, Dame Billie Miller, you can point to the legacy of the former Minister of Education, Erskine Sandiford, to the late Sir James Tudor. He asked what is it that this current Minister has left as a legacy. I had to point out to him that if nothing else -- and there are other things to which we can point -- this current Minister of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation has put down an irremovable stake in the education landscape of Barbados that highlights the issue of nursery education and early childhood education.

Mr. Chairman, it is absolutely indisputable and cannot be contradicted that this Minister has moved the needle so significantly that Barbados is now considered to be a leader in the region and in this hemisphere in relation to early childhood education: the amount of nursery schools built, the sophistication of those nursery schools built, that he has overseen in terms of plant, in terms of the training provided for teachers. Mr. Chairman, the things that we do not say openly or that we do not trumpet but I know as a matter of fact that there are significantly larger numbers of teachers who have gone on to do training in early childhood education, some have even gone beyond Masters level

and some even beyond that. They have been brought back into the system where they have shared that knowledge with their peers who may not have been as fortunate as yet; I say "as yet" because a lot of them are still in line to go off to do their training. When you think about the fact that the Minister has led the way in saying to the Ministry, "One of the things that I want you to focus on when you are doing, for example, the National Development Scholarship, is the issue of early childhood education, the issue of the differentiated skills in linguistics and speech therapy." I follow the Ministry. As Minister of Finance, I am required to read all the briefs; I really am required to read and I do read them. To interface and engage with Ministries, you really have to read the information that they send; otherwise, you cannot question them on the policies. When we think about these things, it shows a clear line of direction. The reason why the Minister has been doing that is not by happenstance or because he likes early childhood education as an interdisciplinary part of the entire discipline of education, but because the Minister has always said at Cabinet level and in his public utterances that though the last Government adopted a policy which saw significant amounts of resources.... We spoke about that in here in our Second Reading speeches, when we discussed the Appropriation Bill; about the amount of money that was being spent at the highest level of the tertiary system at the UWI. We are all happy for all the Barbadians who have been able to go there and be educated. There is that pyramid which we normally consider and which Sir Arthur Lewis would have spoken about in his early writings on education in Africa, not even in the Caribbean, by the way; that pyramid of educational investment and learning to show that in fact it is the more ideal policy to have the larger amount of spending being done at the lower end or at the base of the pyramid, and moving through to the top. The last Government, through its own policy, had kind of switched the pyramid upside down where a vaster amount of resources were being spent at the top while the bottom was being starved of the resources. Therefore, at some point in time Sir Arthur Lewis predicted that countries which followed that particular model would tend over time to find that their educational investment policy was leaning because the base was getting smaller while the top was getting bigger. The thing was teetering like when you spin a top in mud; top-heavy, as we call it. The Minister of Education had a fundamentally different vision of what should happen in Education in Barbados; not that you would starve the UWI at the highest tertiary level from getting resources but that you would have a more even distribution of the resources to ensure that, based on the fundamental policy of the understanding of Education, the top cannot be superior if the bottom is starved and inferior; that the throughput going up has to be better if in fact you are going to reap the gains of what you have at the upper end of the educational system. The Minister and his Ministry therefore took a deliberate policy to say to the

Ministry of Finance, “Yes, we want to maintain or see good levels of spending at the tertiary level, at the highest level, but we want to see more resources put into early childhood education, nursery, primary and secondary as well so that you can have a better and more secured throughput going up into the upper levels of the system.” You would see that for the nine years which the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has been Minister, there has been that gradual rebalancing of the resources to ensure at all levels -- the levels of plant and human resources -- the actual financial resources available. The Minister has tried to rebalance that spend which we found askew when we came into office. One of the fundamental parts of the revision of that policy was for the Minister and his Ministry to say to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs that we spend some additional resources in expanding the number of Sixth Form schools. I know this has been a topic which has been discussed for many years, and nobody really took the bull by the horns. Nobody had the intestinal fortitude and the intellectual foresight, as the Honourable Minister and his team did, to jump in and do the analysis and begin to expand those Sixth Form schools. I certainly know from reading the briefs and the forward estimates and so forth from the Ministry that they are very good intentions to expand those levels, and to expand them in the areas in which that expansion is coming. That is another cog. You see the early childhood education built out. I know the Minister will do it, but I really should take the opportunity as Minister of Finance to thank the Maria Holder Trust in particular for their outstanding contribution which continues to the expansion of a top part of the provisioning of the Ministry’s programme. I think they really should be commended for doing so, and for partnering with the Ministry in this particular regard. We saw, in going into not only doing the Sixth Forms but in what is being taught in those Sixth Forms, the provision of opportunities. People feel that when you provide additional Sixth Forms, it is only an opportunity for the children, but it is also an opportunity for many teachers to be able to have an opportunity to specialise in particular areas and be able to utilise those skills which otherwise would have been latent because they could not have taught beyond the normal Fifth Form. They are now going into CAPE (Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination) and teaching the schools-based assessment programmes on an expanded level, so it helps them to utilise those skills which they had that were more latent, and give them the opportunity to be in there to work with the students. This is the kind of thing we have seen from the Ministry as we kind of rebalance the pyramid, so to speak, in the spending on Education. Another area which the Minister and his team has focused on is that of technical education. This is a really exceedingly strong intervention in relation to ensuring that we equip students. As I said and as the Minister said early today, “We are not just equipping students with a certificate.” I always make this point: Certification is important. I heard one Honourable Member speak and I

cannot really blame it on Lent and say that there are some things in Lent which you must give up. I have given up listening to that particular Honourable Member from St. Michael South East, because I really feel that when you deliver a speech you should write your own speech and not repeat things that people send you on WhatsApp or email. I have given up listening to that Honourable Member, running up and down, not really fully understanding what was WhatsApped to her and just repeating it because it sounds pretty for a time. I have given up that not just for Lent. I have given up that totally. H:No.D7D (22) 6.02 p.m.

I am not listening to any of that but the point that I really want to make because when time is limited you really have to value ... The Prime Minister always says it, it is like a car. If you put in the wrong type of engine oil you cannot get the performance. If you do not control what goes in here, nothing of consequence will come out that is why I try to control what goes in here so there are some people that I am just not listening to. The point of the matter is this. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central and his team at the ministry have ably demonstrated that, in terms of technical levels, they understand that not everybody is going to come out with five CXC’s or three CAPE’s or eight CXC’s or whatever the case may be but that there are other skill sets, there are other interests and so working with his team, they have devised policies that have ??? for the introduction of NVQs and CVQs in the system which have now been expanded and intensified in a Ministry that we have been told does not have any money, has not done anything, cannot do anything, will have to shut down next week because the country is running out of reserves and all of these things that this scare tactics and rumour mongering that has now become the substitute for common sense speech. As I come to bring this part of this particular contribution because I will come back because I want to speak about university education I just want to highlight those particular things that the Ministry has done because I want to go on to speak now about the introduction of the degree programmes at the Barbados Community College, the degree programmes at the Erdiston Teachers’ Training College and so forth, but I wanted to make those early points as we begin to flesh out this particular debate.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, when I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West I thought I was hearing a eulogy for the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. I also recognise that he has tremendous eyes because I also asked myself the question. The Minister is my friend, really. The Minister has been a long serving teacher like myself and I asked myself the question that having served in the Ministry of Education for over nine long years, we want to compliment him for

having the eyes of two Prime Ministers to allow him to remain in that ministry. He has also presided over the most intense revenue, I should say. He has spent almost BDS\$9 billion in those nine years. I took pains to go through to find that the Minister has spent over BDS\$9 billion. He is the longest serving Minister and I ask myself the question: What is the success of my friend, Minister Jones and what can we call the singularly most achievement of the Minister. I was asking to myself: what can we call the Jones amendment and I find it very hard that it reminds me of a guy who goes into a situation and decides that he is not going to touch anything, he is not going to do anything wrong because he does not want anybody to blame him for changing anything. Hence the Minister cannot be blamed for not touching the 11 plus, the CXC, has done nothing to the School Meals Department. The Minister has claimed as his very own the nursery education even though he found that St. Boniface had been built, All Saints, St. Giles and the Thelma Berry Nursery School as started was started. I want to compliment the Minister for carrying out the Barbados Labour Party's programme and we have to say so because we know that there are some historians in here who do not like history at all but who make up their own history, like the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. He distorts everything and he needs to follow at least the Prime Minister who would come and say I recognise that we have a point but you might be wrong in certain places. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said the Minister brought to Cabinet, this is a wonderful programme of a new revolutionary concept in nursery education, but we want to tell the Minister that we have a document called promises and performances which identify the concept. I was at Cabinet and I paid attention to education when the former Prime Minister said that we want to spend a lot of time and energy on nursery education however I think one can say that the sixth form schools, as far as I am concerned, was expanded. We want to talk about that because I need to talk about the sixth form schools in its present state. It was not revolutionary we were just carrying on a colonial programme of sixth form schools that were started years ago and whose curriculum, to my mind is nothing exciting. I would have thought that if you would have put in a more technical wing, for example, when we brought in the Vocational Training Board the element of that was to promote technical education in Barbados for the youngest and for the people who did not have the CXCs and so on and I thought that would have been done. I must say that over the last nine years, he has spent more money than any Minister of Education. I believe he needs to tell us the whole prescription for a new diet at the School Meals Department. I am not happy and people have been saying this and I want to hear what new programmes you are leaving in place because at 10 years a minister has to look at his legacy. What legacy would he be leaving for a new School Meals Programme? What legacy would he be leaving for the tertiary education as far as the University of the West Indies is concerned? Certainly, my friend, you

would be going down in history as the Minister that stopped a lot of children from going to the University of the West Indies. You would have to explain to your children and grandchildren what made you, as Minister, because you have to explain this. This is part of the success and part of the Jones' amendment.

I remember saying to you eight years ago and I do not have it written down that you have to look at early detection of learning disabilities. One of the biggest problems and I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West mention it just now that there are too many children who are still not able to read.

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Of course, as a teacher we always teach the 3Rs, that is the fundamentals, reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic. I want to find out if you are satisfied that at the early age too many children are still not able to read and write and comprehend. We need to look at that. I think that as a teacher you should be able to put a policy in place for the school system to detect those types of children and also those with disabilities. Disabilities happen to be one of the problems that many people face because there are many children who do not learn not because they cannot learn but because of a disability that cannot be identified so readily by the school system. Mr. Chairman, I believe that we have to go forward. A revolution in education can only take place if you are able to detect those children at an early age who have this disability, so we definitely need to look at this.

I listened today to some Honourable Members who asked if you are satisfied, having spent so much money in education, with the success you are getting, the quality that we deserve. When I look sometimes coming out of the WhatsApp at children in the bus terminals fighting, I do not want to call the schools, are you satisfied that the teachers in the system are really teaching those children how to settle problems among themselves rather than fighting. Many children, Mr. Chairman, as soon as they leave school they fight and I wonder what is the head teachers doing about this. We cannot be satisfied in this Committee that we are spending so much money in education and yet we have young children ripping off one another clothes in the bus terminal and in the buses and tearing out the bus seats. We cannot be satisfied and we have to send a signal to the school system Mr. Minister that we are not satisfied. I think that the head teachers who can be identified need to be called to the Ministry and say to them that they have to manage their plant much better, and we demand that at this stage. I mean children will fight among themselves everywhere but I believe that we have to demand better.

Mr. Chairman, I would want to speak on the school bus system, I do not think I have time, because I started

that pilot project. At the Ministry of Transport and Works we were looking at a pilot project. The Democratic Labour Party came into office and without looking at any of the various papers decided to introduce a free bus service, but we were going to introduce it putting in place supervision. You cannot send 50 children on a bus without supervision. I believe very soon somebody might very well sue the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation because those children fight and do all sorts of things in those buses without supervision. Children must always be supervised from school right through. From the time children leave home they should be supervised.

Mr. Chairman, I would have thought that the Minister who was a member of the union would have introduced education for parents.

Asides.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: We will have to discuss this because I feel that there are many parents that need education too because as a parent I would not be able to see my son or my daughter fighting in the bus stand and did not correct or chastise my child. I believe that the school system in Barbados needs to go forward because we are spending too much money on those children but I am not sure if we are seeing the results based on what we are spending.

Mr. Chairman, I would want to come back on this later today. I thank you.

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

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a short intervention here. Mr. Chairman, I left primary school at Four Roads 45 years ago and one of the things I remember is that the Brathwaite's clan and the Skeete's clan, I think they are called, had a fight going on for almost a year. My point is that we behave like if all of these things are new. What is new is the technology. When I went into Harrison College in 1972 there were guys smoking weed and drinking liquor like they are today. I am not saying that it is right, all I am saying is that we paint this present generation like if the things they are doing are new.

Mr. Chairman, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East making a connection between what the Government is doing and what is happening in the schools and I do not understand it, it is uncharitable to say the least. The Government Industrial School is more than 100 years old, so a 100 years ago there was a need for a reform school for boys. They did not just create it because they had nothing else to do. It did not start in 2008. They did not create it because they had nothing else to do but

because there were challenges in our society with young men and I am sure that there were challenges more than 100 years ago because as we always say boys will be boys and stuff. Mr. Chairman, what our responsibility is in modern Barbados is to see how we can address and save more of our young persons.

Mr. Chairman, the Criminal Justice Research Unit has a programme where young boys and girls are sent to them when they recognise that these young children need some intervention outside of the regular schooling, et cetera and they would have social workers, et cetera and exactly what we are discussing are things like conflict resolution, and just on Saturday morning coming out of my office one of the youngsters actually said to me "Sir, I think I know who you are and stuff, I would like you to take us to prison so you can convince these young boys to behave so they do not end up in prison." Mr. Chairman, I have actually promised that on Saturday I am going to go and do a presentation to them.

My point is that what we do have to do is to look at the resources that we have and ensure that they are best deployed to save more of our young people because not all of them as we all recognise will be academics. If there is one correct thing that the Honourable Member for St. George South said today it is that in almost every class you would have those young persons who have no interest in being in the class and so our challenge is to identify them. A good example is that of a very good friend of mine who lives in Trinidad, a very successful businessman. When we were at Harrison College he really had no interest in school whatsoever. It is only when we became adults that I learnt that in fact that what he was more interested in is buying and selling stuff. Even while he was at school that was what he was doing so he had not time for homework, et cetera. Mr. Chairman, my point is that what we need to do is to identify what are the strengths and weaknesses of these young people and those who have no interest in academia and stuff. Of course, you still want them to be able to function in our society.

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Mr. Chairman, I have told this story on more than one occasion. In 1986 or 1987, I went to St. John to see a client. At that time he was picking down the engine of a mustang and he asked for a second to finish what he was doing. Mr. Chairman, here is a greasy, self-taught mechanic with whom I spent the day. He dropped out of school very early and became a mechanic but that is what he loves. I stayed there all day admiring the fact that this man taught himself where we was able to take down that engine and put it back up.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. George North has a bit uncharitably asked what would be

the legacy of the present Minister of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation. Sir, let me just share this with you because I am touching on my Ministry, that of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Sir, even the prisoners at Dodds, many of them are coming out with some form of certification because of initiatives by this Minister, so that the guys who are working on the farm, for example, can have a Caribbean Vocational Qualifications that demonstrates that they at least know about rearing animals and about farming. There is also Woodwork programme, among other programmes. Mr. Chairman, this has nothing to do with some prisoners taking the Caribbean Examination Council examinations, but you would appreciate that many of the young people who get involved in criminal behaviour have never had much interest in academia so that we are then able to channel their skills elsewhere, for example, mechanic shop, tailoring, masonry, et cetera.

Mr. Chairman, our challenge continues to be how we separate these troubled young men. In fact, maybe one of the things that the Minister will touch on a bit later may be what initiatives are being used in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation to address many of these troubled young men. I know that we have the Daryll Jordan Secondary School in Boscobelle but that alone is not enough. I have said over the years that one of the things that concern me is this issue where some teachers are able to say to a child that that child is going to end up at the Government Industrial School from early. Mr. Chairman, if a teacher recognises that a child has issues, then yours is not to put the child at the back of the room and not address the issues. We need to find some mechanisms that when teachers have identified that the child has issue, that there is a special place to send that child so that he or she could have a more one-on-one attention. Again, I am sure that the Minister will share with us what they are doing in that regard. The Minister can update us on the New Horizon School's initiatives, a wonderful initiative that enables these young people to have more one-on-one contact, that whatever psychosocial issues that they have are also addressed therein, that in their normal school settings those issues would not normally be addressed. Therefore they have smaller classes and more resources in terms of specialised teachers. Mr. Chairman, also it is expensive and so that is part of the \$4.5 billion that you are referring to, but we need to spend it. Indeed, we probably need to have a couple more of those schools as time go by because without doubt we are seeing more of our young people gravitating towards deviant behaviour and so we need to identify them from early and address them.

Mr. Chairman, we speak about these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure as if they are in isolation. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central will tell you about all the initiatives that his Ministry is doing

with respect to our young people. The Honourable Member has touched on the Ministry of Youth Affairs and I know that the Honourable Member for St. George South touched on the whole issue of a Barbados Youth Service and the necessity to have that expanded. Mr. Chairman, we agree with that.

Mr. Chairman, there is also the AGANAR Programme coming out of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation. This programme is now being used even at the Government Industrial School where we make the connection between sports and discipline. They are particularly useful for these young people who cannot sit for long hours in terms a classroom and paying attention to the normal mathematics and English and so these are holistic approaches that are being used not just by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation but also the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, along with other ministries and that is why the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure must be looked at in their totality because we work together to see how we could develop these young people.

Mr. Chairman, yes, they may come into contact with me at the Ministry of Home Affairs because of deviancy but we cannot do it alone. For example, the Government Industrial School has a cadre of trained teachers. In fact, I reminded the Honourable Member not just long ago that the teachers at the Government Industrial School are paid higher than the normal teachers in the system.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, please.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: I think they are paid what is called a hazard allowance, et cetera. Mr. Chairman, we not only do the academic programmes, we also do sports programme for those youngsters. We also offer tailoring, dressmaking, et cetera. Mr. Chairman, more importantly, many of these young people come to us with some very serious challenges, whether those challenges are psychological, social or whatever and we have to teach them life skills, we have to go back to teaching them the basic life skills because we want to ensure that when they leave the institution that they can function as normal young people in our society, so that I am very pleased with the direction in which we are going. Mr. Chairman, yes, like all Ministries we do not have all the resources that we would have loved but we are grateful that we have some benefactors who are willing to come into the schools and give of their time, energy and resources and so I want to signal my thanks to them.

Mr. Chairman, before I sit, on the behalf of my constituents I want to signal my thanks for the Oldbury Nursery School and I look forward of course to when we

can actually have St. Martin's/Mangrove. We are promised a new plant and I look forward to having that in the very near future. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, I just want to thank Honourable colleagues on this side who have made what I consider to be outstanding contributions which demonstrate obviously that they have been keeping abreast of many of the dynamics of education and making themselves aware of what has been happening, unlike what I would have heard from the other side, but I will say no more on that.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please address the Chair.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, introduced into the system, and it has happened over the last six years, is the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications. Sir, part of that was to come up with a mix which would give students who are talented in the area of skills, attitudes and a number of other things the opportunity to demonstrate or to showcase their talents.

6.40 p.m.

Let us go back a bit into history. Even in the elementary schools there used to be something called a school garden where boys -- I went to a boys' elementary school -- used to at different intervals go into the school garden and work; plant and reap. In most cases, the principal and teachers used to take home the produce, which is unlike what happens now. What happens now is that they are sold and the resources ploughed back into the ventures and things like that. That continued over time, but there was not anything you could have shown to anybody for your efforts, for your work or for your understanding of agricultural science. The CVQ (Caribbean Vocational Qualification), part of the wider Caribbean operation, particularly with its origins really in Jamaica throughout the training agency, and then the standards spread right across the entire Caribbean. A lot of the work was in fact done through what is called CANTA (Caribbean Association of National Training Agencies) and the Jamaican training agency, and now through TVET which is our own Technical and Vocational Educational Training agency here. It goes by different names in the various territories. Six years ago, the first two schools to start this exercise was Darryl Jordan Secondary and The Alleyne Secondary. The latter went over the hill to Darryl Jordan to do masonry work. Today, every single secondary school has one to four Caribbean Vocational Qualification

standards, equivalent to what you might call a subject. There is an equivalency between a CVQ and CXC or "O" Levels as one would call it. Aside.

Hon. R.D. JONES: There are five levels of CVQ. Level 1 is done in the school system, Level 2 and 3 are currently done at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, but Level 2 will at some time be done in the secondary schools once you complete the Level 1 standard and the mastery at Fifth Form. You may designate a school as a Sixth Form one but that is just a naming; it is the work you do post-16 years. These are some of the standards you have at, as I said, all schools: Art and craft production, electrical installation, general construction, furniture making, commercial food preparation, metal work engineering, data entry, cosmetology. We would have heard of the work being done at Florence Springer Memorial. We have heard of the work in barbering being done at St. Leonard's Boys'. There is only one standard at that school. There is also masonry, engine systems particularly at schools like St. Leonard's Boys' and Princess Margaret, for those two systems -- autotronic centres - which were put in under Edutech; so there are three in Barbados which are SJPP, Princess Margaret and St. Leonard's Boys'. They teach engine system diagnosis and remediation. In fact, only last year one of the students in that skills programme went off in the region-wide competition and did exceptionally well in diagnosis and remediation for the kind of new technologies we have embedded in our cars today. There is also musical performance, crop production, amenities horticulture, data operations, food preparation and cookery right across the entire school system. This is introducing a mix into the system of what we classically call academic learning and teaching and skills acquisition and expression within the schools; so you are giving a wider cross-section of skills, attitudes, behaviours and all kinds of things that they can gravitate towards. You have a school like St. George Secondary with its greenhouses being rolled out, agriculture being put in place, animal husbandry as part of that process; and you have Grantley Adams Memorial which is now rehabilitating, because there are persons who are not sufficiently conscious that when a school rolls out its agricultural plot and has its rabbit hutches and things like that, they should leave those things alone. There are persons who feel they are their personal property and take them, so you have to start them from scratch. That frustrates those students who would have been doing the work, writing out progression in growth, the amount of feed needed to reach this weight, all of that very scientific work, but some wicked individuals -- we have to call them by their names -- would prey on the property of the school and then disadvantage the students. We have these being rolled out across the school system. We have had already at least two cohorts graduating with one, two or three of these particular standards, and they are in the system. More and more standards will be rolled out over time, because you have to go through a very rigid process of assessing the

readiness of a school to deliver the particular standard. If you do not have land, you cannot do amenities horticulture unless then you adapt what I call “the flowers” around the school to do the practice, and develop and prune and all of that. This has in fact been rolled out in the school system. Then for a number of years we were looking, not only since 2008, for a qualification, an assessment which would lift the standards of children in our schools. There was talk about a national diploma and other different iterations of that to deal with what used to be the “school-leaving certificate”. Today, we do the region-wide Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence. I was able to find some research on work done within the Ministry prior to my coming. That is how fair I like to be. After analysing it, the simple decision was then, “Why reinvent the wheel? Let us use what the Caribbean Examinations Council had developed for the region and create a specialised Barbadian type which included not only English, maths, science, integrated science, social studies or maybe a foreign language as well as what we call an empowering part of that for persons to qualify for the certification, and that was community or club engagement; civic engagement. Persons could have all those hard qualifications but if you are not humanised, if you do not care about your fellowman or your sister, you are missing something. Students who try to qualify for this qualification can do it in Third Form if you are ready; it is a readiness exam. You can do it in Fourth Form if you are ready. You can do it in Fifth Form if you are ready, and if you leave school without having reached the standard, you can come back in and reach the standard through an evening exercise or an evening programme. This was evaluated by an agency called UK NARIC which looks at qualifications and the input, and gives you a rating and a value. If you go on the CXC website, you would see that this has a significant rating. All students will do this, and some schools have already started, and you can reach a level of mastery at this level. Honourable Member for St. George North, that too is part of the system, part of the rollout, and it is not a question of legacy because you can sit down and spend all your time saying this will be my legacy and do no work. H:No.D7D (26) 6.41 p.m.

The CCSLC community programme involvement is one where you can go and be a part of a community group. You have to do 40 hours of community work. Maybe you might go and read to little children, help old people, maybe go on the sea shore once supervised and can be credited properly and signed off on that you went on the beaches of Barbados or the gullies of Barbados and you helped cleaned where somebody else dirtied. All of that is part of that programme within the school system. We have not been sitting and working about what our young people can do. Let me say that when it comes to the area of musical performances and I have said it because I think our young people deserve the best.

Across every secondary school in Barbados, there is a burgeoning of musical talent previously not felt. They are dedicated music teachers now in all of our schools, well-trained either overseas, or under Mr. Gittens at the Barbados Community College which produces some of the finest musicians in this country. You hear them right across Barbados. If you go to the Daryll Jordan Secondary School which started a long time ago with their steal pan followed by the Garrison Secondary School, these were the progenitors, the leaders in steal pan music in Barbados, now nearly every school has a steal pan. There are some schools with excellent pop bands. When you listen to the Frederick Smith Secondary School, Harrison College, Parkinson Secondary School, with their pop bands, brilliant music, orchestras of superior quality and that is the musical genre the playing of instruments but do not let us leave out the young people singing in Barbados. There is a quality of voice that is absolutely remarkable among our young people. Sometimes we look for the catalyst for these things but the way civilisation develop there comes a time with urgings, pushings, with talent that you see the blossoming of something. Maybe the presence of Rihanna in the world, maybe the presence of Nicholas Brancker in the world, maybe the presence of Arturo Tappin, maybe the presence of the music teacher at Alma Parris who plays the steel pan, Ziggy Walcott, maybe those presence have ignited a passion across Barbados and I will make it a lot easier for the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central and his creative industry sector to really blossom and to add to that. I remember being given the stick a few years ago by the Honourable Member for St. James North about 23 national development scholarship in 2012. In fact, what ideally happened was 50 per cent of those scholarships went to people in the creative industries, not only simply in music, in theatre, in dance but in the management thereof because you also need those and then we have tied to that development not only what you see at Alexandra School when that hall was done or at Coleridge and Parry when that hall was done under the previous regime. When you can go to the Daryll Jordan Secondary School in the north and you can see possibly an excellence, but we call them halls. That is not a hall at the Daryll Jordan Secondary that is a performance centre. You call it an auditorium I call it a performance centre. You can drive to St. John, at the Lodge School to the south, it is not yet completed but maybe it should be completed in another two months and I am sorry to say, Honourable Member for St. Lucy, but that would be second only to the Frank Collymore Hall. This is the work.

We came in, we saw work done at St. Leonard’s Boys’ School but bad acoustics, the floor a bit too hard and we completely refurbished that facility and we put it out there and now it is heavily used and the school can make some money from the rental of those properties therefore you are having some things coinciding altogether. I am saying that the future of Barbados in that particular area recognise very strongly within the strategic plan 2016-2020

that we will spend some time in building out the creative potential within the primary and secondary schools.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown.

Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am happy to enter this debate at this stage. I think, in my view throughout this debate we have been romanticising education and the education system and not that it is not important but I believe that given the nature of things that confront us at this point and time in our history where our economy is in some trouble, where there is a need for some transformation within our economy and the roll of education, training and human resource development in all of this, I think we need to shift a bit from the romanticising now and look at education training human development through a different set of lens. That is the first point I would like to make and I will explain that before I sit down.

Let me start by just reading a couple extracts from the Educational and Human Development Segment of the last Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party. It says that enhance national capability in the area of science and technology is fundamental to the future development of Barbados to safeguard that future there must be an increase in the number of students at all levels who choose to pursue studies in science and technology. Rapid changes in markets and technology can cause old skills, trades and professions to disappear and new job skills to come into demand. The ability of the education system to provide ongoing opportunities for training and retraining is critical given this reality. I think, Mr. Chairman, that technical and vocational education has to be given a greater push in this country and this ought to be reflected in our Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. I am not saying that we are calling for an increase in any Budget but given the nature of things and the state of play we should be seeing a tilt in my view in that direction because they can be know thoughts of transforming the Barbados economy, there can be no thoughts of opening new economy frontiers in Barbados unless we have the collateral exercise of transforming our educational system to meet the demands of the labour market and this is something that I will continue to argue. I was disappointed in a sense, in my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. George North, when the Honourable Member said that vocational education was intended for people who did not have one, two or three CXC's and I think this is the problem. We cannot be looking at something like vocation or technical education at a time like this where we need to have our industrial based improved and improved considerably and expanded. It is not a matter anymore of having one, two, or three CXC's and in my view, when it comes to technology and vocational education, it is no longer who passed this or that, the critical fact would have to be: how does that

impact on our manufacturing and productive sectors? The new economic frontiers so that whilst I agree with the Honourable Ministry of Education when he spoke about the

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expansion in the schools in terms of music and culture, I think that is a very commendable thing that is happening, at the end of the day if that does not transform to the cultural industries being seen as an income earner, in other words, at the end of the day if all of these people who do all of these things cannot generate employment from those activities, then we are missing the mark.

Mr. Chairman, let us take the Barbados Vocational Training Board as an example. I have a liking for that institution because I find that they are doing a lot of good things in this country and I know that a lot of my people have been benefiting from that, but we need to take that organisation to a different level. The use of primary schools as satellite training centres for the Barbados Vocational Training Board is something that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The number of people who are now pursuing courses with that institution are large and when it comes to equipment and the number of persons the primary school are too small and if we are serious about increasing our industrial output we have to put the Barbados Vocational Training Board on a different footing. I will even argue, Mr. Chairman, that before we build another secondary school as we know it in this country we ought to construct a facility to allow the Barbados Vocational Training Board to expand the type of things they are doing so that we could have a really strong industrial base in this country. There is a need for a modern purpose-built campus which would facilitate the Barbados Vocational Training Board offering more courses and orienting people's skills in the area of manufacturing and other industries that are required to take Barbados forward for the next 50 years.

Mr. Chairman, if you check other countries across the globe you would realise that the vocational training sector is at a level that is reflective of what is happening across the world, state-of-the-art equipment and the use of equipment. We need to move in a different direction. People who are trained as lawyers at the University of the West Indies end up going to law school. When medical students complete whatever they are doing they go on to do other things. You have accountants who do accounting Degrees at the University of the West Indies but then there are professional exams. I am saying Mr. Chairman, that the time has come where our technically oriented people must have another avenue to express themselves whether it is through internships or whatever. We need to move past, for example, people just doing the CXC in ICT when ICT is a major player in terms of developing this country. We are just satisfied with having a qualification in ICT, we are not making the connections to get some of our people to be

able to go to Microsoft and some of these other big places in order to get that real training to propel this country, and this is something that we really need to take serious, serious stock of. I am very serious about that.

I say that, Mr. Chairman, because in my view if we are educating people, yes education is for life and all of those things, we all benefitted from it, at this point in time where we are we cannot have a situation where the world is going along with technology, lots of emerging millionaires in India young people in these countries, and we do not have an information technology school, college or institute in Barbados. It cannot be that you are putting these things into the secondary school system because they would always be playing second class citizens within the school structure that we have established over the last however many years. I am saying that prominence and pre-eminence must be given to those skills. This is where the world is going. We cannot be left behind, so I am calling for us to really make a shift and it is not a shift that is going to be made in isolation, it has to do with whatever plans we have for taking this country forward for the next five, 10, 15 years or 20 years. If at the end of the day we are training people, whether in music, culture, technology or carpentry, and we are not seeing any improvements in our business development and so on then we are not doing the right thing. It cannot be the romanticising of education anymore.

I believe strongly, Mr. Chairman, that this is the right time for us to make the shift and we have to do it systematically and comprehensively so that at the end of the day Barbados would truly be able to build out the capacity for development in this country. I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I re-enter this debate certainly coming after the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown. I believe that certainly the tone of his contribution does connect with what has actually been the mission, I am sure, of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. Certainly, the shift that he has called for is certainly what we are about in terms of the transformation of the Barbados economy and using education as a key aspect of that transformation.

I would certainly like to say that those programmes as outlined by the Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation do not stand in isolation. Part of the transformation that we have been focussing on would have also related to ensuring that the education plant is sufficiently equipped and prepared to handle the kind of transformation that the Honourable Member is talking about.

The full development of the educational capacity of Barbados must be seen within a very holistic context, that is why, for example, we would have heard the Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation speaking to the movement that has started particularly over the last couple of years in terms of looking at making the education plant more relevant to the further transformation of education generally.

I also believe, Mr. Chairman, that we have to get to the point, and I think that is what we have been doing, where within the school system - and I agree with the Honourable Minister certainly in relation to his very eloquent description of what is happening particularly in relation to the development of music and other areas of the creative arts in the schools... I also happened to have visited the Daryl Jordan School and seen the physical development of that school particularly the performance centre, which by the way we will be using as part of the CARIFESTA arrangements because it is already equipped to be able to handle the kinds of events that we will be having in CARIFESTA. That would have become possible because of a vision that makes our school plant across Barbados relevant to what we are doing in terms of the transformation. That transformation, Mr. Chairman, is also very evident in relation to not only music but also the visual arts which has been grounded in our school system. It speaks to the success of the work of the National Cultural Foundation.

Mr. Chairman, each year in these Estimates I always regret that I do not have enough time to go into the details of many of the programmes that are being executed within the schools by the National Cultural Foundation. The National Cultural Foundation would have been very instrumental in the development of pan. The orchestras, of which the Honourable Minister spoke, within the school systems are part of the work of the National Cultural Foundation. That is actually going to feed into the cultural industries in terms of what we want to do in providing avenues for the development of businesses and entrepreneurs that would lead to what I believe would be a further transformation of the Barbados economy.

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So that the shift of which the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown has spoken about is part and parcel of our efforts to diversify the economy in a manner that takes education and other aspects of the economy and uses the investment in a way that redounds to a further transformation of where we want to take the Barbados economy.

Mr. Chairman, the education budget represented in these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure amount to just over \$486 million which is a very sizeable and significant

investment when we also link that to what has been happening, the supportive programmes, particularly in the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development, many of the programmes also being used within the communities because our young people do not only exist within our schools have been targeted at creating that focus in terms of innovation and creativity.

Mr. Chairman, what I think we need to focus on and this is part of the shift that I think needs to occur, is that we have to now do more in relation to creating more innovation within our schools where innovation becomes part of the thrust and involvement of our young people at a very early age. Mr. Chairman, when we compare the reality of where our young people are, our student population in Barbados, this must now be benchmarked against the student population and certain young emerging entrepreneurs in Asia and other emerging economies, for example, in Latin America where our young people at a very early age are being exposed to the rudiments of innovation. Mr. Chairman, particularly focussed on those key area areas upon which we want to create new engines to economic growth and transformation will be very critical in terms of meeting some of the targets that we have to meet in terms of changing the dynamics of what is happening to the Barbados economy. Mr. Chairman, I believe the focus also within the educational system, compared to what is happening in relation to the kind of investment that is being placed in terms of other sectors, will become evident in terms of how we move this area of the Barbados economic strategy or its developmental thrust forward.

Mr. Chairman, I would have heard earlier in the debate of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, the Honourable Member's speech focussed a lot on asking the Government what priorities that it has, how will it meet the very targets in terms of fiscal targets. The Honourable Member mentioned the whole question of foreign reserves and all of that. Mr. Chairman, none of that is in a vacuum, what we are seeing being rolled out within the context of the programmes within education, which are also supported by the programme in the Youth Development Department, are all strategies that are interlinked that will give meaning to what we have to do in terms of the broader macroeconomic strategies that are required to transform and certainly to diversify the Barbados economy. Mr. Chairman, we cannot speak of diversify the Barbados economy without speaking frontally to how we are going to transform the thinking of our young people, without thinking about how we are going, at the very early stage of their education, to be able to use that new thrust in thinking at a very dynamic level to be able to build emerging young men and women who will see

themselves as leaders in their own right. Mr. Chairman, I think that is what we are seeking to do.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation, appropriately called, has a significant role to play within that dynamic. I believe we are doing that very carefully within a reality that requires new thinking in education and new thinking across sector. I did say in my earlier submission that this is critical in terms of linking that new thinking in relation to the new sectors that we have been building in Barbados. For example, the creative sector must become a new engine for economic growth and transformation, but that is now being linked to what is happening in the educational system.

Mr. Chairman, that is not by happenstance when, for example, the Minister can speak of the infrastructural work that is taking place at the Lodge School, that is not being done in a vacuum, the empowerment of our schools to become campuses, that is already a campus. I must say that as a proud student of the Lodge School, I am very pleased at the physical development of that school, at a time when we are talking about fiscal challenges, but placing investment capital at the disposal of our educational system is critical and I think we have lived examples.

Mr. Chairman, in this debate we are not talking of what we want to do or of pie-in-the-sky promises. Mr. Speaker, this is critical because in this debate we have heard a lot about there is no vision, that we are not connecting to the reality of Barbadians existence. Mr. Chairman, everything that the Minister has been talking about in terms of policy is reinforced by actual lived examples on the ground. Mr. Chairman, our school plants are being transformed to meet the new economic transformation that is taking place in Barbados. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I am saying that one of the things I think we should be focusing on is how we are going to meet the next stage because in my view that next stage must be rooted within an innovation culture where our young people are being trained to be innovators.

Mr. Chairman, I would have spoken to a group of young people when we were celebrating our 50th Anniversary of Independence and I basically challenged them in relation to the use of technology. Our exposure of our young people to technology must translate itself into how we are going to become inventors of technology, whether software or hardware technology. I believe there are already existing examples of this and I am very happy that certainly within many of our schools we are seeing our young people being exposed to new fields of technology. Mr. Chairman, that will have to be a new area that we focus on in order to be able to further broaden our economic base.

Mr. Chairman, I totally support the investment in these area because I think these are key, for example, the whole question of vocational training and technology. I have to say again, we see a key linkage between that and what is happening in relation to the Department of Youth Affairs. Mr. Chairman, we have had a very good synergy between the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and also the Barbados Community College and the Youth Mainstreaming Programme in the Ministry of Youth. Sir, every year we spend quite a lot of resources in ensuring that young people are skilled in key areas that we believe that this economy requires.

7.23 p.m.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, in this my second intervention I believe one of the areas we have to look at and that must be introduced into this debate is the whole question of innovation and inculcating in our young minds innovation, the use and understanding of trademarks, the use and understanding of our capital markets, the use of the stock exchanges, and how we are going to develop a cadre of young people to be wealth owners who will become the new owners of private wealth in Barbados. I am obliged, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: It is not my intention to be controversial or anything, Sir, but I have a tremendous difficulty, particularly when I hear the Honourable Minister for Youth Affairs and Sport speak to issues of community activities. I cannot with my regular vision see anything happening in the constituency where I live in relation to the Youth Affairs Department. I cannot get anybody into the mainstream programme, and I am not so sure but I am going to leave that for another occasion and stick to the educational aspect of it which we are discussing. I want to find out from the Honourable Minister at another intervention of his precisely what is taking place in relation to the HIV-AIDS education programmes that would have been instituted. I think that education should not be one of those Ministries where that component has been taken out, especially when we see what is happening to our youth and how there is a lack in supervision, not only in the home. There are some videos we get sometimes of children in the school who are engaged in activities that are not wholesome to their development or their growth, and I am extremely concerned that we have so many sexually active children or that the HIV-AIDS education with its demonstrations and all the other aspects of knowledge now have shown no cost. I am not so sure if the Honourable Minister can indicate to us where exactly that may be located, because I think it is a very tremendous mistake not to have included aspects of HIV education for the students

and the teachers. Some of our teachers are also very young, and they need to be exposed further to the harm.

We know that our numbers may have lessened, we know that the mother-to-child percentage has lessened due to AZT but we still have some challenges with our older folk. When it comes to our young children who are so sexually active and who require that necessary education to prepare themselves for the future, that aspect is not reflected here in the Minutes, Sir. The other part of that is to do with teenaged pregnancies, and I believe one of the Honourable Members would have mentioned it today. I am not saying these things in any disparaging way, except to say that I abhor having to see approximately 15 to 20 children every year at Easter time from all of the secondary schools in this country being pregnant or having just delivered young babies. That gives me the opportunity to add it into why the HIV-AIDS component is missing, because we know what a heavy cost it is and we know how many millions of dollars would have been invested in a programme of that nature, and we do not want to have to be spending in the same areas all the time when we know how critical this is to the advancement of our people. Those young children we see are some I have seen from the age of about 11 years old.

I want to highly commend the staff and management at the Edna Nicholls Centre who coordinate a programme every year at Easter time. That is only one aspect of the population which they capture in the first three months of the year, but throughout the year there are large numbers of children who become pregnant. I want the Honourable Minister to help me through it because I am seeing so many young children at home, and I do not know if it is from expulsion or lack of parental guidance when some of them say, "I am not going to school anymore" and step away from school at 14 and 15, when we know the Education Act says our children should have five full years of free education at the secondary level. It is a heavy cost in relation to the health issues and the health institutions when our children are not being properly supervised and are molested. There are older men in particular who target them, because there seems to be some taboo that if the girl is younger it is nicer, sweeter and whatever. I do not really know, but I believe that these are areas which we must pay some closer attention to.

Aside.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, that part bothers me a lot, and the overall coordinator of the Edna Nicholls Centre and their team must be highly congratulated. Year before last I saw one 14-year-old who was on her second pregnancy. I know that I saw some reports in the newspaper last week about it, and I want to know from you, Sir, the Honourable Attorney General, what is happening in the system. As a child growing up, when big,

hard-backed men targeted young girls, once the parents found out, they would call the police and it would be a court matter. Now I am being told there are some parents, particularly mothers, who say, "If you put the man in court, you are not going to get any maintenance for the child." More often than not, sometimes they do not even know the man's name, and that is where a lot of the problems are. Parents are not allowing them to talk, and they are under-age girls I am talking about; I am not talking about students who are 17, 18 and 20. I am talking about young children who are vulnerable and sometimes want a father-figure. They are having a lot of relationships, and the way they are dressing and so forth really calls for a lot of concern, Sir. That one I would like the Honourable Minister to help me with.

The other point I wish to make, which I consider to be extremely important, has to do with teacher training and professionalism in the system. Too many of our teachers - though the percentage may not be a large one, the numbers are large -- are going to school looking extremely untidy. Their dressing is inadequate, and we do not want our children to be pulling at them when they pass, especially some of the females. Some of the men's pants are dropping off as though they are walking down the street. I think that is an aspect of it where principals and the Ministry with its staff and the education officers need to make sure that we look at dress codes, not only for the children now but for teachers and other administrators as well. It is not speaking well, and if our children do not see us dressed properly for the work place, then when they too have to go for interviews and all that, they will think that is the acceptable thing. I would like for that to happen.

I would like for more to be done to tighten the situation where absenteeism in some of our schools seems to be very high. I have a tremendous difficulty where the school where my grandson is now has two teachers on jury duty, so for the past five or six weeks nobody has been there and the principal or somebody else has to just fill in. These children are not getting the full educational advantage which they should have because a teacher is out for five consecutive weeks. In a small school of 150 to 160 children, you know how the impact would affect not only the teachers who assist but the students as well who are losing out on a lot of quality time.

In terms of the discipline, that too is a problem. Too many teachers are insulting children, and we hear it every day. I am not lambasting teachers. As I said, the population that is being accused is small but they criticise and insult children and tell them they come from this particular community; I am not going to call any. They do not ever tell the children, "You come from the heights so it is okay." They look at some of the communities which they consider to be run-down and then they tell the child, "You come from down there so you are not going to know it. You

would not be able to participate in this. This is knowledge for the others, not for you." They ostracise children. I understand a lot of what the Honourable Minister said earlier and I commend some of the aspects that he has continued to project and whatever new things have been added, but at the end of the day there is no point in having schools where children do not feel comfortable. Also, Mr. Chairman, there are some children who will never fit into a regular school system. Some children suffer from autism; some suffer from so many different challenges, and if a teacher is not properly trained and it is regular teacher, that is where a lot of problems come; and some parents, poor things, they take it so hard when you say to them, "I need for you to take note of this child's deficiencies."

7.29 p.m.

It really needs a proper assessment from the Psychologist or whoever is working in that capacity. A lot of them are living in denial so they do not take the children and by the time the children gets eight, nine and 10 years old, the situation compounds and creates a lot of confusion and those children have so many deficits. I would like, Sir, for that to happen and the final one in that aspect of it is to do with the lack of supervision.

I want the Honourable Minister to let us know where is the new Education Act? We are seeing children go to sports and sometimes you see 50 children, 60 children and not a single adult in the form of a teacher and if the Act says teachers are to be one per 20, I think it is still, acting in local parentis if a child falls and breaks an arm, God forbid, or if a child goes missing, then what do we do? I believe that it is critical that the new Education Act be brought to this Honourable Chamber so that we can continue to assist the Minister because this is now all of us in it and not just criticise and criticise what we did and what the others did not do.

I think it is critical that Education Act is brought here if you are going to look new policy for codes of conduct. If you want to look at the new policy for the use of technology not only the cell phone, all of that should be here and it is sad that so many schools seem to have fractures. Then you would hear, well the Ministry say do not beat them and I do not believe that all children should be flogged in that way at all. There are other ways where discipline can be done to children depending on the kinds of infractions but we are not in an era where children took a stone and threw it. The Honourable Attorney General spoke about the Government Industrial School but I know young men who went to the Government Industrial School in the 1950s and 1960s because they threw a stone and knocked out a pane of glass because that was the only glass houses had at that time, they used to be like those with the flaps. The children had to go up to Government Industrial School or for whatever reason girl and boys wandered

away and they were put there. I am saying that we need to pay a little more attention to our children and ensuring that they follow the rules. The truancy level is extremely high. What about the school attendance officers. When we see children languishing in the bus stand some mornings, nobody is there. Thank God for that senior school attendance officer who is now retired and of course another one who was a real strong member of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) but used to do good work as a school attendance officers to make sure that the children kept out of the bus stand and that the children kept away from truancy and the truancy patrol would go through villages and so with a police officer or two to be able to get the children in school because some of them do not understand. To my mind, a lot of what is happened with our children who are coming with the weapons and the weapons are no longer the sharpener blade or the protractor of the geometry set they are coming with weapons, some of them coming with guns and some with knives and unless the Ministry ensures that all schools make sure that they have in effect the power to search and follow the regulations, more of our children would get injured. I think that it is important that in this time when they are other “don gorgons”. Is that what you call the guys on the block who tell young people what to do and they are more mentoring them in a negative way that we must enforce the various aspects of the legislation to have our children feeling safe in an environment that conducive to learning, growth, development and so on therefore, Mr. Chairman.

The final comment then, Sir, if you would allow me, is to do with the Honourable Minister please give me a chance to learn what is the Alternative Day School. It is the first time I am learning of it and it would be useful if I could get an opportunity to ...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please, please, please. There is no cross-talk.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: I would be happy if I could get the opportunity to be able to learn of it and to determine what the situation is and for the Honourable Minister to help me understand; and I know there were some cenergies with other ministers, departments and community groups where school children wrote their stories, their poems, and did the other aspects of art and so and were able with the Ministry of Culture at that time, put some books together -- and I walked with them specifically because sometimes people say, you are only talk but these are the series of the books, Mr. Chairman. Primary schools and secondary schools when I was there in the Ministry they talked about experiences fires, poems, a potpourri is one of what it is called and what happened is that some funding was extended to the Minister of Culture and when the children prepared the stories and the poems the teachers then were

able vet them nicely and hand over the information, the Ministry of Culture worked with them and then the Audio Visual Aids Department now called that Digital Media Department, they are the ones. Mr. Chairman, these books were made in Barbados with ordinary children that if Honourable Members wanted to have a look to see that it says it shows our children have so much talent and skill they just need for a coordination of activities and I am sure that the names of the schools are spelt out. Sometimes you find the names of some of the children and from my own side of it that is an aspect of empowerment to show that our children just do not go to school and play the fool. All of them do not walk the corridors but the largest majority of them are meaningfully engaged to be able to have a product from the Digital Media Department and I ask that the Honourable Minister please to give me a little clarification as to what is happening now with that kind of activity so that more of the skills that children have can be honed and that they speech and language development can grow from one strength to another because we need for our children to be doing and speaking Standard English as compared to what we sometimes see as we move along on the streets and in the media as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE second by Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, Mr. CHAIRMAN, reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and ask for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 8.15 p.m. this evening.

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

The question that the House do now suspend until 8.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

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Thursday, March 16, 2017

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Members, this Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, we were in Committee of Supply and to that we shall return.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee of Supply.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (RESUMED)

ORDER No. 20 (RESUMED)

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

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a brief intervention, and I would like to deal specifically at the root of the educational system, primary with the levels of pre-primary education and primary education in general with probably specific reference to the Belmont Primary School.

Sir, education is fundamental to the upliftment of our people. It is as a consequence of education that lots of us over the years made both social and economic mobility. Education has enabled us to be standing in this Parliament today where years ago we could not. In 1833 when they were looking at the emancipation of the slaves, the report of the day on education indicated that there was a very aggressive or militant discussion on if our people should be able to enjoy any expansion in whatever it was that was given to them at the specific time when they were working on the plantations, and in 1833, just a year before the emancipation the decision was made in the British Parliament to expand the education to a basic level which we over the years call primary education.

Subsequently, we recognised that a special social grouping were taking advantage of entering into the primary school system long in advance of the children who are the off-springs of the labourers on the plantations across Barbados and the Government made an effort in recent times to drop the educational age for pre-primary education to age 3 in order to facilitate universal primary education but we call it nursery and pre-primary education as such. Mr. Chairman, I think that was a progressive step but there were only a few schools that we caught within the net, and I would hope that the present Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation would take that effort into consideration and see how we can expand the levels of pre-primary education so that all of our children would have an opportunity, especially since it is not a gradual assessment of the ability of the children that allows them to enter into certain specific schools in the system... We know that we have a marker of age 11 which determines in some cases which social class we eventually belong to during the path of social stratification, so we have Harrison College products, we have Parkinson Memorial products and we have St. George Secondary products and regardless of what anybody tells us we know, even if we send the best teachers to some of these schools, that because of that historic journey there is always a view at the level of secondary school that determines in Barbados which social grouping you belong to, and that is the reality. It does not even have anything with if you excelled academically. Even when you reach the age of 16

and 17 and you do the CXC's it does not even matter if you have completed five years in the secondary system of if you got one certificate in Home Economics. You could get one certificate in Home Economics and become an outstanding economist in Barbados, that is how it is, as long as you went to the right school.

We know the history of Barbados. Again, by the 1960s and so on pigmentation determined which institution you work in. Even the black boys who went to school at Harrison College ended up working at William Foggerty and the ones who were mulatto got a break within the banking system as a clerk which probably did not even require a class four primary education in order to calculate the basis things or in the post office where everything that you measure was in 25 cents, 50 cents or a \$1 or so on which did not even call for the capacity of a person selling nuts or anything which would be \$14.23 and you take that away from a \$1. That calls for an even greater challenge than a man working in a post office selling stamps, but the prestige of the school and as a consequence the journey into the workplace determined in Barbados who you are.

This is a very peculiar environment, so I feel I have a responsibility to my people who I represent... This is how I see it and I would hope that most of them see it the same way. When I look at the primary schools in St. Michael East which is St. Giles Primary School, Charles F. Broomes Primary, Grantley Prescod Primary and Belmont Primary, along with the private ones inside the society itself, I know the difference in all of them.

As I said I have a view that the school can shape you and make you. When you hold a child in the school system when it is small... I am not saying that it is tabular rather and therefore the slate is clean or blank and you could print everything on it because I believe that there are elements of learning that are part of the upbringing of a child even before its birth. I represent some poor pockets across St. Michael East and from the research and the data coming out of the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation I know the schools that are at the lower end especially in the primary schools. I do know if they are at that end because of the environment in which they are in, and when I say the environment I am talking about the school plant itself, but I certainly do not believe it has anything to do with any forms of inferiority. Most of the parents of these children are not in a position to do or to contribute to the extra remedial work that is required in those primary schools and in some of those schools the children do not have an opportunity to enter into the system at age 3 to 5 so they go in at age 5 and between age 5 and the next 5 years plus they have to face an 11 Plus Examination whereas other people's children go in at 3 years old and they speak standard English.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Madam Forde, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, is telling me it is called early stimulation.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, I think that there are some things that the State must take responsibility for.

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I know that there are other persons with different rationales for ideological direction but my rationale here tells me that the State has to take a responsibility to address and redress these imbalances in the system and I am urging the Minister to at least move in this direction so that all the people, especially those who live in close proximity to the Belle area. I am very concerned about the Belle area, I am very concerned about that old plant at Belmont, a few years ago that school still had the old chains in the toilets. It is a school where at present its capacity is over 400 students and it is hardly as big as some people's dining room. I feel that we need at least to improve on the physical plant or else give us a new plant.

Mr. Chairman, the other danger in that school is that most of the children from the Belle and Licorish Village, a heavy concentration in that area, the other social reality is that the parents are extremely poor and as I said before they cannot add in any way to what is being offered at the school, they just have to hope that the results at the 11-plus would be the best that there can be. Ma'am, the Minister can probably inform us as to where that school stands in the scheme of things in the primary school system, but I really believe that some improvements need to be done there.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to talk about St. Giles Primary School too but I recognised that the budget is over \$486 million and I want the school at Belmont to get a little piece of it.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: I know that salaries are included in that budget but some of those salaries could even go to the staff at Belmont school so that we can get the best out of the children there. I would like to know that even before this Parliament ends its five-year term that I could come back to the Parliament and give some credit to the Minister for carrying that school in a very positive direction and that at least I could visit that school and hear, like when we use the measurement of the older secondary schools, I can say that the amount of children who sat their examinations that a large percentage or even a quarter of

them are now in the old secondary school's system. Mr. Chairman, sometimes people do not respond positively to people like me who say these things but I really strongly believe that these children deserve an opportunity.

Mr. Chairman, I also know that there are limited facilities there for an IT programme. On my last visit to that school the room was crowded and was being used for other things as well, outside of having an IT laboratory. I would hope that we can at least put some kind of prefab facilities at Belmont Primary School, not just a little choked-up container or bus or just a small 4x6 frame but at least adequate facilities there. It does not have to be too costly, it does not have to be built out of 8" blocks or soft stone, it can be done out of purple-heart wood and in the interim period have that IT programme there.

Mr. Chairman, I understand that the Ministry has recently got modern computers from the People's Republic of China. I am being told by the Minister that as a result of my request, as a consequence of talking to him on a regular basis, the Honourable Member will respond in a very positive way and will make sure that computers are delivered to Belmont Primary School so that the good people of My Lord's Hill and Licorish Village, Howell's Cross Road, the Belle and the surrounding areas will be able to have access to them. Mr. Chairman, obviously the students there now have to play catchup and I hope that the persons with the competent technical skills, because I have been hearing a lot about the importance of technical skills and scientific skills within the educational system at present, but let St. Michael East and Belmont Primary School be also beneficiaries of the new vision for education.

Mr. Chairman, as I said before, education is not about producing people for the workforce because if you produce people for the workforce out of some of those schools I know in advance where they are going, in comparison... It is not with any grudge or envy because I am also proud to say I know how the Charles F. Broome School's children excel and I have the opportunity to represent both schools but education at the primary level can determine who you are; it can determine where you will find a space in the labour market; it can tell you what quality of life you would be able to share in an economy like this, that is why I said that with a \$486 million investment this year I would hope that the required foundations for that fundamental change that is needed in the quality of life for the people of St. Michael East especially in the Belle would be laid down as a consequence of this.

Mr. Chairman, this is not a partisan issue, I am very serious. Mr. Chairman, sometimes parents are not as ambitious as they ought to be and as policymakers and visionaries, especially in the Ministry of Education,

Science and Technology, and Innovation, we have to help those people who cannot help themselves. Some people might not even see the value of the argument that I am advancing on their behalf but we have to help them to understand how easily the lives of the entire family can be transformed overnight as a consequence of education.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Chairman, we came from a community-oriented environment because we also know the shackles of the 20th Century, up to 1930s, but people in a contemporary period seem to be individualistic and even when they have children some people believe that when funds are available they are supposed to enjoy the optimum point of happiness and that if anything else remains the child could share in it. Mr. Chairman, we cannot be so ruthless and uncaring that we cannot understand, because I have heard arguments to the point where...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, your time is up. Please wrap up.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Chairman, I have heard arguments to the point where some people believe that people with a social conscience no longer have to exist but everything that we do and every institution that we set up we must be able to get maximum profit out of the exercise and that is determined by money. I would hope that within the corridors of this Parliament that there are still men and women with that social conscience who understand what our mission must be, it cannot change because we have not yet arrived. I do not think we have covered 50 per cent of the entire journey that we need to cover and I would hope that as a result of the few things I have said within the minutes that were available to me that at least I would be able to stimulate some discussion on the direction that we are likely to go, especially in the area of primary and pre-primary education and that where we fall short in any area that we would have some kind of remedial forms of action so that the parents would not have to depend on their own income to put those remedial programmes in place to help the children but that the State itself would take up the responsibility to do so. Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I thank you for the opportunity to say a few words under Head 77. Let me start by congratulating the Honourable Member for the way in which so far he has articulated the development and progress in education in Barbados.

8.48 p.m.

I am not surprised because I often hear the Honourable Minister speak to the challenges which they face in education; and the manner in which he and the team at the Elsie Payne Complex have been able to deal with these issues is indeed testimony to the way we have developed the excellence of management within the capabilities of our people. Indeed, we could spend all of our time looking at our shortfalls or we could take the approach that, as we build capacity and expertise and we spread opportunities, we take care of some of these shortfalls which will inevitably be present in any mass-based system like that.

Sir, I am also happy that we were able to get over the issue very quickly about free education in Barbados. I think the House is now settled on the entire question of the history of free education; the contribution of both political parties which have enjoyed the opportunity to govern in this country in building on education. It is wonderful to stand and reflect on the fact that it has been a building process, and Barbados has enjoyed the fact that it is not one of tearing down when there is a change in administration but there is a commitment to continuity. I think that we have really reaped the results of that very mature approach.

Sir, I listened very carefully as the Members who spoke would have referred to the architecture of the entire school system within the constituencies which they manage. Of course, in Christ Church South there is one public primary school; that is the St. Lawrence School right at the entrance of St. Lawrence Gap for those on the land side, juxtaposed to the Graeme Hall Swamp at the western end. There is the Wills Primary School which is a private school located in Dover itself; and young children who are residents of Christ Church South would then either attend the St. Christopher School to the east or the Milton Lynch or the Christ Church Girls' School over the hill in the Water Street area. Of course, upon graduation from primary school, then the choices are mainly the Foundation School and Deighton Griffith School, and Princess Margaret which is in St. Philip. Sir, in my view that is a demonstration of the choices that we have as a people and the community at large, and the kind of opportunities which parents and children have in exercising their choices.

The Minister has spent a lot of time describing also how the whole process of development of even pre-primary schools and nursery schools has evolved in Barbados. Yes, our area is getting served by the private Jones Nursery School as well as one of the nurseries associated with the Ministry of Social Care in St. Christopher. It may not be enough, and I think that Honourable Members who have spoken to the question of education still speak to the fact that there is need to build out more capacity. I hear very much the plea from the Honourable Member who just sat, for instance, speaking about Belmont Primary School. Yes, I hope there is the opportunity to provide a more modern

facility for Belmont Primary, but I would want to urge that in that process they do not necessarily tear down the existing building, but retain that for posterity so that we can as a people reflect on what has evolved.

I remember I had a very nostalgic experience last Christmas when the Barbados Ex-Police Association of New York was going to host an activity for some elderly members of our community who were part of the elderly care programme in the Ministry of Health. They were taking them to Farley Hill National Park, but because of the weather they had to change the venue to the old All Saints' Boys' School which, of course, was my school and which I went to as a four- or five-year-old. I am not even sure. I know that for a short period my brother and I would have attended the girls' school, which was very close to home. It was only about 100 yards away from our house, and somehow my father was able to work out an arrangement with the then headteacher, which I am sure was nothing to do with the Ministry, Mr. Minister. That was a private arrangement. As a matter of fact, I think the headteacher was so pleased, not with my performance but with my brother's. I know there is a story around that when Daddy was ready to move James, my brother, to his correct school, the headteacher had loved him so much that she wanted him to stay. He used his powers of persuasion to urge the headteacher that James was a boy so he had to go to the boys' school. Those are the things that obtained in our day, and I am sure that Members can refer to these kinds of experiences. That is why I tell you it was such a wonderful experience last year at Christmas to enjoy the camaraderie of the ex-police association, of course, and the fact that we were offering this kind of charitable occasion for the elderly.

I recall too when the new All Saints' Boys' School was built. That would have been about 1968, and I was very upset that I did not get an opportunity to occupy the new facilities there. As a matter of fact, I think if given the choice, I would probably have remained at the primary school and forgotten about the opportunity to go on to secondary school just to experience the new school; so I can imagine how your children of Belmont would feel if a new school were provided for them. Mr. Minister, I beg you to see what you can do to help our colleague from St. Michael East achieve that very noble objective.

I also reflect on the technology, and the fact that the Minister spoke to the fact that they were going to now introduce the use of i-Pads and tablets generally within the primary and secondary school system. I think this is an excellent opportunity. It is, of course, the way to go. What is happening now in Barbados is that we are talking about technological change and the introduction of information technology and health information systems and that kind of kind; but the truth is the majority of our workers at this point in time are so accustomed to using paper and printing

stuff, that although we are sitting in front of computers which are capable of saving documents and dropping them almost anywhere, we want to drop them in the world. We still resort to too much printing on paper rather than creating the relevant security around our systems and the kind of easy access for those persons who have the authority to have access to these systems. We have a challenge in this area, but I am certainly comfortable with the fact that our teenaged population and those in their 20s and maybe 30s are so accustomed to this new technology that this change will come about.

8.52 p.m.

We are fighting with it in the Ministry of Health in terms of the introduction of the information technology and the health information system and we are winning a lot of the battles, but it is taking us much longer that we would probably expect for an arrangement like that. I want to spend just a few minutes dealing with some of the major challenges. I could either deal with that now or leave it probably until we look at hour head on health which we hope to come to come to sometime early in the morning but I cannot sit, now that I have the opportunity to link health and our education system. Of course, in this regard I refer to the fact that we suffer in Barbados from a serious problem of childhood obesity and it has been proven that obesity leads to the development in our older years of so many of the non-communicable diseases we talk about, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, et cetera, and indeed our overweight childhood population that has been surveyed, albeit around 2011/2012 to be something like 31-32 per cent. That is a tremendous burden on our society, a strain on our potential to develop and we have to get to the point where we start to impress on our communities because it will start in the communities. There is no point creating some kind of an oasis in our school environment only that offers the correct atmosphere in terms of our nutrition, et cetera, without making sure that the rest of our community or our parents at home, our shops in our villages, et cetera, and the kind of servings that are available match those same standards. Certainly the Ministry is embarking even as I speak, on a programme which will see the development of certain regulations with respect to what is acceptable and what is not acceptable therefore I would expect the Nutrition Department in the Ministry of Health to work even more with the School Meals Department in the preparation of the lunches. They do something like 25 000 to 26000 meals per day with a staff of over 500 at the centre where they prepare meals for our children throughout the island. I would want to see that programme develop with haste to match the very exacting standards which the Ministry of Health feels strongly must be associated with these programmes. We also want to have a look at what is being allowed in our schools by way of advertisement by our fast food agents in the island. There are a number of fast food agents who provide some

form of gifts for our primary schools especially but I am afraid some of the advertisements associated with the book covers, et cetera, are not acceptable to the Ministry of Health, given our programme on childhood obesity. As we roll out our strategy on childhood obesity over the next couple of months or so, you can expect that we will be challenging these representations that are not part of this programme and we know that with the correct dialogue established between stakeholders we can get Barbadians on both sides of the fence, and this time I am talking about the providers of these fast foods and our children and families who are the consumers. This kind of regulation must also attend to the vendors who provide snacks in and around our schools. Again we would have to get our vendors to understand that their offerings must meet the kind of healthy standard that is associated with a healthy population. It will be an investment, Mr. Chairman. The programme has been started, we have talked about it a long time and we have had programmes within our schools about battling obesity but I am afraid we are still not getting through at a satisfactory level to our population so we have to change tack, so to speak, Mr. Chairman, and make sure that these standards move from just talking about them at health fairs and at special programmes in the schools and move to the point of regulation and eventually, legislation when it is correctly shaped and shared with the population then we can move to the stage of actually legislation. Sir, I think this is a wonderful opportunity for the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health to put their resources together to help us to build a healthier nation because then we can start to look at a Barbados where we have done our part by shaping the practices within our schools system, within our young children even to the extent that the meals we offer, the nutrition that is practiced within our school system and within our communities is one that properly promotes a healthy lifestyle and helps us to reduce that increasing cost of management of our elderly as the population grows older and containing that explosion of non-communicable diseases. I really appreciate the opportunity to say a few words under this Head and if the opportunity provides I will come back again and make another contribution.

I am obliged to you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, I made a few errors here so that has compensated now so we are back on to the 15 minutes restriction because the first Honourable Member spoke more than 15 minutes, so I had to balance it out, so respect the time now. Thank you.

The Honourable Member for St. James North.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: I will take the opportunity of this intervention first to again thank the charitable organisations which make provision for the educational advancement of our youth in this country especially those

that are foreign based such as the Maria Holder Trust, the Sandy Lane Trust and the Tanglewood Family Trust which I think is managed by Derrick Smith. The reality of the situation, Mr. Chairman, is that the nursery schools many of which the Government praises themselves on which they clap and tap themselves on the back for being provided for with funding from these institutions and that should be recognised and credit taken by them for that and not by the Government. If it was not for these charitable organisations only God knows where we would be at the present time and the Government cannot take kudos for the provision of those schools. We have recently, of course, had a \$10 million donation by the Chinese Government and we would hope that none of these pieces of equipment, tablets, laptops, or anything are used for partisan political purposes by the Democratic Labour Party.

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They are State to State gifts. Information reached us about whose car they went in after the donation was made, so really and truly we have to be suspicious and we just warn the Government not to use these for any purposes of a partisan political nature.

The reality, Mr. Chairman, is that a visionary Government would have taken this kind of initiative and these kinds of concepts to free up the tax system more. Rather than remove the tax concessions which allowed taxpayers to make donations to educational institutions and to get tax concessions off, the Government instead removed the ability to make those donations and get tax concessions for them. That was a retroactive move. In fact, it was absolutely contrary to the Democratic Labour Party 2013 Manifesto.

When we were in a recessionary period the Democratic Labour Party still made the promise in its Manifesto to provide an income tax credit of \$5 000 maximum each year in respect of the cost of tertiary education and training at an overseas internationally recognised institution. Of course, we have not heard one word about that from the Honourable Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation or the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs or anyone else after the election.

The issue of early childhood education and nursery education came up and the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs again sought to take kudos on behalf of his party for that, and again that is not in strict compliance with the truth because under the Barbados Labour Party the Honourable Member for St. Peter led that initiative himself in promoting and advancing education at the nursery level, and we have to give kudos where kudos are due.

The issue of child abuse came up on a matter earlier in the Second Reading. The Honourable Member for St. Michael Central wants to take to court the parents of a brilliant young man 13 years old who delivered himself with tremendous eloquence and presence, knowing when to pause, and with tremendous content. In fact, only one or two Honourable Members on that side quite frankly could make better presentations than what I saw on Saturday night calling for hope and dreams and unity but yet they are talking about child abuse.

The abuse in the educational system in this country is about the buses that cannot get the children to school when the day comes. A lot of children are getting to school late. The public transportation system is inadequate to get the children to the various schools. The Democratic Labour Party instituted this free bus ride policy which was not in their 2008 Manifesto and which the Honourable Member St. Philip West in his presentation and his cures for the ills of his party's mismanagement of the economy and society spoke about as being something which really the country could not afford, so we have these free bus rides for school children but in name only in a lot of cases because there is inadequate public transport service to get these children to school.

The Honourable Minister has embarked on a policy of sixth form schools. A lot of schools now have sixth forms. Well, we could argue and debate on whether that is a good concept or not but certainly I would have thought that if you were doing that that you would have specialist schools specialising in culture, sports and in the arts rather than this adhocism in terms of the creation of sixth form schools. The Barbados Secondary Teachers' Union publicly said that the resources are not there to carry the sixth form in all of these schools, and I do not know that we are really benefitting from that policy whatsoever.

We have the still outstanding issue of the continuing tensions between the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation and some of the trade unions. Would the Minister addressed this Honourable House and by extension the people of Barbados on that issue? There are still unresolved issues. There is the question of the SBAs marking and the issue of the deduction of pay of the teachers' salaries because they attended a union meeting, something which I am sure that the Honourable Minister when was head of the trade union would have ranted and raved and kept a lot of noise, to use his favourite word, about. The last we heard from the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation was that they were waiting on an opinion from the Solicitor General. We wonder if that opinion has been given, and if so, what is it. These are not issues really that should cause this kind of discord in the educational system to the detriment of the teachers quite frankly and ought to have been resolved by now.

The issue came up in terms of Barbados' rating. Yes, we all agree that we have had a great educational system coming up, but it has been compromised recently in terms of the imposition of tuition fees at the University of the West Indies, but facts are facts. The World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report 2016/17 speaks to Barbados being at number 6 in terms of the quality of its education. It was 9th in terms of quality of maths and sciences education in 2013/14 but now within three years it is down to 22nd in terms of the quality of the educational system and 20th in terms of the quality of maths and science education so we are slipping and quite frankly this should be of concern to the Honourable Minister and to the Government as a whole.

Mr. Chairman, I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Philip South when he spoke about the development of life skills programmes. He spoke about this within a different context but he and I agree on this. This is something that should be emphasized more, giving work and life skills to our young people. Of course, I have a foundation that does that every year. We are about to start another programme before the end of the month in St. James North focussing this time on males trying to develop life and work skills for them because we all agree that it is wider than the academics and the technical and vocational skills. We also have to have life and work skills and the ability to relate to people and to know how to behave on the job, et cetera.

The issue came up in terms of education for persons with disabilities and special needs, and I must tell the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central again that no one will stop my passion in terms of the need to improve the rights of people with disabilities in this country. The Honourable Member can say all he wants that I politicises the matter. I do not have to politicise the matter of disabilities. I have been involved in advancing the cause of people with disabilities for the last 30 years and that is why I joined the Lions Club of Barbados, that is why I am the Deputy Chairman of a national committee on improving the rights of people with disabilities and that is why I am legal advisor gratuitously to many of the 20 organisations serving the disabled in Barbados. I do not have to use that for political purposes. My passion for people with disabilities is genuine. My sister was born deaf, and therefore the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central knows not what he is talking about and I will plea their cause once I have blood in my bone and life.

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The issue is that children with disabilities are at a disadvantage in this country. The Minister of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation himself a few years ago admitted that Government was not doing enough for children with special needs and we have to make our

educational system more accessible and inclusive for specially-challenged children, whether they are mobility challenged, visually impaired or deaf because a society has to be judged on how it treats its most vulnerable and even simple solutions or recommendations like that by the National Advisory Committee on Education which set up under this Government, under the said Minister in 2010-2011, which recommended that part of the Caribbean Examination Council to be done orally to accommodate children with dyslexia and that has not been done. Further, there is the issue of transportation for children with disabilities to go to school. We have free bus rides for all others except children with disabilities who practically have to pay in a lot of cases to get to school. There is also the issue of having more appropriately trained teachers of special needs children which comes into play.

Mr. Chairman, as was said by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, there is also the issue of putting more children with disabilities into mainstream education. This needs to be addressed more fully. There is also the need of full accessibility of schools for children with disabilities or to accommodate children with disabilities in terms of adequate ramps and bathroom and sports facilities. These are all issues that the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which we have signed and ratified but which we have not brought before this Parliament to be enacted into law. Sir, this speaks to discrimination in this sense. The Education Act, practically speaking, a lot of children with disabilities have to pay to go to school and so we need to look at these areas as a matter or priority, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Chairman, the matter of national development scholarships was raised and the Honourable Member referred to it. Yes, we still have a continuing decline of national development scholarships in this country and if we are looking towards creating new areas of the economy in the area of culture, energy, science and technology and innovation, then why have we reduced the number in terms of the allocation of national development scholarships?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute left in which to conclude.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, these are all issues which we need to address. Finally, Mr. Chairman, there is the issue of the declining roll of students at the Barbados Community College. This is a sad thing as the Barbados Community College at one time was a beacon tertiary institution, you go there now and in some cases it looks like a ghost town. This needs to be looked at as a matter or priority. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. D.O'N. INNIS: Mr. Chairman, I rise to join the debate on this Head for a few minutes and would want to start by commending my colleague, the Honourable for Christ Church East Central for his vocation over the last couple of years. Mr. Chairman, if you listen to Members of the Opposition from time to time you would actually believe that nothing good has happened in Barbados and in this case specifically that nothing good has been happening in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation. Sir, that is very regrettable because hitherto it has been accepted on both sides that education is perhaps the greatest tool for upward mobility and stability in this society and economy.

Mr. Chairman, the truth of the matter is that even in the midst of the deepest and longest recession that we have had, the Government has continued to focus on and invest heavily in education and we have seen tremendous benefits. When I reflect upon the fact that as Members on the other side talk about the deteriorating state of the economy we have still been able, under this Minister and Administration, to build the Blackman-Gollop School. We have certainly undertaken major renovations to secondary and primary schools in Barbados, including extensive renovations I believe of the Lodge School and the Erdiston Teachers Training College. We have also, for the first time, in the midst of what the Opposition called a much challenged economy, been able to get schools reopened on time. Mr. Chairman, in the so-called days of plenty many parents had to take an extra week or two at the end of the summer holidays because the schools were not be completed on time and perhaps it tells me that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation has been able to retool, refocus and to be able to deliver, not just on the school plant but also on the entire education system on the whole.

Mr. Chairman, I listened to my friend, the Honourable Member for St. James North and would want to say to the Honourable Member in all sincerity, to please disabuse his mind of any belief that the Honourable Member is the only one who cares for the disabled in this society. As a Government we have continued to invest over and over again in that particular group in this society and so I really would like the Honourable Member to... I understand the Honourable Member's passion.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. I never said that I was the only person who cared.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, the Honourable Member did not say you were the only one who cared, that is not what the Honourable Member said. Please proceed Honourable Member.

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: Mr. Chairman, the truth of the matter is that even here in Parliament we have been able to welcome the mentally challenged from time to time as is reflected in some of the speeches that we hear occasionally from the other side. Mr. Chairman, the truth of the matter is that when it comes to the disabled community in Barbados as a Government, and both Governments must take credit for first raising the awareness of that particular group in our society, providing physical access to Government's premises and plants around the island for the physically challenged. The Children's Development Centre, renamed the Albert Graham Centre was equipped along with assistance from external sources to cater to the physically challenged. We have had the Deryck Smith School opened at Lears under this Administration with the support from the Government, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and with concessions given. I believe that the Government is called upon to assist with the operating expenses.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, we have been doing well so far. I am asking for your cooperation, you were heard in silence just now, so please give the Honourable Member the opportunity to be heard.

Hon. D.O'N. INNISS: Mr. Chairman, if you look at the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure you would see that we have given \$182 000 per year to some of the groupings in that particular sector and the Honourable Member for St. James North would say that the Deryck School was private sector moneys. Mr. Chairman, what is wrong with the private sector investing and giving to the community? Therefore I want to thank the Deryck Smith Foundation for their immeasurable contribution to the disabled community in Barbados, that is what we should do. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank my colleagues in Government for providing the right ecosystem to make that happen. We must also thank the Maria Holder Trust for the work that they have been doing in assisting and building plants in Barbados for young people. The State cannot do everything. Mr. Chairman, I believe they have been able to take I believe the Nightingale Home and have totally refurbished that Home and so I would like my friend, the Honourable Member for St. James North, to stop speaking as though the Honourable Member is the only one who understands and cares about that particular sector. These are God's children' children too and as a Government we have not turned a blind eye to them.

9.30 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, it leads me to the point in respect to the changes that have been taking place in education in Barbados. As a Government and as a political party, we stood steadfast in our firm belief in providing education

that is accessible and affordable to all. One may argue about the changes at the University of the West Indies, and I take my stance on that, because I have constituents who too have experienced some challenges as a result of our change in our policy, but I believe under the circumstances it was the right thing to do. We could not continue to put all of that investment in tertiary level education and compromise what is available at primary and secondary schools and certainly at the Community College, Erdiston Teachers' Training College and other facilities in Barbados. The contribution that we have asked students to make towards getting university education is not a significant amount in the grand scheme of things, and it certainly has been able to maintain the level of integrity throughout the rest of the educational system in Barbados. I think we must disabuse our minds, and I really challenge the Opposition party on this Point, Mr. Chairman, and I say it with all sincerity: Please explain to the public of Barbados how you are going to be able to finance education for every Barbadian who wishes to go to university. Let us stop fooling ourselves. Let us stop making people believe that we are going to go back to the days where the State will pay for everything. It is not sustainable, Mr. Chairman, and if there is one thing that must cross that political divide, it is this issue. I challenge the Opposition party to tell us tonight or whenever you see fit how you are going to finance it. How are you going to shut down primary schools, how are you going to stop teacher training, how are you going to compromise on the integrity of the plant that we have around here?

Mr. Chairman, I think that under all of the circumstances as a Government we have delivered well when it comes to education in Barbados, and it is not to be quantified in terms of the physical plant, which we have done very well on, but we continue to invest in teacher training, for example. We continue to invest in technology within the school. We have to ask ourselves: What are we training for? We must train towards the future, and the future that recognises the importance of ICT (information communication technology) within the socio-economic landscape of this island; the fact that we can now use it to enhance teaching methodologies, and the fact that we can use it to challenge our children to become the most innovative or the most creative in the world in whatever discipline they choose to go into. These are the kinds of things we have been working on assiduously and must be given a level of credit for, Mr. Chairman.

I think that the money we are spending in Education, generally speaking, is well spent, but there is another side to this argument that we have not been focusing on heavily. Too many parents in Barbados are abdicating their responsibility to the schools. I am a father, I have two children who have gone through our school system here and one who is in it still, and I can tell you that no teacher -- I do not care how much they are paid -- can replace my

role or responsibility as a father. There are just too many individuals in this society who are prepared to cry down the Ministry of Education, complain about the school, complain about the conduct of children on the public service vehicles, and are not prepared to spend five minutes each day having a conversation with their children about their conduct, about their lack of manners. They are not prepared to do homework with their children. They are not even prepared to sit and have a meal with their children. There are just too many sperm donors, I suspect, in this society. There are too many individuals who are not prepared to sit and spend just a few minutes of quality time with their children, and then want to say that our educational system is failing. Perhaps it is us as adults and parents who are failing the educational system. The kinds of children we are rearing in the household are the ones who are reflected out there in the bus-stand. When a 13- or 14-year-old gets on a PSV and curse and carry on, walk with a pen-knife, abuse an old lady, lift up their skirts et cetera, they did not learn that in the school system per se. They learnt that right in the house which they live in, whether it is a two-storey \$1 million mansion or a chattel house with a pit toilet in the backyard.

Many of us who have the opportunity to come into this Parliament have come from working class backgrounds where we all learnt “manners maketh man”, where we were taught to respect the elderly, where we were taught to place value upon the education system, whether you went to school with a knife in your backpack or you had cheese, biscuits and mauby at school. Whatever it was, it was a solid upbringing that we had, and was so because we took an attitude then that it took a village to raise a child. Today, we have certainly seemed to have adopted the position that it takes somebody in a classroom in a school alone to raise a child. I say to you, Mr. Chairman, in all sincerity, that until we get back to the point where we accept that the future of our children and the behaviour of our children must start in the home environment, then we are going to be forever looking to find millions and millions of dollars to put into a school plant, which I dare say will never give us the return on investment that we are looking for.

Mr. Chairman, I firmly believe that when you take a 5 000-foot view of where we have come from and where we are today, we can say that we still have an educational system that is solid. We still have one of the highest literacy rates in the world. We still have others who look on and praise the educational system of Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. D.O’N. INNISS: There was a recent report, I do not remember which one it was, that listed Barbados as having the ninth best educational system in the world, Ronald. I would see the media in Barbados take a negative report, whether it is a credit agency rating, a corruption

index or whatever, and that will run the Front Page for a whole week. You will get everybody jumping on the bandwagon and saying how bad Barbados is, whether it is doing business, credit rating, whatever. I am not dispelling those things, but when you have a good story like the fact that we are the ninth in the world when it comes to educational standards and systems, that is buried near the obituaries in the newspapers if it makes it at all. You do not see anybody going on Social Media and saying that Erdiston College continues to produce top quality teachers. You do not hear anybody say that it is because we have been able to introduce degree programmes at the Barbados Community College. You do not hear anybody say it is because you have taken a few million dollars and redone The Lodge School. You do not hear them say it is because we have invested in creating Sixth Form schools around Barbados so that more young people, between ages 16 and 18 who hitherto could not get into university, now have a chance to continue their education. You do not hear those things at all, and I say that if we are to really take our work seriously and if we ought to take our responsibility as parents and adults in this society seriously, we must stop wallowing in a cesspool of negativity and start to highlight and champion the positive things in this country. What example are we setting for young people in Barbados today as adults?

Mr. Chairman, as I come down let me say this once again. I stand proud and I am extremely proud of the quality education that I have had in Barbados, from St. Catherine’s Primary School to Harrison College to Community College to the University of the West Indies. Even when I studied abroad, it was because I had a solid foundation here in Barbados. It takes more than just those teachers in a classroom. It takes each and every one of us as responsible adults to realise we have a duty to rear our children in the right and proper way. I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. George South.

Mr. D.G. SUTHERLAND: MR. Chairman, I rise to re-enter this debate on Head 77. I want to start this contribution by disagreeing somewhat with something that the Member for St. James South said. It is not about arguing about it; it is about our policy and how strong the Barbados Labour Party feels about tertiary education and paying tuition fees at the university.

9.31 p.m.

I am not getting into any argument about whether you are wrong and we are right or we are wrong and we are right. The crux of the matter, the real issue that we have seen in this country as a result of the whole tuition fee issue certain under-privilege persons, let me rephrase that,

persons from within the lower socio-economic bracket in this society have had to drop out of university as a result of the imposition of tuition fees and we can argue that, we can say it is wrong or it is right but I have met a number of students from that bracket that I just mentioned and even from the middle class bracket who have been unable to pay tuition fees. I understand the Honourable Member is strong on his policy decision representing the Democratic Labour Party and equally the Barbados Labour Party is also strong on the position that we believe the same way that we as members of this society, most of us were from poor parents, humble origins, from the country, wherever in the urban areas, we benefitted from, some say it is not free but we use the term, free education in this country. I strongly believe, and I am representing the Barbados Labour Party without ...

Asides.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. James South can say what he likes. I am not arguing. I am just stating the Barbados Labour Party position on the imposition on tuition fees.

Asides.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: You can ask about the how. Within 15 minutes we cannot tell you about the how but we know very well that we have seen people from the low socio-economic bracket deprived of a tertiary education as a result of having to drop out of the university. I have seen it in St. George South when I walked around, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member had his chance and no one interrupted him. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

That is the fact. It is not whether you are right or I am wrong but that is the fact. That is what we see in this society today. I do not want to spend the whole night on it but I am saying that we are very strong on it as a party. That is the party's position, you have yours and we have ours. No need to argue on it because we are not changing our position.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to move further and I wish now to agree with the Honourable Member who just sat down and I think someone else would have mentioned it. When I went to primary school ...

Asides.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Chairman, can I get your help.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please, please

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: You have asked us to keep quiet, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please, let us corporate.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Can you ask the Honourable Member for St. James South to try and raise the level of debate?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: We have raised the level of debate so ask him to ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, let me deal with it. Go ahead and speak.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Thank you. We have reached a stage whereby a good parent-teacher relationship benefitted all of us when we went to primary school. What I am seeing in today's society and I spend a lot of time at the schools in St. George South and even out of St. George South whereby too often we see parents coming to the schools often wanting to argue with teachers, beat teachers, and things like that. I am saying the time has come whereby we need to foster or regain those types of relationships that we would have benefitted from and I agree with the Honourable Member for St. James South, charity begins at home. We cannot expect to send a child to school who does not understand basic table manners and then we want to blame the teacher when the teacher sees him or her eating his or her lunch in a particular way. The teacher's role is to try to change the child positively with a view understanding how to use a knife and fork, how to sit, and whatever else, but we are seeing too much of this in our society whereby the parents want to give the student to the teachers from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. but they still want to tell them how to teach their children. I think that is a fundamental difficulty that we are being faced with in our system and it is something that the Ministry of Education should try to foster. The parent teachers associations in my view need to be revamped. I should be mandatory that you have certain meetings, say once a month between parents and child and the reporting relations are fed to the Ministry. I do not think that is happening now in our system. We have a number of cases that are being swept under the carpet and they are not being reported to the Ministry of Education and it is posing a tremendous difficulty as it relates to learning, especially within the primary school environment because we can say what we like but at the end of the day, a school or schools are built for learning. It is not about us in the Parliament it is about the child and children. When a child goes to school it is about him and

until we, all of us, understand that the parents, as well as the teachers and I complimented the teachers in my first speech on this important Head. I think the teachers in this country are doing a wonderful job but we need to spend more time as the Minister and the Minister fostering better relationship at the school between the parents and the teachers.

What I have seen also, and I want to thank the Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown who spoke eloquently on the whole vocational training issue and building out the capacity because I myself would have taken the time to meet with the director of the Barbados Vocational Training Board because I had a concern. I met with some 30 young men within the constituency of St. George and people keep saying and I heard some politicians too and I do not know if any of them are in the House here. I do not want apportion blame to any of you on the Other Side, but I heard politicians in this country saying that the men do not want to work and it is a very serious statement. These 30 young men that I met with, all they wanted was an opportunity to get into the Barbados Vocational Training Board programme to learn some skill. Out of the 30 that I met with, my constant pleads and calls only one of those 30 young men entered the programme. It is not because no one wanted to enrol them but it was because of the lack of space. That is why I am saying, the Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown it the nail on the head when he spoke about building out the capacity because we cannot say, yes, we are doing a good job. Probably you are in your view but we still need to look at those who have been deprived of opportunities within the system. We may not be able to get 100 per cent but we need to put greater effort in the whole vocational training in this society to ensure that most of the young men, especially, I am not saying anything negative about the young women but most of the young men can learn a skill.

Some of these skills too can be exported. Let us look at the offshore sector. I spoke in my second reading speech within respect to energy and it is an area that I am passionate about. We can build the capacity for exporting skills in the area of offshore drilling and it is something that the Barbados Vocational Training Board through you, the Minister of Education or whether a labourer can really examine because we have the capability to do that. Of course, you must have vibrant offshore dwelling programme too. I am not saying that in a negative way I am saying it in a very positive way because it is some of the areas that we can focus on to achieve cash, skills, whatever. Mr. Chairman, this whole aspect of the Common Entrance Exam, I am one who strongly believe that ...

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We have a culture where young men and women go to this exam one day and this day determines their future,

and I am saying we need to break that culture. I have seen a lot of young men and women whose egos and the whole intrinsic motivational aspect of their learning have been destroyed as a result of that stigma associated with that one day - and I think the Honourable Member for St. Thomas mentioned it in her speech -- if you do not pass for Harrison College or Queen's College. If you go to the Graydon Sealy School, Grantley Adams Memorial School or the Lester Vaughan School, you are not seen as anybody in this society. It is still a stigma associated with going to those schools.

Asides.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: I am saying this in a positive light and I would like the Honourable Member for Christ Church East to take it in the vein in which I am speaking about it. It is not to say that you have not done anything. It is to say that we need to address the matter of zoning and how we administer the whole aspect of the Common Entrance Examination. These are some of the things that I have seen in this society that we need to address. I saw the Honourable Member for Christ Church South shaking his as well as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North because they know that it is true, so we need to address these issues in our society sooner rather than later.

Asides.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: The Honourable Member for St. James South can make fun at it because he is seen as one of these guys who went to Harrison College so within the scheme of things he can make fun at it but we have others in this society whose self-esteem has been affected because of this one day.

Mr. Chairman, I would have touched on a few things but there is just one more thing that I want to mention which is the whole aspect of the Student Revolving Loan Fund. Mr. Chairman, I will say that we need to ensure that more of our students at the tertiary level can gain access to the Student Revolving Loan Fund. I am not sure what the actual fund is in terms of dollar value now and the Honourable Minister ought to tell this Chamber at some point in time what is the actual value of the Student Revolving Loan Fund because we find that a number of students are going to the Fund and are being turned back. Mr. Chairman, you have to pay tuition fees now which is a burden on you but then when you go to the Student Revolving Loan Fund you have a challenge accessing it, so Mr. Chairman through you I would like the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central to at least shed some light on the state of the Student Revolving Loan Fund and how the Fund is being administered.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. This has boiled down from the other side in relation to making statements in an absolute way and then asking questions on the absolute statement. It is really miasmic, confusing and problematic. Anyhow, I wish to address a few questions that have been raised so that we will give clarity to them and if there are any I have not written down I would not mind if you would just repeat them.

Mr. Chairman, I first want to start with the Honourable Member for St. Michael East and say to him that there are about 79 schools that are down for major work. If not complete dismantling and rebuild, there will be extensions to those plants. Belmont Primary School is a relatively old school and has been problematic or a little while and therefore it is down for major rebuild in maybe another two years. In other words, you have to go through the design phase which we are about to start and then the tendering for the construction phase. Belmont Primary will be one of those schools in the first phase of that construction and that is recognised. We need good plant for our children. In that bottom in McClean's Gap you will find that there is a real need for that. We have children who have drifted away from Belmont Primary because of the issues associated so we will be doing a complete demolishing on that site and a complete reconstruction of a new plant in that area.

At the Wesley Hall Junior School we have good land there but it is potmarked with an old building here and an old building there and then the main block. All of that is to be dismantled, bulldozed and the entire site clear and replaced with possibly a new three-storey building which would then give you good playing space and parking space in that area because I am sure the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown would know that the Infant School along with the Junior School would have nearly 1 200 students in that location. It is a bit heavy. With the construction of the nursery school at Deacons, if you do it as a standalone school, one would hope that would ease some of the congestion there. Mr. Chairman, the Wesley Hall Junior School is to suffer the same fate as Belmont Primary, complete demolishing, clearing of the site and a complete build. That too will be under the architect's pen shortly.

We have two St. Martins Schools. We have St Martins/Four Roads and the one closer to the airport side going back that way to the south, St. Martins/Mangrove, is also to have a new school there as well. Wesley Hall Junior School is to be a 600 students school but bearing in mind that a lot of people come from around the country into Wesley Hall, we do not want to disrupt that because one

knows that parents working in the wider inner city and outer city want to be able to get to their children quickly and one has to respect that particular position.

We are still trying to work out the location for the merger of St. John Primary and Society Primary because I am not pleased with what is being suggested to be the location where the old outpatient clinic is, so I am going to have to speak to the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development relative to that. We had identified another location but the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Rural Development has to deal with that.

The Willkie Cumberbatch Primary School, which I believe is in St. Michael South East, is to have a new 24 classroom block. St. Philip Primary is to have a new, I believe, 12 classroom block where the prefabs...

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: All of this is now being rolled out, you know the issues we have had so we are now at the design stage of those. There are one or two other schools which I do not remember now offhand which will also be part of that redevelopment initiative.

Mr. Chairman, I was making the point earlier to the Honourable Member for St. George North that it takes time go through... schools. The school plants are the largest of any plants across the Government sector and from time to time you would find that more money is spent on one than on the other because of the nature of the decay that has taken place.

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In 2015, if you look at the St. Christopher Primary School it looks like a new plant because of the work that was put in. if you go to St. Lucy you would see that the Ignatius Byer School looks like a new school because of the enhancement done to it. We stopped using paint but have put on trowel plastic, et cetera. Mr. Chairman, a whole lot of work went into those plants. We have done work at the Wesley Hall Infants School on two occasions and also at the St. Mary's Junior School where there was major enhancement of the plant.

Mr. Chairman, sometimes when you consider that you were going to spend \$200 000 sometimes when you go in you end up spending more, especially if you have to remove an entire roof because sometimes the rafters and the other things are also damaged and so you have to end up changing those. Major work was done at the St. Matthew Primary School in 2016. All of this is continuing because we have a work programme in the summer that continues to work on those various plants. Mr. Chairman, even at this time with reduced revenues to the State's sector

we continue to spend between \$2 million to \$2.5 million every summer on those schools to bring them up to scratch, because we are concerned about the comfort for teachers, for the children and for those who would visit the schools to transact their legitimate business.

Mr. Chairman, it is not easy to deal with social constructs. The 11-plus examination is a social construct, but what we have to do is to stop using language or words to make children feel as though somehow they are not worthy, that is the mistake that we make in this country. Mr. Chairman, I remember when I first came into this Ministry my first graduation speech was done at the Barbados Workers' Union Headquarters, Harmony Hall, where I said to the audience at the time that if schools were like elastic then we only needed one school in Barbados, when we wanted to accommodate 4 000 students at Harrison College or Queen's College we would stretch it like elastic and put 4 000 students in. Mr. Chairman, but do you know what would be the issue? The issue would be that children learn at different rates, at different paces, they demonstrate different competencies, different skills and different attitudes and therefore from an educational background we have to be able to find space for them to grow within the context of the provision of education.

Mr. Chairman, I have used the example, and teachers know it well, of how to build on the strength of a child to take into consideration the development or the emergence of other strengths. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Members for St. George North, St. Thomas or the Right Honourable Prime Minister who has had some 10 years of teaching and others who would have been in the classroom, all might be at the proverbial chalkboard and might see a child looking very intently downward on a page and when you go over you see that that child has nothing that you have on the board written down, instead that child is doodling and reproducing some of the best cartoon characters that that child saw last night on television. Mr. Chairman, that is creative talent and so the mind was slanted in that direction. The question therefore would be, how do you get that child integrated into the programme without discouraging that child? Mr. Chairman, that child becomes the artist of the class and you are able to use that child's work to help facilitate learning within the school. As a result of that you will find that child now beginning to appreciate some of the other things that you are doing because that child now moves from his page and looks at your page because your and his are now the same. Mr. Chairman, that is how you have to bring them out of themselves even more because they might be a bit introverted and comfortable just being there with the pencil and paper.

Mr. Chairman, when we speak to the 11-plus examination it is a transfer examination, it does not test really your ability for Mathematics and English even

though scores emerge. Mr. Chairman, we have an institution in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation that was developed by our Planning Unit and helped refined by the Inter-American Development Bank which can track the value added and the performance of students at whatever the entry point is in whatever school and to see at Form 1 or Form 4, if you are using the ordinary marks of the class or the exit results, how those students perform vis-à-vis the marks they might have achieved in the 11-plus examination.

Mr. Chairman, it might surprise you to note that sometimes the value-added and the learning curve is more significant among students who would have scored a lower grade than those who would have scored a higher mark or a higher grade and this test this in a significant way. Mr. Chairman, this is available and I hope it is being used in all of the schools, because we had training and exposure so that schools can actually interrogate the performance of each class and the whole school within the context of that particular instrument which I believe was developed two to three years ago within the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation.

Mr. Chairman, not only are we testing, we are evaluating, we are accessing, we are seeing the progress of the students against these particular parameters within our system, so do not quarrel with the system, it is the society that bears down on other elements within that society but we have to be strong. Mr. Chairman, today there are 30 of us in here, some of whom are coming from a similar background, some coming from different backgrounds and some of us from varying backgrounds but we stand representing the country as a whole. There are some persons who may say that they had a silver spoon in their mouths and there are some who might argue they had a tin spoon. What is the common denominator? It is not necessarily the metal but that you had a spoon, and we were able to use that effectively to become leaders in the society to lead others out of that false state of mind. Mr. Chairman, I know for some that is almost a severe difficulty but they have already been burned and fashioned in the fire and be made to be who and what they are but at least they are still making a contribution to the society, so do not make our children feel as though they are of no value or worth.

Mr. Chairman, one of the things I have always said and will continue to say is this, what is now considered a reward where when one does the examinations or the results come back there are these limousines that turn up at schools and you and your friends jump into it and are feted. When Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown left the Old St. Mary's Primary School there was none of that, there was not even a bicycle to put you on for your father to ride you somewhere, you would have finished the

examinations, gotten your results and you were able to go to Combermere.

10.13 p.m.

You rose in the ranks, because Combermere has produced a lot of the leaders of the Defence Force of Barbados; the last of course being from Parkinson. That shows you the melting pot and courage which individuals must have from within their domestic environment, supported by their teachers who are sufficiently conscious. It is not your environment that holds you down, but the support and the talent which surrounds you and you desire to achieve takes you forward. In some instances, that desire to achieve is not there but do not give up. I am finishing here, Sir.

The Honourable Member for St. George South said he went with 30 fellows. It is a strange statistic, 30, but I am not questioning the veracity, and all of them to a man said, "We want to go to BVTB (Barbados Vocational Training Board)." I do not encounter that myself. Out of 30, sometimes you get eight who demonstrate the ability at the time. I support all 30 who said "We want to go"; that is an extremely unique group. We will continue this debate tomorrow to point to more successes, more opportunities for Barbadian youth to utilise their resources. This 16 to 20 per cent of Government's annual revenue and this six per cent of the Gross Domestic Product has been consistent over time. You have had one or two little blips when there have been severe challenges, but Education has been ring-fenced. One of the things that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said way back in 2013 when he became Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs was that we were going to ring-fence Education because we know when we emerge out of this, that the future must still be strong for our young people.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Rt. Hon. F.J. STUART: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. This is just a brief intervention in this debate under this Head to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Education on his sterling performance over the last nine years as Minister of Education of Barbados. He has stuck to the task. He has understood very clearly the mandate which was set for him, and nine years later as a Government - and I am sure as a country - we are all proud of the record which he has established for our education here in Barbados. The Ministry of Education of course has had a long history, as one would expect. I used to know when it was just the Ministry of Education. That was when, under the Barbados Labour Party, the late Luther Thorne was Minister of Education, and more recently then under the Democratic Labour Party in the early 1960s Mr. Cameron Tudor, later to become Sir James Tudor, was also

Minister of Education. Then I used to know when it used to be called the Ministry of Education and Culture. Education and Culture were linked to each other, and later it was Education, Culture and Sports. Today, it is the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, and those changes in nomenclature reflect the changes which have been taking place in this society; the changes of emphasis which have been taking place in this society.

The accentuation of science here in Barbados and, of course, across the world has made emphasis on scientific teaching an imperative here in Barbados. We have all tried to make sure that our students well understand science and are as scientific as possible in their approach to learning and to their social practice. At the same time, we have tried to make sure that while they are as scientific as possible, they do not become too scientific; and there is a distinction between scientific and being scientific. The latter word, of course, connotes that science can be the solution to anything or everything and can answer all questions. There are still areas of the human experience that science has not touched and cannot touch by its very nature; but having said that, we live in a world that is scientific and the march of science makes the absorption of science education a very important pursuit.

Similarly, there is technology. The word technology really means a tool, and as a result of scientific understanding there are technological developments of a wide variety, and technology mediates the relationship between Man and Nature and between Man and Man. We have seen technology used for very positive purposes, and we have seen it used for very destructive purposes, but from technology and its use we cannot escape. I am very proud, of course, of the fact that I see from the very primary level in our education, students becoming more and more excited about technological creation. When I tour BMEX from year to year, primary and secondary school students are proud to show how they use scientific understanding to do technological creation; and that is a positive sign because there was a time in the history of Barbados, not too long ago, when the emphasis on science was not nearly as pronounced as it is today.

Then there is the issue of innovation, which is a front-burner issue in the Caribbean and a front-burner issue across the western world as we try to do sometimes the same things differently or to do new things in new ways or to do old things in new ways. The emphasis on innovation is, of course, very important to our development as a country as well. Mr. Chairman, the one mistake I think we must never make, and I hear it all too often in Barbados, is this: When we go to school or to university or when we educate ourselves, we are acquiring education for the marketplace. Yes, we have to eat, we have to drink, we have to work, we have to acquire, we have to house ourselves and so on, but education is about our own self-

development. I think it was Cardinal John Henry Newman who made the point that in the same way that we do not want top-class health because we want it for the marketplace, but top-class health is a virtue in and of itself, being well-educated is a virtue in and of itself.

10.10 p.m.

The fact that we can master our own environment, that we can understand all or as many as possible of the complexities of our environment can only result from being properly educated. I am not suggesting that we ignore the market all together but I am saying that the reason we pursue education is because to be educated means to be put in a position where we can control our environment better, control our interpersonal relations better, set higher standards for ourselves, pursue higher standards and on the whole become a better culture and a better civilisation. It teaches us not only self-respect but it teaches us how to respect others. It gives us a surer and more secure hold on life, it puts us in a position where we can be better, not just better persons but in the context of our society, better citizens. That is the kind of education that has been pursued by this Government over the last nine years and in fact, but successive Democratic Labour Party Governments. We concern ourselves with the development of people, creating top class human resources while at the same time not ignoring the fact that social and economic development are imperatives which we must pursue.

We have just completed 50 years of independence. We are still a young nation and post-colonial societies and all of the post-colonial societies here in the Caribbean and in Africa and wherever else they can be found have to deal with the issue of what kind of educational philosophy they will embrace and what kind of educational policies they will pursue. I know in Tanzania under the late Doctor Julius Nyerere he evolved a system of education which he called the education for self-reliance and in other third world countries education has served the purposes of human development because education should always reflect the aspirations of a society at any given time in the course of that society's development. One of the disfigurements, I would say, of post-colonial education, of course - it started as a disfigurement of colonial education and we are still trying to, as it were, exorcise that demon in our thinking -- is that we continue to draw a line of distinction between mental labour and manual labour, between people who work with books, pens and paper and people who work with other tools, hammers, saws and so on. That is one of the, what I call the disfigurements of our civilisation because, not only do we make that distinction but we draw other conclusions from the distinction that the people who we call academic are superior to the ones who we call non-academic, that the ones who use mental labour, as we classify it, are superior, ipso facto, to the persons

who use manual labour, using their hands from day to day in various technical and vocational occupations.

Historically the Democratic Labour Party and our national Hero and the founder of this organisation has taken a very strong view against that. He is not alone in that view, there are other who have taken a very strong position against it because all men and women, no matter what kind of work they do have to use their brains. The people who built the furniture in this House had to use their brains. They had to conceptualise first and then had to apply their conceptualisations to the task of creating what we have in this House and what we call furniture. That goes for everything else therefore the distinction between mental labour and manual labour has always been a false distinction, deriving from colonial society and designed to draw lines of distinction between people to create superiors and inferiors and to create people who see themselves as servants and others who see themselves as masters. This has a long history and when the Greek philosopher Plato was conceptualising his ideal republic, for example, he premised all that he was saying on what he called the noble lie and that noble lie had to do with the fact that some people were born to rule and others were born to serve those who were ruling and education was at the heart of all of that. We have been trying over time to dismantle those myths and to create a more egalitarian society where whether you are academically inclined or technically inclined you can command the respect of people in the society and we can relate to one another as human beings rather than as superiors and inferiors as people who should enjoy on the one hand, a certain set of privileges while on the other hand, those who work with their hands, as we say, serve those who are supposed to enjoy the privileges and those who are regarded as being superior. I know that Mr. Barrow in many a speech confronted that question and made it very clear that he never accepted that distinction but there are many thinkers in the last century and many thinkers in this century who continue to confront that issue and that is an issue which I am proud to say is being confronted by this Administration and quite frankly being confronted in Barbados by our elevation of technical and vocational training and our putting in place, qualifications for all of those people who do technical and vocational work or pursue technical and vocational studies as a measure of their quality in the society in which they live. This will continue to be a work in progress but in the fullness of time we will achieve that egalitarianism or that egalitarian society that we dream of.

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In highly industrialised countries, Japan, Germany, the United States of America and so on, these distinctions are far less pronounced than they are in our society because the earning capacity of any ...of the people that we say are manual labourers are so stunning that they make the point

that all of this talk about people being academically gifted and people only being technically gifted can sometimes be the pursuit of a mythical kind of distinction.

In addition to that, Mr. Chairman, the other point that I think we have to recognise in local education is the fact that education has to be as holistic as possible. We try in the way we instruct our students to give them as broad-based as possible an understanding of their environment and we try to indigenise, to make local, that kind of understanding because ultimately the distinction between a colonial society and an independent society will be found in whether all of the symbols that we use are the symbols of the mother country or the symbols that we use in our education are the symbols of our local environment, so these are some of the issues that we have continue to pursue as we try to liberate our people and to emancipate their minds in such a way that they can become confident citizens and allied themselves more easily to the task of national development.

This is a debate, as I understand it, that is going to go on for a little while. I think we will resume on education tomorrow and I therefore do not want to take up this Committee's time too much more tonight but I think that in making those few observations I have laid the foundation for a further intervention tomorrow when we resume.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, with that we have come to the end of Government Business for today and I therefore beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 9.30 a.m. on Friday, March 17, 2017.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 9.30 a.m. on Friday, March 17, 2017 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BOSTIC, Lt. Col. J. D.**BOYCE, Hon. J. D. E. (Christ Church South)****BRADSHAW, Miss. S. J. O. (St. Michael South East)****BRATHWAITE, Hon. A. D. (St. Philip South)****CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)****FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)****HINKSON, Mr. E.G. (St. James North)****INNISS, Hon. D.O'N. (St. James South)****JONES, Hon. R.D. (Christ Church East Central)****KELLMAN, Hon. D. St.E. (St. Lucy)****LASHLEY, Hon. S.A. (Christ Church West Central)****PRESCOD, Mr. T. A. (St. Michael East)****SEALY, Hon. R. L. (St. Michael South Central)****SINKLER, Hon. C. P.****STUART, Rt. Hon. F.J. (St. Michael South)****SUTHERLAND, Mr. D. G. (St. George South)**

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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 begins with a take-slip ('House D 7D Seq 1 2.09 p.m.') and Mr. Speaker's opening words ('Good afternoon, Honourable Members. This Sitting is resumed...') as plain paragraphs without a speaker label. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Committee of Supply, Head 77, take-slip about 2.30 p.m.. The source carries the note 'INSERT S3 PRINCE' as a heading, and the Minister's next speech begins with '... They continue to be so equipped.' A passage (Sequence 3) may be missing at this point. Please confirm.

Q4. Committee of Supply, Head 77, Hon. R. D. Jones and Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw. The Chairman's call and the opening of Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw's speech ('Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. Miss. S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman...') are run into the end of Hon. R. D. Jones's speech in the source, so the first part of Miss Bradshaw's speech prints under Mr. Jones's label. Please confirm.

Q5. Committee of Supply, Hon. C. P. Sinckler. The speech is labelled 'Hon. C. P. SINKLER'; elsewhere the name is spelt Sinckler. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Heading after the 8.15 p.m. resumption. The heading reads 'COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (RESUMED)'. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed on Thursday, 16th March, 2017 at about 2.09 p.m., with Mr. Speaker in the Chair. Reverting to Papers, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, Member for Christ Church South, laid the Excise Tax Amendment Regulations 2017 and the Needham Point Holdings Limited Annual Report for 31st March, 2014. On his motion, seconded by Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, the House went into Committee of Supply on Order No. 20, with Mr. J. D. Paul in the Chair, and the whole sitting was given to Head 77, the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation.

Hon. R. D. Jones, Member for Christ Church East Central, opened the Head, thanking the Ministry's staff and describing the retooling of schools with mobile technology, aided by some BDS\$10 million from the People's Republic of China, for Caribbean Examinations Council assessments. Mr. E. G. Hinkson, Member for St. James North, disputed the Government's account of past education policy, and his exchanges with the Minister brought points of order on both sides. Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, Member for St. Lucy, answered Mr. Hinkson, while Mr. D. G. Sutherland, Member for St. George South, asked Members to look forward rather than rehearse what earlier leaders had done.

Miss C. Y. Forde, Member for St. Thomas, thanked teachers and community groups, and Hon. R. L. Sealy, Member for St. Michael South Central, commended the 'quiet but significant reform' of which the Minister spoke. Mr. Hinkson pressed for the Ministry's policy on technical and vocational education. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, Member for St. Michael South East, said the Government's position on printing money and on growth remained unclear after the Minister of Finance's wrap-up, and that primary, secondary and other tertiary institutions together cost less than the University of the West Indies. Progress was reported and the House was suspended until 5.35 p.m.

After the resumption Hon. J. D. E. Boyce gave notice of a Resolution to grant \$1 312 739 from the Consolidated Fund under Supplementary Estimates No. 14, 2016-2017, and the Committee resumed. Hon. C. P. Sinckler, Member for St. Michael North West, congratulated the Minister as the longest-serving holder of the office; Mr. G. A. Clarke, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, Lt. Col. J. D. Bostic and Hon. S. A. Lashley followed. The Minister described the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications introduced over six years, and Miss Forde criticised the Youth Affairs Department's work in her constituency. Progress was again reported and the House was suspended until 8.15 p.m.

In the evening Mr. T. A. Prescod spoke on pre-primary education and Belmont Primary School, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce commended the Minister, and Mr. Hinkson thanked trusts such as the Maria Holder Trust and the Sandy Lane Trust. Hon. D. O'N. Inniss, Member for St. James South, said \$182 000 a year was given to some groups in that sector and defended private investment such as the Deryck School; his exchanges with Mr. Sutherland required the Chairman's repeated intervention. The Minister replied on school redevelopment, and the Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart, Member for St. Michael South, congratulated him on nine years in the office. Progress was reported, and on the motion of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, seconded by Hon. A.

D. Brathwaite, the Sitting was suspended until 9.30 a.m. on | Friday, 17th March, 2017.

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