
THE

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HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

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RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Good afternoon Honourable Members, this Sitting is resumed. Honourable Members, last evening when the suspension was taken, we were on Government Business, Order No. 19, and with that we shall continue. Yes, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

ORDER No. 19 (RESUMED)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I would just like to clarify before I start the timelines that are available in accordance with the practices of this Chambers for broadcast.

Mr. SPEAKER: Three hours, three minutes.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Three hours and three minutes from the point of starting?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, three hours and three minutes from now.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: We are now at 4:03, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Is that correct. Thank you. So we go until 7.07 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for that courtesy and I would like to start this evening by thanking all of the Honourable Members on my side for their continued support and for their commitment to duty as we have walked across this country over the course of the last few months 'Rubbing Shoulders' with Barbadians allowing us

to be in a position to speak to the issues and concerns of ordinary Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, after some 28 going into 29 years of active involvement in politics and public life in Barbados I would have been exposed to many a Budget and to many a Budget Reply. Indeed, Sir, before coming to this Parliament I recall as a child and as a teenager the duels of Errol Barrow and Tom Adams and Tom Adams and Richie Haynes as a young teenager. Indeed, there was also Erskine Sandiford and Owen Arthur, there was Owen Arthur and David Thompson and now today the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West and yours truly. This is the Ninth Budget Reply that I would have been engaged in as Leader of the Opposition or speaking on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party. I recall, Sir, aspects of every Budget and every Budget Reply in this House therefore pretty much for more than 30 years, but there is a salient quotation, Mr. Speaker, from, yesterday's Budget that forever shall be etched in my mind.

There would be ample opportunity in the next two hours for me to deal with the Budgetary measures and Financial Proposals as well as the true calls and costs of suffering in this country, but for the next few moments Mr. Speaker, I want to do the unanticipated. I want to quote from and I want to agree with the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs on an aspect of his speech, a revelation that he has made and a revelation that I am sure his advisors in the Democratic Labour Party would, on reflection, have counselled him to reserve. This is what the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs stated last evening and I quote him verbatim.

"This is a time for strong, determined and unflinching leadership, leadership, Sir, that will be unafraid to take tough and resolute decisions which may be unpopular but which ultimately would be in the best interest of the country, leadership, Mr. Speaker, that will be open, frank and honest with the people of Barbados as to what the challenges are that continue to confront us so

many years after the debilitating impact of the most severe global recession since the Great Depression, but ultimately, Sir, leadership that is prepared to take action now and not in an attempt to willfully punish people for the sake of it but to secure a sustainable and successful way of life for those who are here now but especially for those who will come after. Put another way Sir, we need leadership that will continue to put people and country above politics, party, popularity, and yes even the polls to come. Leadership, Sir, that will do as Erskine Sandiford did in the early 1990s and put Barbados first. If ever there was a time for that type of leadership, that time is now."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with that said I really am tempted to take my seat and to tell the Prime Minister of this country to call elections, to dissolve this Parliament, because this country after nine long years is now being told by the Honourable Minister of Finance that the country needs to go in search for leadership. If ever there was a farce, it was that. Nine years, Sir, and what did the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs gave us yesterday as imperatives and prerequisites to good and sound leadership of Barbados in 2017. What he said is what 95 per cent of Barbadians would agree with, that the current leadership of Barbados has fallen and remains way below the mark and is incapable of taking Barbados where it deserves and it needs to go. By saying what the country needs, the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs exposed for all of us to see what by his own bewildered admission the country now currently lacks.

Indeed, the speech writer for the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, and I say the speech writer because I do not know of anybody from Black Rock that speaks about Fall as he did on page 31 of his Budget Speech, before Fall this year... I know Bajans talks about wet season and dry season. I know Bajans talk about October. Bajans do no talk about Fall and Autumn, but we now know where the tutelage came from because people in Washington D.C. talk about Fall. This speech writer who clearly is not living in Barbados clearly they have not observed the attitude and the indifference of the Honourable Prime Minister to issues of interest and concern to the people of this country.

Open and frank dialogue is what the Minister of Finance says is the imperative when clearly nobody has heard the Honourable Member for St. James South recently who continues to attack the Prime Minister for not talking to the people of this country, but in case somebody says that those were the comments of a guard-less Member from St. James South, people forget that the Attorney-General, no less a person, also delivered himself of remarks that the Prime Minister needed to talk to the people of this country. Have we gotten this, Sir? Are we getting any different statement from the Prime Minister? Or is he still sleeping? Or is he still asking us to watch a race being run on its

own? What about leadership that is prepared to take action now? Surely the author of the script that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs read yesterday is not familiar with what the people of Barbados have had to endure from this current leader over the past eight to nine years.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, listening to the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs one got the impression that the speech was flown in from as far as I said yesterday morning and was embargoed until five minutes before he read it given the number of mistakes that he made in reading the speech. How else does one reconcile the fact that this was the same Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs who in 2015 told this Honourable Chamber we have turned the corner and we have a successful home-grown programme that is working? This is the same Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs who inflicted the largest dose of taxation ever in the history of this country since taxation was introduced in 1941 on the people of Barbados. This is the seventh recovery plan by the same Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs: Medium Term Adjustment Plan, March 2010; Revised Medium Term Plan, November 2011; the 19-month Adjustment Strategy, August 13, 2013.

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In addition to that in December 2013 when 3000 persons were announced to have to go home and another 2000 posts to be the subject of attrition over the next five years and four years later we still do not see the full benefits of what the Honourable Member said he would do; March 2014 when the Honourable Member foisted taxes on the credit union sector and increased the Excise Taxes then; June 2015 when the Honourable Member removed all of the allowances on the backs of people leaving just those for spouses, children and for one registered charity in a trade union, leading to almost \$70 million being extracted from the backs of households particularly middle income households in this country who can take and bear no more. And then of course we come now yesterday to what is the most vicious tax take ever to hit this country since taxation was introduced in 1941.

Mr. Speaker, how would you rate the previous six, because you cannot get to tax number seven unless the last six have failed? But I do not need to be the one telling you that it has failed, no less a person than the Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management on 21st February this year in an interview with "Barbados Today" told this country that these policies have failed miserably, and I quote him verbatim. The Honourable Member said: "What I will stand behind is the analysis as to why economic policies and strategies were pursued that we pursued as a Government would not have worked and why we would have to refinance and

restructure the debt. This should have been done much earlier and it would have been easier to do.”

The Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management went on to say that he the Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management asked the same Right Honourable Prime Minister whose leadership is in question and is at issue today to change the present fiscal economic stance and fiscal consolidation programme of this Government.

The Honourable Member warned them that the magnitude -- and listen to this carefully -- “The Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management warned that the magnitude of the current account deficit was too large to be simply corrected by budget cuts and tax increases alone.”

Mr. Speaker, what does the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs come here yesterday with? The Honourable Member came with the exact prescription that the Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management said as recent as 21st February, that it could not work. But this was the same Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management who told the country -- and my notes show me a front page of February 14, 2014 -- blame us. The Honourable Member did not say to blame anybody else, the Honourable Member said blame us. Mr. Speaker, for the purposes of the record of this Honourable House I will make it a document because we need to be clear, that the desperate pleas of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs yesterday come against the background of all of this, that they are not found in a vacuum.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs harped back to this days of working with the former Prime Minister, Sir Lloyd Sandiford. Sir, in case the public forgets let me remind them that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs was not the Economic Advisor of Sir Lloyd, the Honourable Member was Sir Lloyd’s Personal Assistant, so I am not sure for what purpose the Honourable Member was drawing the reference.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I do not know what messages the Honourable Member used to carry for Sir Lloyd or what bills the Honourable Member used to pay but I can be assured that the Honourable Member was not there in the room when Sir Lloyd was crafting what he had to craft, but if it makes the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs feels better to refer to Sir Lloyd, even though the Honourable Member was Sir Lloyd’s messenger boy, that that was the last time that the Honourable Member fell under the shadow of a leader then so be it. If

we meet this evening against the backdrop of a Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs that says that this country needs leadership, that has not been able to find it, that recognises that this current Prime Minister has been Prime Minister for seven years and indeed has been Prime Minister longer than Sir Lloyd was ever Prime Minister of Barbados, so that the Honourable Member is choosing to ignore who is next to him who has served longer than Sir Lloyd but to call Sir Lloyd as his point of reference for leadership in this country. Well, we now understand why there was an Eager-11. We now understand why as we speak today discussions are being held on that side as to who should replace the Prime Minister to carry that party into the elections. We now understand why they have been unable to find a replacement and hence among themselves the troubles persist. Mr. Speaker, Sir, these persistent rumours continue. Sir, the Prime Minister ought to be aware of it and if the Honourable Member is not, hopefully from this evening the Honourable Member shall know that there are at least three of them who meet on a continuous basis and that yesterday was about setting the measurement for leadership which the Prime Minister could not pass muster on once it was set in the context of this debate.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we will examine this economy.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: This is one afternoon that I have the time, relax yourself. Mr. Speaker, we will examine this economy and its recent performance in a little while but I want to stress from the outset, Sir, that the fundamental issue facing this country is leadership and lack of leadership. Mr. Speaker, that is what this debate is about, it is about leadership of the country, leadership of the Government and leadership of the Cabinet. Mr. Speaker, it is the absence of that leadership that has frustrating and retarding progress in Barbados today. There is a clear void at the top of Government and Barbadians need to come to terms with that reality. It is not something which we enjoy, nothing meaningful, Mr. Speaker, will happen in this country as long as the country remains afflicted with the uninspired, lackluster, indifferent and incompetent leadership that now engages us.

Mr. Speaker, many believe, Sir, that it is only the local media, that it is only the local private sector, that it is only the local Trade Union Movement or the local youth leaders, or that it only the local social commentators that believe that this Prime Minister has a puzzling and indifferent attitude to the country and to leadership but if you were to travel, Mr. Speaker, across the Caribbean and if you were to travel even beyond, you would realise that the experience of homeowners living in the parish of St. Joseph, St. Andrew, St. Peter, even in the parish of St. Lucy was not unique, that they could be without running

water in this country for months upon months upon months and that a Prime Minister has never even thought it necessary to go visit and understand and listen to their plight. Sir, it is the most amazing measurement of lack of leadership in this country. Where is the compassion? Where is the caring in this country?

Mr. Speaker, when you talk to regional or international Heads of organisations it is no different, they throw their hands up in the air because of the non-responsiveness of this Prime Minister. Barbados has fallen in the eyes of the world, not only because our streets are hardly lit with street lights not working, not only because potholes abound as a transitory inconvenience, not only because the country is bushy in spite of \$3 million being voted to hire people to clean up the country and God only knows where that money has gone, not only because the country is looking dingy but because nobody also understands what drives the Prime Minister of this country. Mr. Speaker, there is no urgency of the part of the Prime Minister to address, far less than to resolve problems.

4.29 p.m.

Do you know what matters, Sir? Correspondence sent to his office very often is not acknowledged, not responded to, and useful responses are not given. Advice sometimes is ignored, decisions never taken, and no less a person than a senior Member of his Cabinet was heard to say that when he tells you this matter will be dealt is when you have to start to worry; when he tells you this matter deserves sober, mature consideration. These words will resonate with that side because they know what I am talking about and that decisions cannot come. This is what they say to you, and this is not what Mia Mottley says; this is the lament of almost everyone who comes into contact with the Prime Minister and indeed, regrettably, outside of Barbados, his Foreign Minister, Mr. Speaker.

If you think that the failure of the Prime Minister to engage the local private sector on a regular basis, even after asking them to submit a report, is an issue, how do you explain letters from the commercial banking sector; the last one in particular of May 3 of this year in language that reflects the great gravity of their concern? I am not going to quote from it extensively, because I will respond at a different stage, but suffice it to say that when you bring to the attention of the Prime Minister your concerns that the Barbados Revenue Authority (Amendment) Act would bring to a halt a serious slowing or considerably slow down real estate transactions in this country, and that there is already a reduction in the velocity and in the closure of real estate transactions which, left unattended, will further inhibit economic activity in Barbados and constrict growth. Between May 3 and when the banks took their action last week Wednesday or Thursday, no response has come from the Prime Minister of this country. Shame on him. No

answer; and this is not average people who are not known. These are people controlling financial institutions in this country. Suffice it to say that was not a unique experience.

When a Canadian High Commissioner can write and remind this Government on August 2, 2016, to the Prime Minister that “you have submitted a proposal since January 2016” -- a competitive financial offer to build a reverse osmosis plant at the Belle -- and from April 2016 the matter has remained without any communication in the Ministry of Finance; and when you are asking the Prime Minister to recognise that the Government of Barbados should provide an indication as to whether it will proceed with the construction of this reverse osmosis plant that will assist with the circumstances of the hundreds of people living in the Belle and Licorish Village who continue to live in 19th Century conditions in a 21st Century Barbados, it is shame on the Prime Minister. The Canadian High Commissioner has no duty to the people of the Belle and Licorish Village. It is our Prime Minister who has it, and I can later on show you other letters from companies and international multinational corporations, the Chinese Exim Bank, companies that have contracts with Barbados waiting for the Indian Exim Bank to respond, companies that have contractual relationships that could become the subject of law suits. I will get to that very carefully and soon before the end of my debate. There are at least five examples of a non-responsive Government and a non-responsive Prime Minister. I say to you that it is shameful and that Barbados cannot accommodate or carry the weight of an incompetent and non-responsive Prime Minister.

We knew he did not talk to us. That is the truth, and we got accustomed to that, but we did not know that he did not talk to officials who he should be speaking to as well. We thought that he spoke to them, but it is clearly a case that the Prime Minister only speaks to tourists at Ilaro Court and the dead people in his library. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that leadership is a fundamental issue to get us out of this; and why? Let me contextualise it. Do we understand that this Minister of Finance has brought six failed plans? He wants us to believe that this seventh plan will work. This is fundamentally an issue of credibility. Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of Barbados needs to take responsibility for the actions of his Minister of Finance. That is what it comes down to. There is no other Minister of Finance in the Commonwealth -- and I dare say the world -- who has had as many credit downgrades foisted under his stewardship than this Minister of Finance. Indeed, he has the record in the Guinness Book of World Records for the most credit downgrades of any Minister of Finance in the world. Yet, the Prime Minister believes that Barbados can carry the weight of his incompetence and other attributes to which I will refer later.

Sir, may I say that if we examine the leadership of post-Independence Barbados, the Errol Barrow who they

speak of so often would never have tolerated the leadership of the Minister of Finance with all of those credit downgrades? He would have been fired. Tom Adams would have fired him. Sir Harold St. John would have fired him. The person for whom he acted as personal assistant; he too would have fired him and told him “come back and be my personal assistant, not my Minister of Finance.” The Right Honourable Member for St. Peter I know he would have fired him. Quick, quick, quick. Sir, I suspect that the Member for St. John would also have fired him had he lived. Do you know what the biggest news is, Sir? That there is a man called Chris Sinckler who I suspect would have fired the Minister of Finance too. So heavy has been the weight of his incompetence on this country.

Sir, none of this matters to the Prime Minister, which is why the Prime Minister can stand shoulder-to-shoulder to the Minister of Finance when he delivers this extraordinary Budget. The only post-Independence leader who could still be working with this Minister of Finance is this Prime Minister, because this Prime Minister does not bestir himself even one iota to come into contact with the economic circumstances of this country and the financial woes of the people of this country. The Prime Minister can find himself talking to us about everything under the sun except the state of the Barbados economy. Sir, here you have a Minister of Finance rising to his feet yesterday and setting forth a new set of reasons for his failings. Mind you, this after he has claimed success on every occasion. He reminds me of George Bush: Mission accomplished, and each time it has to be taken down. Some people warned us this week of it by reminding us of his 2015 language, “It is working”, only to find \$480 million; \$481 million, to be precise. The accounting firms today, which in their synopses gave you the figure of \$340 million, have regrettably taken the figures that he put at the end of his Budget Speech rather than looking at what his words said, because those figures only relate to the balance of the financial year, the full cost of the taxes Sir, \$291 million for a National Social Responsibility Levy in one year, almost \$300 million; \$140 million in two per cent Commission on the sale of foreign exchange; \$50 million in excise tax, and I am going to come to that when we deal with the Budget because as is to be expected, the Minister has come in here again with mistakes in his computation.

4.32 p.m.

Sir, \$481 million in additional taxes in one year. Where is it coming from? Sir, Budget after Budget after Budget, the people of Barbados are asked to make further sacrifices.

Mr. Speaker, on December 13, 2013, I sat in this precinct when they announced the layoff of the 3000 workers and I said to the country that we are asking people to make sacrifices without bringing them to safety. Sir,

every year you ask Bajans to make another sacrifice, you ask the middle class in this country to make another sacrifice, you ask the civil servants in the country to make another sacrifice, you ask poor people in the country to make another sacrifice; you beg them to whole strain and you tell them about team Barbados, you tell them you are going to reach safety this time, you tell them you have this wonderful home grown strategy and 10 years later, what do they get yesterday. Sir, all they have to show for their sacrifice is an effective detrimental defacto devaluation of their social and economic existence and a defacto devaluation of the Barbados dollar yesterday by these measures that have been put by the Minister of Finance. Sir, that is all they have to show.

Mr. Speaker, I spent my time articulating leadership because as a leader of this country no Minister of Finance could bring three of the most regressive taxes that will have a disproportionate burden on poor people and low middle income people in the country who have already been under the strain of over \$400 million in new taxes in the last nine years and tell me to bear this.

Mr. Speaker, this is like asking a man who has not eaten for two months to go and run a marathon race and carry heavy weights. He simply cannot do it and they know it and we know it. Sir, I will come to it in details as to why the measures will not have the results that the Minister wants them to have. I want to tell you that the leadership that I will bring to this country will not admit of a Minister of Finance seeking to come with taxes of high percent of GDP, all to make an idle boast that he has balanced the Budget. Balance what? I would like somebody to give me the Estimates of Expenditure of Revenue on the Clerk's table, please.

Mr. Speaker, when you balance a Budget, it means that you have met all of the expenditure that the Government has to bear. When we look at the expenditure that the Government has to bear ...

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Turn to the Ministry of Education for me please, first, the University of the West Indies. We have all the time in the world today because the people of Barbados will learn the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Sir, it is at page 354. Sir, the problem is that we need God to help up, not them.

Mr. Speaker, page 354 of the Estimate, now the law of the land, the figure voted in the balanced Budget that the Minister boasted to balance yesterday is \$71.3 million but we all know that the liability of the Barbados Government to the University of the West Indies is in excess of \$100 million, and the Minister of Education will tell us this. Now turn to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for me now

please. We know that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital need \$185 million and that the Minister of Finance has not altered the terms to which it supplies goods and services to the people of this country. Tell us which Budget was balanced yesterday. Sir, this is an 'obzockie' Budget. This is a one-sided Budget. This is worse than going down the hill in White Hill.

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, the Ministry of Health, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is at page 191/192. Believe you me, I am taking the time because the people of Barbados must know that we are not plucking these figure from mid-air. The people of Barbados must know that when a Minister of Finance comes and tells you this is the expenditure of the country, I can go into Hansard and find all the speeches where he said, "Oh, do not worry about this, we will bring the supplementaries at the end of the financial year in March and it will reflect the full expenditure". Sir, many a year, you do not bring them and that is why the Government has arrears and it owes away to people almost \$1.5 billion dollars between VAT refunds, between Income Tax refunds, between the University of the West Indies, between IONICS, between UCAL and between all the suppliers large and small. It is true that some large suppliers get paid better than small ones, that is true but that is the reality.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you that when you look at what the Queen Elizabeth Hospital voted for this year, \$115,980,000. We know it needs \$185 million by the admission of the Minister of Health and by the admission of the previous Minister of Health and by the admission of this Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, without working, I have added \$70 something million to the Government's budget and nowhere in this Budget yesterday was there any change in the terms and conditions under which people access services in the country. Sir, for the sake of an idle boast, a Minister of Finance wants to tell you that he has passed an exam like a little boy. I now have surplus of \$4 million.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me tell you something. Barbados is not about an exam, Barbados is about people and household, Barbados is about people who have not been able to meet their demands for daily living. We have public servants who have not had a pay increase in the country since 2010, who have face extraordinary increases in prices for over 40 per cent in that timeframe but we have a Government that could not do without their 10 per cent in pay increase, and this Government and the Cabinet sought to restore its own 10 per cent to its pay knowing full well what it was bringing down with an increase to 10 per cent of the national corporate social responsibility levy. Sir, they knew what they were bringing and they put themselves

back in a position to have a fuller salary to withstand the onslaught but public servants in the country do not have it.

Mr. Speaker, while I am on it, I want to make a document of the House, because the Barbados Labour Party parliamentary team is absolutely clear that we will not be accepting the 10 per cent increase and that other that what is required, we have said that the back pay must go to two organisations, the Diabetes Foundation and the Salvation Army of Barbados, and those donations will be make. The Clerk of Parliament can confirm that were it not for the fact that the Accountant-General was not available for meetings for the last two or three weeks, those cheques would have been paid already but I make this now a document of the Honourable Chamber in relation to where the pay increase of Barbados Labour Party will go. Sir, it is unconscionable and leaders must lead from in front. You do not go to the front of the queue and start eating, and they know it. Sir, that is why I say that this is fundamentally about leadership in the country. I want to tell you that if I were Prime Minister of this country, the Minister of Finance that came to me.... Let me put it on record now, to inflict that level of taxation that he would have to wheel and come again. You could not seek to tell me you were budgeting a Budget by gouging the liver gall out of the people of this country.

Sequence 4.

It was no less a person than the Right Excellent Errol Barrow who indicated and tutored this Honourable Chamber that the colonial Administration insisted on surpluses but that he would not impose that on his Government because to do so would be to deprive Barbadians of development in this country. It is something to which all political parties until now subscribed and that is what is fundamentally wrong with this moment in time in this country that this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) Administration and this Prime Minister has departed from the morals and values that have held this country together since 1944 and even before from Grantley Adams right through to Errol Barrow right through the J. M. G. M. "Tom" Adams right through to Bernard "Bree" St. John right through to Erskine Sandiford right through the Honourable Member for St. Peter right through to the former Honourable Member for St. John even. They have departed from it and everything that defined Barbados they have thrown out.

Well I am here to tell you that as Prime Minister of this country we will reinstall what it is like to be a Barbadian. What it is like to be a Barbadian includes that if you have at times to take difficult decisions as happens sometimes that measure and burden of taxation must be tempered with an understanding of how people can going to live. How are they going to live? If you rub shoulders as we have been doing day in and day out then you would

understand why this is a real issue but if they do not go and visit the people in St. John, St. Joseph and elsewhere when they do not have water. If they are driving about one of five and six cars, they would not know. Every Barbadian household deserves a living income.

I am here tonight to tell you that as Prime Minister of this country I would have had to have insisted and will insist that every household in Barbados must have a living income whether it is from wages, salary, National Insurance benefits or pension and that we will take 10 per cent of any new tax take such as what happened yesterday to buffer the most vulnerable in this country and that what is spent alone in the Welfare and the National Assistance Board is not enough to carry them through this. If you expect to get \$481 million, isolate \$48 million. If you are going to get \$400 million, isolate \$40 million, if it is \$300 million, isolate \$30 million and work with the community groups and churches and identify those households to give them a living income, not to meet their wants but to meet their needs; basic needs. I cannot believe that all of these men in this Honourable Chamber sat down in a Cabinet yesterday and approved this Budget and not one of them from the Prime Minister back down said to the Minister of Finance, do not introduce that without putting measures in place to ensure that those who have no income coming into their households can live in this country come July 01.

Further, I would not know how as Prime Minister to hear from a Minister of Finance that he wants to increase the cost of living to the magnitude, if you listened to people today, from as low as 12 per cent in food to as high as 23 per cent, to as low overall inflation from as low as 5 per cent to as high as 7 or 8 per cent without introducing a cost of allowance for the public servants in this country. There are over 20 000 public servants who have not had a pay increase and at the very least in the absence of that pay increase they must benefit from a cost of living allowance to help them meet the extraordinary increase that will take place now in prices in this country. Do you understand that the Minister of Finance told us that the inflation will go up? When a Minister of Finance tells you that inflation will go up you know a tsunami of prices coming and this is the same Government whose mandate is derived from cost of living, cost of living, cost of living in the language of a famous lawyer/actor "whapaxx, whapaxx, whapaxx". That is what the cost of living, cost of living, cost of living meant when we heard it in 2008 and as if that were not enough you through salt in the wounds of people. You have an intergenerational poverty study that shows in poverty in Barbados under this Government increased by 50 per cent up to 2010/2011 and you come now with this in 2017. Before the Prime Minister, ... that is what I tell you about leadership, you cannot tell this country that they must tolerate the burden of a Patrick Todd that they do not even want to run in The City of Bridgetown but he is still carrying cost on the public purse getting more than what

the Member of Parliament for The City draws. I can go through the amount of consultants and the amount of former candidates that did not win like Irene Sandiford-Garner and Peter Gilkes whose only purpose in live now is to send out WhatsApp messages. Do you understand what these people draw as salaries? But you send home Sham from Jackson at the National Conservation Commission. You would send home my constituents, you would send home constituents from people in here from the National Conservation Commission, the Drainage Division and the Ministry of Transport and Works. This was the most selective trimming of staff. They kept their own working even if they were not prepared to run them in constituencies all because the fatted calf syndrome must predominate.

I would not know how to lead a country that does not have my Cabinet and my parliamentarians leading from in front. When in the Ministry of Education we were doing the White Paper, the night Carew died, the rain came out of the skies like nothing, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would tell you, and the two of us were down there with the staff until half past four in the morning in and out of the rain photocopying. When St. Leonard's School was not going to be ready to open for the term, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central probably should remember because he was in the unions at that time, we had from myself to the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, to the Chief Education Officer, to the Deputy Chiefs, to everyone down there at the St. Leonard's School with mop and bucket. We did not bring the Press to take pictures because it was not about a public relations event, it was about getting a school ready for children so that there would be no disruption on the Monday morning.

When I say to you that the Government that I lead must be responsive to people, that I want to hear what people have to say, we would not be a Government that sees the people of Temple Yard without water and electricity for four months in the capital city of this town and not believe that something is fundamentally wrong with that. I would not know how to be a Prime Minister of Barbados of two 'Barbadoses'. I want to restore faith in leadership in this country by engaging with the unions not treating them like if they are opponents and enemies of the State.

This notion that only a certain group can survive and only a certain group have ... Mr. Speaker, the one thing that would have to stop is the use of the CBC as a tool of propaganda by the State of this country, it is disgusting.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Under the Barbados Labour Party every lunch time lecture was on television on Friday night and every Sunday night public meeting were

carried on Monday nights during the news and when the former Honourable Prime Minister David Thompson took over the leadership of the Party in 2006 he was given an hour on People's Business to talk to the people of this country, and I cannot even get 60 seconds to talk to the people of this country. To add insult to injury the Prime Minister is the Minister and to add insult to injury the debt to CBC is over \$100 million and you are going to me that we do not have leadership as an issue in this country.

I want to go on, Sir, because I want this country to understand that we will not introduce ill-conceived measures in a Budget that are not ready for implementation.

House D 12B Seq 5 4.52 p.m.

How many taxes have this Government and this Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs...? It is true the first one was not his, the first one was the former Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, the same Honourable Prime Minister: the taxes on lotteries and the taxes on cell phones. That was two attempts at that. How many ill-conceived taxes have we had? The one that we marched for: the Municipal Solid Waste Tax and before that there was an environmental levy that he sought to attach to the National Insurance Scheme that could not get off the ground, and now as if that were not enough we come in here today again and we hear from this Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs an attempt to put a tax on excise for gas and diesel. Do you know what is so sad, Sir? That this Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs told us that this will only result in an increase of the excise and the price of gasoline to \$3.05, I believe, and the price of diesel to \$2.25.

If the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs used to take tutelage or advice from the public servants, these mistakes would not become a common feature of every Budget he delivers to this House. The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs ought to have known that in the price build up of gasoline and diesel, the Barbados Revenue Authority issued a notice saying that the National Social Responsibility Levy apply to gas and diesel and as a result - I want to make this a document of the House - once you put that it meant that the National Social Responsibility Levy would move from 2.48 cents to 12.4 cents for gasoline and from 2.36 cents to 11.8 cents for diesel. It, therefore, means that in addition to that with the changes to the excise tax there would also be a corresponding change in the VAT because the VAT is now on a larger base and therefore instead of the VAT on the price point that he chose to use yesterday being 44.6 cents the VAT will now be 49.01 cents on gas and the VAT on diesel would be 31.16 cents instead of 32.05 cents. For a lot of fancy numbers, what it means for your money is that instead of you paying \$3.05 per litre for gasoline you will now be paying \$3.29 per litre for gasoline, 24 cents more

per litre, and instead of you paying \$2.25 per litre for diesel you will now be paying \$2.42 per litre for diesel.

In order for this not to happen, and may I remind the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs that under the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act - his voice proclaims law, it is a dangerous power, it should not be used by little children - he would now have to amend the law either by ensuring that the National Social Responsibility Levy does not apply to gasoline and diesel, but then again this is a Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs that delighted in the fact to collect taxes for the National Insurance Scheme....for the last five months without there being any lawful authority because the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act ceased operating since the beginning of December, all of December, all of January, all of February, all of March, all of April and all of May, and still as we speak because it has not been debated in this Chamber now to ratify the collection of taxes for the last six months in this country but we want to lock up people from Bush Hall in Swan Street for selling without a licence.

I suspect that this Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has spent too much time around a man who sold insurance policies without lawful permission so he believes that he could now collect taxes without lawful permission. That is what I mean about the Prime Minister because the Prime Minister served in this country for three years as Attorney-General and the Prime Minister cannot claim like the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs not to know the importance of the Rule of Law, not to have studied jurisprudence, and not to understand, as learned as he is in philosophy and jurisprudence, the importance of not just appearing to give lip service to the law but approving a reality of dealing with the law. Everybody brought it to the attention of the Ministry of Finance that there was no lawful authority for this. Well, I say to you now that in the interest of Barbadians if you want to bring an amendment tomorrow night to be able to ensure that this does what you want it to do, a Barbados Labour Party Opposition will accommodate and cooperate without debate. We are not going to hold you in here much longer, but without this Bajans will now pay \$3.29 per litre for gas and \$2.42 for a litre of diesel. This was not what was announced or intended, but the application of the law, if applied appropriately, will put this on the backs of Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me come to the actual budgetary provisions because these budgetary provisions are amazing. I am in two minds, Sir, whether the measures announced are real or not because there are three fundamental problems if they are.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I have all of the time in the world.

There are three fundamental problems:

1. Just one year after telling us that his home-grown project was working as we said earlier and just two months after the Estimates, as I said, this Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs have come with the biggest tax take ever.

This document was approved by this Honourable Chamber

in March of this year. At no stage during the debate in Estimates... The Minister spoke for five hours. He denied the scale of the problem. I say to you that it says to me that the fact that he has not learnt from David Thompson's tax take of 2008 is an unfortunate thing. This is a Government now of trial and error but Bajans cannot take being victims of trial and error anymore because let us look at it when you purport to charge a rate of tax for the National Social Responsibility Levy that goes from 2 per cent to 10 per cent not only is that not a 400 per cent increase in the tax, 8 percentage points, but you run the risk of businesses not being able to meet their costs anymore, insolvency at best, bankruptcy at worst, unemployment increasing in this country, and if those things start to happen what happens to the corporation taxes? What happens to the value added taxes? What happens to the income tax take?

This is the fundamental debate about elasticity and taxes. The Minister must know therefore that his desire to be able to yield \$291 million from this tax is unlikely to be successful, but this was never about what is going to be successful or not, this is fundamentally about buying time, this is about a state of execution, Mr. Speaker.

I have already established that this speech was not written in Barbados, it really was not. Fall.

House D12B Sequence 6

Mr. Speaker, what is even more important is that eight or nine months before the dissolution of this Parliament, because this Parliament ceases to exist on 5th or 6th March next year, we are eight or nine months away from the end of the life of this Parliament and this Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs comes with a level of taxation that is unable... Mr. Speaker, if you talk to any economist in any part of Barbados, if you talk to anyone who has been in public life long enough, they will tell you that the human behaviour that is likely to attend the execution of this tax, in circumstances where people have already been the victims of almost \$400 million in new taxes, not old ones, that we are unlikely to see this, so why announce it, because you had to satisfy somebody to give us a break to ease us, to stay your hands, to roll over the instrument so that we could at least have seven or eight

more months to issue a contract here to bring a Housing Incentives Act for the benefit of one or two people again.

Mr. Speaker, this is about the welfare and well-being of the Cabinet, it does not matter what happens to poor people out there, it does not matter what happens to middle class people out there, it does not matter if people can and will now have to pay 23 per cent more than they were paying before for stew beef. This is criminal because when all is said and done, Honourable Members here can delight about which roof to fix and which car to buy but there are people out there who we meet Thursday nights, Friday nights, Saturday nights, Sunday nights, people from across the country, from St. Lucy down to St. Philip, they do not know how they can get groceries bought in this country. They do not know how many light bills or water bills. Mr. Speaker, how many people now live off kerosene oil to provide light at night? Do not tell me that because they go to "Reggae on the Hill" that all is good, people go to "Reggae on the Hill" to relieve stress, they save up money for four months or beg somebody who likes them to pay for their ticket or beg one of the same politicians to give them a ticket. That is a fact, but that is how people get through stress.

Why do you think that Barbados must be one of the only countries in the world where a beer is cheaper than water? Four beers cost \$10. Not anymore, not after this. Four beers for \$10 is cheaper than a liter of water in the supermarket or in the shop. Mr. Speaker, I am saying to you therefore, Sir, that the reality of being able to access this quantum of income is not there. Sir, let us take the Foreign Exchange Commission, everybody, including the accounting firms today, focus on the 2 per cent, but who is collecting that 2 per cent? Sir, the banks are collecting that 2 per cent. Mr. Speaker, have you ever seen a bank in Barbados collecting anything for anybody without charging a fee? What is the fee going to be? This effective devaluation for the purchase of a United States of America dollar or Pound Sterling or any other form of foreign exchange is distortionary. If you were really going to do a devaluation it would be because you would want to get one of the side benefits of being competitive, but rather than being competitive it puts you in a distortionary position.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Do not ask me, I am only a little lawyer, go talk to your economist, go talk to the institutions, but what we had yesterday was a Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs who wanted to come here and beat his chest with an idle boast and a Prime Minister who is so disconnected from the people of this country, to have allowed us once again to be victims of this sordid side show for which we now pay the ultimate price.

Mr. Speaker, there then another increase in the Excise Tax. How many more? Mr. Speaker, I am not even going to get in today to where the Cess was taken off and who was going to benefit from that Cess with the sale of the Barbados National Terminal Company, and how the Government is foregoing that to ensure that there is a rate of return to the purchaser. I am not getting into that today because that is sub judice' but at what point do we have Government that stands up for the people of this country? At what point? This tax grab is so huge that it is likely to lead to a contraction in this economy and a contraction in this economy means that our Gross Domestic Product will fall, and our Gross Domestic Product falling would mean that our debt to Gross Domestic Product ratio is going to increase, and our debt to Gross Domestic Product ratio increasing means that we are now galloping down the road to take over from Greece.

Mr. Speaker, right now there are only three countries: Barbados, Greece and Japan that have over 160 per cent debt to Gross Domestic Product ratio and with this Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs we no go galloping down the road, instead of learning from the lessons of Greece, a total race to the bottom. I tell you that being a Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs given to the wrong person or given to a child who does not know what he or she is doing is like putting a child behind the wheels of a Ferrari and putting them on the Spring Garden Highway. God help all the people living in Brandon's, all the people on the beach would be killed. It would be like monkey handling a gun. Mr. Speaker, if it were not so tragic it would be funny. If you do not know what you are doing...

Mr. Speaker, that is why I started with the leadership of the Prime Minister, I actually believe that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has had enough. I actually believe that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs wants to be relieved from his job. I know the Honourable Member well-enough to know that the swagger that the Honourable Member used to have is not there anymore. I know that the Honourable Member wants to be relieved more than anything else, but the problem is, Sir, that there is still a Hilton Hotel to be sold. The problem is, Sir, and I will come to it later, that there is still a Sam Lord's Castle to deal with, that there is still a Berth Six to deal with, that there are still a number of contracts that have to be resolved. Mr. Speaker, this is unheard of.

In addition to that, Sir, the other budgetary measures in terms of the National Social Responsibility Levy, let us look at the fact that this as a cascading tax means that the tax is paid at more than one stage and that the people who are going to suffer from this tax are the local producers. I want the Honourable Member for St. James South to go in the next week and talk to domestic producers in this country and ask them what is going to be their experience

yet again. The Honourable Member met with them at Pelican Village late last year where there was almost a riot there in Harbour Road. Mr. Speaker, what also got them vexed was this notion and instruction from the Barbados Revenue Authority that you were not to separate out what was the tax in the invoice, as if it was now the wicked private sector that was causing people to pay more money, instead of letting people know that it was Government's imposition of this tax that caused from hamburgers, to stew beef, to school uniforms, to beer, to whatever, to be increased in this country, so that it was sufficient that you charged that tax, you also now want to be able to hide the fact that you charged it.

Mr. Speaker, well, what happens? Mr. Speaker, local production is unlikely to suffer and indeed the competitiveness of local products, because imported goods invariably will only have one or two contact points with the National Social Responsibility Levy, but a man who manufactures goods will have raw materials coming, will have transport costs and other costs, so that the cascading effect of the tax means that you are now destroying the basis for local entrepreneurship and effort and production. Does this Cabinet not sit down and talk these things out?

5.14 p.m.

The Member for St. James South has a lot of mouth on everybody's business. I want to know whether he expresses his views to the Minister of Finance and, of all people, the Prime Minister.

Aside.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: We have already established that the Minister of Agriculture's only hope is to do a "mea culpa" to the country. Blame us. Madness. Mr. Speaker, five per cent is being taken out of this economy through higher taxes, because that is what \$481 million is. Let me break it down for the public. Our GDP is roughly about \$9.1 billion. Ten per cent of GDP is \$910 million. Five per cent of GDP would roughly be \$455 million. This Minister of Finance is taking \$481 million out of this economy one time, and my advisors tell me that is likely to cause a slide in this economy by over 7.5 per cent, and that the timing depends on the implementation of the measures. The bigger issue is how vendors will pass on the prices. As we know, this is always an issue. Will vendors use the opportunity to cut their margin, increase their margin, or hold their margin? There are just so many variables. What I do know is this: This is a country that, previously from Errol Barrow and Grantley Adams right through, let people live. Let us not even talk about what this Minister is proposing to do.

Barbadians do not really have a problem with paying taxes, but I do not know sending Gestapo-like people

looking for people in communities to register for taxation is going to help you. It is not going to. What will help us is a Prime Minister talking to the people of this country. What will help us is a Prime Minister saying to the people of this country, "Let us understand this. Sometimes you may have to make a little sacrifice longer than you otherwise intended to," but we do not get any pep talk, we do not get any consultative talk, we do not get any encouragement, and we do not get any entreaties. We do not get anything. In fact, the only people who get it, as I said, are the tourists at Ilaro Court who are repeat visitors and the dead people in his library. They are the only ones.

Mr. Speaker, what made yesterday's encounter particularly difficult is this: Check the Minister of Finance again. If I were to pause now and tell the Clerk to bring every single Budget Speech since 2010 -- the Members for St. James South, St. Joseph and St. Michael North will remember these -- you will see promises. "We are going to do this to the international business sector to allow the ease of doing business in this country. We are going to do this for the agricultural sector." He is done talking agriculture now because I suspect that the Minister of Agriculture curses him on the economy for him to be talking agriculture now. Every year promises for competitiveness, and yet again we have one this year: Page 31. The name is so long for the committee that I cannot even remember it. It is the National Fiscal Economic and Social Development Restructuring and Enhancement Programme. By the time you say those words, the Election would have come and gone. That is a fact. Then again, this is the same Government that told us about FACTS. They like these acronyms. Do you know what FACTS stand for? Freundel And Chris Telling Stories.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I have not quite worked out what National Fiscal Economic and Social Development Restructuring and Enhancement Programme means. I thought it was bad enough that we had National Social Responsibility Levy, but I did not know this was to come too. If this was not so tragic, it would be funny. Chris Rock, watch out. Trevor Eastmond, watch out. We are making mock sport of people's lives in this country, but do you know what is sad? I had to tell some young members of my party who have now come and who feel this is the first time, "Do not feel so. Go and talk to the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister for St. James South and ask them if we were not talking about this in 2008. Go and ask them about the Estimates of 2009." The Member for St. Michael North can tell you that when the Member for St. John stood up opposite me in March 2009 and said that he was going to run a deficit -- go and get the figures for the draft Estimates -- of 5.5 per cent, I stood up after lunch in this Chamber and told him that the least it would be was eight to 8.5 per cent, and I did not have economic training.

As fate would have it, by the end of the year it came in at 8.5 per cent, because I did not need economic training. I know Government. I know the liabilities of Government. I know the costs. I know what GDP is. I know how to divide and subtract and add and multiply. This does not take a Solomon.

I also know smoke and mirrors, and I also know deception, and I say to this country that yesterday was an exercise to have a stay of execution. Please roll over the debt which you have so that I do not have to print any more money, and let me get this extra five, six or seven months that I need to sort out these contracts. Do not mind people will have to take a little suffering in the middle. If I was serious, I would have brought a programme of serious restructuring and a programme for growth of this economy. You cannot tax your way back to growth. We are saying it in every debate in this country since what we thought was the biggest ever tax take: \$108 million in July 2008. We left in here reeling. We did not know that the Member for St. Michael North West would seek to outdo.

There is a point in life where psychiatrists tell you that the one thing people do not like is for people to laugh at them. I am now satisfied that yesterday's exercise was also about passing an exercise of "wunnah feel wunnah could laugh at me? Well take this." This is a sorry, sorry fate in this country. I want to know how the people in Black Rock, in Danesbury, in Free Hill, in Straker's Road, will get through this. I want to know what they are going to do when they go in at Carlton and A1 and they now cannot find the money to pay for the groceries which they have picked up and have at the cash counter. Can they go across the road to the Minister of Finance's constituency office and beg for help? That is what this is going to come down to. When we go back and look at all of the momentous occasions in this country, they always happened because people could not eat. If this was about simply cars and members of the public not being able to drive BMWs like the Member for Christ Church East or the Member for St. Philip North who have businesses that give them BMWs to drive and which are doing work with a Ministry, I would not mind. It is wrong and it should not happen, but guess what? The law should deal with them. When this is about eating food, this is what this comes down to. This is past electricity. This is about food. Then I have a problem in this country and every one of us from this generation -- the majority of us are from the Independence generation -- should be ashamed to be in a Parliament that is going to deal with this kind of measure and foist it on the people of this country. What did the Minister of Finance tell us about what he would do to help restructure tourism in this country, other than to mention Sandals? Is he talking about who would deal with Sandals? Let me tell you something. Their deal with Sandals created three classes of hoteliers in this country: The one that does not have to do anything and that can literally bring in their stuff at will; Sandals. No. 2

represent the ones who are in the luxury division who have got support for a few alcohol and food products but have to run like little messengers to the Ministry of Tourism every two weeks and say, "Please, Sir, can you please allow us to bring in these goods?"

5.21 p.m.

They do not have a fiat like Sandals. Sir, then the 3rd category who really need it but who cannot get it because they are told that you owe statutory obligations. It is because they owe statutory obligations that they need help in order to be competitive. Then you have to go and buy a meal from somewhere and a bottle of wine from somewhere. The people that most need it are now the most expensive in the country for you to go and purchase a meal and they cannot refinance because of the tax clearance certificate now. Sir, it is complete strangulation. What is the fate of all the direct tourism services? What is the fate of attractions? Sir, people come this country, children, 14 years, 15 years and 16 years old and other than to go into the sea and to run about on the sand, there are no attractions for families. Sir, Barbados was never only price competitive, Barbados was competitive on quality but we have a Minister of Tourism that has presided over the biggest decline in tourism in the country since Independence.

Mr. Speaker, do you know that when we left Government we were earning \$2.3 billion from tourism services in the country and that last year, we struggled to reach \$2 billion after nine years of this Minister of Tourism and then I am going to hear about arrivals. He wants to count one-one arrivals where the greatest increase in arrivals are people under 24 hours and 48 hours.

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph says he is so consumed with arrivals that perhaps he should be consumed with departures as will happen to him on the elections.

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I am asking where are the jobs in tourism? How many people in the country are working two and three day weeks in tourism? The Honourable Member for St. Michael North will deal with it tonight as he has done. Sir, this is not a joke anymore. Sir, do you know that in July that the Honourable Member for St. James Central and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East did a Press conference in July 2013. I will never forget it. I will have to call them the Bobsie twins now because they never used to get on but, all of a sudden, since Sam Lords and a common lawyer friend in common, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North

West and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central are now the Bobsie twins. They are now Chinese twins. The two of them held a Press conference and they promised the hotel sector that they would deal with the smart energy cost, renewal energy and reduce the cost of doing business in the country. The promised improvement at St. Lawrence Gap. It was a ten-point plan. I wonder where are the journalists in the country. I want to know where the talk show hosts go. I want to ask what part of that plan has been executed but then again, this was the same Minister of Tourism in the height of the financial crisis that said he was going to bring a TURF. Sir, I tell you they like acronyms. He she he would bring a Tourism Industry Relief Fund (TURF). They had a \$25 million fund and they had \$81 million in claims on the \$25 million fund. You think they came back and try to satisfy the remaining \$56 million. They were left to flounder on their own. Sir, this is the only Government I know that will boast of selling a Hilton Hotel and tell you the price they will sell it at too before waiting to see what the bids bring in a price at. Sir, they must have a buyer. They have already counted it in here, breaking the laws of the land yet again.

Mr. Speaker, where is the Honourable Attorney-General? The Prime Minister served as Attorney-General and know that the only thing that can go into the Estimates is that which is law. That is the first I learnt in 1989 when I became a political aspirant, and as a Senator in 1991, you learnt that even if you intended to give a salary increase to public servants, if it was not yet the law it could not be put into the Estimates of Expenditure because it only deals with the reality and the law. This is a bunch of wild people who break the law at will, and break contracts at will.

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: The Minister is saying it is not true. The Minister would have to be the one telling the country...

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I am not finished. I have now started but I will come to Sam Lord's Castle shortly. It is not US\$180 million either. They purported to build a Sam Lord's Castle for US\$180 million but want to sell the Hilton Hotel for BDS\$100 million.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am serious when I say the measures announced by the Minister of Finance last night fail to correct the problem. He attempted to do too much in one fell swoop such that what he is intending to do is unlikely to be achieved. I am told they have 12 serious buyers for the Hilton Hotel but I will wait for them to announce that to the country because I am going to come to Sam Lord's Castle shortly.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, these measures here are unlikely to achieve what they set out to achieve. Our reserves. This year, we still have to pay \$400 million in foreign debt in June and December of this year. Sir, when I told him in 2015 about lengthening the repayment of Credit Suisse beyond the five years because they bought the Credit Suisse loan sheet in here and the Honourable Member for St. James Central spoke to it in December 2013 and it was a five-year loan that should finish in December 2018, and when I accused the Minister of Finance of lengthening the terms of repayment not only did he call me a liar but Barbados Today wrote a headline, "Liar, Liar". Now, Sir, ask him now when the Credit Suisse Loan is going to finish. Look at the back of this document and see if it is not 2019. Who is the liar now? Sir, then again, we already have him apologizing to the country for lying to Parliament last year when we went to Baxter's Road and highlighted to the country that he misled Parliament and we already had the Minister of Finance apologise to Parliament when the Honourable Member for St. James North showed that he had misled the Parliament about BAMC reports being laid in this House. Sir, this is the modus operandi and I expect you to come in here and lie and curse me tonight but I am coming to that too, Sir. I am not finished yet because what you have now done to the voiceless in the country requires that we are going to stand up and fight toe to toe on behalf of the people of this country. This is now beyond the Sir, look at the Credit Suisse Loan and see if it not to finish in 2019. Sir, I cannot make this a document of the House because this is now the law of the land. If you want evidence of the Minister of Finance lying to the country of Barbados go no further than Appendix C of the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue, Note 14, \$225 million amortised 18th June, 2015 to 18th December, 2019. This was the Minister of Finance who denied it and said that he had not varied the terms and mentioned the payment but called us a liar.

Sequence 9

I am accustomed to it now but if that's what makes you good and gives you an extra ounce of breath bring it on.

I go further. You came here yesterday and you talked about expenditure cuts, \$82 million in expenditure cuts, we do not know whether it is paper pins, whether it is gas, whether it is diesel, whether it is supplies that are necessary for people who are coming to work to be able to do the work but we know that it is not ministerial salaries and we know it is not the 10 per cent that they have taken back in their salaries. Mr. Speaker, this is not how you can govern a country in an economic crisis. This is unlikely and when you look at all of the commentary that has come today from the accounting firms, from the banks, from independent people, do you know what they say? This sounds too good to be true because the Government does

not have a track record on executing. When they told you they were going to send home x people they did not send them home. When they said that they were going to deal with State-owned enterprises, this Minister of Finance and this Prime Minister said that they were going to deal with State owned enterprises in 2013. We are almost four years later in 2017 and other than paying for PriceWaterhouseCoopers to do the study which is as -- God knows what it is -- what have they done?

Mr. Speaker, I say to you that a new Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government recognises that we have a duty to this country and that there are seven urgent jobs to be done. I have already pointed out that as a Prime Minister of this country that I would not know how to allow over 20 000 public servants not to benefit from a cost of living allowance. This is not a wild card promise about interest free mortgages or duty free cars. This is to allow people to have a cost of living allowance to live because their salaries have not been increased since 2010 and that this is a Government, in spite of having the NUPW put a pay increase before it for almost a year, the only action that the Government took was from May 2016 to announce its intension to return the 10 per cent to themselves and not to the public servants. No wonder public servants are in meetings openly declaring now that oath for the days of the dispatch of this Government. That is what they have presided over. You have to ask yourself: what is the damage you are doing to the integrity of the Government of this country because people no longer have respect for you? I say that in addition to the cost of living allowance to the public servants that we will ensure that there will be a minimum living income for every household because people must eat, people must bathe, people must have shelter, people must be able to go to a bathroom, people must be able to do the basic things in this country but if I want now to address broad areas because you know I hear in this country what the Labour Party would do and what it would not do. You would not believe, Sir, that on so many occasions we have told this country, the Chamber of Commerce, BAMP, all of them but they are people who like to hear their own voices and hear what they want to hear but I satisfy myself that a time is coming when in the context of an election Manifestos will be put out and both sides or all sides will contend but in the interim, Barbadians must know what we stand for and Barbadians must know how we will make decisions in their names, and Barbadians must know what values we have and it is to that I want to address because a Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government must believe that it can share with you who we are, what we stand for and what we will fight for. We did not put out a Covenant of Hope because we had nothing to do or we had money to waste. We put it out because in the same way that you must know how your children will behave when they become adults you need to know how your Government will behave when it has power to exercise. You need to know what matters to your

Government, how it will prioritise expenditure, what are the values, what are the objectives, well let me tell you some of them.

1) We must stop the printing of money in this country in short order and we have to introduce legislation to ensure that it does not happen again. Jamaica has legislation that would have prevented what happened in this country where Central Bank holding of Government securities went from \$0 to \$1.8 billion at the end of last March. Jamaica's legislation would have required it to come to Parliament. Do you know why? We get in here and we make decisions as lawmakers only for the people in that tower over there to ignore what we have said by facilitating the printing of money so you could as well have done nothing in Parliament. Then for the other people in Bay Street to ignore it and to continue to incur liabilities and to build up arrears to the tune of \$1.5 billion. Do you see this pink book? This book that we talk about a balance Budget? Were it not for the fact that you called it the law, it means very little because of the behaviour of this Government both with the printing of money and the building up of arrears, what the private sector now call adversarial funding. We understand that it cannot be done overnight and that is the point that we made to the Minister of Finance. If given a cost of living allowance and ensuring a living income to the most vulnerable in this society costs us \$100 million to \$120 million and we have to run a deficit of 1 per cent, so shall it be because we are coming down from 6 and 7 per cent. There is no magic about saying I passed this idle boast unless it is testosterone flying but there is no room for testosterone to fly in this country now. We cannot afford it. This is about people being able to eat and if it means that we have to carry these people and these families, we are talking about tens of thousands of people, then we shall do it so that we under like certain typos of medication you have to bring yourself down because a sudden withdrawal will lead to calamity and implosion

2) We will restore confidence, independence and capabilities of key institutions in this country. This Government has presided over the destruction of two many of our institutions. The Central Bank of Barbados. There was a time when you could pick up Central Bank Reports and treat them as gospel but not now. You can never even get up-to-date fiscal data. I do not even know if to ask the Prime Minister if he has ever seen this because I am sure he does not read it. Table 1 for the current quarter fiscal deficit has not been published since 2012, other than one. People who worked in the Central Bank of Barbados would tell you that they are horrified that the Central Bank of Barbados now behaves like that. When I want it I have to call somebody and tell them, tell me what the fiscal data is and I get it straight away and that is what we have now presided over, a central bank that was a star in the region, a stellar player. The Auditor General working hard but cannot get the staff. Every time we come to the Estimates

for the Auditor General he complains that he cannot get the staff to do the job that needs to be done. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph can tell you, the Honourable Member for St. James Central can tell you and all it requires is the Public Service Commission devolving authority to the Auditor General to be able to hire his own staff while we are going to create the opportunity for further and deeper independence for the Auditor General in this country even though we acknowledge that we will be the first Government to be subject to those stronger powers of an Auditor General but we are not frighten to be. Data: You can only create decisions on the best possible information and half the problem in this country is that this Government continues to hide behind all kinds of data, all kinds of madness. The former Prime Minister asked, how did we get here? One of the reasons was because we were not tracking and telling the truth. How can you have nominal GDP continue to fall that our economy is smaller and smaller and have a negative deflator. The Honourable Member for St. Peter spoke about it in 2011 in this Chamber and Dr. Mascoll spoke about it year after year. This country must now have an independent institute of national statistics not just economic statistics but social statistics.

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We must understand where and what is happening in our country, so like any good doctor we could apply the medicine where the medicine needs to be applied and it must be done without the interference of the political class. It must be an independent statutory entity.

A Police Service Commission. You bring a junior police officer to chair a Police Service Commission to make decisions over senior police officers, that they were subject to their jurisdiction. That same police officer that was Chairman of the Police Service Commission wanted to run in the parish of St. Joseph against the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and when unsuccessful was then placed as Chairman of the Police Service Commission to work with another former senior police officer to destroy the morale of the Royal Barbados Police Force, and what do we have today over 200 acting officers, law court cases by case by case.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Oh, it is true. He has a \$300 000 consultancy too. He is not one of the ones who got cut from the Drainage Division or from the Ministry of Transport and Works or cut from about the place, he is one of the favoured fatted calf few. What is more important is that you have a former Commissioner of Police now retired on leave for two years, and you know what was the real giveaway, whenever you suspend a man for wrongdoing you put him on half pay. Do you believe that at no stage

was the Commissioner of Police Darwin Dottin ever on half pay, so you sent him home for two years on full pay to sit down drawing full pay because nothing was wrong with what he did, but that is what happens when politics intercedes, and if we go to the Regional Security System we see the arm of politics going there too, so when I say that we will strengthen institutions, trust me, Sir.

We also believe that there must be a Joint Standing Committee of both Houses of Parliament that must take evidence from the public of this country and from interested bodies such as the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados and other entities like the Independent Statistical Institute. These are not things to hide. We had a Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados who stopped giving press conferences. You would believe that he was working in at him. We have a Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs and a Prime Minister who does not believe they have to answer. I am saying that those days will be over under a Barbados Labour Party Government, that this Government will have Joint Select Committees of both Houses to take evidence. If it is men who go on the call-in programmes who want to come and give evidence so be it; if it is somebody in Temple Yard, so be it; if it is the Head of the University of the West Indies Economics Department, so be it; and if it is the Head of the Department of the Caribbean Development Bank, so be it; but this Parliament must come to stand for something.

When we came into this Parliament those benches used to be full. People used to fight to get in here but we become irrelevant because we do not deal with what matters and we do not create platforms for the people of this country to have a say.

We will also pass legislation - and I want you to listen to me carefully... The notion that statutory boards can continue to take money from this Parliament and not account for the money must stop. We will pass legislation that no statutory board will be able to receive a subvention beyond wages if for three years they have not submitted an annual report to this country to be accountable to this Parliament. It has to stop, and if after one year of that then this Parliament will call this statutory board before the Joint Select Committee to show cause why it should not be disbanded. You cannot take the taxpayers money and fail to account for it. It is not a private theft and it is definitely not a thieftom.

3. We have to fix our court system. Barbados' reputation as a country for the Rule of Law matters and that is why we said earlier to the Prime Minister you have to be able to deal with examples of Government breaching the law. It cannot be. If there is a mistake the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has made in the

price build up of gas and diesel, tell us, we will agree.

We also feel, and we were prepared to do it because we will amend it, that the Barbados Revenue Authority (Amendment) Act brings to an end effective commerce in this country. A Tax Clearance Certificate is like a poll. It is valid for the day on which it is issued, it is not valid for three months from now so it means that every time the bank has to put additional personnel in there to assess the quality of its security as against the liability of the persons seeking to borrow money for taxes. That is why even before this, if you are married and you want to go and borrow money and use your house as a security, no man or no woman cannot do it without the spouse or the common-law partner agreeing to it because they are getting equitable interest in the property and the bank realised that their security was compromised by it and that is why the Honourable Members for St. Joseph, St. James North, St. James Central and others in here when this Bill came in March warned you this will be the death-knell of commerce in this country. Well, I am here tonight to tell you that we agree that you must have a dedicated unit for the collection of taxes but we do not believe that it can be served by asking people to produce Tax Clearance Certificates because it holds up the conduit of commerce and serve no useful purpose because a Tax Compliance Certificate is as good as a snapshot in time on the day on which it is given. It is not rigorous, it cannot achieve the ends which you want it to achieve and we appeal to this Government do not let us make it more difficult for us to get out of this rut, let us do it easier and we will work with you to that end.

We also believe that that court system as I said needs to reduce the burden that now exists. You cannot have people come into commercial dispute and not believing that the courts can resolve their problem. We need a dedicated commercial court in this country that can resolve both domestic and international business disputes within six months in this country at first instance and we need to do it using greater ADR but also in the traditional court system. We cannot have 10 000 criminal cases backed up in this country because people would believe that they could commit crime and act as impunity. It is too simple a problem to solve.

I say to you that the Barbados Labour Party recognises that our competitiveness as a nation does not only come down to tax issues but it also comes down to Rule of Law issues and stability as a country, political and social stability, and therefore this is a priority for us. We believe that a commercial court can be separate and completely self-funded to facilitate the speed of the disputes and we would do so in addition to creating a framework for international arbitration in this country again as we left you in 2007 when the last Bill that the Barbados Labour Party passed was the International

Arbitration Act which this Government has never properly promoted as a platform for additional growth in this economy.

4. We believe, Sir, that we would support investment in our economy by removing unnecessary regulatory impediments and boosting the power of the Fair Trading Commission to support competition and challenge contracts that abuse public good.

If the Honourable Member for St. Michael North goes down to nothing else in this country he must go down for the extraordinary and sterling work that he did in the creation of the Fair Trading Commission in Barbados. Anybody who wonders about the worthiness of that Fair Trading Commission particularly now with the sale of the Barbados National Terminal Company Limited needs not do so because that Fair Trading Commission is standing up for the people of this country in the breach where the Cabinet of Barbados fell down. Could you imagine that the Cabinet of Barbados was prepared to give the purchaser of that company a 15-year moratorium where nobody else would have the right to store diesel or gasoline or fuel products in this country again against the law of this land. The law of this land did not give the Cabinet that power and that is why the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs cannot account for the sale proceeds of the Barbados National Terminal Company Limited as we speak. Well, I hope that they do not seek to bring legislation in this country to distort the powers of either the Fair Trading Commission or the law courts because this is a country still governed by the Rule of Law.

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We will also, as I said, immediately repeal the Barbados Revenue Authority (Amendment) Act, 2017 and find different ways for dealing with tax compliance. We will also have to find a way that allows entities that are in distress to be able to deal with it.

Mr. Speaker, what is the reality? Sir, this Government was the first one in 2009 to beg people not to send people home, to hold on to the staff, to bear it out with them, and people ran up all kinds of expenses for two or three years and found themselves with statutory liabilities and all kinds of things and now you want to say that you are going to deny people access to benefits in this country because of statutory liabilities. Well, I say to you, Minister, that I understand and that he has to recover and the amnesties are a way in which he has found some respite.

I have said to this country and I make no bones about it, I do not owe taxes personally, but the entity with which I am associated as a law firm does and it is largely because it took a decision to hold on to 21 staff in circumstances where this Government and others begged it

to hold on to the staff. The Honourable Member does not need to smile because he nor nobody will hold nothing over me in this country because what you see is what you get from me. And subject to the loans being completed those tax arrears will be paid by that firm, even if it takes 30 years to do so, and I will come to the wickedness of why at a later date.

We will also immediately introduce a charter for the turnaround time of decisions where businesses are dependent on Government for an answer, decisions, license, or certificate. This notion that you have to butt about this country to get a liquor license or a driver's license, this is nonsense in 2017 and we have so many young people in this county who can carry us to e-governance platform. It ill be a thing of the past, we must have them accelerate us to be able to help us get to the next level and all of this will help trigger growth in this economy. But above all else, Sir, as Prime Minister of this country I will chair a Ministerial Committee called "Get Barbados Moving Again". That Committee will literally every week seek to deconstruct and reconstruct all of the regulations that exist in this country, many of which are 19th or 20th century regulations and bear no relationship to the Barbados in which we live.

Mr. Speaker, this notion that you cannot deconstruct a planning system that is over 50 years old in this country is a nonsense, Barbados has a planning system that is over 50 years old. What is it that we are trying to achieve? The laws must reflect the public interest we are trying to protect, the public mischief that we are trying to avoid. Is there a better way in which technology can allow us to achieve the same thing? Can we at this time facilitate greater ownership and economic enfranchisement in this economy as we seek to build this regulatory framework? And whether it is planning, immigration, police certificates of character, accident reports for police, birth certificate, corporate affairs, whatever it is we can do it, but you have to have ministers who come to work every day to do eight, 10 and 12 hours of work, not to play golf at Durants Golf Course and that is why I say that there is no leadership because this Prime Minister needs to be able to say to his Ministers that they have to do the people's work.

No. 5. We will rethink State-owned enterprises and State procurement in ways that maximise opportunities for ordinary Barbadians to become owners in this country and not just tenants, and for greater transparency and taxpayers' savings.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to speak very shortly to the madness of procurement in this country and the avoidance of procurement. Would it been that this Minister in 2010 spoke about procurement rules for State-owned enterprises we would have been in a better position tonight but that the Honourable Member should leave it to be his final act

before the Honourable Member leaves the scene is his greatest travesty and the Honourable Member may come to be regarded for that.

Ordinary Barbadians, especially now that they cannot get money from savings accounts and commercial banks, this Government removed the minimum deposit savings rate. What do you get? You get ten cents for every hundred dollars every year. Do you know that people drop ten cents and not pick them up? But we the independence generation of this country do not believe that we have a duty to create opportunities for economic enfranchisement for people in this country. I say nonsense, I say that any Government that I lead must create opportunities for the non-traditional class and not just the usual handful and what has now become the three or four, and that if there are public goods to be conferred on people that instead of believing that you can tell a man to take the 100 per cent ownership and walk and run, that we must now say to people that you have to make provision for public participation and ownership of the asset and the management of the operation of the asset because ordinary Barbadians whose patrimony is being handed to us must have the opportunity to participate in the equity, the debt and in any convertible preference shares available for those entities such that Barbadians will not become tenants in our own country in the next 50 years of Independence.

Mr. Speaker, this is a solemn pledge, in fact, this is the major reason I continue to be in public life in this country, because people who have not had the opportunity to participate in this country must be able to do so and as God is my witness, that is what a Barbados Labour Party Government will do to complete the circle of enfranchisement which was started in 1938 by men like Grantley Adams, Chrissy Brathwaite and J.M. Martineau, where they started to enfranchise people politically, enfranchise workers in the establishment of the workers union, enfranchise people socially with education, healthcare and labour rights under Tom Adams with the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act, and the provisions for the amassing of savings with credit unions, and the isolation of investment for ordinary Barbadians in transport and the food business.

Mr. Speaker, this is the work of the Barbados Labour Party and when they talk to us about it, let them know that I lead a party that will be 80 years old next year and proud of the record that it has delivered to the people of this country. I am proud of what it has inspired in the Caribbean, that is why we have established the "Covenant of Hope" because you must know how we will approach the prioritization of your taxes in this country, just like you must know if your child has been raised properly, whether your child will go out and how your child will behave when you are not around. But instead what do we have? We have ministers who sign away tax breaks for periods of 40 years in our

name and then telling us that we cannot see the taxes that have been signed away and the agreements that have signed. Did they sign them for themselves? No.

Mr. Speaker, let me go further. We will also, Sir, have a programme that focuses on growth and prioritizes growth in this country. Do you know that I am satisfied now that growth is a word that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs cannot deal with? I am not sure what is his particular peculiar problem with growth but the Honourable Member cannot deal with growth, and rather than spending time to create the platform for growth in this economy we continue to have this isolated approach: to taxes, to selling off, to spending and to protecting a few people in this country. Enough is enough. What have we said? I spoke just now about the fact that we will create opportunities for economic enfranchisement. We will also create special instruments that allow ordinary Barbadians to protect and to participate while being protected so that we can fuel the pool of capital to build private and public enterprise and development projects in this country.

We will decriminalise entrepreneurship because in this country to be an entrepreneur you almost have to be a criminal. You can ask the ones coming up at Cropover now. It is the saddest of things. I know wherever I speak because I know what it is to put on promotions and activities.

We will pass legislation that will seek to reclaim land in this country in the same way that Grantley Adams reclaimed land in 1960/1961 for a Port. I never saw Pelican Island, I see it over and over and as a Barbados Labour Party we reclaimed 20 acres in the Port, and we will come to that. Those 20 acres are now housing an illegal contract by a contractor for one year that has not gone out to tender.

6.10 p.m.

I did not know that the Port of Barbados is now a workshop, but we will come to that. We will also make Barbados a hub for education and health in the entire Americas. How do we not accept that the two areas for which we are most globally competitive -- education and health care -- cannot be the platforms upon which we build not just a social sector that helps our people but creates an economic platform for Barbadians? Why are we not training nurses to export the nurses; not for them to emigrate to other countries but to sell their services? There is a global shortage of nurses. There is a global shortage of ICT (Information Communication Technology) people. There are people who we can help create with the skills that our young people are coming out with, but in order for us to do that we need to maximise the opportunities for trade in services.

We need to take leadership of the CSME (Caribbean Single Market and Economy) again. The notion that we still do not have the protocol of contingent rights resolved is a travesty. How do you expect a man or a woman to move to a country if they do not know what is going to be the position of their spouse or their children? How do we expect a company to be formed in Barbados and then have to file and pay money to be an external company in St. Vincent, Antigua, St. Kitts, Dominica, when we can have a simple agreement that mutually recognises that formation? This is the country, and I know, because for 18 months we worked to create a security architecture to create a single domestic space in this Caribbean region across ten countries, Mr. Speaker. We worked with police, immigration, customs, airport authorities and ministries, and we did it successfully; and you will tell me that we cannot get basic little things solved now with a CSME? CSME must work because Barbados is the country that stands to benefit from a trade in services. One in every five tourists who come to this country comes from CARICOM. Trinidad is the third or second largest source of investment into this country, and 52 per cent of the goods exported by Barbados go to CARICOM, and Barbados has the wonderful luxury of being the lead Prime Minister for CARICOM-CSME, but we have done nothing for the last eight years. This Prime Minister must go.

In terms of the energy sector, this Government talks and talks, but there is a dub song which goes, "Action, not a bag of words." That is what we want now; action. Barbados must become the first fossil fuel-free country in the world by 2030. For that to happen, it means planning out our business in a certain way and prioritising our expenditure and our public sector investment programme. It does not happen because you get up and say it. We have already worked out that this is a Government of pronouncements and proclamations like Pickering in St. Lucy.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: We have already determined and committed that we will ban plastic bags and styrofoam containers in this country because Barbados cannot accommodate the weight of that environmental degradation to our shores. All of these things trigger economic growth; all of them. It is using non-fiscal measures to accommodate them. We have determined that in the construction of a good society we want to prioritise our capital projects. This Government chose to build Valery at \$24 million and the Grotto at \$28 million; \$52 million to the same contractor. A contract for the Grotto was signed a Sunday morning before the Cabinet could ever see it. It was paraphernalia to get in for Elections in a hurry, and it had to be signed. Mercifully, the Public Accounts Committee now has the chronology of what transpired and those sordid affairs, and the Auditor General

has written a separate report on it. If we had \$52 million to spend on housing-related matters, let me tell you what the Barbados Labour Party would do. Our values and our principles tell you as Call No. 2 that the Barbados Labour Party stands for an acceptable quality of life for all, including a standard of living below which no citizen must be allowed to fall.

This country in the second decade of the 21st Century has 4 000 households living with a pit toilet. I want to repeat myself. If the rain falls tonight, they are 4 000 households where people have to brave the elements to relieve themselves. I know what it is like as a woman to be invisible in this country, and I have to say it over and over when I hear that we do not talk policy. You mean that you do not want to see me. You do not want to see the fact that I am a woman. I know what it is like for poor people to be invisible, and we hear it from them every week when we go out. If we had money to spend, each water-borne facility would cost \$15 000. Four thousand times \$15 000 is \$60 million; so instead of spending \$52 million in the constituency on no less people than the Prime Minister and the effective Deputy Prime Minister, the Member for St. Michael South Central, and giving that money to one contractor who I shall shortly show you why he is the billion-dollar man -- not million -- in this country, where the profits from those two projects which were reasonably expected at 15 to 20 per cent. He sounds more like a 20 per cent man in terms of profits and overheads, and when I show you the increases at the Port you will see why. The \$10 million that he would have gained from those projects are likely to be declared as dividends and go into a bank account outside of Barbados. If we build 4 000 water-borne facilities across this country to begin with, no big construction firm will be coming to put any water-born facility on any old lady's chattel house. There is the class of small contractor that has cried under this Government to see us return to a point where a handful of people -- a literal handful -- hold a vise with the vertical integration of their companies from paving stones to roofs to materials to windows. You cannot even get in for a look upon any part of construction, because they are controlling the whole vertical thing. Small contractors in this country would now be able to get a chance to be able to get work providing these for the country.

Mr. Speaker, life is about choices. I can choose tonight to eat fish or I can choose to eat pork or I can choose to be a vegetarian. I can choose to spend \$52 million on high-rise buildings that have not been properly built and that were shut up for two-and-a-half years with nobody living in them, and pay \$10 000 a month of the taxpayers' money for security guards to guard empty buildings and watch grass grow to bush in the Prime Minister's constituency, no less. Otherwise, I can choose to go from St. Lucy in Crab Hill down to St. Philip in Kirtons, across to Christ Church in Parish Land, across to St.

Michael, and give to ordinary people in the Marl Hole, in Bush Hall, and let us not talk about Licorish Village and the Belle. Those people in Licorish Village and the Belle and the people of White Hill will be the two major capital projects of a Barbados Labour Party Government because it is wrong. The conditions under which they are living in a 21st Century Barbados are unpardonable; they are criminal. We feel we can come into a Parliament that looks pretty like this and forget that they exist? I have come to tell you that the days of people being invisible in this country will come to an end under my leadership in a Barbados Labour Party Government.

6.10 p.m.

They also tell you that the last thing we will do apart from using projects to build the good society that would bring economic activity, we will transfer to them the right to do their business in dignity and under the law as legal entity.

Mr. Speaker, small people in the country deserve a break. We are going to have to conceive of passing legislation that allow contracts for under \$250 000 to have as a relevant criteria, the geographical origin of the contractor, so that young men and young women can do work in their communities whether it is primary schools, whether it is bathes, whether it is these same water borne facilities. There are too many people in this country languishing and not capable of doing proper work other than if they go to somebody and say yes Sir, yes Sir, three bags full, Sir. They must become entrepreneurs and tradesmen of class in this country again but they cannot do it without our help. Sir, in the same way that we can conceive of helping people like Sandals with 40 years of tax concession, let me conceive of helping people in Black Rock, Danesbury, Station Hill, New Orleans in the same way.

Sir, it is an approach to governance. We want to build a Hyatt and that is cool, that is great. We should do stuff in the Pierhead but you cannot build a Hyatt and leave the people in uptown, in Santo Domingo Alley and Wellington Street living in the conditions under which they are living. We want to do upgrades in the Port but we want to leave the people in Rotten Town and the people in the New Orleans ignored and invisible. Well, I say under a Barbados Labour Party Government that it will not happen.

Mr. Speaker, the State may have an entrepreneurial role in some instances as we did with the Hilton and as we did with other things but rest assured that whatever role we have, we stand committed to page 26 of this Covenant as the manner in which we will treat to the issue of prioritisation of expenditure in the fiscal governance of this country. This is a contract to which we remain committed to the people of Barbados that we must first make this

country safe, that we must second protect the public health and the health care of our citizens, that thirdly, we must empower our people and provide education for them and protect the vulnerable, that fourthly, we must preserve our public spaces and protect and enhance our land and our marine and built environment. Fifth, we must create the platform for our productive sectors to grow because if you want you help people, you would need this economy to grow. It cannot happen by you strangling the oxygen out of it as you did yesterday. Finally, we must safeguard our national identity at home and abroad through interaction with the rest of the world and the region through diplomacy and trade. Sir, Barbados used to stand for something. Sir, this is the first time that a President of the United States of America, from George Washington, come to the Caribbean and never come here.

Asides.

Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: From 1776. A President of China... People do not score us or rank us anymore but this was a country from the 1950s and 1960s, regardless of whether it was the Democratic Labour Party or the Barbados Labour Party, there was a consistent compact, economic independence where we pay for what we used, which is why we had the fiscal independence that did not run up the kinds of current account deficits that we see now that has us in trouble, with the Minister having to do the nonsense that he has come here purporting to do.

Mr. Speaker, this was a country that believed in social reform and this was a country that punched above its weight because it believed that it could lead other countries in other regions in the world and now we find ourselves economically weak, and we find ourselves not protected. This Minister gives us all this long talk yesterday about the social things we are to protect and this and that but why does he not tell us that everyone of those social institutions are labouring under lack of performance. The hospital is suffering, it cannot give people the services on which they depend, people have to carry from toilet paper to soap to their medication sometimes. Sir, the schools. If teachers do not buy stuff for schools they do not benefit in the country now. Sir, buses. People cannot guarantee that they will get to work on time if they need a bus in this country and he speaks about balancing a Budget as if he has achieved something. Sir, this country has problem so let us fix them, let us deal with them.

Mr. Speaker, it brings me to the last point because the only reason this Government is still holding on, pensions taken care of, is the off book gratuities. Sir, I want to say to the people of Barbados now with all seriousness, Mr. Speaker, through you that the Barbados Labour Party Government that I lead will not tolerate corruption of any type from anybody whether the corruption is in high places or in low places. I want to say so because the truth is, Mr.

Speaker, this country cannot take the weight of this Government's corruption anymore. There are about four or five Ministers in here who really have to ask themselves some questions. When people ask how can you drive a jeep belonging to a company that provides services to your Ministry and gets work from your Ministry and believe that is okay, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East have to answer that question. There are people in this country who are renting houses but now delight in all kinds of ownership and all kinds of assets and Barbadians see it. I do not take any delight coming in here to talk about it. In fact, the most difficult period for me is to tell you to stop behaving like this. You are shaming your generation, you are shaming this country and we know you did not win no lotto. I want to say to my side too, and I have spoken to them.... When I was seven years old I asked my grandmother, she was Grenadian, what is 'bobol'. She told me not to worry about that, that is a Trinidad word, it has nothing to do with Barbados. Sir, we now have a situation in this country that if we do not deal with corruption in both high and low places, it cannot accommodate the weight, it cannot carry the weight of corruption in the country. Sir, whether we are stealing money or stealing time, it has to stop, or whether we are using influence improperly, it has to stop. Sir, this thing about whose house is going to get a little repair here and who got this house and who got this car.... Sir, look, too many people are suffering in this country for this nonsense to continue.

Mr. Speaker, I have said to this side, and we have agreed, that there has to be a proclamation on the Prevention of Corruption Act. This Government makes a lot smoke and mirrors. They come in here and tell people about it passing legislation for corruption and up to now the Governor-General has not proclaimed it. Sir, in July 2008, I came into this Parliament and declared my assets. I will come to a number of things that I expect in here to be declared from Lambert in St. Lucy to Scarborough in Trinidad. Let us deal with it one at a time because you will have to tell me about the other serious corruption issues in here today too. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East wants to know about who has a Legal Education Certificate, but, Sir, he should go and read the law but what I take delight tonight in doing again is making a document of the House a letter in the handwriting of Errol Walton Barrow, Q.C. It says:

"I Errol Walton Barrow, Q.C. of Trident Chambers, Bridgetown, Barbados, Barrister-at-Law of ... Inn certify that Miss Mia Mottley, student..."

Sir, it is in his handwriting, it is not typewritten.

"...has been known to me personally for upwards of 18 years."

Sir, at that point I was 18 years and a few months.

"...I have had the following opportunity of judging her character, that is to say, I have been a close family friend for over 30 years and I have known the applicant from birth. I believe her to be a person of respectability and a proper person to be admitted as a student of the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple with a view to being called to the Bar.

Dated 8th January, 1984

Errol E.W. Barrow"

Underneath him,

Henry De. B. Forde, Q.C."

Mr. Speaker, I make that a document of the House for the Honourable Member for Christ Church East. He is out of the Chamber but he is coming back in.

Sequence 14

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East. I am so sorry. He knows better because he, at least knows about the certificates he has, I cannot say the same thing about the other one. Past that to him please and this nonsense about being ashamed. I would tell you this, I know that none of them could not be getting on like this and getting on with it but I do not stop there, Mr. Speaker, because that is why integrity legislation has to be introduced in this country again.

This Government feels that it can make these spurious allegations about who is what and what is what. The Four Seasons, let us deal with that because in the case of Four Seasons the law firm with which I was associated was hired by a private company called Paradise Beach Limited. We were not paid by the taxpayers of Barbados and even then the services provided were for eight lawyers in a firm not a single lawyer. That is what a law firm does and the firm Elliot D. Mottley and Company provided those services from conveyancing to commercial documents to mortgages, and I will go further. We drafted the documents and we even helped the Government's lawyer who was paid twice what we were paid by the taxpayers of this country and we drafted the documents. But I will go further, we are not like the ones in here and you may be familiar with some who charge legal fees disproportionate to what they were doing, whether up for the IDC or for the Barbados Water Authority and I make this a document of the House and do you know why I do it? Because the same firm Elliot D. Mottley and Company -- and I am going to deal with everything in here today

because you must know who I am and I must know who I am. I grew up in the full glare of this country. I have been in public life since I was 23 years and I am 52 now and they know every wart, every strength, everything about me and you are not going to run me nor nobody on This Side on the back foot for spurious lies, damnations, liable and slander.

Mr. Speaker, I make a document of the House and invoice from a person who is less a person than the legal partner of the Prime Minister from a Mr. Hal McL. Gollop and the Barbados Water Authority, 23rd March, 2012. This is not a private invoice. The invoice is for the sum of \$1.276 million with VAT of \$223 000 coming to \$1.5 million and that has nothing to do with the next invoice on 3rd July, 2012. These are draw downs and sorry, the total amount came to \$1.87 million.

My father who has been practicing law in this country for 56 years, when the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) ...

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute, Honourable Member. I hesitate to stop you because you are doing your address and so on but what you are doing, I am trying to work out 1) how it is relevant to what is happening here and 2) it would seem to me it amounts to an attack on the character because you are questioning fees and so on of the persons whom you called. The rules are clear, that you should have given the particular notice and that you should only deal with people in their professional capacities and so on.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I withdraw those remarks.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, I am glad that you withdrew them. Fine.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I will say this, that I my father who has been practicing law, and I believe that I can speak about my father, for 56 years in this country for the 14 years that the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) was in Government my father did a single brief, one brief for a Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government and it was for a bond for the Barbados Water Authority for \$120 million and the fee was \$150 000 as opposed to the \$1.5 million for a \$65 million project so for half the amount. My father charged 1/10 of the amount. Let us not start in here talking these things but I go further, Sir, because I do not need to talk about who got \$750 000 for Sanitation Service Authority, I am done with that. The important point is this, that for Four Seasons I worked for Paradise Beach Limited a private company and I will not -- because if you start I am going to talk about the advisory group who was really paid by the taxpayers money at the insistence of the former Prime Minister. I will talk about it because one was a son of a former Attorney General, one was a former Cabinet of

the Democratic Labour Party (DLP), one is the accounting firm of a Member of Cabinet when he was a senior accountant in this country. Let us not talk, let us get it straight because we are coming here to talk about issues today and since I do not have the chance to come back again after the Minister of Finance or the Prime Minister I am going to give you the facts up front.

3) I want to talk about and I want the Minister of Tourism because part and parcel of the weight of this country with debt has not only to do with the arrears but it has to do with the extraordinary amount of damages that we are going to have to pay in Barbados now for contracts wantonly and arbitrarily signed by Ministers. I came in here today to talk about leadership and I am going to repeat it again because two years ago I spoke about CAHILL in this Honourable Chamber and you could hear a pin drop. I referred to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East and Senator Boyce. I said that they had signed this incorporated terms agreement and I make it a document of the House because to this date the Ministers and Cabinet of Barbados would not share with the country the contracts that were signed in their name. Any contract signed by any Minister under the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government that is not a national security contract must be laid in this Parliament and certainly those that commit this country to multi-year liabilities like this \$4.7 billion in liabilities and if you think CAHILL has gone, ask them about the company that wants to buy CAHILL and bring another form of waste to energy to Barbados for which the Government of Barbados is still obligated under this power purchase agreement, signed under those by those four ministers to buy the power at prices per kilowatt hour that they have agreed to. Do you know what hurts me? Tell me which of these Ministers could read this formula here. Did they know what they were signing when they were signing this? A is greater of A0 and the actual cost of raw materials, spare parts excluding contract waste water and electric power supply to CEB other than by generation. Does the Honourable Member for Christ Church East know that B1 is the greater of B0 and the actual cost water incurred by CEB in the operation and the maintenance of the facility of the calculation period? Does the Honourable Member for St. Lucy under that C0 is the estimated cost of electricity power supply to CEB other than by generation from the facility outlies in the operation and maintenance of the facility. I went as estimated by CEB set out an approved cost model as in the case of the first calculation period. Does the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West know D per cent is a percentage of CEBs cost of operation and maintenance of the facility during the calculation period represented by labour cost and other cost that following within the previously mentioned cost? I want to know what did they sign? Look at the signatures. That "D" is not Dennis the Menace it is Denis Kellman. That does

not even look like “D” but that is Darcy Boyce but we will come to him soon when we talk about the prison. That “D”, oh Lord, that “D” looks like “U” Denis Lowe.

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How low? No. It cannot be so. Well, O is supposed to be Chris Sinckler. X and Os, and then a lady called M. E. Clare Cowan.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just a minute, I know the Public Gallery and so on is having a lot of fun but I just want to let you know what the Rules are, so please behave so that we can get through this. The Honourable Member has to make her contribution in peace and quiet. Thank you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Attorney-General refused to sign it, thank God for that. On this one you have to applaud. Mr. Speaker, when I raised these documents I did not in any way believe, because you could hear a pin drop... The Prime Minister listened to me as if he was hearing these things for the very first time. Those Agreements that I just referred to was all signed on the 15th of March 2014. The Ides of March. What I could not believe was that the person who looked as though he was horrified in this Chamber when I spoke to that six months later, I discovered was the first body to sign a contract with Cahill Energy, was none other than the Right Honourable Prime Minister for the same thing under a Heads of Agreement Final Execution Copy, and I make this a document of this Honourable Chamber now. When I tell you that it is scandalous, it is scandalous. On the 13th of September 2013, the Prime Minister started the arrangements and relationship with Cahill Energy, so five Ministers before the Cabinet ever even gets to see it signed this.

Well, I want the Honourable Member for Christ Church East also to tell us now: Has this separate power purchase agreement with Deltro been signed because the National Conservation Commission Act passed by this Parliament does not allow the National Conservation Commission to buy power electricity in this country? If this Agreement is ever signed, I say to you now, Mr. Speaker, that any Barbados Labour Party Government I have will have a duty to do forensic audits in this country to understand how people are breaching the law wantonly. Do you understand that in each of these cases money is being spent, money that we cannot now put in the hospital, money that we cannot buy buses with and money that we cannot buy garbage trucks with? All the promise about garbage trucks, what does the Minister of the Environment do, build a five-storey building in Vacluse St. Thomas for \$28 million when he could have brought 35 trucks for \$12 million to keep Barbados clean.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me come the Port because the Port is the most egregious of them. When I tell you that the man who has my initials has a contract for Valery, The Grotto, Coverley and Bushy Park, 2 300 lots that were given a week or two before the last election, an attempt by the Minister of Housing and Lands as he then was, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, to terminate a contract with Rotherley Construction to give him that, telling a lie on Cabinet by the way, but there is time for that at Haggatt Hall because there is going to be our Haggatt Hall meeting too. We shall all meet at Haggatt Hall, rest assured. All of those deals were done in a hurry before the last election to be able to allow an onslaught of money... The Prime Minister knows better than to smile because the very same legal partner of the Prime Minister was giving out envelopes all through the Bay Land on the same day the Prime Minister said that money spend in an election. This nonsense must stop in this country.

I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that this Government here has been signing contracts wantonly and willingly across the board without reference to whether they can execute them or not. In the Barbados Port a contract was signed by no less a person than the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. You know, he and the Prime Minister got something in common, they like to wipe their mouth clean but they forget the fishcake grease in their pocket.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the 2nd of September 2013, a letter was written by the Ministry of International Transport to the Barbados Port Inc. outlining the conditions which Cabinet agreed at its meeting of August 29, 2013 for the construction of a second cruise pier called Sugar Point in Barbados. This Cabinet agreed that a guarantee from the Government of Barbados be limited to lease payments of the facility and that the project cost should not exceed US\$200 million. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North and the Honourable Member for St. James Central will talk more on these things. More importantly, do you believe that that contract was signed first in a Joint Venture Heads of Agreement by a person named the Chairman of the Port Authority and a company called SMI. There was then an agreement and an authorisation to lease the land in the Port, and what is this Cruise Pier for? To build two cruise piers with an option for a third, to reclaim 16 acres of land and to do this for US\$190 million. The Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs talked about that cruise pier in here, how many times in the last nine years, as one of the growth projects to come, promising it to help Bajans. No less a person than the Minister of Tourism, Mr. Richard Sealy signed this. Sugar Point Marine Development, Glyne Bannister, Barbados Port Inc. David Harding, signed on the 29th of November the day before Independence 2013.

Would you believe, Sir, that with all of that going on that on December 21, 2016 Royal Caribbean Cruises Limited, a major multinational firm in the cruise industry in the world, had cause to write the Chairman of the Barbados Port Inc., and I make this a document of the House too, confirming that they intend to advance the long planned Sugar Point Cruise Port Development Project in Barbados and that it has been brought to his attention that the Chairman of the Port has not responded to Royal Caribbean's letter since March 23, 2016. You see what I tell you about what the Prime Minister start but not responding. As you know, Royal Caribbean Cruises Limited participated in Barbados Port Inc.'s tender. This was a procurement by tender, not no handpicked nothing, for proposals to upgrade the existing Port many years ago. During the process our joint venture with SMI submitted an alternative proposal for a completely new Port that was vetted, accepted and approved by Barbados Port Inc. and the Government of Barbados. Subsequently, the Government of Barbados through Cabinet action voted in August 2013 to approve the proposed project and agreed to provide a Government back-step to the long-term financing lease that was a component of the financing to bring the project to fruition. Subsequently, RCL, SMI and the Barbados Port undertook extensive site studies and environmental impact studies, unlike the Hyatt Hotel, and submissions that have all been approved by various governmental agencies. The studies included navigational simulations that were accepted by all RCL Cruise Lines. In some we can start construction eminently. We are aware of the unfortunate circumstances whereby the financial status of the credit rating of Barbados has been repeatedly downgraded in recent years. This circumstance made it difficult to arrange financing for the project. Nevertheless, our group obtained a workable proposal from the largest construction company in the world to provide financing of the marine and shore side project as part of the construction undertaking. He goes on talk about that, that it conformed to the Cabinet measure and it was communicated to the Barbados Port Inc. and the Government of Barbados more than a year before December 2016, that means 18 months ago. We have been standing by awaiting the positive response of the Barbados Product Authority to advance the transaction.

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"We have been standing by, awaiting the positive response of the Barbados Port Inc. to advance the transaction. We are puzzled by the lack of response in this past year from you and the Barbados Port team. Please clarify what may be the opened issues that are causing a delay in your authorising the advancement of this project. "Our company continues to build oasis and quantum-class ships and we can foresee a time in the future where many, if not most, of our ships operating in the Caribbean will be

these very large ships. We will not be able to call in ports that do not have adequate infrastructure."

Mr. Speaker, I happen to know that St. Kitts is now building a second cruise pier to accommodate these ships because if not they would be left behind.

"The proposed Sugar Point addresses both these issues, larger ship capacity and new homeport terminal infrastructure. In addition, you know the proposal includes a highly upgraded port sized thematic commercial village opened to the entire local community that will be an enormous upgrade over the existing cargo port."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I jump and go to the end because I am going to put all of this on Facebook page for those who want to read it. It says:

"Despite the passage of several years, the facts, circumstances and justification for this project that represent a tremendous upgrade for your tourism infrastructure all stand. Given the financial downgrades of Barbados it would seem advantageous for the Barbados Port Inc. and the Government to embrace such a significant economic investment into the island."

Do you imagine that Royal Caribbean is telling us that it would be advantageous for us to do business with them, instead of us running after them?

"We are as committed as ever to the undertaking. Please advise clearly as to what is holding up the project."

Mr. Speaker, now I did work for Royal Caribbean five years ago. Since becoming Leader of the Opposition, I no longer works for them, but I want to go further. Would you believe that that same port is now issuing a contract for something called Berth Six without it going to tender? Would you believe that having built Berth Five at a cost overrun from \$48 million to \$63 million, let the Minister deny it, \$15 million more by one Mark Maloney to build Berth Five, that that company has never demobilised and that in the Port they have been allowed to use the Barbados Port -- and I make this a document of this Honourable House showing the piles with the dates on it, go on the website and see it -- to manufacture cement piles in the Port with the authority and consent of the Chairman of the Barbados Port Inc. who happens to be the logistical contract provider for the same Mark Maloney's company, PreConco in the Caribbean for Hard Rock, and that the customs broker for that same company is also a member of the Board of the Barbados Port Authority. Mr. Speaker, I say that the Prime Minister has duty to clean up the actions of the Barbados Port Inc.

Mr. Speaker, it gets worse because the price to construct Berth Six is \$140 million almost and to purchase

a third gantry crane. But would you believe that it is the same Maloney who provided the second gantry crane and other equipment? Would you believe that it is the same company Berth Five Projects Limited...?

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, Honourable Member...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I apologise and withdraw the name, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I know you know the rules.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I apologise, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: You go ahead.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir...

Mr. SPEAKER: But you see, it really does not help to hold public citizens up to ridicule in the House like this.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: You go ahead.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Berth Five Projects Limited is the company in the Port that is building these piles. You only have to go stand up by the Spring Garden Highway tomorrow and look across on the reclaimed land and you will see these piles. What are on them? Each pile has the date on which the pile was constructed and the earliest one I have here, Sir, is from May, 2016. Do you believe that Berth Five Projects Limited, of which the directors can be found in the Corporate Affairs Registry or I can make them available to this Honourable House, but each of these piles is being built inside the Port? The Port is a national security installation.

Now, when they are finished building Berth Six, do you know that the liability for Barbados Port Inc. to Royal Caribbean and SMI still exist and that in law the mention of damages is loss of profit, so that when we worry about all the money we have to pay in arrears, because a Minister of the Crown signs these contracts and it did not stop with him because the Barbados Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs signed the one for the Pierhead. I make this now a document of this Honourable House, signed by the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, the big "O", just like the "O" on the Grotto, just like the "O" on the Valery contract, 9th February, 2011.

Now, I expect them to come tell me about the prison because of Mr. Bannister, but I want them to read the Ministerial Statement from the Honourable Member for St.

Joseph who was Minister of Home Affairs and who accounts for the fact that the person who approved the contractor for the prison was not a member of the Cabinet of Barbados but was Senator Boyce who is a Minister in the Government of this country now, and that the project was not only brought in within budget but also within time. Mr. Speaker, this too will be put on the website tonight, and that under this Prime Minister when the Honourable Member was Honourable Attorney-General that the company returned to the Government of Barbados the princely sum of what would have been \$10 million, minus the amount to build Dodd that had burned, over \$3 million was returned to the people of Barbados for a contract, contrary to what they had said, that was brought in within time and within budget. Name me one other contract since Independence that the Government got back money on? I am ready to rumble in this country with this Government.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Barbados Port Inc. therefore has a duty to explain how it can wantonly incur additional liability because the contract has not been signed, but I want the Minister of Tourism to know because the Honourable Member and I both know, as God is my witness, that the Port has not signed the contract yet. Mr. Speaker, I say today that the people of Barbados must send a message to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central down tar, no brush, do not have the Barbados Port Authority signing \$140 million to Berth Five Projects Limited without any tender issued and building piles in the Port for the last year and there is a letter of 6th October that the Minister of Tourism... I do not want to make it public, Sir, you have a duty to distance yourself, having approved the approach of the Port. You know the letter, I know the letter and if you trouble me tonight I am going to give you the letter.

Mr. Speaker, let us now deal with Sam Lord's Castle because despite all the talk about Sam Lord's Castle two years ago you come here and talked about a groundbreaking in September 2015. Would you believe that this project that was supposed to be constructed and had two groundbreakings, not one... Mr. Speaker, when you believe that Sam Lord's Castle put in a request for Town Planning Department permission, Senator Sandiford-Garner all with a Facebook posting talking about building H-4, going up. Would you believe that yet again this Government is breaching the law in the constituency on the Honourable Attorney-General, building the building without the permission of the Town Planning Department? Look at the letter from Maurice Clarke Architecture Inc. March 31, 2017, now applying for Town Planning Department permission because what they had from the Chief Town Planner before was simply the permission from the previous CLICO buildings which they are not using that architecture for and they had to resubmit and then what they have now is a letter from the Town Planning Department on 11th of April, 2017: "I hereby

acknowledged receipt of the additional information requested regarding formal application No. and you will be notified accordingly of the decision of the Chief Town Planner.”

Mr. Speaker, that was six weeks ago but we have buildings, the temporary accommodations did not need it, the road works which the Town Planning Department gave permissions for, the pre-access facility because that is for people in the public, but the buildings.

6.54 p.m.

Sir, the real rub in Sam Lord's comes in this: Everybody knows in the construction industry that a directive has been given by no less than this Government that the precast concrete work is to be utilised for the building blocks, where there is only one precast concrete company in the entire country. Who is the name? Mr. Speaker, you said I cannot call the name. I rely on my initials: M.A.M. Good initials, bad person. Preconco. What is worse, the Minister of Tourism has a duty to tell us whether BTII (Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated) has a responsibility to tell Wyndham whether it will subsidise or indemnify Wyndham for the use of any precast concrete, bearing in mind that you can hide and buy land but you cannot hide and work it because the facts will come out; if not today. The Minister of Finance has learnt that the hard way with the Credit Suisse loan. I have got time. I have got patience.

The bottom line is that this US\$180 million project -- and I make this now a Document of the House too -- was approved by this Honourable Chamber. This project at Sam Lord's is now \$435.62 million. Where is the extra \$75 million to come to this project, or will the Government do the decent and honourable thing and cut it back? Is it that the Government is now so obsessed with a notion? It has hired a company called Complant. You know, Sir, I seem to be causing some consternation on the other side. I do not know what it is, because I do not want the red herring issues that I talked about just now with Four Seasons and the prison and so on. Whenever it is done, it is not Mia Mottley who signed the contract with the Port with SMI and Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines; it was the Minister of Tourism in 2013. It is not me who signed the contract at the Pierhead. Ironically, two weeks after the Pierhead contract was written to be broken and after the Cabinet in 2011 told the Pierhead people that they had jurisdiction down to the old Eye Ward at Jemmotts Lane, all of a sudden the Minister of Tourism announced that there would be towers at Hyatt in Bay Street by the same Preconco people. What is this if not a billion-dollar man? When is Barbados now the property of one man? It goes further, Sir. At Sam Lord's Castle there was something....

Sir, I will be fair because I have said that finder's fees are things that we either do by law in this country or we do not do them at all. They have to be transparent and laid open. The problem is that I suspect the finder's fee for Sam Lord's is a different problem, and I suspect that the people who are going to get the finder's fee at Sam Lord's were not in Flushing Meadows, New York, when the project was first discussed with the Minister of Finance and the Chinese representative of Complant. The Chinese have been known to sign these agency agreements in the region, and what is the language of the agency agreement? The language is that the agent enjoys a good relationship with the Government and the Ministry, that the services of the agent are to include to work hard for the signing of the relevant contract. Did you hear that? Work hard for signing a contract. To provide the client with information for a project but not limited to local subcontractors. To help and arrange client trips and meetings and discussions. To coordinate. For all of this, you are to get the princely sum of five and six and seven per cent of the construction fee. In this case, it is the princely sum of US\$20 million which the taxpayers of Barbados will have to pay back in a loan.

Mr. Speaker, I want the assurance, and I say this; that none of them know how this project came into being. Is that what they are saying? Well, fine. I know this evening that I too am in touch with officials in Beijing, and I too will get to know, if not today or tomorrow, what contracts have been signed with people who are either the campaign manager of the Prime Minister, the man who has brought the Chinese twins together between the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Tourism, and the pal of the Prime Minister. We too will find out whether US\$20 million is going to a firm in this country, and we too will have the Chinese.... I tell you this, Sir: Because I do not believe in Governments coming to a situation where they are being tribal, we will ensure that international investigation is done of this. Nobody on this side must be in the mix of any investigation. If it is RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police), Scotland Yard or FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), this contract will be investigated because the taxpayers of Barbados cannot withstand \$40 million in loans to pay back for people working hard on a contract. It is unacceptable.

Aside.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, bring what you may. I want to say to this one, the Member for Christ Church East, “You cannot come in here and intimidate anybody.” The bottom line is this; that I stand proud with the first Governor General of this country as a woman who knows what it is to mother children without having children. I stand proud with the Member for the City who was previously in here. If you need to know, I prefer to be able to continue to provide the services and the support I give to women, because there are men in here

who will not even pay for their children. I will never go so low. Bailiffs have to come for them. I will never. I want to also say this: This notion that you want to foist on the Labour Party about same-sex marriages is a nonsense. I have said in this Chamber before that no 30 people in this country can get in here and deal with wedge issues. Whether it is the decriminalisation of marijuana, whether it is capital punishment or whether it is same-sex marriages, there are people who support and are against on that side and on this side; and the Member for St. James South made that clear. These are wedge issues. Our role is to facilitate governance in this country, but I can say to you without fear of contradiction that this Barbados Labour Party as a Government will never do it, because it is not the role of a Government to do such.

Sir, I want to go further. I believe that we have come to a sad state of affairs in our country. I believe I have about ten minutes left, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I have other things because we will have our Haggatt Hall moment, and I have not used half. I have not started yet. Do you know what bothers me, Sir? I said earlier that we are all children of Independence. The Prime Minister may be a little older than us, but the majority of us in here are. It cannot be that the first set of people born in an Independent Barbados come to be the ones who preside over its destruction. It cannot be that we are the ones having people in this Parliament who betray not just the legacy of your founder leader but the legacy of this country. For what? A mess of pottage? For eight months more to foist on the people of this country the largest tax take ever in this country? My generation has to do better, and I have a responsibility to roll it back even further because of your behaviour. This country knows who I am. I am Mia. I am no different. I grew up in front of this country from the age of 23. The Member for St. Michael North West said I should run down naked on Broad Street. Well, I am already naked to the country if that is what you want, because nothing you bring that requires me to stand up for the people of this country will I resilie from.

I want you to understand this tonight; that what you are foisting on the people of this country cannot be accommodated. If it means that your corruption has to be read out, then it will be read out, because it is unacceptable. This Prime Minister ought to know better. I do not know whether it is weakness. I do not know whether it is that he likes to hide behind those few individuals. How all of a sudden that same law partner is now the lawyer for the same man who has my initials? Is that the route to unlocking success and decisions in this country? Is that why the Prime Minister went down to Rock Hard or Hard Rock down in the Port to determine whether they could

build the buildings there when the case is before the court? Who is standing up for the people in the Orleans?

H:No.D12B (18)

Who is standing up for the people in St. Joseph? Who is standing up for the people in White Hill? Who? Sir, the Barbados Labour Party will. Who is standing up for the vendors in the country, the Barbados Labour Party will. Who will stand up for the middle class in the country, the Barbados Labour Party will. Who will stand up for the people who just want to make a decent living in Barbados, the Barbados Labour Party will. Who will stand up for people who cannot take the corruption and go to put a little tender, and all of a sudden the same billion dollar man all over the place like if he is a phantom.

Mr. Speaker, it is not just corrupt contracts. It is badly negotiated contracts. There are people who I know too that I have said to them that the desalination plants that they have gotten, both Jada and Innotech, that they have gotten away with murder because they should not be getting any take or pay contract that allow them at this stage to be the recipients of money once those construction plants are finished for water that they are not supplying. Do not get tie up, because it is a small society and you know people does not mean that you succumb to doing the wrong thing. You know who I am. I have been a Minister in the country for 14 years and nobody never accused of 'tiefing' or corruption but because we are on the eve of an election that is now the words out of your mouth. Well, I take the licks because I have a team I am proud of. I have a team of people who are young, dynamic and experienced who are ready to save and serve this country. I say to you tonight that we are equal to the task. I know that nothing good can come out of this Parliament and until this Parliament goes, nothing will change in Barbados. Until this Prime Minister goes and until this country has leadership nothing will change in the country. We do not profess to be perfect but we profess to put your interest first. We tell you that we will be honest and pass that Covenant of Hope. Sir, I use those words deliberately because it is a covenant, it is not a contract. A contract is just something to which you are legally bound, a covenant goes beyond duty and what this country needs more than anything else is hope because we know that we can be a better people and we can do better, and we can come back to the point where we can out-perform where we were because the real problem was that we have gotten into a culture of contentment and we need to rise about it. Sir, there is always a good side to a crisis. We need to utilise that good side to this crisis to make this country a better country again. I am saying tonight that the people who I am bringing to this country may not be perfect but they are good solid Barbadians prepared to work beyond the call of duty to make this country a better place again.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as Buju Banton would say, "...the full has never been told". We have now start and we will continue to talk to the people of this country. Sir, that I should have had to use this opportunity to speak to the people is a travesty but because this Government has determined that no Opposition Party is to have access to the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, but thank God for the internet. Sir, that is what we have come to in the country but then this is a crack heads Government, this is an enemy of the State Government.

Mr. Speaker, I say this to you tonight. A man told me on my way here that if it could have been possible to give every member on the other side a million dollar to leave now so that they would not have to spend the next eight months that this Parliament should vote to give it to them because it would be cheaper than what they are going to spend away in contracts that they are going to sign in the next eight months. Sir, can you imagine that? That is what the ordinary public feels about these people here. I say therefore tonight, Mr. Speaker, that for Barbados to grow this Prime Minister must go. Sir, for Barbados to grow, this Government must go. Sir, I say that our biggest economic problem today is the continued presence of this Government. Barbadians understand the mess we are in. Barbadian understand that we can suck it in and suck it up and that over the next three years we may not run like Usain Bolt but we will walk like men and women with dignity again and we will set new targets then for this country. Mr. Speaker, I say to you tonight that this Government must no longer be capable of rubbing Barbadians of their dream, that we can soar again and, who will make it happen? This Barbados Labour Party will make it happen. The only solution is dissolution of this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I say to you that I can find no better way than to use the words of the late, great Tom Adams in 1976, when confronted with a similar Democratic Labour Party Government that was loitering upon the patience of the people of the country and exploiting the people of the country and bereft of ideas as it was, as this Government is, the late, great, Tom Adams used the words of Oliver Cromwell and I can find no better way to end this speech, "You have sat here too long for any good which may come and you might have done". In the name of God, to give Barbados a chance, to give Bajans a chance, in the name of God, we ask you to go. The only solution is the dissolution of this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, I stand obliged to you.

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

Hon. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution. Over 24 hours ago, we had a Resolution

presented by the Minister of Finance. It was a Budget to promote growth, to promote development and to pay down the vexing issues of debt.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think that the Minister of Finance and indeed all of us should be thankful that we have a Government that at this critical juncture is prepared to put country ahead of Party. Mr. Speaker, you cannot accuse this Democratic Labour Party of an election Budget because we have put the country first. Perhaps, after a presentation like what we just heard, you should reflect a little bit on what being Barbadian is all about. The Leader of the Opposition described Barbados as being dingy. I do not associated myself with that description of Barbados at all. Last I checked, we had a health system that was regarded as one of the best in the western hemisphere, last I checked we had an education system that was rated one of the best in the world, we have a score high on the Human Development Index, as the best place to live, very high rate of internet penetration, in fact, 100 per cent of the country has fiber network and we are one of the only countries in the world that can say that. We score high on Transparency International. We score high in terms of tourism competitiveness and small wonder, you can ask the Chief Immigration Officer that there are several thousands of people who want to live here in Barbados. Sir, this is a very desirable place, so I cannot associate myself with a description that says we are dingy and somehow not a desirable place. Indeed, I think it was 55 plus years ago, that the Democratic Labour Party created what we call the modern Barbados and intrinsic in that was the social infrastructure that has made us such a desirable place. I think what we have been doing as a Government is making the deliberate to see that that social infrastructure remains intact. I was delighted that the Minister of Finance in that gem of an address took some time to explain to people the cost of maintaining all of these social services that we take for granted.

Mr. Speaker, that is where I see where we are as a Government and what we have been able to achieve.

Sequence 19

Yes, we have had to introduce measures to get some more revenue but the whole point is that by aiming for a balance budget you are trying to live within your means. That is something that every single household can relate to. We cannot continue to just kick the can down the road we have to accept that we have to make a few difficult decisions to live within our means so I am actually grateful for the opportunity to be a Barbadian and to have lived in Barbados, to have lived most of my life, my two sojourns abroad, one case was for study but I am fortunate and grateful and on that note of gratitude let me also, of course, reach out to the people of St. Michael South Central who have made it possible for me to be here to contribute in this

capacity for 14 years and I delight in that opportunity and I will continue on their support and advice to represent their interests.

I note that the Leader of the Opposition, I think it is fair to say by her standards that was actually a pretty poor presentation. I honestly expected better. This is the ninth occasion and it was the same old, same old, muck raking, peeping under here, a document here and falling off a thing here and there, the shame and scandal politics, who driving what vehicle and all of this kind of thing. Surely months away from a dissolution I would have thought that we would have had something by way of an alternative plan, nothing of substance and even by her standards referring to the distinguished Minister of Finance, however you may feel about his policy, as a boy, a little child. Is this what we have really come to now? That type of condescending behaviour. About 40 or 50 months ago, the member was talking about leaders that need replacing in here. There is only one leader in here who has the distinction of being replaced and that is the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and who was she replaced by, five men in her own party, four of whom were sitting right in front of me during that presentation and I want her to realise those smiles were grimaces and when you make comments like that about calling a minister of the Crown a boy and a child, that is exact what they were talking about. Remember they did not replace her because they thought she was not ready yet or she needed to mature, you are half baked, go back in the oven a little longer, they said she was unfit and they still feel that way. I saw them grimacing. Every time she said, as Prime Minister, they were wincing, they cannot take the thought. Four of them sitting right there in front of me. The current Chairman of the party was the one who announced with delight. Do you remember five years ago? We have replaced the Member and we are putting back the Honourable Member for St. Peter. Only one leader in here has that distinction of being replaced and frankly speaking, you keep up behaviour like that, you may very well get a re-run of that particular script. Enough said. That is my advice to the Honourable Leader. She can take it, she can reject it but enough on that.

I have actually known her a very long, long time well, obviously not as long as Uncle Errol but I can say our families are close and have been close so I have known her a long time. Enough of that advice. What I want to speak about now though and this is where I think I can take issue. We have said printing at the Central Bank of Barbados is wrong or rather it should have been kept to a minimum and our Budget is designed to reduce it down to an absolute minimum, down to \$86 million if so much. The leader agrees that we would not do that but yet the same Leader of the Opposition is saying what? She wants a cost of living allowance for public servants, she wants an increase for the same public servants -- now I know they asked for 23 per

cent I do not know if she agrees with that. The danced around that issue because ...

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: No, she talked about the NUPW, a \$60 million programme to eliminate pit toilets an admission, I suppose, of failure when she had ministerial responsibility for the Urban Development Commission and Economic Development. She could not eliminate pit toilets then but now she wants to find \$60 million in times like this. You do not want to print money from the Central Bank of Barbados, she does not want to increase taxes, where are you going to get the money to do this? I must tell you, that little shopping list, that vote grabbing shopping list is not going to cut it. She is going to reconstitute the Police Service Commission, she is going to ban plastic bags and styrofoam containers, that is not a serious analysis of our economic reality and how you propose to lead us through that so I urge the public to just take these things with a pinch of salt. The Government has done well under these circumstances. We are still years out of what was the worst global economic recession that we have seen and the mere fact that we are seeing growth and the prospect for further growth tells us that we are on the right track. We are determined to see that we can attract investment, we are determined to see that we can attract different types of investment. We are working hard in terms of the energy sector. I know this thing about the renewables is a bug bearer, I understand, for the Leader of the Opposition.

In 2008 when we came to office you could not have found 1 megawatt that was generated via renewable sources. There are now 23 megawatts of renewable energy being generated in Barbados and another 60 megawatts about to come on stream through various sources. That means that we will have almost 1/3 of our peak capacity in the short run where you will have from renewable sources and we have, of course, made sure that we still have the natural gas option to transition us to full renewables. It is not about making a general statement about by 2030 we are going to be fully renewable, we believe that we can get there but energy security is a serious issue so you have to transition out of fossil fuels to the renewables and by importing natural gas to buttress our local resources, we think that we can get there.

We have a plan to make Barbados, not only economically viable and socially balanced but environmentally sound and our energy policy fits right in that regard. The question of renewable energy and what we are doing, I think, is significant in terms of creating a new sector going forward for the future. I would have thought again, offering yourself for leadership you could have expatiated on this and I would take this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, to actually put it out there, young people interested in a career and you might want to give some

thought to the renewable energy sector and all that is on offer, both photovoltaic and when. This is something for the future and as you can see if our peak demand is \$250 and growing with all the hotels coming on stream in the various housing projects, your peak capacity is going to grow there will be an opportunity for people to start careers and certainly some entrepreneurial opportunities as well because much of the energy being generated and put into the grid is coming from smaller players as well and not only big players. I think though if you are going to talk about our economic recovery plan you naturally have to focus on our initiatives in tourism. The fact is that we have been promoting a steady growth in terms of our capacity in tourism so the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East speaks about change but we were able to change much of what was taking place in tourism and a lot of the success that we are seeing now is as a consequence of deliberate policies, policies on improving our airlift and policies on improving where we bring our airlift from so we have come from non-traditional sources but we also had policies on diversifying our product offering and on promoting investment in our accommodation sector so we have facilitated at the private sector's introduction of...

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Yes, Sandals Resort is expanding at the moment and what is now a 280-room property will be a 500-room property. Let me add as well that I heard this talk about jobs in the sector. As we speak, Mr. Speaker, just under 1 000 Barbadians are working at that Sandals Casuarina property in St. Lawrence. Now, I can understand why that might be a problem for some in the Barbados Labour Party. These are 1 000 Barbadians that would have been home or on the street naturally blaming the Government, no work, natural targets that you could tell them that things dread and we voting red and that type of thing, but no, no, no, they are employed. Yes, you may say well okay those are only temporary jobs that is true but they will give way to 600 permanent jobs on that site when projects like Sam Lord's and the same Sandals Beaches which will start April next year come on stream and you would indeed have a constant delivery of tourism jobs, and I think that is the point that we need to be aware of.

As we speak, the 220 rooms under construction at that Sandals site plus the 450 rooms that will come on stream at Sam Lord's, plus what is going on at the Sands as well, which I think is just over 100 rooms, will take our room stock to over 7 000 for the first time in the short run and will get us heading closer to the 10 000 rooms or so that we do need in order to see that we can have sustainable jobs, jobs that are part of the productive sector not jobs that are costing foreign exchange but jobs that are paid from the earnings of foreign exchange. Tourism is an export industry, remember that and that is exactly what we want to have.

I want to also make the point that the Government has also facilitated for domestic investment in the tourism sector. Very directly, Mr. Speaker, you would have sat in that very place in 2014 when we amended something called the Tourism Development Act to allow for the inputs to the tourism sector to be free of all imposts, that you are not restricted to the Schedule to the Act anymore. As a consequence of that decision 4 472 applications have been received by the Ministry of Tourism and \$13.6 million in concessions has been granted and 40 properties are now refurbishing as a result of that and these are smaller properties. I am not talking about Sandy Lane or Royal Westmoreland or Sandals here, these are very much the ones that are owned locally, tens of millions of dollars, apart from the 40 properties under construction so for example Sea Breeze is doing a \$12 million expansion for 53 additional rooms and 74 people are to be employed. Waves Hotel, part of the Elegant Group that is well-known to the other side, will have an upgrade of \$8 million and 130 person will be employed there as well, so the Amendment to the Tourism Development Act has worked in terms of the promotion of investment, the upgrading of our hotel plant and of course the expanding out of our room stock. It is important yes to have the brands and we welcome Wyndham and Sandals and of course we are happy to hear that Fairmont is also going to be investing and improving their offerings as well too. The brands are important but these indigenous brands, the smaller ones, are also very important as well.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that the Amendment to the Tourism Development Act is working and people indeed are taking advantage of the offerings that are taking place there.

Mr. Speaker, it is obviously important if you are going to be expanding out your tourism sector that your airport and seaport are also expanded to improve efficiency and to improve the experience. I know that this issue of the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. and the long waits has bedevilled us for some time. Some minimal work has been done. There is a wall in that arrival area that was taken down to facilitate easier use of the green line, we are happy to hear that. Of course, in the longer run at the rates at which the numbers are coming in at the moment you are going to have to cater for larger numbers and that is why the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. is going to be significantly retrofitted and expanded including five jet bridges which are on stream. We have had to do some work in the meantime to accommodate the air/sea transfer passengers that are coming in, the home-porters, so we have done some expansion work at the Airport and we still have more to do.

The Seaport is also an area where we have had to do some expansion as well. Berth 5 and Berth 6 are important in order to expand capacity again for home-porters. Having

Berth 5 allowed us to home-port the Manchi 3 and the Britannia with over 7 000 persons were home-porting on one day. We have a strong comparative advantage in this area of home-porting and we have to continue to push that capacity.

Berth 6 is also necessary for the same reason because while we want to push cruise tourism we must also recognise the opportunities in cargo as well. In the last financial year 1.4 million tonnes of cargo went through the Bridgetown Port as at April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017, that is a record I believe, and a large part of that was actually transshipment, so if we are going to get into the transshipment business as well and all of those opportunities now that the Panama Canal is being expanded and the like we have to have the gantry cranes, et cetera in order to do it, and that is what that project is about.

Berths 5 and 6 are about expanding capacity. It is not about any white elephant for any Minister to gawk at and say look at that. Berth 5 was \$63 million because the scope was extended to allow for 30 berths for yachts, another subsector of tourism that we have been taking advantage of that for a long time Barbados was not benefitting from, so we did the work in Berth 5 in order to promote cruise tourism, cargo and yachting tourism. All of these are axes of economic activity that we need to do if we are going to expand out. You talk about growth. You say you have to grow your way out of a recession, but how are you going to grow if you do not have means of growth? That is the kind of discussion that I would think a potential Prime Minister would want to engage the nation on, not banning plastic bags and Styrofoam containers. I would have thought so but of course that is just my humble opinion.

What this Government has been doing is making sure that we have avenues to grow investments coming in and opportunities. I believe that with what is happening in tourism and tourism-related sectors because... Again, you are going to probably hear about the JetBlue flights from Fort Lauderdale being cut down to four flights a week because anything negative I do not have to bring it in here other people will bring that in here, but they are not going to mention the fact that we were 14 per cent up out of the United States of America last year and year-to-date we are 21 per cent up on a record year.

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Mr. Speaker, they did not mention that part, instead they would find something negative to mention and that is fine but if we are going to have those record numbers we have to start to see how we could develop out this tourism industry in such a way that all Barbadians can benefit. If we do it right and we do it the way in which this Government is doing it, by taking careful measured decisions, we are then in a position to adequately see that

anyone looking for a job in Barbados should be able to find that job. As it is, the unemployment of Barbados of 9 per cent to date is a large part to those 900-odd jobs at Sandals. If we can continue to get the other projects going and in the wake of those projects what they leave behind as productive capacity that can earn foreign exchange for this country, then we are going in the right direction.

Mr. Speaker, I am real happy to be a part of Government that is taking this approach. There is bitter medicine along the way, everybody knows that. I do not think that anybody has ever filled a prescription and got tasty medicine, you understand that to get better you have to go through sometimes a little pain. If you want to lose weight and you exercise it hurts a little. To get some place you have to sacrifice. Every Barbadian understands that. The Leader of the Opposition is saying that the Honourable Member would reduce the fiscal deficit to Gross Domestic Product to 1 per cent as opposed to a balanced budget, so that we are going from 6.3 per cent to 1 per cent, as opposed to 6.3 per cent to zero per cent and is making heavy, heavy, heavy weather of this 1 per cent. I do not get it and I sincerely hope that people would put on their thinking caps and see that you have proven results, that the economy is growing, albeit slightly, unemployment is falling and in fact we are seeing the prospects with the investments that are occurring: the construction that is occurring in the right areas, the projects that are coming on stream, that we are going in the right direction. Mr. Speaker, I think that we need to see it in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of tourism accommodation I supposed I should also mention that there is a legislative element as well in terms of regulations that need to be modernised. Barbados has a wide range of offerings, we have the villas, we have the traditional hotels, we of course have some of the all-inclusive projects now coming in in a more serious way but we have to admit that the shared economy is a reality and that it is no point declaring war on the Airbnb's and the Homeaway's in this world, there is a market for it and of course we have to embrace it but we need to do so in a responsible way. Officials both of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism have been talking and we will put them into the net and do what we have to do and not leave them out there. Mr. Speaker, again, that is the sensible way to plan developing a sector in a manner that the success and benefit can be enjoyed by all. Mr. Speaker, that is what we are about.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other things that is also good about this Government is the fact that even though we are focusing so heavily on getting our economic sectors strong: International Business Sector, the whole renewable energy sector and what that means for saving foreign exchange, tourism and tourism related. We also have not forgotten the social sectors as well. Mr. Speaker, one of the areas, for

example, of what we are doing is analysing health cost and the fact that we are potentially looking at a way to ease the households.

Mr. Speaker, some research done by the Ministry of Health under the Honourable Member for Christ Church South shows that we are spending nearly \$300 million and that households are spending almost as much as the Government in healthcare. How do we deal with that? Now I heard some attempt to empower communities but we started the Constituency Councils which was totally opposed by the Barbados Labour Party, well, officially opposed, but you talk about wanting to empower communities or you have discovered that you wanted to empower communities now that elections are around the corner, yet here it is that you had the perfect mechanism in the form of Constituency Councils because the truth is that the majority of the members of these Constituency Councils are not partisan, these are just people in community who want to make a difference.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: They applied to be a part of it.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Yes, you might have nominated a few members but I have gone to Constituency Councils meeting and butt up on people whom I did not even know were interested in community work. Mr. Speaker, what could be wrong with giving people a chance to be empowered? Therefore, I think that when we speak about economic development or economic viability, to be more precise, and environmentally sound policies but the social balance is also quite important and Mr. Speaker, I think we have definitely scored well in that department.

Mr. Speaker, I do not accept that what I necessarily heard in here earlier is indeed accurate. Mr. Speaker, the reality is that much of what we heard was just an attempt again to try to... It was the usual muck-raking that we have gotten used to. I think that even by the muck-raking standards that we have gotten used to, it was still a poor presentation and it is a little unfortunate, I actually thought that they would up the ante a little, given the elections that the Honourable Member said are around the corner so that it was a little disappointing.

Mr. Speaker, there is this foolishness about some letter that the Honourable Member is holding over my head as a sword of Damocles, the Honourable Member could put the letter on Facebook and on all of the different places wherever the Honourable Member is on, I do not care, I do not have anything at all to hide.

Mr. Speaker, on the question of Sugar Point, the Honourable Member was the attorney-at-law for Royal Caribbean and knows full-well everything that went on and I know that the Honourable Member knows. Mr. Speaker, SMI is in a relationship with the Government, Sugar Point is not off the table, per se' but Sugar Point has challenges. The work that is being done on the existing Deepwater Harbour, Berths Five and Six, is not inconsistent with Sugar Point but there are some challenges with Sugar Point to which the Honourable Member alluded, which was the cost of the project. There are active discussions going on right now between the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism to see how we could make that work. It is as simple as that, there is no inconsistency about Berths Five and Six and Sugar Point, it was always the plan that if you created the purpose-built cruise facility...

Mr. Speaker, I made the point in here that with the opportunities for cargo or transshipment that you are still going to have to master-plan that area. There is also another challenge as well, because the letter was read from Royal Caribbean, the second largest while Carnival Cruise Lines in the largest cruise line in the world and they are also responsible for the majority of our homeporting. Carnival has had some concerns about Sugar Point for its homeporters because of where it is located and the tidal impact where they may not be able to berth vessels there constantly, homeporters that is. They do not have a problem with ships on an itinerary because they can bypass you if it is not safe to berth, a homeporter must be able to berth obviously because that is the commencement of the voyage. Mr. Speaker, in essence, what I am saying is that with the Sugar Point facility you will still need to use the existing Deepwater Harbour as well for some key cruise activities and so that is why we need to have that balance in terms of creating our cruise offering going forward.

Mr. Speaker, I would just to say to the Honourable Member to release the letter, release everything, it does not matter, it was something that should have happened a long time ago. I should not be dealing with any Sugar Point in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 or 2013, cargo and cruise should have been separated in the time of plenty, a long, long time ago.

7.49 p.m.

Only recently we had another accident with a cruise passenger and a truck. He could not see properly and the truck reversed and hit him, and he ended up in the QEH. For a long time that separation should have happened. We have put things in place and it is causing all kinds of angst. Mr. Speaker, I know you have given me the signal. Let me just say to the country, but I am speaking to my colleagues and to the country: Any time the Barbados Labour Party is opposing you, you are in a very good place. I feel good

when the Barbados Labour Party is criticising me. They were against Independence, they were against the School Meals Department, they were against the National Insurance Scheme, they were against everything progressive that we have ever attempted. They were against free secondary education, in modern times now they were against Sandals, against this, against that. Let them keep criticising. That makes me feel good. When they tell me they support something, that is when I will start to worry. Everything the Democratic Labour Party has done that has been progressive for this country has been opposed, and that is a historical fact, by the Barbados Labour Party. I think it is clear to me that we have a very strong case to put to the people of Barbados. It has been a difficult period, and we have got you through it.

MR. SPEAKER: Member, you need to wind up please. Your time is up.

Hon. R.L. SEALY: It is a fact that we have had to make difficult decisions, but it is clear that we are seeing the results of those decisions now, and all we need to do is continue to support the Democratic Labour Party and we can see that this growth is managed in the responsible way. Once again, Mr. Speaker, we have not come here on any vote-catching exercise. This is not the time to put party ahead of country. We still have some work to do to complete this mission, which is of course building the just and prosperous society that we want Barbados to be. I am obliged to you.

MR. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Yes, Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for dinner until a quarter to nine this evening.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 8.45 p.m. for dinner was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and MR. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

7.42 p.m.

Wednesday, May 31, 2017

RESUMPTION

(Sequence 24)(Read)

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, we were on Order No. 19, and with that we shall continue.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

MR. R. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, this is quite possibly the most important budgetary debate that has ever taken place in the country. I really want to, after the last speech to bring things back to reality in this debate. I want at the outset to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East who really delivered a sterling presentation this evening and who really raised and dealt with all the relevant issues facing this country at the time. It is clear to me that the people of Barbados deserve a lot better than they have been getting from this Government over the last nine years because truth be told, this country has really been turned upside down, inside out by a Government that is really out of its depth when it comes to the management of the affairs of this country. In fact, only a favoured few who have been able to get some of the huge chunks of the fatted calf can really say that they hunger has been satisfied but for the rest in the other Barbados, the one that is being left behind it has been nothing short of a roller coaster ride and a nightmare.

Mr. Speaker, you have to remember in all this that this is the Government that used the slogan that Barbados is not an economy, it is a society, and that we have to improve the lot of the people in the society and that is what Barbados' development is all about. Sir, it is those same people in this same society who are one saying wherever you go, whether it is in the supermarket, the goods and services station, the constituency, whether you are in a line queuing to pay a Bill, those same people that make up the same society that they say are the one you are supposed to look after if you want to talk about development those are those one that are using the mantra that Barbados has never been in this state before, that we have never been in such a calamitous state before. Sir, I really thought that by now in this debate having heard two Honourable Members on the other side I thought by now we would have heard from them some serious promises to put Barbados on a more productive growth path and to restore hope and confidence in the hearts and minds of Barbadians. Sir, in that context, I also thought that as tourism is the sector that is depended on so heavily to bring this country out of the mess that we have been put in that you would have heard some bold and new initiatives for the purpose of achieving that objectives in relation to the Ministry of Tourism as well. We have heard from the Minister of Finance that there would have been in a position of some \$480 million plus in taxes on an already overburdened and over taxed population, taxes on those who do not even work, new taxes that are going to take an already high excessively high cost of living and spin it even more out of control than it has been ever before.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the Ministry of Education, the Minister tonight made comments that show that as far as he is concerned, that everything is fine, you cannot get cured unless you take medicine, and the Minister really comes with the same script every year and he makes the same point. I look forward to day when we can see the Minister of Tourism moving from a Ministry of platitudes and prophesies to one of performance. Sir, that is really what we want to see, a Ministry of platitudes and prophesies to one of performance, but we have not heard anything from the Minister of Tourism indicating that. He makes the same point, he sometimes talks with his own facts and we hear statements we make all the time. We hear statements, for example, about the expensive concessions granted to hoteliers and yet you speak to hoteliers who say, yes, they have been granted on paper but you cannot get them, that it takes forever to get them and that only a small amount have been getting them and they are frustrated into eternity.

Mr. Speaker, basically, the Ministry of Tourism is going to continue to underperform and to stagnate and to be nothing more than the vehicle that created a very special elite group to build and consolidate significant wealth in the country while other Barbadians, ordinary Barbadians, the masses in particular that they do not stand a chance in terms of improving their lot in the country. Sir, we have this evening to burst the bubble of the Minister because Barbadians have really been depending on this Ministry of Tourism to put out of this mess and, really and truly, far from doing that it has really been nothing more than a splendid spectacular failure.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister significantly in his presentation spent exactly thirteen minutes and fourteen seconds talking about tourism, when you would have thought that he had a lot to say, so someone has to try to enlighten the nation. Sir, at the outset, I want to deal with the notion that this tourism sector is setting records. I want to deal with that because nothing could be further from the truth and I am going to let the facts speak for themselves. Sir, both the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Tourism has been talking extensively about there being a record number of arrivals for the last two years and the Minister of Tourism likes to pump himself on the chest for that fact, and it is a fact that there has been two "record years" for the last two years but he does that while glossing over the issue of the amount being spent by tourists while in Barbados which is the most important thing but that is serious business and it cannot be trivialized because as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said in her presentation this evening the amount spent by tourists in Barbados in 2016, last year, in fact, represented less than has been spent in 2007 some nine years ago, almost a decade ago. Sir, put differently, more tourists, significantly more tourists in 2015 and 2016 are spending significantly less than a smaller number of tourists spent almost 10 years

ago. Sir, in other words, this Minister is getting less from more. He is not getting more from less, he is getting less from more, and it has happened not once but twice. I do not know perhaps if he is a reversed magician because sometimes you tend to get more from less but he is getting less from more. Now, Sir, to be fair to the Minister, I decided to go back to compare his performance for the nine years that he has been Minister of Tourism with the first nine years for all Ministers of Tourism of previous administrations because we have to compare like with like, and I want to be fair to him. Sir, never ever before has it ever happened over a nine year period of any previous administration that tourists coming here spent less at the end of a nine year period than at the beginning of that nine year period.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the figures because figures do not lie. Sir, if you look at the period 1976 to 1985, that nine year period. Sir, long-stay arrivals in Barbados over that nine year period increased by 60 per cent and tourists spend increase by 273 per cent. Sir, from 1986 to 1994, long stay arrivals increased by 15 per cent and tourists spend increased by 76.5 per cent. Sir, from 1995 to 2004, long stay arrivals increased by 24.7 per cent and tourists spend also increased by 24.6 per cent but under this Minister, this disaster that we have, 2008 to 2016, tourists arrivals increased by 10.9 per cent but for the first time in our history tourists spend declines, not increases by declines by 12.8 per cent. This failure for a minister.

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What has happened is that 10.9 per cent more tourists spent some \$304 900 000 less than a smaller number of tourists spent here almost a decade ago. Mr. Speaker, this is absurd. He likes to talk about record well that is a record and it is also the record of his record in relation, Sir, to the numbers game that he loves to play so we have to beat him at his own game. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, without even doing any sort of analysis at all, anytime you can get more tourists and getting less revenue you know that something has to be wrong and it has to be telling a sorted tale and the tale that this tells is that there has been no competent leadership whatsoever of this sector in Barbados. There has been no clear strategy, no proper planning or direction for this sector at all. We have, Mr. Speaker, a totally incompetent minister ...

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North is misleading the House because he does not know what tourists spend in Barbados ...

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not something on which I can rule. No point of order.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: What I am saying is that the Member should state ...

Mr. SPEAKER: It is nothing on which I can rule.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the Minister as usual. Grandiose incantations trying to gloss over and disguise and hide facts relating to failure. That is what it is but the facts show that he cannot get the job done.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: The Barbados Statistical Digest published by the Central Bank of Barbados. Do you understand that now? I will bring it for you the next time.

Mr. Speaker, what we have is an incompetent Minister who really and do you know what is the hard thing about this? From since 2009 the then Prime Minister of this country, the late David Thompson, in his Budgetary presentation, there is not a lot of good to really say about his performance as a Minister of Finance or Prime Minister but even he recognised in 2009 and said in this Chamber in a 2009 Budgetary debate, admonished the Minister that visitor spend was going down and urged him to take steps to deal with it and the Minister of Tourism refused to take steps to do anything. That is why I can stand here today and say, as I am quoting from publication of the Central Bank, The Statistical Digest, that 10.9 per cent more tourists in 2016 spent \$309 million less than tourists spent in 2007 on coming to Barbados. Mr. Speaker, to make this situation more unbelievable, we have to understand that this is the Minister who has three consultants. Not one, not two, but three consultants. Two for tourism and one for aviation and that is also a record because that is more than any Minister of Tourism has ever had in terms of consultants and there is still not record of achievement. These consultants earn approximately \$10 000 a month each so that when people at being laid off across this country or people, including civil servants are being told to hold strain, we cannot manage any salary increases, this Minister manages to get brought on his payroll three consultants taking home about \$30 000 per month and still does not know how at all to tackle the serious issues that confront his Ministry, but Mr. Speaker, the story gets worst because this Minister has, as I said, presided over a Ministry that has created that special small elite group that I spoke about earlier. That is what he can wave around, that he has actually managed to set up a small elite group who are really taking care of this fatted calf and one of the best illustrations, because they are many, is the Barbados Port Authority. I do not know how a minister could have sat there and really have the gall to even come back in here after dinner, after the points made by the Honourable

Member for St. Michael North East about the corruption in his Ministry in particular. She spoke of corruption generally but a lot of it related to his Ministry and he just spoke for 30 minutes and glossed over that and almost ignored it. He could not say a word. When he did try to refute it because we know the story at the Port Authority in relation to the Berths. You have at the Port Authority a situation where a certain face that has become the face of this Government has been able to get everything at The Port as and when he wants it so he can get an award to build a berth without even going through a tendering process and although he has experience whatsoever in the construction of a berth, he can get that and he can also get it, not even if an invitation forbids but by virtue of the submission of an unsolicited bid. No one even said to him, well bid for this. He just sent in a bid and The Port decided, okay, go ahead. He interjected himself into the process and got his way. The Port never bothered to check to see if The Berth could have been built for less because there was not competitive bidding process. Of course, if it could have been built for less, then the difference could have been used in meaningful ways. Maybe buying some much needed buses for the Barbados Transport Board but The Port went ahead acting on an unsolicited bid, \$50 million on a face that has become the face of this Government. Then they gave the same contract to a yacht facility for another \$14 million under the same conditions, no bids, nothing. They just said go and do it, \$14 million. They never checked to see if it could have been done by somebody else cheaper. Save some money and see if you can buy some garbage trucks maybe, the face of this Government. They decided to acquire equipment, millions and millions of dollars in equipment. There are 275 000 in people in Barbados and billions all over the world but they went and found this one same face of the Government again to give him the agency and to get commission for acquiring the required equipment but the baffling one is Berth 6. The Minister really is known to confuse himself and trip himself up on truth. That is one of his hallmarks and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East made a comment in relation to Berth 6 when she produced an agreement that he is a signatory to giving the okay for Sugar Point. The Minister gave the okay for Sugar Point himself, his own signature was read out in this Chamber today. He never got up on a point of order and denied it and then he came in here in one of his bouts of idiocy to say that Sugar Point always had problems.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, rephrase "in a bout of idiocy", that is not allowed, withdraw it. By the way, I do not intend to sit here and repeat the argue of the Honourable Member for the Opposition.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I do not know who is doing that.

Mr. SPEAKER: There are rules about repetition.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, perhaps you can tell me what they are because I intent to speak freely in this Chamber so understand that very clearly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have the right to speak freely and I have the right to rule freely. I am not going to tolerate any challenge like that. Please continue.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I am reiterating points made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East as I am entitled. When the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was talking about what the Minister of Finance said you did not interject.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, we can swap places of you want.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, let us proceed. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central when it was put in this Chamber that he had signed a contract with the company in relation to the Sugar Point project, the Minister did not deny that he was a signatory to it.

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He was caught by surprise by the revelation and then came back tonight at the end of his presentation in a very illogical way to say he does not care because Sugar Point in any case always had problems. Now, why would a competent Minister decides he is going to sign a contract for a project that always was known to have problems? That is what the Minister said tonight, that he signed a contract for a project but do not hassle him about it because he is aware of the issues, it always had problems. You see this is a very, very reckless approach to governance.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: On a point of elucidation. Let me help the Honourable Member here. Ministers of the Crown do not sign contracts with entities, okay. I cannot sign a contract. If you must know what it was, it was a bit of correspondence as the shareholders' representative to the entity. As I said, you are free to make it public, put it on Facebook. The matter of Sugar Point is public record. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is the attorney-at-law for one of the entities in it. It is an open book. What is the big deal? There is nothing to hide at all.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay, thanks for the elucidation.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: The Honourable Minister signed a document evidencing an agreement with Sugar Point and now he stands to be hung by the same document that he signed. The funny thing about this position that he is in is that one way or the other he is going to be hang because if he double-crosses Sugar Point he is going to get sued by the present contractor and if he does not he would be sued by Sugar Point, so whichever way the cookie crumbles he is in some deep, deep whatever and he knows it, and it is really a reckless way to govern.

Mr. Speaker, the question is: Where is all of the transparency?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member is alleged to be an attorney-at-law. Barbados Port Inc. is incorporated under Cap. 308. Shareholders do not sign contracts for companies, directors do. I am not a Director of Barbados Port Inc. I cannot sign a contract. If the Honourable Member does not know that, there are one or two other lawyers over there that could help him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Alright, point taken. Yes, Honourable Member.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: The question is then: If you know you cannot sign, why did you sign? I can see how rattle the Honourable Member is.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to go on to Hyatt because when you go over to the Hyatt project, you see the same face of the Government over there at the Hyatt project again. The issue with the Hyatt is that a portion of land that relates to the Hyatt project is land that we know was vested in the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. which is also 100 per cent owned by Government, so it is still Government land. We were never told and to this day we have not been told that it has ever been sold or leased to the developer who is to build this hotel for the Hyatt to manage on the land there on Bay Street, but although this land has not been vested in the developer, two private entities, being the developer and its partner on the one hand and representatives from the Hyatt on the other, sometime ago met without any representative there from Government and signed a contract in relation to this Hyatt Hotel by virtue of which Hyatt will manage the property to be built by the developer on land some of which as I said is owned by the Government, but the problem is that the developer did not then own the land and up to now the public has not been told that he owns the land so how can he be signing or how could he be signing a contract giving somebody else rights in relation to properties to be built on land that he does not own.

What is the true relationship between this developer and the Government? What stranglehold does this developer has on this Government that it can be behaving in that way? What is there that we do not know? If, Mr. Speaker, an agreement has been reached now finally to sell the land to the developer, what is the agreed price and is the agreed price the best price that could be obtained? Also, Mr. Speaker, as the contractor needs land on the other side of the road for parking and other facilities in relation to the hotel, has any agreement has been reached with the owners of that land across the street particularly the Methodist Church in relation to a price for either the sale or lease of those premises on the other side or have negotiations broken down thereby putting another poke in the wheel of this project which does not seem to be able to get started as the Minister seems unable generally to get projects started?

Mr. Speaker, the last point I want to make in relation to the Hyatt Hotel is that everybody wishes to condemn David Comissiong for his involvement in this project including the Prime Minister.

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

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, do the developers have the money to build this project in the first place and are there any safeguards in place to prevent profiteering in relation to this project because the last thing we would want to see is this project gets off the ground and then hear that everything is sold to another developer at an obscene profit? We do not want another Cahill at this time.

The point, Mr. Speaker, that I will move on to quickly now is the sale of Time Out at the Gap by this Government to the Sun Group for \$7.3 million. This has been announced. I have already said and will say gain that Clifton Hall Great House, a property in St. John, inland in the countryside, away from the action, with only six bedrooms, has been put on the market for an asking price of US\$3 995 000 say BDS\$8 million but the Government now takes up a property, Time Out at the Gap, that has 12 times as many rooms as Clifton Hall Great House, across the road from the sea and purports to sell it for \$7.3 million without any tendering process. Now, this really in my view is not a sale, this is a giveaway. The Minister always likes to jump up and say whatever it takes to get him to the next point, so he said that the property was being sold for market value and that the buyer was the tenants with a right of first refusal. Now, first refusal or not the fact is that the owner has a duty to get the best price. This is Government property. This does not belong to the Minister. This is not his plaything. He has to get the best price. What is worse is that, and more importantly, this property is valued at \$10.5 million not the \$7.3 million the Minister said it was valued at. It is valued at \$10.5 million and the only reason that it is valued that low still is because a couple years ago the

Minister of Finance put a freeze on the value of hotel properties for land tax purposes, if not it would have been worth more but it could have been sold for even more than the \$10.5 million but the Minister decides to sell it for \$7.3 million thereby writing off \$3.2 million, a burden that would have to be carried by the taxpayers of Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House and imputing improper motive to an Honourable Member. The last time this issue came up I mentioned that the land tax valuation was \$8 million. That is what the Commissioner of Land Tax valued the property at so to come in here and say that you have a valuation for \$10.5 million and that I misled the House is very serious. Again, I hate disturbing the Honourable Member but I cannot allow it to go out there on national television in essence telling me that I lied to the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thanks for the elucidation Honourable Member.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: The land tax value is \$10.5 million. I am saying, yes you did.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say this, and I am going to end on this point.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, because your time has expired.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, one thing that I look forward to in politics is the restoration of honesty and integrity and I really hope that God willing and the people of Barbados willing I could be part of an Administration in the next few months in this country because really and truly I would be prepared to support fully any special or other audits or investigations that have to be carried out to really get to the bottom of what has happened in the country in the last eight years.

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Mr. Speaker, as people in this country suffer, there are certain Ministers over there who live a lifestyle that is not consonant with the salaries that they earn. They really do not, and I really would like to have the benefit of an audit done to really explain how they maintain their lifestyles because Mr. Speaker, we have to get to the bottom of corruption in this country and I really would like to meet somebody who really could write a book on how to become a millionaire overnight on a Minister's salary and that is a book I look forward to reading, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I really hope that on attaining Government, that God's and the people's willing, that an audit will be done to get to the bottom of the corruption of this country for the last eight years. Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2017, but from the outset, Sir, I would like to say that the last speaker who spoke has accused me of something of which I am not guilty when the Honourable Member said that I have allowed a private company to be using land that belongs to the Church, under the pretense that the land belongs to the Government. Mr. Speaker, the facts are that the land that the company is leasing is the land that belongs to the Government of Barbados but the Government Electrical Department was using land that belong to the Church, and there are two separate pieces of land because the land that the Government Engineering Department was using has now gone back to the Church, but the land that the hotel wants to lease is the land belonging to the Government of Barbados that was probably used by the Church for parking and so on but it was not the property of the Church and so I need to clarify that upfront.

Mr. Speaker, another thing that I would like to clarify very early is that the Honourable Member said that under tourism we were able to increase numbers but that the spend was down. Sir, this is something that I have spoken to on many occasions and I would like to speak to it again tonight. The reason it appears in Barbados that the spend is down is that our tourism product is now so diverse that the rational way of measuring the tourism income cannot continue anymore. Mr. Speaker, everybody knows that it is not only villas and hotels now, but that you also have to count community tourism which is not now measured in the count in the rational way, that is why you will see that community tourism is now a large part of our tourism product but it is not being counted in the spend in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, for example, a lot of tourists coming to Barbados now like to ride on ZR's which is now a new attraction; they like to go to shops; if you go to Sandy Lane you would see the tourists going by Sandra, who sells local foods; if you go down to the various places in Barbados you would see that the tourists are not now eating in the traditional areas but that that is not being counted in the spend of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, it is not correct to say that the spend is down, what we would have to say is that the money being spent in Barbados whereas previously you could easily measure it but that it cannot be measured anymore. Mr. Speaker, those who do not understand should go and educate themselves on it. So much so, Mr. Speaker, I have

suggested already we need to separate the ones staying in the villas, the condominiums and the hotels and then find out the remainder and apply a figure to those persons so that we can get true estimate of the amount of spend that is actually happening in the industry and in the country.

Mr. Speaker, the truth is that under proper accounting principles we are actually understating the spend, which is not wrong in accounting principles because we have always been taught that you understate revenue and overstate expenditure, because you are supposed to always look at the worse side and not at the best side. So you could understand now why we are doing so well because unlike the Barbados Labour Party, because based on what they are saying that they would understate expenditure and overstate revenue, but the reverse is happening here so that the country is much better off.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to make the point here that yesterday in the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2017, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs said that we are only getting \$200 million from the International Business Sector and there is a believe that this has occurred and that country Barbados has done nothing about it. Let us imagine, had we followed the others and had zero-rated as the others did to get the business, it would have meant that we would not have shown any corporation tax instead of the \$200 million that we are showing. Mr. Speaker, those who believe that we have done nothing must recognise that we would have had to do something in order to earn \$200 million.

Mr. Speaker, what was even worse, I heard a charge last night that while all this was happening the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados has done nothing but that is not true, the Right Honourable Prime Minister got on a plane, went to Canada and met with persons. Not only did the Right Honourable Prime Minister met persons in the International Business Sector, the Honourable Member also met with the persons of those banks operating in Barbados, so that the myth that we did nothing must be counteracted by (1), we kept a low tax and (2), that the Right Honourable Prime Minister of the day did his duty by going into the market the same way that the Right Honourable Owen Arthur did after we told him when we were in Opposition and the Organisation of Eastern Developing States sought to blacklist us. Mr. Speaker, the truth is that the fight did not come from the Government of the day, the fight was led by us the Opposition, so much so that the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter took a turn in me, and the Honourable Member for St. Michael West of the day will remember this. The Honourable Member for St. Peter said that once it is something big that I am always badmouthing it but fortunate for me in the same year I was going to a conference, along with the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and the former Speaker, and the Right

Honourable Prime Minister shouted across the Floor and asked me to curse him.

Well, I then had to wait to tell him what I thought but when I went to the Bahamas I had to tell him a couple of words and it was reported, not in Barbados but on CNN and then the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation picked it up. So that when we hear all of these things we have to be very careful and we have to be very careful of what people say and what they pretend to be facts are not necessarily facts. For example, the Barbados Labour Party has abused the Auditor-General not once but twice, they have voted against him because when the Auditor-General did the Special Report on Housing, because the Auditor-General did not publish what they wanted, they did not vote for him to retain his job, and the facts of the votes are here, the Government voted for the Auditor-General to retain his job and the Barbados Labour Party refused to vote for the Auditor-General because in his report the Auditor-General said when he spoke about Valery that the original proposal was for \$15 799 545 and the Revised Estimate was \$15 140 000. And they went all around Barbados giving the impression that that was an overrun. How could the original be \$15 799 545 and the Revised Estimate of \$15 140 000 could be an overrun? The Revised was less than the original proposal but what occurred, as was stated by the Auditor-General was that new items were included.

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The revised was less than the original proposal, but what occurred, as stated by the Auditor General, was that new items were included. The 'handicap building' for \$1.5 million, infrastructural and external works \$2.4 million, the sewerage system and water plant \$1.5 million, finance and legal charges \$1.85 million, design consultants \$0.6 million, and tiles and kitchen cabinets for the new addition \$0.6 million; bringing a total of \$23.58 million. Because they had additional work, they went around the country saying how the Auditor General accused the Government of overruns and how we were putting money in a contractor's pocket. When one looks at the cost to Valery and when one considers that the cost of Valery and the cost, according to the Auditor General, of the Grotto are the same, how can you have overruns? How can the Government be in bed with somebody when the Auditor General demonstrated, using figures? These are not estimates; these are the figures from the Auditor General that the actual figure was less than the proposed figure. Do you understand what I am saying? Yet still, they got angry and gave this rumour about how Grotto and Valery are overruns.

However, if that is true, they should have voted for the Auditor General to retain his job then. They accused the Auditor General.

Aside.

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Now I hear it is democracy. I am not telling them not to. Mr. Speaker, all I am saying is that the Auditor General, according to them, did the job they wanted him to do, but they still punished the man. Why would you punish a man who did the job you wanted him to do? It is because he did not write what they wanted in the Report that they did not vote for him, and now the Auditor General is in limbo because he cannot go past the age as signified in the old Act. That is not all. The only error -- and I cannot blame the Auditor General for that -- was that on the Grotto the Auditor General asked a question: How come you said you were going to have 90 parts, you only did 44 and did not reduce the costs? When the file came to me, I wrote on the file about two more foundations, because originally there were supposed to be three buildings and the buildings increased to five. Everybody knows. Anybody who knows anything about building would know that one of the most expensive things about a building is the foundation more so than the walls and the roof. Even though I explained that and put it on the file, it never got to the Auditor General. I am yet to find out why the Auditor General would have been allowed to print a Report, and why the Minister has written the explanation and it was not passed onto the Auditor General.

The impression is out there that even though I was not the Minister at the time the things were signed, these wrongdoings went on and nothing was questioned. I want to say I wrote on the file and I explained it. I also explained that one of the things which occurred at Grotto was that the Town Planner made certain requests about maintaining the trees and noted that because of the configuration, it would have hampered the production of the contractor, which would also have increased the costs. All of those things were explained but they never reached the Auditor General, and I need to find out why such a sensible and logical suggestion could have been executed by a Minister and it never reached the Auditor General. I could not believe it, and when I questioned it I was not given a reasonable answer.

Mr. Speaker, you would have heard that this Minister came to the office in 2013, and the impression is that all this Minister does is go on Facebook, he does no work and so on. Sir, I want you to know that since 2013 three hundred and thirty houses were constructed and allocated, 440 lots completed, rental units of 131 were allocated, and 82 rent-to-own were also allocated; giving a total solution of 983 and more to come. Sir, what is even more interesting than that is that during that same time, the only thing the Ministry of Finance was paying for this Minister would have been the debt, and sometimes he might give us a little 'tralya' to help with salaries and some bills. We are now accountable. We have to look for our own finances, and when one listens to the Barbados Labour

Party, one gets the impression that I am getting ranks from the 20-year programme, I have an overdraft with all the \$10 million, I am getting a drawdown from the Government, and I can also borrow, et cetera. I cannot do any of those things, but yet I have been able to execute and deliver; so much so that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North must also be praised for this. You would not believe it, Mr. Speaker, but the Liberal Democrats in their manifesto at Page 60-61 are now talking about offering rent-to-own to the people of London. They have admitted that is one of the fastest ways to get people to own properties. I will say this, Sir: Not only have we offered rent-to-own but we have also offered rent-to-buy. It means that when you come to National Housing Corporation, once the directors have signed off, the officers are free to enter into an arrangement with that proposed owner, and the owner can move into his or her property the same time and pay NHC \$500 a month while all the legal work and so on is going on.

I want to show you how important that project is. Right now we have about eight or nine houses at Lancaster 1, waiting for a solution, but it does not mean that because we have eight or nine houses at Lancaster 1 that people are not living in the houses. All the houses are occupied because of the rent-to-buy solution that I put in place. Do you hear what I tell you? This means that any time we have a property and it is completed and the mortgage certificate is brought in and so on, the NHC staff should get the people in the houses, while the lawyers and so on are doing their work to ensure that there is income coming to the NHC. If they do not do that, what they are actually doing is putting their salaries and their expenditure at NHC under trouble. We have found the solutions. We do not talk, we put our thoughts into action, and we have been able. We heard the criticism, we understood the criticism and we found the solutions to it. Mr. Speaker, we are not idling. We are not wasting the taxpayers' money. We are maximising the returns of the taxpayers' money by ensuring that the downtime should not be there. If the people are not in the houses, you should not blame the Government or the Minister, because we have ensured that we put a position so that the people can be in the houses much faster.

All of the lot of long talk you hear, Sir. Mr. Speaker, another thing...

Asides.

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I heard a week ago that only three people are in the Grotto. Somebody from the other side said they passed and only three people were in the Grotto. Today, 59 people are in the Grotto, but you know what happened and why they did not understand that, Mr. Speaker? We were putting the people in the back and coming forward.

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We were doing like country people building from the back and coming forward, so whilst they were looking at the front, the people were in the back units, so when they passed, they could not see anybody, so they did not know that people were in there. Sir, as usual, they run with the fiction and not with the fact, so when they passed they could not see anybody so they did not know that people were in there. Sir, as usual, they ran with the fiction and not the facts but today I am bringing the fact and if anybody doubts what I am saying I have documentation to provide it and they were not produced by me, they were produced by my staff at the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, I also want you to know that we are not sitting idly by and not recognising the importance of rural development to community tourism. We have acknowledged as a Government that in order for us to continue to be attractive and to be different in the country that we have to come up with creative ways and we have to ensure that when people come to Barbados that we cannot just operate for a two-few and that is why we are seeking to build out areas right across Barbados so that every time you come to Barbados you have an alternative.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Prime Minister for going to St. Thomas and announcing about parks and open spaces and what should happen to them because we Understand that we also have to ensure that we have to offer people things to make Barbados attractive and we cannot operate like the Barbados Labour Party who take it for granted that when you come to Barbados to take what you see. Sir, we are not operating like that.

Mr. Speaker, just this week on Monday, the Minister of Tourism and myself met along with his officials and the officials from the Ministry of Housing and Lands and we are now about to bring one of the most creative projects that would change the lifestyle of tourism and the lifestyle of the people around the Glendairy Prison and the lifestyle of those in urban Barbados and also make tourism more attractive. We met and we were able to receive the keys for the prison..

Asides.

Hon. D. KELLMAN: Yes. The Glendairy prison, not the one that started out in Barbados dollars and ended up in U.S. dollars. Sir, we were able to come to a logical conclusion on that where one of the agencies of the Ministry of Tourism will take charge and enter into arrangement to make Glendairy Prison an attraction. Sir, I did not stop there. We also invited Urban Development Commission because we recognised that we had a farm and some farm lands within the prisons and we also spoke to Urban Development Commission so that people in urban

Barbados who wanted to farm land and had no land to farm, we met and decided that the land at Waterford would be given to Urban Development Commission and they would work out an arrangement with Ministry of Culture because they have this programme going, so that young people in urban Barbados would be able to enjoy what I have been telling rural about because also rural is expected to ensure that they find land because, as you know, in rural Barbados there are lots of lands that were previously owned by small farmers that they are not working which they were prepared to rent to rural so that they can then lease it to young farmers to make their lives fruitful.

Mr. Speaker, we are not only looking at land. We have recognised that Barbados is a country surrounded by water and that we must also encourage young persons to use the sea. I want also to point out that we are aware there are certain areas that have been overfished and we know that the Minister of Agriculture, under the Fisheries Division is putting in place the right size net and right size wire, so that fishermen can continue to fish but we have to understand that if we have designated certain areas, we are not doing it to deprive fishermen from catching fish but what we are doing is allowing those areas to be like Folkestone Park, so that you can get back fish in those areas and maybe we can do it right across Barbados and then you might be able to ease up Folkestone and the other areas, so that people would then go back there and fish while you segregate other areas so that the reef fish can come back and bring fish closer to the shores.

Mr. Speaker, we know there are some amenities that might be needed in the urban areas and we are looking at various facilities and we will be testing in Archer's Bay. This is something that Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Environment and the Minister responsible for urban might be able to look at it and see how we can solve the problem of these thousands of men and women who are suffering with diabetes in Barbados and sometimes find themselves in awkward position and cannot find a public convenience. We are now finding something to solve that problem. We are not sitting and not thinking about the people of Barbados. We recognise that for every problem there must be a solution and we are looking to put logical conclusions to these problems.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that that a week or two ago, we were able to take a tour. We first went to Nesfield, where we look at the possibility of a site for the fire station next to where the Minister of Education wants to build his tertiary college et cetera to create that educational belt.

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

Hon. D. KELLMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sir, then we went to Cottage to look at the possibility of National Housing Corporation offering land a house spot at the same time so that persons who want to farm would be able to farm and still have a house spot. We went to Lamberts Hill because when you go to Lamberts Hill, it is like going into the CN Tower in Canada and all you need is to build a base and you have a wonderful site. Sir, we left there and we went to Little Bay, where we know that is a lot of vending and that a lot of tourists go there and that at Little Bay, there are no public conveniences and the same solution we have for Archer's Bay, where we are hoping to bring CARIFESTA, we are looking to put those facilities and we will also look to see how we get the necessary space so that people can sell craft to tourists. Sir, one of the things we observe is that we have to do something about degradation in that area so will create a parking space. We also visited the North Point where the Government has land and we also went to Checker Hall. Sir, when we first went to Checker Hall and we diverted the road everybody quarreled but everybody has now recognised that the diversion of the road in Checker Hall has now created Checker Hall as an economic zone because you have the playing field and the park, which I have constructed and there is also a triangular area there which can be used for vending. Sir, last but not least on that aspect of rural, the possibility of bringing back the jetty is one we cannot ignore because we understand.

Mr. Speaker, this has nothing to do with what we are expecting to do in Shroud Bay. It has nothing to do with the land at Lowlands that we are expecting to get soon because the lots we expect to get at Archer's Bay because we are waiting on the Office of the Attorney-General to ensure that there is some clarity so that we can go ahead and offer those lots and also the lands at Cluffs.

Mr. Speaker, St. Lucy is not a place that needs a lot. All we are asking the Government to do is just fix the roads and I have the commitment of the Government and of the Minister, and we also have some transportation problems. The people of St. Lucy are independence people. I want people to stop believing they are people who can be bought out because when you look and see what is going on in St. Lucy, the majority of it is self- development. These are people who develop themselves and who are independence people. I do not know why some people believe they are people who can be bought out and that they can walk in and offer them things. My advice to them is that when they come and make their offerings to accept them but continue to be the most independence and the brightest people in the world. I want to say that community tourism is here to stay. Sir, every time in this House people give the impression that I should run away from the debate on Pickerings.

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I want to say this. I have always supported Pickerings. Any development that is coming to St. Lucy that is wholesome, I will support it and if it has a lot of hitches, I know Beach Land had the same problems that Pickerings had too but Beach Land is being constructed but we had to wait on Beach Land and I am prepared to wait on Pickerings, I do not care how long it takes. I am not going to back away from Pickerings. That is because I know the people that are behind Pickerings and I am not going to give confidence to people that I do not know and disown people that I know. That is what the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) expect me to do and that is why every time they come in here and they bad mouth the Pickerings project they are the ones that frustrated the project. It would have to end on Judge Gap, Mr. Speaker.

The Honourable Member for St. Andrew because of the sterling work I did in this House representing St. Lucy changed the name from Judge Gap to Kellman's Road and I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. Andrew for recognising the sterling work that I did in that constituency and continues to do in that constituency. Mr. Speaker, I end by asking the people of St. Lucy to hold strain. What we have promised you will come including the project at the Hope in St. Lucy because I know the St. Lucy man from Christ Church East Central will deliver to St. Lucy people and I thank you very much, Sir.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, thank you for recognising me. I must say that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy continues to ramble but, of course, he ended where I thought he should have begun by thanking the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) for naming the Judge Gap after Kellman and, of course, Mr. Speaker, I must say from the outset that I could not comprehend anything that he said so I cannot even comment on anything but he rambling like Poonka, all over the place. Mr. Speaker, I want to first thank my constituents who have over the past 22 to 23 years helped me to represent them and, of course, they are lovely people. I want to say too that in preparing for this exercise I came across a famous quote written by a US lawyer in 1761, a gentleman by the name of James Otis and he argued that the British Parliament had no right to overtax the colonies without the proper representation therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to look carefully at why we tax and who should we tax.

In a democracy, Mr. Speaker, we have to ask ourselves the questions, what are we spending on and why are we taxing? Can a country's Parliament impose taxes upon taxes without regard for the poor and vulnerable or without regard for the working poor? Mr. Speaker, we need to understand that people in this country and in most countries around the world have a right to ask the question

and if it was asked in 1761, regarding representation and taxation and a full revolution took place the people in a modern society must ask the question and, of course, the Parliament must provide the answer. Mr. Speaker, I am of the view that we are overtaxed in this country. There is a silent revolution going on because people across Barbados are of one mind. People are suffering, they cannot buy food, some cannot buy clothes, they go from pay cheques to pay cheques, some have to cook one day a week, mainly on Sunday and warm their food sometimes two or three days after, and it goes on and on. We have seen poverty in this country as we have never seen before. As the Honourable Member for St. Philip South has reminded me, people are roasting their breadfruits and you cannot even get one sometimes if you want one.

Mr. Speaker, this is serious because as a Parliament in this day and age we have to insist that Parliament be responsible for the taxes that we collect, therefore, I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, the Leader of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) who presented today a programme well-articulated to carry Barbados forward. That speech was analytical, compassionate and articulated in a way that the people of Barbados can understand. I like the idea of a cost of living allowance which is something that a former Barbados Labour Party (BLP) had put in place which was removed by the present Administration especially for pensioners that every time there was an increase or a decrease in the cost of living, pensioners got that adjustment, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is important for us to look carefully at how we treat to these matters especially in a society that is reeling under poverty. There are a number of person who cannot pay there light bills, cannot purchase a National Housing Corporation unit or purchase a lot at the National Housing Corporation today and I think the Minister of Housing should spend more time providing some opportunities for the poor. In fact, that Minister of Finance said only yesterday that he does not know what is low income housing. I know the Minister was born in the farm, I know he is from Deacons Farm and he must understand what is low income housing. In our day people who were paying 25 cents or 30 cents a square foot for a piece of land, \$5, but today you have to pay \$13, \$14, up to \$20 a square foot for a piece of land from the National Housing Corporation. The Government is not providing social housing for anybody in this country anymore. The Government has announced that it is not providing low income housing. I told my people in St. George North not to go to National Housing Corporation anymore because they are not providing solutions for the poor, we are not.

Mr. Speaker, I must say from the outset that because of this high taxation there is a divide in this Parliament. The divide is one side believes in high taxation, the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) from 2008 taxed and felt that taxation upon taxation is the answer to the economy. In

2008, the former Prime Minister raised \$108 million in taxation in one fell swoop and over the past seven years, another \$340 million were added. Today we are told that the Minister of Finance is now seeking to raise another \$400 million approximately and when you compound that because we are not taking into consideration the VAT. The Minister said that he was told to increase the VAT to 22 per cent. Had the Minister increased the VAT on certain specialised products, Mr. Speaker, it would not have the same effect as increasing this special allowance by 10 per cent and then you put VAT on it.

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We have severe increases in this country and I do not know how the people would take it.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister said that the adjustments in the measures outlined would raise approximately \$300 million or \$299 million so that as of the 1st of July this year the price of motor vehicles would increase by 15 per cent when you add on the Vat so that a vehicle costing now \$75 000 will go to \$90 000 and a vehicle costing \$50 000 will go to \$75 000 and the price of car parts, oils, furniture and building materials, which include the imported cement, will increase because the Minister said that the Democratic Labour Party had liberalised the price of cement, that he has brought in cement now to compete with the cement that is produced in St. Lucy so that many persons who once worked, and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy must understand this, at the Arawak Cement Plant in St. Lucy were laid off and I did not hear a word from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. Speaker, the measure introduced to increase the National Social Responsibility Levy will increase the cost of cement, lumber and pipes. Everything will go up. The cost of agricultural foods, imports, milk, meat, fish and everything else will increase.

Mr. Speaker, when you look carefully at the excise tax on fuel, this will cause tremendous hardship across Barbados. The Government increased road taxes for all types of vehicles in 2008 by 60 per cent. Some vehicles went from \$300 to \$1 600 and from \$200 to \$400. The VAT was increased from 15 per cent to 17.5 per cent, and we have problems. Mr. Speaker, I have said before that you have bad roads across Barbados and I cannot understand how you can increase the road taxes but you have less repairs being done to the roads.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member but the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. He is using this number 15 per cent and he is not tying it to any kind of arithmetical reality. His numbers are not matching. He talks

about 15 per cent of \$70 000 and says it is \$15 000 and then he said 15 per cent of \$50 000 is \$25 000.

Mr. SPEAKER: All you are saying then is that his maths is wrong but I am not a teacher, I am very sorry.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: The point I am making is that you increased this tax by 10 per cent but you have not taken into consideration the VAT because the Minister introduced the tax but then you have to add the VAT on it and when you take the two into consideration it is more than 15 per cent and that is what I am explaining to the House because the 10 per cent that was introduced yesterday will now attract VAT as well, and that is the point I was making so that the increase on motor vehicles will be more than 10 per cent, that is the point, and it will hurt Barbadians across the country.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the road repairs, you are not repairing the roads. In fact, had it not been for a local association which started to highlight the potholes in the road the Government would not even have fixed one. The Government started to fix a few of them but when you look at Highway 5 coming out of St. Philip and Highway 3 and you look at roads coming into the constituency of St. George North you have a problem. We have real problems in this country and the Government is increasing taxes and I do not understand why they are increasing taxes at this time.

For 14 years the Barbados Labour Party had a low tax regime. Not only this, we did not increase taxes, we gave reductions wherever possible. We increased the allowance to \$25 000 for persons who are earning the tax on that so that you did not pay taxes until you reach \$25 000. Mr. Speaker, I heard the Minister of Finance said in here yesterday that he was thinking about looking at that as an option, so we have to be careful of what this Minister of Finance is doing, and that is why I said before that in order for us to keep track of this Government we have to be reminded of the words of the lawyer from the United States of America in 1761: No taxation without representation.

Mr. Speaker, we as parliamentarians must come in here and represent our constituencies and therefore across Barbados the constituents in the various constituencies must ask the question: Did you represent me in Parliament? When the Honourable Member introduced those tax measures, what did you say? What are you going to say? I agree with them. Mr. Speaker, we have to look carefully at these measures.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak carefully on one issue which our leader have put forward, that is, the question of leadership. Leadership is important and strong leadership is even more important. I believe that there is a need for leadership not only in terms of the Government level,

because my leader have dealt with that, but there is a need for leadership at all facets across the society. We need to understand that there is leadership not only from the ministerial point of view. All across Barbados you could see that there is a lack of leadership. Strong leadership is needed. I have seen it in the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. I have spoken about it in terms of the schools. There needs to be strong leadership in terms of how you prepare your young children for the world of work and for the world at large.

I am of the view, Mr. Speaker, that these fights that you see going on across society is because of weak leadership within the school system. The Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation must be able to put a position in place to help the school system. It is important for us to do this. There needs to be leadership across Barbados.

In the Ministry of Agriculture, Foods, Fisheries and Water Resource Management, there is a need for strong leadership. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that we need to understand that these measures that were introduced will have big problems within the Ministry of Agriculture, Foods, Fisheries and Water Resource Management. For example, the Minister who is perceived to be a very strong robust person said in 2010 that a Praedial Larceny Bill would come to the House and that sooner or later praedial larceny will be a thing of the past. Today, Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where persons across Barbados especially in the rural areas are losing their crops and their animals. We have organised crimes and we need to see that this Bill comes to Parliament sooner rather than later.

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It is important, therefore, that a Minister flexes his muscles and ensures that this Bill comes to Parliament before this summer. You have organised crimes where it is perceived that these gangs usually attract not only large plantations but also small plantations, for example, we have people in Barbados who now sell sugar cane on the sidewalks, persons who have never planted any sugar cane. You also have situations where the police cannot do anything because the law does not, Mr. Speaker, speak to modern measures to be able to protect the farming community.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that if you do not want to introduce praedial larceny, then you have to introduce what the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central spoke about some years ago, that the Honourable Member needs to see an organised police force to police the farming community. We need that. Mr. Speaker, I am of the view that the time has come for us that without this legislation there are a number of young people who would not want to get into agriculture again because they would not want to

plant their crops while others reap. Mr. Speaker, there are also a number of persons out there who are buying products from vendors, but they do not know if those products were stolen or not, so that we have to be able to do something about this as the farming community has reached out.

Mr. Speaker, the other question about agriculture that needs to be spoken about today is this fishing agreement. One Prime Minister said that he could have written an agreement on a napkin over a bowl of soup. Mr. Speaker, eight years have passed and we have not had the fishing agreement by this Government, we need to do something about it, it is important that we do something about it. We need also to have a new fishing Bill before Parliament very soon to allow Barbados to be able to export fish to the United Kingdom, the European Union and also to North America. There are a number of areas that are crying out for help within the fishing industry.

Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who represents a fishing community has not spoken about the need to protect those fishermen there and also the fishermen in the City of Bridgetown. I have heard the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown speaking about the Bridgetown Fishing Market but we definitely need to see more being done within the fishing community to ensure that we uplift those persons who are now crying out for help. Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to see the Minister flexing his muscles about the land of CLICO International Life Limited. It is perceived that Government was too involved in the CLICO International Life Limited matter and there are over 200 acres of land there sitting idle. Mr. Speaker, the Minister must flex his muscles and show that the lands at CLICO International Life Limited be cut up and given to Barbadians who are not necessary policyholders but who would want to become a farming community. Mr. Speaker, that land should be put in the Land for the Landless programme and given to Barbadians who need it.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing is that, I do not know, the Minister needs to explain to us what is happening also with the lands at the Belle. I see some 'river tamarinds' are now being planted there. I do not know, I guess that when the Honourable Member gets up he would tell me whether or not 'river tamarind' is a cash crop like that of sugar cane or cotton, but I see large acreage of land being planted at the Belle. Mr. Speaker, I know that 'river tamarind' normally grows wild all across St. Andrew, St. Joseph, St. George and all over the country side but I now see a crop of 'river tamarind' now being planted at the Belle and so I would want that to be explained. I do not know what is there, I do understand that it has something to do with the factory.

Mr. Speaker, while we are talking about the sugar factory, I would want to ask the question. What has the Minister done about the Andrews Sugar Factory? When we look, sugar has been our mainstay for over 300 years and this year we have seen a little increase. I noticed that the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management has said that there has been an increase of 40 per cent in the output of sugar, so that the tonnage has moved from 5 000 tonnes to 6 000 tonnes last year, they are expected to produce about 10 000 tonnes this year, so that the Minister has clapped himself on the back saying that he is a good boy, that there has been some increase, but the Minister is not telling the country that that tonnage has been reduced from 30 000 tonnes to about 12 000 tonnes. Mr. Speaker, the Minister has to explain to the country why we are at less than 12 000 tonnes this year and what is the position with the new sugar factory.

Mr. Speaker, we understand that in the sugar partnership that the Regional Project Manager has threatened to stop the financing of further work if the Government does not meet its obligation, that Government was to provide \$27.5 million in equity. They were supposed to provide concessions. The facilitation of licenses was also to be given. What is the position with the new sugar factory at Andrews? I want to ask the question, is it still being proposed despite... Mr. Speaker, I know we cannot talk about it very much because it is a court matter but I would want to know if the Minister still intends to go to Andrews Sugar Factory. It is understood that attorneys-at-law for the project have written letters saying that the Government has not honoured its obligations. Again, we have problems and so we need to look at that very carefully. Again, I think that when the Minister speaks, the Honourable Member needs to give us the facts. Mr. Speaker, this is yet another contractual breach and we know that breaches cost money.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the Minister needs to tell us what is happening to Andrews Sugar Factory. Mr. Speaker, the Minister needs to tell us if it would not be better for us to remain at Portvale seeing that the Minister could only produce 12 000 tonnes of sugar per year. Mr. Speaker, would it not be better for us to remain at Portvale because Portvale Sugar Factory because Portvale is a small sugar factory, or if the project is going to be held up in court much longer, why not go to Buckeley? Mr. Speaker, plans were in place for Buckeley several years ago.

Mr. Speaker, do you realise that we have spent a lot of money doing all types of new studies and all kinds of studies on Buckeley and that Buckeley is the preferred site, so that if you have problems at the Andrew Sugar Factory,

then why not Buckeley? If you have problems at both sites, then why not remain at Portvale? The question is that if the two sites are not preferred and you do not have money for any of those two sites, I therefore believe that the best thing would be to remain at Portvale to produce the only 6 000 tonnes or 7 000 tonnes of canes. If, however, you are going to increase the tonnage over the next five years, then you have to ensure that the persons who are employed can have proper wages, you have to ensure that farmers can get paid on time.

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you have to ensure that the field preparation is done. All these are things which have to be done over time, so you cannot increase to 30 000 tons within the short term. It has to be a long-term project. If you are going to do that, then it costs money. I do not believe that the Ministry of Finance and Planning really understands what is happening in agriculture, and despite what I have said before, I know the Minister has tried his best sometimes to ensure he gets money, but it is like hitting a rock. It is hard work, and the Government does not understand this hard work. I must say that the Minister was able to come to the assistance of the rural community as Minister responsible for water, but it took him a long time because he had to squeeze the Minister of Finance to get money in order to provide help for the rural people in getting potable water. The people of St. Thomas, St. Joseph and all over the rural parishes had to fight hard in order to get potable water, and the Minister did come out at the last minute after some prompting. He came out.

Asides.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: This is the problem; that we understand that the Minister of Agriculture is not highly respected in the Cabinet because of what he stands for. We know that he does not understand and he would not support this Budget. I know. I know that in his heart he understands that taxing your way to prosperity is not a solution; that when you tax your way, people must pay and people must suffer. We have said over and over again that you cannot tax more than you can tax, because people cannot pay. You cannot really tax your way out of these things. He understands this. The measures that he would want to introduce in agriculture cannot get off the ground because he needs to flex his muscles. He needs to tell the Cabinet that this is the position; that as Minister of Agriculture "I cannot do a job based on the programmes of this Government". This is where we need to understand.

Finally, Mr. Speaker....

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, please wind up.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: I understand that it was said today that the Prime Minister speaks to the dead. I heard so. I do not know if the Prime Minister is clairvoyant.

Aside.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: I was wondering. I mean I know that he does not like to go to Ilaro Court, and I thought he was scared of the dead, but I heard today that he likes to speak to the dead. We have to ask ourselves the question: What is our Prime Minister really doing? Is he speaking to the dead? Is he not speaking to the dead? I do not know, but he needs to tell us. I do not know. We need to hear from our Prime Minister. Mr. Speaker, this is important because the Prime Minister....

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you must wind up now please. Your time has expired.

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: The Prime Minister must tell us today that these things which we hear are not true; that he speaks to ordinary people and though it is 10:30 tonight, "I will go to Ilaro Court and I will not speak to the dead but will speak to ordinary Barbadians." I thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central.

Hon. S.A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to make my contribution in this Budget debate and to make a number of points in relation to where we are in Barbados in terms of the state and condition of our economy. I certainly sat with a lot of disbelief in listening to not only the Leader of the Opposition but respective Members on the other side speaking to the state of the Barbados economy, and most importantly, speaking to how they would address the ills of our economy. I also heard a number of projections about being in Government and being in charge of the affairs of the country. In a sense, I thought I was dreaming because it was not so long ago that the Barbados Labour Party was in charge of the affairs of Barbados and landed this country in some very serious trouble. I would not want to imagine that I was awake and the Barbados Labour Party was in office again.

Mr. Speaker, this Budget brings to the fore the true position of the Barbados economy. It is a continuation of presentations of financial statements and budgetary proposals over the past eight years or so; a relatively short space of time in which to correct some of the most deep-seated structural challenges which we came and found in 2008. These deep-seated structural challenges of an economic nature were never really fixed by the Barbados Labour Party in office, Mr. Speaker. We would have had to come to office in 2008 at the height of a very serious and challenging global recession, Mr. Speaker. These matters are not new to Barbadians, Mr. Speaker. In fact, what is

perhaps new and frightening are the mouthings of the Barbados Labour Party. I almost laughed to see that the Barbados Labour Party has again found its way in coming into the House dressed in a uniformed manner; dressed in red and yellow. The gents are dressed in red ties and looking the part of a party that appears to be united, but we know that they are not united, Mr. Speaker. We know that it was not too long ago that several of them who are wearing bright red ties stood and tore apart the current Leader of the Opposition and removed her from office. Yet still we hear them in this House pretending that they are together and pretending to speak as though they are in love with one another. That is far from the truth.

I know that Barbadians will recognise the nakedness of the lust for power by the Barbados Labour Party. They may not want to hear what I am going to say because I am going to speak very frankly in relation to their contributions in this debate. They are masking what is really the true devil of the Barbados Labour Party. They are masking it, and I smile and laugh because I could not imagine that not too long ago the Members of the Barbados Labour Party, whose leader is speaking about what she would do if she were to become the Prime Minister of Barbados, were cutting each other's throats. They were cutting each other's throats only a few months ago, but on the eve, in their perception, of a General Election, they come in here dressed in red and yellow and looking as though they are a united bunch. Mr. Speaker, I happen to know that they are not. I happen to know that they do not have the answers to the economic challenges of Barbados, because if they did, in 2008 the International Monetary Fund would not have painted a picture as it did in relation to the serious financial challenges which Barbados faced.

H:No.D12B (33)

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Leader of the Opposition speaking of a number of governance issues which in here estimation are relevant for Barbados. She spoke of the fact that if she were to become the Prime Minister of Barbados, that a number of practices which afflict statutory corporations in terms of accountability would be addressed but, Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that. We have recognised in the Budget, and the Minister of Finance spoke of the issues which State-owned enterprises pose to the fiscal health of Barbados. He spoke to that but these are not new. In fact, when the Leader of the Opposition spoke of the fact that she would establish a number of control mechanisms to manage the accountability of statutory corporations we know that cannot be true because the Leader of the Opposition sat in a Cabinet which presided over a number of statutory corporations were allowed to run amok when it came to the public finances of Barbados. We have the Rural Development Commission and we have the Urban Development Commission and all of these are subject in relation to the reports of the Auditor-General, so I ask the

question, is this a reformed Barbados Labour Party. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke of the need to have new Government structures but still she is the biggest defaulter in this House in relation to heeding the rulings of the Speaker and yet still she is talking about having governance. Sir, the member of the Opposition come to the House and basically flout every rule there is in the House. Sir, governance does not begin by speaking through your mouth, governance begins by the actions you take now and not a promise of actions in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I heard a most laughable statement in relation to the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation where the Leader of the Opposition laments that she does not get any airtime on the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation and that when they come to office.... Sir, you know the Barbados Labour Party has not said that in the event the people of Barbados repose any trust in them that they expect to become the next Government. They have said in this House, when they become the Government which is a most arrogant display of naked lust for power. It is actually a disrespect to the people of Barbados and disrespect the electorate to come in here and say, when we come to office and when we become Prime Minister. In fact, everybody in Barbados knows that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has already promised out Ministries to members on the other side. The only thing left to do now is for the people of Barbados to go through what they have determine to be the formalities of an election because the Barbados Labour Party dressed up in their red and flaunting themselves on the people of Barbados wants to now make a determination that they will become the Government of the day.

Mr. Speaker, I have listened to the presentation of the Leader of the Opposition and if you listen carefully you would see in there embedded the deep-seated contradictions of someone who has not carefully thought out their speech, a speech that has actually been written by the spin doctors of the Barbados Labour Party. You could tell that the presentation was basically a presentation concocted by the spin doctors of the Barbados Labour Party, who continue apparently to come up with their particular policies of how they believe that the Barbados Labour Party could somehow find their way back into Government in Barbados. Sir, nothing has changed.

Mr. Speaker, we recognise there are issues facing the Barbados economy and that is not something that we have not been speaking to, so when the Leader of the Opposition speaks to the fact that they want to transform Barbados into an entrepreneurial society and that entrepreneurship must become the centre piece of the development of Barbados, I have some news for them because that is where we are at now in Barbados in the year 2017. We are not sitting down waiting for the Barbados Labour Party to come talking about entrepreneurship. We are not, in fact, there have been

so many strides made in relation to developing our young people in relation to entrepreneurial opportunities over the years. In fact, in the year 2015/2016, we have seen tremendous interest from our young people. In fact, through the Youth Entrepreneurial Scheme (YES), many businesses youth led have been expanded in Barbados. In fact, in the year 2015 alone, if we are talking about entrepreneurship, we have had significant increase in the earning capacity of several youth-led businesses who have received technical and financial assistance from the Government of Barbados. In fact, in that year alone, the earning capacity of 12 businesses on the Youth Entrepreneurial Scheme accounting service generated in excess of \$1.5 million in income alone and those were only 12 businesses that were receiving assistance under the Youth Entrepreneurial Scheme, supported by the tax players of Barbados. Of course, the Minister of Commerce would have brought to this House a very far-reaching policy in relation to driving entrepreneurship in Barbados. Sir, in 2006, we have expanded 17 existing businesses, increase the earning capacity again in that financial year of 10 more business to the tune of just over \$720 000 in income. We have had the Youth Mainstreaming Programme in the year 2016 alone training hundreds of young Barbadians in various areas of endeavour attaching them to business opportunities. We have had significant growth in the Digital Media Programme. We have had an expansion in relation to interest of young Barbadians who are interested in film making and in fact, we are positioning Barbados to be a destination of choice in relation to film in Barbados and, Sir, that is truly transformational compounded by the fact that of course with the enactment of the Cultural Industries Development Act and establishing the Cultural Industries Development Authority for the first time in this history of Barbados and though of course operating in challenging economic times and of course with the promise of creating the opportunity for investment into the Cultural Industries Development Fund they have done a significant amount of work in creating the capacity for the expansion of the cultural industries in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, already we are talking about the Cultural Industries Development Authority, already they have gotten on board through the assistance of CDB, a very important project connecting creatives to opportunities in the European market and which has the potential to create significant opportunity for them in relation to utilising the European Partnership Agreement, which for many years have continued to be one of those areas we have got do some more work in.

Mr. Speaker, through that particular project the Government of Barbados has earmarked two very critical subsectors, fashion and visual arts as key drivers of potential economic opportunity that would create the

opportunities to make break-through in the European market in particular.

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Of course, Mr. Speaker, there are increasing opportunities to do similar activity in the United States of America (USA) market, in Canada and also in South America as well.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that this country, certainly the country that I have heard painted by the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) does not in any way connect to the reality on the ground. I have always said this in my contributions in the House listening to the contributions of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP). I know and we know that the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) would do practically anything to find their way back into office. They will say anything even if it means sinking Barbados, even if it means going out there and spreading propaganda that the dollar will be devalued, if it means that the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) will do it. They have been doing it. They have been telling the business people in Barbados that the dollar will be devalued and they have been using some of the most, I would say, mercenary language in describing this Barbados that we are all proud of and I want to say that certainly my role in this debate is to put ??? to that. That is not how anybody who loves Barbados behaves. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we have a Barbados, in my view, that continues to be impacted by global economic forces. The issues pertaining to the fiscal deficit have continued to be a critical issue not only facing this Government. Even in 2008, Mr. Speaker, when we came to office that was one of the things that the IMF pointed out to the Government in the 2008 IMF Country Report. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) even looking at the growth of our revenues cautioned the Government that even in relation to the projected growth that would have been put our fiscal challenges, our fiscal deficit remain a serious challenge and, in fact, even before that Government was being asked to engage in serious structural adjustment in relation to our economy. The structure of our economy has remained largely a challenge that we have been faced with over the past eight years, a relatively short space of time. In fact, their key economic advisor, Dr. Clyde Mascoll, when he spoke in the 2004 Budget debate in this House he made some very telling remarks in relation to a Government that over the last 10 years, the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government, would have had 10 years of economic plenty and failed to transform the Barbados economy. In fact, we have had significant growth in our debt. Our debt profile increased significantly to a multibillion dollar figure under the Barbados Labour Party (BLP). Even up to now, the trail of that debt continues to afflict this Government and I will point to only one of them. We have one example of that debt that continues to stranglehold Barbadians and I speak to the debt in relation

to the prison at Dodds where on an annual basis this Government has to find about \$30 million every January to pay in relation to the prison. That is what the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) did so when you come into the House, I want the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) to speak to facts.

I want to go on to a number of things because in fact we have had so much neglect of our infrastructure in Barbados over the years under the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) and I always said that they mask their growth, this was not only said by me, it was said by Dr. Clyde Mascoll. The Barbados Labour Party (BLP) would have masked their growth and created artificial growth in Barbados, neglected our infrastructure whether it is the water mains, the sewerage systems, significant areas of our economic plant, but I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that even in the middle of challenging economic times, and only in relation to the Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth that I am speaking in relation to infrastructure. We have been able to do some phenomenon things and I speak of a few in relation to capital projects. As I speak, Mr. Speaker, the Wildey Gymnasium which is being refurbished to the tune of just about \$19 million, a grant by the Government of the Peoples Republic of China. That Gymnasium which really got no attention under the Barbados Labour Party (BLP), it was just there with no refurbishment, that Gymnasium, as I speak, Mr. Speaker, is being refurbished to the tune of \$19 million and we are hopeful that Gymnasium would be ready for CARIFESTA which will be held in Barbados later this year. We are talking about sports as an industry; Sports Tourism, all of that, Mr. Speaker, upon completion of the Gymnasium in its history because of the work that is being done will be able to host some major international indoor sporting events. That value added, Mr. Speaker, would help to bring to Barbados much needed foreign direct investment, foreign inflows of capital to be able to boast our reserves. Then we have the Queen's Park House, Mr. Speaker, the famous Daphne Joseph Hackett Theatre, a historic structure in the middle of Historic Bridgetown was left to rot under the Barbados Labour Party (Barbados Labour Party (BLP)), forgotten. They speak only of their love of the arts but hardly do anything to support the development of the creative sector in actual fact. This facility, the Queen's Park House, in the constituency of the Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown was left to the whims and fancies of vagrants and left to rot. I am able to say, Mr. Speaker, that this Government with very scarce resources, recognising the importance of that facility to the creative sector in Barbados has embarked on a project to the tune of just about \$5 million to refurbish and to transform the Queen's Park House and the Daphne Joseph Hackett Theatre to bring it back to life again. That, Mr. Speaker, is what I call purposeful development, development that is not only talked about but is actually put into reality. This is what is happening in this Barbados today as I speak. This is what is occurring. That certainly does not connect to the gloom and doom that I hear coming

from the Barbados Labour Party (BLP). When we embark on a programme of systematically ensuring that our sole indigenous game called road tennis could be brought to the point where it could be internationally recognised and to put the investment behind it to the extent that players are now earning a living in road tennis, I call that, Mr. Speaker, transformation of our human capital. I refer to that, Mr. Speaker, as the utility of taxpayers' money in a way to assist with the transformation of our human capital in Barbados and putting money in the hands of the people that the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) says have nothing under this Government by utilising sports and I say, Mr. Speaker, that we have said, and we have gone on record as policy that we will use sports in a purposeful way to transform the Barbados economy and to create new and meaningful opportunities for our young people. That is what we have to do. We have never been a Government, Mr. Speaker, to go out there and fool young people that somehow the money that the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) wish to put in their hands is enough to help them to build their futures. That is not what we have done. We have embarked on a programme of ensuring that our young people can be brought to the place where they are empowered.

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The project of empowering our young people has been the hallmark of the only National Youth Policy that has been put in place in Barbados, a policy that has been drafted and prepared by our young people with the assistance of the Government. That to my mind, Mr. Speaker, relates to what we are doing.

We have seen phenomenal growth in Crop Over. The Crop Over Festival under this Government has been transformed into an international festival of repute where Barbadians, the same entrepreneurs that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is talking about, have been able to be involved in earning a living with events that have been truly transformational of their livelihoods. For the first time, Mr. Speaker, we have had a record number of events across the genres of cultural expressions in Barbados where our vendors, our small people, have been able to get an opportunity to earn a livelihood in our festival.

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

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that a volunteer programme which I started in Crop Over has been able to train in excess of 500 young volunteers, and several of those persons have been able to obtain fulltime jobs at the National Cultural Foundation, that is what I call empowerment.

We have been able to increase prize moneys. We have been able to provide those who participate in the

festival particularly our band leaders with subventions, and we have had a controversy-free festival certainly over the years which has never been the case as I recall under the Barbados Labour Party.

Later this year, Mr. Speaker, precisely between the periods of August 17 to 27, Barbados will host CARIFESTA. The last time Barbados hosted CARIFESTA was in the year 1981. We are hosting CARIFESTA, a festival that would see coming to Barbados some 3 000 artisans and performers and a festival that will benefit the economy because of the utility of hotels, accommodation, taxis and other services and other goods. We believe, Mr. Speaker, that this festival which will help to propel and showcase the region as a centre for the cultural industries is happening at the right time for Barbados, this Barbados that the Barbados Labour Party has spun a web to suggest that nothing is happening in the Barbados economy. This is where we are employing our young people. The opportunity for our young people, Mr. Speaker, has been heightened by an approach through a number of programmes within the Government.

We have had the Barbados Youth Service. Indeed, under the last Government I believe they would have had the Barbados Youth Service housed in St. Lucy. Of course, the very critical aspect of that, the residential phase of the programme which is saving so many young lives, transforming and repositioning our young people... We have had success in resuming that programme because of a two-year hiatus and we are actively pursuing a new home for the Barbados Youth Service at the Paragon Base. We have voted some moneys in the Estimates to allow for certain works to be done, and of course we are confident that we will get the resources to create a home for the Barbados Youth Service. That programme, Mr. Speaker, stands as a beacon of hope for our young people who require and need a second chance. Mr. Speaker, I would hope and want to expand it as well, I believe it needs to be expanded, to allow for our young people in the residential phase, allow for young people in that particular time-slot, to get the kind of intervention that they would not get in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that that programme along with the very innovative programme of Endless Possibilities have been helping in the creation of opportunities for your young people. Yes, I said Endless Possibilities, which is a job mentorship and placement programme involving about 70 companies. Seventy companies have come on board this programme and we have had about 40 per cent of our young people getting fulltime employment by these companies, and I feel, Mr. Speaker, that they should be congratulated for that, so when the Barbados Labour Party is talking about oh when we get back into Government we are going to do this for young people all of that is happening now, so they better

come up with different policies and programmes. That is not something that is a pipe dream. This is the Barbados that we are talking about.

Mr. Speaker, of course, I can go on for the whole night but I want to wind up my presentation by saying what we are doing to empower our young people to transform their thinking. I want to end, Mr. Speaker, by saying that this Budget speaks to the opportunities and to the inadequacies of our economic situation and where we need to position Barbados. I feel that we have a duty in here not to fool people. The Barbados Labour Party knows that over the last ten or so years our economy, because of deep structural weaknesses, has been plagued by a number of challenges. They do not have the answers either. If they did, then the International Monetary Fund in their 2008 Report would not have written what they wrote. Their chief advisor Clyde Mascoll spoke of the fact that they failed to put in place measures to transform the economy.

Mr. Speaker, I am not here to say that the Budget will not bring with it discomforts in relation to the cost of living and those matters, we know that, but in analysing the economy, and I believe that certainly the advisors in the Ministry of Finance are some of the same advisors who advised the Barbados Labour Party...

Mr. Speaker, I heard some of the most disparaging remarks being made about the Central Bank of Barbados. It is interesting. The Leader of the Opposition hurled some very disparaging remarks on the technocrats in the Central Bank of Barbados to suggest that somehow they are not doing what they are supposed to be doing, they are not practising their professional skill and that they are not providing the information. Mr. Speaker, I think that is a dark day that we have arrived at when the Leader of the Opposition can heap such scorn on professionals in the Central Bank of Barbados. They are the ones who are advising the Government and who along with us are looking, as I believe the Barbados Labour Party should be interested in, to protect our reserves. They are the ones who came in here and actually beat their chests when our foreign exchange fell by a certain amount over the last three quarters or so, and I looked at them and said but how could they be so gleeful about the fact that our foreign reserves have fallen, and now that we are taking some efforts to protect our foreign reserves then they go off on another tangent to pretend that somehow Barbadians cannot read and write.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we have come to a juncture where we have got to face certain realities about our economy. The efficiencies that are required... In fact, I think going forward that we have to look at building up the kind of efficiencies that we need. We need to do business in a much more efficient manner.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please wind up, thank you.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: We need to get Barbados to the point where we can earn our living in the world.

The Government will continue to hold the hands of those who are less fortunate. Those programmes remain largely intact. The social safety net remains largely intact and the Government will continue to hold the hands of Barbadians as we go through what is really a very difficult period of adjustment. We have given that assurance, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that we have got a pathway towards the resurgence of the Barbados economy and returning our country to the kind of stability that is required for a purposeful development.

Mr. Speaker, with those brief remarks, I will say that this Budget is aiming to position Barbados towards growth and therefore I will signal my support for the measures.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of Government Business.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I now beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 9.00 a.m. tomorrow, Wednesday, June 01, 2017.

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

The question was put to the Honourable the House of Assembly and resolved in the affirmative, without division and Mr. Speaker suspended the Sitting accordingly.

11.04 p.m.

CONTENTS

RESUMPTION

Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26; Hon. R. L. Sealy, 27, 28, 31, 32.

RESUMPTION

Mr. R. St.C. Toppin, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37; Hon. R. L. Sealy, 33, 34, 35, 36; Hon. D.St.E. Kellman, 37, 38, 39, 40; Mr. G.A. Clarke, 41, 42, 44, 45; Hon. J.D.E. Boyce, 42; Hon. S. A. Lashley, 45, 48, 49.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BOYCE, Hon. J.D.E. (Christ Church South)
BRATHWAITE, Hon. A. D. (St. Philip South)
CLARKE, Mr. G.A. (St. George North)
KELLMAN, Hon. D.St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Hon. S. A. (Christ Church West Central)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
SEALY, Hon. R. L. (St. Michael South Central)
STUART, Rt. Hon. F.J. (St. Michael South)
TOPPIN, Mr. R. St.C. (St. Michael North)

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

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

Q3. Throughout. Several reporters' take-slip references appear in the source as ordinary paragraphs of the debate rather than as take-slips, for example 'Sequence 4.', 'House D 12B Seq 5 4.52 p.m.', 'H:No.D12B (18)' and '(Sequence 24)(Read)'. They are printed as in the source.

Q4. Take-slips about 7.45 p.m.. Take-slip 'H:D12B(22)' is timed '7.49 p.m.' and the next, 'H:No.D12B (23)', '7.42 p.m.'; 'Sequence 24' also appears twice. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Before the dinner suspension. Mr. Speaker calls 'Honourable Member for Christ Church South' and the sitting is then suspended; after the resumption the Member for St. Michael North is called. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Speech of the Member for St. Michael North. The speech label is given as 'MR. R. TOPPIN' for the first part and 'Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN' afterwards. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Suspension. The motion suspends the Sitting 'until 9.00 a.m. tomorrow, Wednesday, June 01, 2017'; June 1, 2017 was a Thursday. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed on Wednesday, 31st May, 2017, Mr. Speaker in the Chair, on Government Business, Order No. 19, the debate on the Resolution on the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, 2017. The Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, Member for St. Michael North East, was given three hours and three minutes, from 4.03 p.m. until 7.07 p.m. She said the fundamental issue facing the country was leadership, and quoted the Minister of Finance's own call for 'strong, determined and unflinching leadership'. Turning to the Estimates, she said the \$71.3 million voted for the University of the West Indies compared with a liability of

more than \$100 million, and the \$115,980,000 voted for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital with the \$185 million it needed. She mocked the title 'National Fiscal Economic and Social Development Restructuring and Enhancement Programme', and questioned the plans for Sam Lord's Castle at US\$180 million and the sale of the Hilton Hotel for BDS\$100 million.

Miss Mottley set out Opposition proposals, among them a Joint Standing Committee of both Houses to take evidence from the public, a ban on plastic bags and styrofoam, and attention to the 4 000 households still using pit toilets. She read from legal invoices to the Barbados Water Authority, and Mr. Speaker stopped her as amounting to an attack on character; she withdrew the remarks, and later withdrew a name after a further ruling. She spoke of the Berth Five Projects Limited piles at the Port and the continuing liability to Royal Caribbean and SMI, and of the desalination contracts with Jada and Innotech, and ended with Tom Adams' 1976 use of Oliver Cromwell's words.

Hon. R. L. Sealy, Member for St. Michael South Central, supported the Resolution as a Budget to promote growth and pay down debt rather than an election Budget. He said renewable generation had risen from under 1 megawatt in 2008 to 23 megawatts, with another 60 to come, and dismissed the Opposition's \$60 million pit toilet programme. The Sitting was suspended for dinner on the motion of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, seconded by Rt. Hon. F. J. Stuart.

After dinner Mr. R. St.C. Toppin, Member for St. Michael North, criticised the Minister of Tourism, the Hyatt project on land vested in the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc., the agreement with Sugar Point and the sale of Time Out at the Gap to the Sun Group for \$7.3 million, and called for audits; Mr. Sealy raised several points of order that he was misleading the House, and Mr. Speaker required him to withdraw the words 'in a bout of idiocy'. Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, Member for St. Lucy, denied Mr. Toppin's allegation about Church land, argued that visitor spending was not falling but harder to measure, and described plans for Glendairy Prison and house spots for farmers.

Mr. G. A. Clarke, Member for St. George North, said the new 10 per cent tax would attract VAT and asked about the Andrews and Portvale sugar factories and Buckeley; Mr. Boyce rose on a point of order to say his percentages did not match. Hon. S. A. Lashley, Member for Christ Church West Central, said the Budget addressed structural problems found in 2008, that a Crop Over volunteer programme had trained more than 500 young

people and that the social safety net remained intact, and he supported the measures. On the motion of Mr. Boyce,

seconded by Hon. A. D. Brathwaite, the Sitting was suspended until 9.00 a.m. the next day.