
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, September 26, 2017

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 26, 2017.

PRESENT

His Honour M. A. CARRINGTON, Q.C., B.A., LL.B. (Speaker) Her Honour Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON, B.A., M.Sc. (Ph.Ed.) (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.)
Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Q.C.
Mr. G. A. CLARKE, J.P., B.Sc., Dip. Ed.
Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)
Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: (Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development)
Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Leader of the Opposition)
Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P.
Hon. R. D. JONES, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), M.A. (Ed.) (Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation)
Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B. B.S. (Minister of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management)
Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C.
Hon. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of Transport and Works)
Hon. R. L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)
Hon. F. J. STUART, Q.C., B.A., LL.M. (Prime Minister, Minister of National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development)
Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, M.Sc., C. Eng. (Minister of Health) (Leader of the House)
Hon. S. D. BLACKETT, (Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development)

Mr. J. D. PAUL, B.Sc. (Chairman of Committees)
Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE, Dip. Theology, B.A., M.Ed., Ed.D. (Minister of Environment and Drainage)
Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.) (Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs)
Hon. S. A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth)
Hon. D. O'N. INNISS, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development)
Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, B.A., M.Sc. (Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)
Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A.
Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B.
Lt. Col. J. D. BOSTIC, MVO, B.A. (Hons.)
Mr. E. G. HINKSON, LL.B (Hons.) L.E.C., LL.M
Dr. M. M. AGARD, J.P., B.Sc., M.Sc., D.D.S
Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND, B.Sc., M.Sc., MBA (Dist.)
Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW, LL.B. (Hons.)
Prayers were taken by Rev. Father Mark Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: Good morning Honourable Members, this House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I have with me the Minutes of our Meeting held on Tuesday, July 25, 2017.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its Meeting of Tuesday, July 25, 2017 be confirmed subject to any omissions, corrections and/or observations.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no corrections or observations, then let those Minutes stand confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me just take the opportunity to welcome among us some members from the Barbados Youth Parliament and the Caribbean Youth Environmental Network. As you know, they are going to be debating on Friday in the Senate Chamber the topic “Sustainable Development” as part of the Youth Parliament debate. This forms part of the National Youth Week of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth which runs from September 24 to 30 this year, so we welcome among us those who will be participating and we hope that they would find this experience a rewarding one. Yes, Mr. Clerk of Parliament.

PAPERS

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. The Fifteen Actuarial Review of the National Insurance Fund, Unemployment Fund and Severance Fund of Barbados as of December 31, 2014;
2. The Offshore Petroleum (Amendment) Regulations, 2017;
3. The Barbados Prison Services Annual Report, 2016;
4. The Waste Characterisation Study for Barbados 2015; and
5. The National Productivity Council Annual Report for the period April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Minister of Tourism.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Barbados Port Inc. Annual Report for 2016.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN, the Latin American Development Bank (Amendment) Bill, 2017 was read for a first time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I beg to second that.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER No. 19

RESOLUTION THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVED
ITSELF
INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER
THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE
SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND

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

House D17 Sequence 1

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

Committee of Supply

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE SUM OF \$4 639 775 TO BE GRANTED FROM THE CONSOLIDATION FUND AND BE PLACED AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2017-2018, AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 2, 2017-2018, WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION.

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MINISTRY OF HEALTH

\$4 639 775

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I am happy at the restart of this Honourable Chamber, after the Summer Recess, to bring to this Committee a Resolution which seeks to put at the disposal of the Ministry of Health some \$4 639 775 for executing what has been familiarly referred to as another debushing programme in Barbados. Mr. Chairman, I want to join His Honour the Speaker in welcoming Honourable Members back and indeed as we contribute to this debate, I am sure that Honourable Members will reflect on the fact that our region has been witness to some devastation by way of Hurricanes Erma and Maria who have visited many of our island states and have displaced human life, infrastructure, and Mr.

Chairman, even displaced economies. Mr. Chairman, we certainly pray for the souls of those who would have lost their lives during these hurricanes and pray that their relatives would find comfort and that indeed the rebuilding of the affected countries would be executed in the usual efficiency which is associated with activities in this region.

Mr. Chairman, it makes the point, and I am sure that I heard members of our regional Governments making the point during the United Nations debate last week, that in truth our Small Island Developing States are a disaster away from underdevelopment. Mr. Chairman, this is a point we have made numerous times, especially in presenting our arguments to a number of international lending agencies who would have used purely economic criteria such as Gross Domestic Product, et cetera, to graduate Member States of the region, including Barbados, from special assistance programmes being offered by places like the World Bank and Global Fund. Mr. Chairman, suffice it to say that these discussions continue, although not necessarily with the kind of acceptance that we would want to herald.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, the debushing programme contemplated to commence as soon as this Resolution is passed and funds are made available to the Ministry of Health will be the 16th such programme on record in the Ministry of Health. It does not mean, Mr. Chairman, that debushing does not occur elsewhere, and I want to make that point early because the responsibility for cleaning our roadways, our curbs, overhanging bush, et cetera, largely lies with the Drainage Division of the Ministry of Transport and Works when it was that ministry, or now of the Ministry of the Environment and Drainage. This is a programme which is executed throughout the year, with varying degrees of efficiency, of course. It only takes a quiet visit to any community to hear the expressions of our people about the dissatisfaction with either one or the other of these activities, so that from time to time the Ministry of Health takes on a special initiative and the Government of Barbados, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs is kind enough to put at the Ministry's disposal special funds for executing specific debushing programmes.

Mr. Chairman, the programme was initiated to target residential areas as a number of owners or their agents who often reside overseas allow their properties to become health nuisances, risks to residents and of course the general public. Mr. Chairman, not only are the overgrown lots a health risk, but they harbour vermin and regrettably, also provide cover where necessary for would-be robbers to prey on residents of our communities, so that there are a lot of reasons we need to engage in these specific programmes from time to time although, truth be told, if the landowners and that includes Government were to take their responsibility as they should, then we would have a much

more comfortable time generally in our country, but we know this is a tall ask.

Mr. Chairman, I want to state up front, I know that in considering the overgrown bush, et cetera, a lot of the public tend to say that Government is one of the major landowners and indeed they are one of the major offenders. Mr. Chairman, where that may be a fact, it is also true that the large tranches of land owned by Government really renders it a massive undertaking to expect the Government to necessarily undertake, but it is an expectation which should not be thrown by the wayside. Mr. Chairman, I am in no way condoning that we allow bush to grow undeterred throughout our communities, whether Government or private sector. Certainly, as I stated earlier, there are regular funds available through the Ministry of the Environment and Drainage who now manage the Drainage Unit Division to carry out this work.

Mr. Chairman, even as we contemplate or mull over the tragic events of the recent past in our region, we recognised the threat that these overgrown lots will also be in the event of a catastrophe like that of a hurricane. As a matter of fact, the overgrown lots also tend to block drainage areas and naturally contribute to excessive flooding in our communities. This, of course, can lead to very serious harm being rendered to members of the community.

10.53 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the programme, as I said, is implemented by the Environmental Health Unit of the Ministry of Health and facilitated through a process where the environmental health officers routinely -- throughout the year -- serve abatement notices on these property owners, advising them that the properties have been deemed a threat and giving them a period of time in which to make good the properties which they own or control. Mr. Chairman, Sir, examination of these records would reveal that this is not an overly successful operation, as it would not be incorrect to say that the general public largely tends to ignore these notices, regrettably. This is something which we probably need to relook. Sir, even indeed when the Environmental Health Unit moves in and clears a lot because of the lack of action by a homeowner, the charge which is made of the homeowner is really extremely light. I think the number is around 18 or 20 cents a square foot, which is really almost nothing in today's costs; although there are members of our community who would again argue that this is an excessive charge when Government decides, "Well, look, your lot has been overgrown for a long time. You have created a nuisance in your district, including creating a health hazard. We have served you with a notice to clear your lot, you have not acted on the notice we have served, we have therefore had to move in our own resources to clear the area, and the cost to you is X

square feet of land multiplied by 18 cents, which equals whatever number.” Even in cases like that, we can get some resistance from members.

Sir, I think this is a programme which will continue to attract the attention of the Ministry of Health and related Ministries. It is a programme which the public of Barbados must understand is critically important. I will get to some of the medical, clinical reasons why it is also very important, and that it is a programme which we will have to relook in terms of impressing upon landowners that it is important for them to act upon these abatement notices. Sometimes they say that only money talks, so I suppose it can be argued that if that fee were to be increased, then landowners would feel more urged to act upon it and to recognise how important their intervention is. However, I would like as Minister of Health to call upon landowners not to wait until we reach the stage of an abatement notice or even wait until we reach the stage of an inspection by the Environmental Health Unit. Do like your humble servant, Sir, but then again, I do not own large tranches of property. I have a couple of square feet here and there and, Sir, I include them in my cleaning arrangement with my contractor, so that I do not ever expect to hear from the team at the Ministry of Health, the Environmental Health Unit, about those two little “nay nay” lots that I have responsibility for in Barbados; about 5 000 and 8 000 square feet.

Asides.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Sir, you see the point. We have to be responsible in that regard. We like to own property. We must therefore take all the responsibilities related with owning that property. When it comes to paying Land Tax, we cringe and we complain, and sometimes we do not pay the Land Tax. When it comes to cleaning our property again, we allow it to reach a stage of “unmanageability”. I do not know if that is a word, Mr. Chairman, Sir. If it is not, then Hansard will take care of it, but you know what I mean. It gets out of hand, and then it costs a tremendous lot of money whether we do it ourselves as landowners or whether the Government in one of its programmes undertakes to do the cleaning. That is when you have to move in all kinds of equipment, large-scale moving equipment, bobcats and heavy-loaders to effect that cleaning, so it is a caution which I think is worth repeating to Barbadians; that we must cooperate. We must cooperate with our agencies, we must cooperate with our communities, and make sure we are not contributing to their health hazards.

Sir, the purpose of the programme, as I said, is always to make a serious indentation in the number of lots which are offending the public and which are causing injury. The objectives are to reduce the vector and rodent population and, of course, the other offsite is where you

have the occasion of illegal dumping. This is another subject altogether, and I am sure when Honourable Members rise, if they speak on this, they will speak to illegal dumping which has become almost like a daily activity among some Barbadians, regrettably again. These are things which we should not engage in. We aim to reduce the vector and rodent population and the opportunities for illegal dumping. We want to enhance the aesthetics and the security concerns for the residents. Of course, a dirty environment is not attractive to our visitors so the Honourable Minister of Tourism would be happy to see a programme like this executed, especially in our country areas where we take our visitors and which we ourselves as a population enjoy for Sunday afternoon drives. We still sometimes on Sunday afternoons get into our vehicles or get into a bus and take a ride through the country with the family and sort of enjoy the beautiful offerings which this country continues to have.

Sir, of course, there is the special question of the management of ‘cow itch’. As I said, this is when the lot is allowed to reach a stage of inaction and we get to a point where large trees start to grow and cow itch starts to manifest itself. Of course, that has a special treatment arrangement because we cannot expect workers to work in a cow itch environment without special protection in terms of protective gear. That is when we have to move in mechanical equipment especially to assist in the programme. I think in some cases we even -- I do not necessarily agree with it -- resort to burning; some controlled burning, but I think this is something which we may want to revisit given all the attendant challenges which the smoke emitted from burning that kind of bush would have on our communities.

The overgrown lots in the island present a problem to the Environmental Health Unit. They constitute a nuisance according to the Health Services Act, 1969, and, as I said, they are used for many other illegal activities like dumping. In terms of the question of vectors which spread diseases such as leptospirosis left by rats, and dengue fever, chikungunya and Zika caused by mosquitoes, these diseases are of concern since they not only affect the quality of life of the population but have significant impact on the use of scarce resources in our health care system.

10.54 a.m.

We need to spend a little time speaking about the impact of these diseases especially dengue fever, chikungunya and more recently Zika and the kind of numbers associated with the treatment of these diseases in Barbados. Sir, I do not want to say they are not life threatening because all illnesses are life threatening but because the symptoms are not necessarily in every case very harsh sometimes these viruses go completely unreported to the health authorities so that in measuring our

numbers we recognise that there has to be an amount allocated for totally unreported cases. Sir, in every population I think it is a fact that people tend to, once the virus is not have very serious symptoms tend to try to sort themselves out by way of over the counter medications that may be available from country to country but the important thing the threat is there. Of course, the Zika virus which is the newest virus in the region having first been reported in Barbados in 2016 or late 2015 is now a virus that is causing very serious concern not only to the Ministry of Health and Ministries of Health in the region but to the Pan American Health Organisation and World Health Organisation who have from time to time declared certain areas as areas of grave concern because of the incidences of the Zika virus. Then, of course, in the case of the Zika virus, the threat to the unborn baby and indeed, here in Barbados and in most countries the practice has been put in place where pregnant mothers who are detected with the Zika virus are put under special care so that the incident of a birth affected by the Zika virus, the most frequent occurrence worldwide has been the question of microcephaly where children are born with serious mental defects and therefore moved into special care. We have experienced for ourselves in Barbados such an incident and certainly, we at the Ministry of Health country to hold our hand to the family of these children.

Asides.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Sir, anyway, these incidences are regrettably but we continue to offer our services to anyone who happens to be affected by them.

Mr. Speaker, the surveillance Unit of the Environmental Health Unit for the period 2012 to 2016 has recorded 11 533 cases of dengue fevers and 2034 cases of chikungunya. These are of course, academic. These are academic especially to those who have not had the attack but to the persons who have had a severe bout of either one of these, dengue fever, chikungunya or Zika, we know the kind of suffering which you can go through.

Mr. Speaker, in the case of Zika there were 688 reported cases and about 147 confirmed. What I can say in looking at the reports from the Surveillance Unit at the Ministry of Health, which convenes every two weeks and look at the epidemiological reports from the different diseases centres and monitors the disease profile in the country. This is a very important exercise the Unit makes sure there are no incidence of any kind of outbreak, or if there is, there is an opportunity to render immediate attention to the affected areas and the affected persons. Sir, what I am trying to convey is that these three virus which are borne by the Aedes Egypti mosquito are virus which are monitored constantly by the Ministry of Health to make sure that there are no alarms either taking place or trending so that the appropriate action can be taken

preemptively to control and manage the infection. Of course, this information is avail for all countries because in a world where travel is so easy and movement of human being between countries and between borders is so frequent we have to constantly on the alert for these diseases. We boast in the region that we have managed down the incidences of communicable diseases and we speak to the fact that our challenge today is largely to deal with the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) which have now been afflicting something in the region of 75 per cent to 80 per cent especially of our adult population and this is a programme which has to continue but, Sir, at the same time, and I go back to it, this surveillance of communicable diseases is extremely important and critical because one thing about the world we live in is that we learn that not only do we have the instance of emerging new diseases as occurred in the case of the Zika, in the region that is because it existed in parts of Africa and the south east before but because of the incidence of the Zika virus in our region, we also have to be constantly on the alert for threat of re-emerging diseases, and we speak to things like yellow fever, malaria and the other regular diseases that we talk about. Sir, we manage this programme not only by way of surveillance but our preventative programme is associated too with a very important vaccination programme which is introduced to our children from the age of three months. We start to administer our vaccination programme and the certainly the country continues to receive accolades for its achievement by way of vaccination.

Mr. Chairman, we know that we face a growing inquisitive community and there are provisions for those persons who may have one objection or another to the vaccination programme and process but I think that largely we have been able to sign on to something like 95 to 96 compliance in Barbados and even sometimes those who do not necessarily take up the programme immediately as a baby, once the children becomes older the parent then tends to make a different decision.

Mr. Chairman, we continue to preach the values of that programme and to urge Barbadians parents to feel comfortable in participating in the vaccination programme for their children.

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I certainly urge you too to ask questions of our professionals so that they can provide the appropriate answers in the clinical environment where questions are required to be answered so that you can be more comfortable in the decisions that you make. So much, Mr. Chairman, for the actually threat, the background that we used to assess the urgent need for the programme and indeed, I think it is largely agreed that where we have applied this programme there has been a significant success in terms of the eradication of the threat of the mosquito-

borne diseases. Of course, we did carry out a debushing programme last year and what I have not said yet, but I will say now is that the programme which would have started on December 05, 2016 and went on for some 17 weeks concluding on March 13.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Five minutes? Yes, I can wrap up in five minutes.

The programme is island wide, as I said, and it is implemented across seven catchments, the Maurice Byer, the Eunice Gibson and the Branford Taitt, these are all polyclinic names, by the way, for those Members who may not be fully aware, as well as Randall Phillips and the St. Philip and, of course, now the David Thompson Social and Health Services Complex at The Glebe in St. John. We employ some 180 General Workers in that programme from all over the country, Mr. Chairman, along with two coordinators and 12 supervisors and, of course, as I said, some special trucking that was necessary.

The amount allocated last year, and I think we should mention this, was something like \$3 155 344 and the programme actually used only \$1.6 million of that money allocated. Obviously, there would have been some rainy days when there was no work and that kind of thing and persons would not have been paid for those days. Mr. Chairman, I think that the only other thing I want to add for the benefit of the Chamber is that even as we speak the units in the seven catchment areas that I have spoken to have identified some 1 400 lots which are in need of our attention to which abatement notices should largely have been served and these will be the target of the initial work of this 2017/2018 Debushing Programme.

Mr. Chairman, in wrapping up I want to just say that the \$4.6 million being sought for this programme is going to be well managed by the Minister of Health. I am sure that Honourable Members will certainly be pleased with the outcomes in terms of the impact of cleaning in our respective constituencies. I am not for one moment suggesting that every lot that we wish were clean is going to be cleaned by certainly those that we get to and we are able to clean, Sir, will benefit in all the ways that I have mentioned. I certainly commend this Resolution to the Chamber and look forward to taking it to the team for full implementation. Mr. Chairman, I will come back in the wrap up to answer any questions that may be raised during the discussion of this Resolution and any new information which you may need.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, with that I beg to move that Head 23 Stand Part.

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

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

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and a pleasant good morning to the Members of the Chamber. I wish we all are well-rested and ready to do business on the behalf of the people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to join this debate to speak on this supplementary with respect to meeting the cost of the debushing programme for the end of the financial year 2017/2018 and at the outset, Mr. Chairman, I wish to reference some material that I read from the World Health Organization (WHO), a report which is called "Preventing Disease through Healthy Environment: A Global Assessment of the Burden of Disease from Environmental Factors". Some of what the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would have spoken about in his introduction to the Resolution the whole list of infectious and parasitic diseases and their associated key environmental interventions. He spoke about vector breeding sites, leptospirosis, dengue fever, Zika, Chikungunya and the report went on to list things like respiratory tract infections from air pollution and water pollution and we know water pollution can cause gastrointestinal issues but, Mr. Chairman, that is why we need to reinforce the point that an unhealthy environment can lead to infectious diseases and cause public health concerns in this country and these are very costly. There is a cost associated with remedying these diseases and there is a health cost associated with all of these infectious disease and vector breeding sites but, Mr. Speaker, the debushing programme, while in principle, the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) cannot knock the debushing programme because this programme was started under the late J.M.G.M. "Tom" Adams during his tenure as Prime Minister of this country. This programme is a critical programme to ensure that Barbados remains a clean place to attract tourist and to ensure that our young people remain healthy, our elderly also, in fact, everyone remains healthy as a result of maintain good environmental standards in this country and debushing is part of the action plan to ensure that we achieve this, but having said that, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South alluded to the fact that in the Estimates 2016/2017 we approved some \$3.155 million for debushing. Sorry, it was a supplementary that came during the Estimates because it was during the Estimates period that we came with a supplementary for \$3.155 million for debushing. Mr. Chairman, and then in our Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals for 2016 when the National Social Responsibility Levy (NSRL) was introduced, we somewhat allocated some \$5 million for a national clean-up and

debushing programme. It was supposed to last five months and now again, Mr. Speaker, we are here for some \$4.639755 million again for debushing.

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If my maths serves me well that is close to \$13 million, \$12.794 million, for de-bushing over a one-year period. If you want to say that it is retroactive, feel free to say so but it is over a one-year period. Mr. Speaker, I am asking the question of the Honourable Member who represented the Democratic Labour Party in his opening speech whether this \$4.6 million is not feathering the nest of the Democratic Labour Party. I said earlier that I agree with de-bushing in this country but at the end of the day over a one-year period we have allocated some \$13 million for a de-bushing programme. The Honourable Member said that all of the \$3.155 million was not spent so I am asking myself now on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party and the citizens of this country...

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Before the Honourable Member confuses himself too much, I said in my presentation that funds are normally made available under many different ministries for the general clean-up of the country, and I mentioned specifically the work of the Ministry of Transport and Works and the Drainage Unit, so to add the \$5 million as referred to in the Estimates and then try to make certain comments about feathering... The Honourable Member needs to stick to the script, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please proceed.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I maintain that over the year \$12.79 million has been allocated in this country for de-bushing. I ask the question and I will ask it again despite what the Honourable Member for Christ Church South just got up and said, I do not know what point of order that is because he made nothing clear to us, if this \$4.639775 million will not be feathering the Democratic Labour Party nest. We know what the time is, Mr. Chairman. This is the silly season. It was evident, Mr. Chairman, at the Democratic Labour Party's conference when the leader of this country sought to speak about elitism and classicism and he has a number of Members on his side, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, I will skip the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and go to the Honourable Member for St. James

South, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, and I will also reference the Honourable Member for St. Michael South who is a graduate of St. Marks Primary... We have Honourable Members on the other side who came from a fishing village, their fathers were fishermen and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South saw it fit... This is the silly season so I use it as an example to ask this question in this Chamber and for the citizens of this country if this \$4.63 million will not be used to feather the Democratic Labour Party's nest over the next six months. Parliament is dissolved around what date? March 06, 2018, and after that we have three more months that we can extent to before an election is called so we have the dates so we know very well that this is the silly season and the Democratic Labour Party may be using this \$4.639 million to feather its nest.

Let me go to a more fundamental point here, Mr. Chairman, because they sent home workers from the National Conservation Commission, Beautify Barbados, the Drainage Unit and from the Health Inspectorate and I am asking for myself and for the people of this country if we did a cost analysis and what was the cost of these workers who were sent home, what was the cost to the taxpayers. Let us look at the cost to the taxpayers. I would like the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West to produce the figures because he is the Finance Minister of this country, and I will bet you, Mr. Chairman, that it costs the taxpayers more than the \$12.794 million over the two-year period because this is a one-year period.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying to you that the Democratic Labour Party have been carrying out their mandate ad hoc in this country without any planning and with little attention being paid to sustainable development. I drove this morning and on my way here I heard the Speaker of the House welcoming some members of the Chamber who will be debating I think on Friday on the whole aspect of sustainable development. I know that part of their mission will be to examine the role that environmental management and the healthcare sector will play in a sustainable developed Barbados over some period of time, and I want to say to you that if we are true to ourselves and true to the people of this country we would recognise that we need a more sustainable plan as it relates to de-bushing in this country. We started it under J. M. G. M. "Tom" Adams and it was a sustainable plan but all of a sudden it is ad hoc, it is nest feathering and I will say knee-jerking.

Asides.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Chairman, I do not mind if the Honourable Member for Christ Church South refers to me as stupid. Mr. Chairman, we have seen in this country that the Democratic Labour Party have sent home

people from the National Conservation Commission and Beautify Barbados and every six months they are coming with a Resolution for money to de-bush this country. I drove from home this morning, I came from Ellerton and coming down Mount Hill opposite the Pitts' residence just between the community centre and Ellco Rentals there are big trees and overgrown trees and as I came further down the road between Bulkeley and Salters there is overgrown bush, the road is somewhat a few inches smaller and as I drove and drove I drove through Warrens and I came to Hinds Hill and I looked at a streetlight pole and I saw bush wrapped around it and I am asking myself if the Democratic Labour Party really have a strategy for debushing this country and making this country beautiful again because what I am saying is that we are seeing overgrown bush in several places.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: The Honourable Member spoke about those persons who leave the lots to get overgrown and the time has come for a strategy by this Government. We have people who leave their lots for years...

Asides.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: You want to put it on the land tax. Mr. Chairman, I can speak about a lot which is next to my residence which for years I have been referencing the health department to address that matter and up to today they cannot find a solution. Mr. Chairman, I am saying that this Government could come to this Lower Chamber and could speak all of these fancy words in relation to diseases and vector-breeding but what is the real action in addressing these problems in this country.

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Mr. Chairman, I am hoping, though, in my last two minutes, that the first order of the day in this debushing programme should be to reemploy back into this programme those workers from the National Conservation Commission and Beautify Barbados who were sent home. Mr. Chairman, people in this country are suffering and Mr. Chairman, I am hoping that the Democratic Labour Party is not using these funds to feather their nests as it is the silly season. Therefore, I am asking you on the behalf of the people of this country and the constituents of St. George South to give us a fair share of work in this programme, to make sure that this money goes to the people of Barbados and not into campaign funding.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, your time has expired. You can come back.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: I will certainly come back, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I also join this debate to say that based on what I have just heard from the Honourable Member for St. George South, where the Honourable Member said that \$4 639 775 will be used for feathering nests and for the silly season, it is quite clear to me that what the Honourable Member is saying is that the people of Barbados do not have a problem with overgrown shrubs and trees that need cutting. The Honourable Member has also put a strong case, as the Honourable Member has claimed that it is only for the silly season and for feathering nests, that there is no need then to give the Honourable Member any in his constituency because the Honourable Member claims that this is political and that it will be used against the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Chairman, if the Honourable Member wants to say that the Honourable Member does not need any in his constituency, then there is no problem with that. Mr. Chairman, I am quite prepared to accept the Honourable Member's share because we have some debushing that needs to be done in the north of Barbados. Mr. Chairman, I would ask that not only do we look at debushing those lots but also at the possibility of paying some attention to the highways, et cetera, because we need to ensure that we continue to look after the environment of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, this is not simply a matter of cutting trees and so on, this is about looking after the environment. Mr. Chairman, it is regrettable that at a time when we are in the hurricane season, that the Honourable Member for St. George South cannot appreciate that a programme such as this is a sensible one and that it is very much needed.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. The Honourable Member is seeking to suggest that I do not appreciate the debushing programme. Mr. Chairman, at the outset I said to this Lower Chamber that the debushing programme was started under the Barbados Labour Party and that it was a planned and structured programme. Mr. Chairman, so that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy does not mislead this Honourable Chamber and the people of this country, I am saying that this programme is an ad hoc programme. I never said that I do not agree with the debushing programme.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, thank you. Please proceed, Honourable Member.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, as the Honourable Member has said, this programme was started under the Barbados Labour Party by “Tom” Adams. I am also very happy to hear that they are even now accepting the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow as their “Tom”

Adams because if anybody knows anything about this programme, they would know that this programme only started in the 1960s by the Democratic Labour Party and that it was known as parks and beaches. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown would know very much about this because the Honourable Member was very well-aware about a gentleman called Mr. Lisle Carmichael who was chairman of that particular programme. Mr. Chairman, I would appreciate very much if the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown would educate the Honourable Member for St. George South on these matters, instead of letting that Honourable Member come to this Honourable House and accuse me of misleading this Honourable House when, in fact, it is that Honourable Member who has actually misled this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that in this day and age when we speak a lot about climate change, biodiversity and all of those things that we have to appreciate that we cannot just see this programme as just going out there cutting bush, digging up bush and such things, we have to appreciate that this is far more important. Mr. Chairman, we have now to appreciate that we need to educate the public of Barbados that instead of allowing their lands only to grow shrubs and so on, that it now makes sense to cultivate those lands by planting coconut trees, fruit trees or trees that really means something because if you plant such trees there would be no need for those lots to become overgrown with shrubs or bush because those fruit trees would then have to be pruned so that there would be no need for the overgrown shrubs or bush which would create vermin or interfere with the habitat and cause overgrowth, et cetera.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, every year we have a problem whether it is with Zika, chikungunya, leptospirosis or something else that it is very important that we continue this programme. Mr. Chairman, I object when the Honourable Member could come to Honourable House and could say that this is the second time within one year that we have come to this Honourable House. Mr. Chairman, everybody knows that the financial year starts on April 01, 2017 and that this is the first vote for which we are coming to this Honourable House. If the Honourable Member is saying that the Honourable Member does not want us to come here for another vote and that we should not listen to the voices of the people who are telling us that we need to debush because of the rains that are falling... Mr. Chairman, anybody who are truly country people will

know that once the rain is falling you would have this type of problem and that there is very much a need for this programme, so that when the Honourable Member could say that this is a programme for feathering nests and that because it is the silly season, it tells me that the Honourable Member does not have an appreciation for the environment of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, what is interesting is that the last programme we had started in October last year, we are now in October again, so that it is clear this is a yearly programme and that we are only following the programme we have put in place because we have recognised, after all the rains have fallen, that we need to have a programme like this in place to make Barbados beautiful. Mr. Chairman, what is also interesting is that not only does this programme work for us as locals, it is also very timely because it allows us to prepare the country also for the tourism season, so that somebody like the Honourable Member for St. George North should have looked back and asked the Honourable Member for St. George South if the Honourable Member recognises what is happening or if the Honourable Member has an appreciation for what is happening in this country because a well-planned and thought-out process has now been demoralized by the Honourable Member for St. George South because the Honourable Member does not appreciate anything as it relates to the environment, et cetera.

Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt that correcting a problem as it relates to 1 400 lots and some highways in this country will mean something to Barbados, it means that the water will be able to flow more freely, it means that when you pass the site will be better, it means that we are correcting all of those negatives the Honourable Member has spoken about, and that these are what the people of Barbados want. Mr. Chairman, if the Honourable Member for St. George South feels that his constituents do not want any of these things, well, mine wants them.

11.34 a.m.

If the Honourable Member for St. George South feels that his constituents do not want any of these things, well my constituents want them and those of the other Members over here want them. If the others on the other side do not support it, they need to get up and say that they agreed with what was said by the Honourable Member for St. George South. I am saying that this is in the interest of Country Barbados and this will ensure that we continue to keep Barbados beautiful socially, environmentally, economically and otherwise. Do you know why? We care about Barbados, and that is why we have brought this programme. We will ensure that we continue. Do not let anybody believe that there is only this programme that is in place. There is a programme also under the Ministry of the Environment. There is a programme also under the

Ministry of Transport and Public Works. It means that we are only complementing what is happening already because we recognise what has been happening with climate change and the amount of rain that has fallen and what is happening that the shrubs are growing faster. We have to put a programme in place to look after what has happened.

Sir, what I am going to say, and I agree with the Minister, is that people need to recognise this; for example, what is wrong with people planting coconut trees on their lots if they are not going to be using them? Coconut trees grow and bear pretty quickly, and when one considers the demand for coconuts now, it makes sense. They do not even have to cut the coconuts themselves, because the people will come and cut the coconuts. If you have coconut trees and you do not need the coconuts, the guys are quite prepared to come and clean the trees and prune them for you and so on, and take the coconuts, so I do not understand. Mr. Speaker, I was in this House when I once said to a Minister of the Environment on the other side, "Let us be realistic and acknowledge what is happening in this country. Let us really look after the environment not only for ourselves but also look after the other things which need to have their habitat." I said, "Let us go into the gullies and replant the fruit trees instead of going and planting ornamentals only on the highways. Let us plant some fruit trees on the highways instead of having play parks. They are all ornamentals. Let us put some fruit trees." I was told that Barbadians would steal the fruits, as if you would just be planting them for the fruits to drop off.

Asides.

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that there is a big divide when it comes to the environment and when it comes to the appreciation of people of Barbados. We plant and we look after things that are in the interest of Country Barbados. The other side is just interested in what looks good. We are not about a pappy-show or running a contest to look for beauty only. We are about substance, and that is why as a result of this programme which we are putting in place, we hope that people have an appreciation for the land they have and an appreciation to understand that the land carries a liability and they need to put something in place to balance that liability by planting coconut trees, fruit trees, et cetera, until they are ready to build their homes and so on.

Mr. Chairman, it is no doubt that this programme is timely and everything you have heard from the other side is the opinion of the Honourable Member for St. George South and the opinion of everybody on that side, excluding one: Christ Church West. The other Member was the lead spokesperson for the Barbados Labour Party and everything he said was the policy of the Barbados Labour Party, and everyone out there clapped for him when he sat. It means that they see this as the silly season, they see this

as feathering nests, and they see that there is no need for us to come to Parliament and waste time budgeting \$4.6 million to clean up Barbados. They are against it, because when the Honourable Member said that and he sat, everybody clapped for him. It means that they agree with everything he said, but, Mr. Chairman, I want you to know, Sir, that we have to look after the health of the people of Barbados and that is why we are here today; not only debushing Barbados, not only looking after the environment of Barbados but also creating some work for people who need it in Barbados. He also said he does not want any of the work, because he is against the \$4.639 million.

Aside.

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: He does not want poor people in his constituency, because he does not feel that debushing work is work. He does not feel that honest working people can earn from \$4.639 million. Mr. Chairman, I am saying, Sir, that I strongly believe that all work is good work even if conditions of work sometimes are not good. At least we can change the condition of work and make it all good work. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Asides.

Dr. M.M. AGARD: Sir, from the outset I wish to state my support for this Resolution. Of course, I have very special concerns with respect to public health in this country, and I do not feel that public health ought to be an electioneering issue. We cannot afford in the face of all that has transpired within the last weeks or months or years to feel that we need to position public health and environmental sanitation in the context of a very small frame of electioneering. Sir, I want to start by addressing the statement made by the Leader of Government Business, who suggested that this \$4.6 million is for the service of residential areas where landowners have relinquished their responsibilities, not just to themselves but to their communities. He stated that the cost levied against a delinquent landowner is approximately 18 to 20 cents per square foot. Sir, when you consider the dangers posed by overgrown lots of delinquent owners, I would like to suggest that the cost to the country, and by extension the cost to the communities, is far more than that levied against the delinquent landowner. We cannot afford to allow ourselves to be held ransom by these individuals. I stand here without apology to state that whatever cost is levied against the landowner should be a deterrent, it should be a penalty, and it should be a punishment that not only serves as a deterrent but also feeds the fund to allow for further development and sanitation of the country as a whole. I make no apology to say that we ought to tax delinquent

landowners upwards to \$1 per square foot, because it must serve as a deterrent.

When a penalty is that extreme, landowners will think once, they will think twice before they leave their lots to lie fallow and to serve as a nuisance for people around them. There are too many people in our communities who are complaining that they have had, out of their own pockets, to clean adjacent lots because the owner has reneged on his or her responsibility to do it.

11.42 a.m.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that in a developing society such as ours we cannot allow this to continue and we cannot continue to talk around the situation. We need to act definitely and to say to these land owners that we are going to punish you for leaving your lots to lie fallow. I am purporting \$1 per square foot. I know that it is exorbitant but it must serve as a deterrent. Sir, if we are going to say that in residential owners that landowners need to be responsible then I think that we also need to be fair and say that where they are Crown land, for example, that are lying fallow and where there are plantations that are lying fallow that we need to bring them into operation.

Mr. Chairman, I have heard an Honourable Member in the Chamber speak of food production and how we ought to be growing coconut trees and I would go further and say that we ought to be growing things like breadfruit trees as well and certainly food production is one of the most profound statements that we can make and the most profound engagement that we can take to combat poverty in any developing society. I would therefore, like to propose that in areas where we have Crown lands and in areas where we have plantations lying fallow that as part and parcel of our debuting profile that we should seek to increase the planting of food crops that can serve the nation.

Mr. Chairman, in many developing countries you have the concept of community food production where trees are just planted along the byways and highways and any person in need can harvest those products. There is nothing wrong on Barbados with entertaining community food production to offset any poverty that may exist in the country.

Mr. Chairman, in the context of dealing with all the lands not just residential lands but all lands in the country my recommendation is to put it into food production, there is no reason why we should not.

Mr. Chairman, also, we are facing a very serious situation from those who are trying their best to deal with this issue. Sir, constantly we have people complaining that others are burning this bush and placing asthmatic at risk

and placing homes at risk because of bush fires. We have to address this situation and there must be a penalty as well for those who persist in burning bush. Why is this still being allowed in Barbados? I say that we need to deal with this.

Mr. Chairman, to place the statement of the presenting Minister in context. He did say that \$1.6 million was used last year in the debushing programme. I thank him for those details but in reality, it is not acceptable that we could set aside \$5 million from our two percent national social responsibility levy and then only use \$1.6 million. I am not going to stand here like the Honourable Member to say that the Government is trying to feather their nest because I do not want this discussion to Government there but I believe it is a legitimate request and a legitimate query to ask the question: If Barbadians put out this money under the text of the national social responsibility levy and we were expected to raise \$5 million, you can refer to page 51 of the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals and you can see what was stated there. I think that it is fair to us...

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

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I hate to disturb the Honourable Member in her presentation but I must clarify. The \$1.6 million that was spent was referred to in the case of the \$3.1 million that was allocated in a supplementary for the debushing programme last year. It has nothing whatsoever to do with any national social responsibility levy or anything else. It was separate allocation for the debushing programme just like the \$4 million being asked today of which \$1.6 million was used. I feel that clarification is important for the debate structure.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: Sir, if the Leader of Government Business is stating that this \$1.6 million that he referenced was as a result of the \$3 million supplementary that was requested last year, if that is what he is suggesting then the point still has to be made that he ought to give an account this country as to where the \$5 million went to. Sir, I am going right back and if you would permit me on page 51 of Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, the Minister of Finance said that \$5 million of the proposed \$142 million that was expected to be garnered from national social responsibility levy, that \$5 million of that \$142 million was going to be going to specifically to environmental issues. He made reference to other things. He made reference to the fact that some would be going to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, that some would be going to service a loan that was going to be used by the Sanitation Service Authority to increase the fleet of sanitations trucks and to bring the fleet numbers back up to 35 by this time this year. I distinctly recall that because I remember that as I stood here and supported the

introduction of the two percent national social responsibility levy that I begged both the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Environment that in as much as I supported the proposal please do not come back the following year and tell us that the imposition of the levy did not meet its intended target and that you would have to increase the levy or that you would have to prolong the levy. Sir, as it is, we have had both an increase and the prolonging of the levy in spite of the fact that they both promised me faithfully that it would not happen, so yes, Sir, I would like to know how that \$5 million that was garnered was spent on environmental issues. I think that it is a fair question. I am not electioneering but it has to be given to the public in their best interest. (8:06) I am sure that when they take to their feet, they will tell us how that \$5 million of that \$142 million was spent.

Sir, one of the other advantages of a sound, sustainable, environmental programme is for that of security and not just security in terms of personal property. I know that whenever we think of overgrown shrub and so forth, we think of our personal security or we think that prevent some sort of shield to allow other with nebulous intentions to take advantage of our property but when you look at national security, we live in what has become a flood-prone nation. This country only needs to have a drizzle and you have Hometown flooded, Speightstown flooded and Bridgetown flooded. The areas where our financial centres and our economic activity is located floods immediately and the reality is that we have become a flood-prone nation because many of our water ways have been blocked by poor sanitation. I believe that the responsibility of addressing this issue lies not just with Government, it has to start as a personal responsibility.

Mr. Chairman, I know that some people would be very hesitant to make certain statements because, yes, this is the silly season but it would be remiss of me if I did not say that every Barbadian hesitant to make certain statements because yes, this is the silly season but it would be remiss of me if I did not say that every Barbadian must make a commitment to keeping this country clean and the fact is many of us have become committed to a mediocrity such that we feel that we can no longer engage in the small domestic duties that Barbadians were once proud to do so, for example, if there is overgrowth in a district, we see the entire community in the press complaining that they have not seen their representative, that the Sanitation Service Authority has failed in its duty, that the Minister of Environment and Drainage needs to be fired because they have two or three shrubs that need to be removed.

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Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: Thank you.

Sir, there was a time when, as a community committed to excellence, we were happy to take on these responsibilities for ourselves and inasmuch as we place the responsibility on the Government to lead the way, we must also state that personal responsibility is of the essence to address these issues, therefore the way that we dispose of refuse, for example, needs to come into focus. Too often we speak of simple things like bringing into engagement the green economy and we like to use the word but we have not actually seen action to make this happen. We talk about recycling our waste products and we are asking the question, why is it that we have not yet initiated programmes to make this happen? Sir, it could start first in the schools where, as a school initiative, every school is given a series of bins so that from small, children from the age of a small child, the practice of separating refuse and placing it in the requisite bins for the appropriate disposal is inculcated. It can also be initiated in Government buildings where it should be easy to lead the way and then by extension through community councils or through the constituency councils we can expand the programme to all households. Sir, I know that you are looking at me and I therefore do not wish to extend my time on my feet. If given permission, I will come back to this point.

I thank you.

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

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise to make an intervention in this discourse and certainly intend to, once time permits, come back again to re-enter this discussion. As I listen to both the Leader of Government Business in piloting this Resolution, I got a very clear picture of why it is that the Government is introducing this Resolution to this Honourable House to respond to the need to finance a debushing programme which, as the Honourable Member for St. George South noted, is nothing new and that the Other Side would have on occasions introduce debushing programmes, or so he claims, so debushing is not new but what amazes me is how the discussion has descended into a set of utterances that really make you ask yourself, this is our first Sitting after the summer recession and one would hope that the depth of the discussion would be centred around concrete ideas that reveal some level of ideals that would inform the country as to where we need to go on matters of environmental sustainability because that is what this is about. You hear about bush, you hear about lots, money, flooding, lay-offs, poor workers delinquent land owners and the like and you being to ask yourself: where is the connect? Or perhaps better yet, where is the disconnect?

The programme establishes four objectives: 1) Is to reduce vector and rodent populations and illegal dumping sites, 2) to enhance the aesthetics and to improve the security concerns of residents within affected communities, 3) to reduce the negative impact on the tourism product, and 4) to reduce the number of Cow Itch complains by residents and the general public. Let me start there to suggest that Cow Itch complaints do not often come from the edge of the road. They come from distant areas in plantation lands, in abandoned agricultural lands and so on where, once the Cow Itch pod dries up, the wind takes the fibres of the pod and spread them far and wide including into residential areas because hardly ever, Mr. Chairman, do you pass by the road and see a lot populated with Cow Itch. I am not saying that they are not occasions where it happens but hardly ever. I wanted to start there because the truth of the matter is that this is an issue about our environment and yes, the Opposition like to call the Minister's name or at least to reflect on the portfolio of the environment. That is fine because I am proud of the work that the Ministry of the Environment has been doing and I am proud of the work that the youth of the country association with the Ministry of Environment are doing and now there is a take up of communities around the island that are now dealing with beach cleaning up and lots. Just the other day in the community of the Honourable Member for St. James Central I got a complaint from a resident about some bush hanging over the road reducing the sizes of the road right in front the residence of the Honourable Member and I took it upon myself, Mr. Speaker, I did not wait on the NCC or the Drainage Division, I took it upon myself to find two young men who are unemployed in the community and send them to clear the area. I am quite sure that the Honourable Member for St. James Central would say yes, that was done and it is now easier for him to pull in and out of his residence. That is what the communities are doing and that is what we, even in our roles, in this Parliament cannot sit down and wait on the \$2 500 that the Government gives us on a monthly basis or the salaries that we earn. We can go out there and do things for the community of our own pockets and that is what a lot of us do. This discussion is not so much about that. Let us start with bush.

Mr. Chairman, it is not unreasonable to expect as you drive around the country for the country to look as though there is overgrown bush everywhere. It is a function of nature and if you stay in high elevations, for example, like the towers at Warrens and look over Barbados, Barbados looks beautiful because of the new foliage, the new trees that are growing cross the island. We can manage it.

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Mr. Chairman, Sir, but we have to get to the point where we do more selective removal of foliage around the

island and not go out with cutlasses and cut down everything that we see in sight because some of this bush that we are talking about is important to the maintenance of the landscape and also important to help avoid some of the land slippage that we otherwise could experience. Mr. Chairman, the bush is not my worry. The bush is there because there has been rainfall all over the island and therefore you can expect that there would be bush.

Mr. Chairman, I want to compliment the Drainage Division. I hear Honourable Members talk about the Drainage Division. Yes, the Drainage Division is in need of more manpower, I do not think that can be denied. The Drainage Division is still working out its continuous rehabilitation programme not only of drains but of sideways, sidewalks and so on and so forth, but they have been doing a very good job.

Mr. Chairman, I hear associated with the Drainage Division that Barbados has become a flood-prone country because of poor sanitation. Let me be charitable, that is not really the case. Barbados is a low-lying State. It is part of the Small Island Developing States that are plagued by low-lying conditions that when you have an appreciable amount of rain you can expect some level of water settlement. Mr. Chairman, people have to define what they mean by flooding and they have to distinguish the difference between water settling in areas because of an overabundance of rain and a tendency for the island to flood. It is not accurate to say that Barbados has become a flood State because of poor sanitation and the lack of clearing drains. That is not a reflection of the reality because we had about 66-something cases of water settlement in Barbados in the last rainfall as a result of Hurricane Harvey and in some cases before the Drainage Division could get to the complaint the water dissipated. Obviously the drainage systems that Barbados have are systems from the 60s and 70s that were not designed to accommodate the kind of pressures they feel now. Yes, it is true to say that many residents are not careful enough to make sure that they appropriately discard their waste. A lot of the things affecting communities in terms of illegal dumping are not happening by the communities themselves, it is happening by individuals who are coming through and pelting off stuff and it is also happening because there is dumping up the elevations and that dumping comes down through the drainage system when it can pass through to create problems for communities. We understand that, so do not let us blame the Sanitation Services Authority. The Sanitation Services Authority is doing an exceptional job in keeping this country clean in spite of the pressures that it has gone through. I say that without apology because I live it every day. Just this weekend, for example, a resident called to complain about a situation in Paddock Road and we seriously dispatched persons to make sure that if there is a case where a collection is missed and the authority is informed that we

move quickly to address the issue with the assistance of the Ministry of Transport and Works, the Drainage Division and so forth.

Today was laid in this Parliament a study that was just done that will be debated where perhaps parliamentarians will be better informed as to the realities of what is affecting the volume of waste in Barbados. The volume of waste on the curve side has little to do with the inability of the Sanitation Services Authority to collect the waste, it has more to do with the consumption patterns of Barbadians in relying more on packaged goods and generating more waste, including commercial entities which by the way I should say there are commercial entities in this country who expect the Sanitation Services Authority to collect their waste free of cost who are making money off of their business and they are not charged to collect their waste but the Sanitation Services Authority must go to their businesses and collect their waste free of cost because the Sanitation Services Authority is a self-help institution... A policy will be introduced where commercial entities will be asked to foot the bill for the collection of their commercial waste and that commercial waste should not be misunderstood for municipal waste, but those are some of the issues that we will discuss.

Mr. Chairman, yes, there is an issue with lots. People invest in purchasing land and they abandon their land and they move. As a matter of fact, there are persons who live in other areas of the country who have lots in the Chancery Lane area, and some of the names when I call them you would be shocked, and they would not look after their lots. There are high-powered lawyers, other people and other Government workers who have properties in the Chancery Lane area who would not pay to get their lots clean and the National Conservation Commission has been putting out an exorbitant amount of manpower and cost to clear some of these lots at no cost to the residents.

I have been signalled that we have two more minutes. Mr. Chairman, I will come back though because these derelict landowners... I agree with the Honourable Member for Christ Church West that any penalty imposed can only be a penalty when it causes discomfort on the person upon whom it has been disposed because if you would only be charged 18 cents per square foot to clear your lot, why would I clear it. I know that there are lots that have been cleared multiple times that are owned by public servants and by, like I said, some high-powered lawyers that have land in Chancery Lane, I drove through that area on Sunday, and now it is becoming a wilderness. You call them and you call them, you cajoled them and they still would not respond so I understand that concern. Of course some of the lots are not easily accessed. I do not mean easily accessed because of logistics in law or by the owner but because of the landscape itself. There are some lots that are community agricultural lots that are now out of

agricultural service and those lots are also creating a problem.

There are lots owned by the Government too that needs to be attended to and I am calling on the relevant ministries to go and clear the lots because you cannot have one rule for the Medes and one for the Persians. If poor people are being asked to clear their lots then I believe that the Government should be asked to clear their too, and perhaps the de-bushing programme will assist in that regard.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your time and I will come back again in the presentation.

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

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak on this matter. Mr. Chairman, I begin by reflecting on the useful contribution made by my friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West. Sir, as she spoke, my mind took me back a calendar year, for the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy a year ago, to when the Resolution for the passage of \$3 million was moved in this House for the same purposes to which this Resolution speaks. Sir, I remember that in that debate the Honourable Member for St. James South shared my concerns which were identical to the concerns echoed by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West today.

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Mr. Chairman, I do not believe that in the passage of that year in which we have had at least one Honourable Member on the Opposition Bench articulating serious concerns about the way in which we treat to overgrown lots, your humble servant speak to it in the same way. We have an Honourable Independent Member sitting in this Honourable Chamber speaking to it in the same way and it begs the question what steps have Government been taking to rectify this matter. Nor, Mr. Chairman, is it a difficult matter to redress.

Mr. Chairman, I remember well in that same debate the Honourable Member for St. Philip North engaged me on the law in the matter and it was agreed, as I understood it on both sides of this Honourable House, that there is absolutely no reason, once the requisite notices have been sent out, why the State cannot go into Bagatelle in my constituency to the piece of property where a ridiculous excuse for a property owner has allowed the bush to grow taller than the house next-door to him, clear the lot and affix to the land tax bill the cost for the clearance of that lot. Mr. Chairman, there is no legal reason it cannot happen; in fact, it is only at this stage a question which already exists in law, implementing precisely that which

was intended to be done, because when there was talk about here of having Municipal Solid Waste Tax, one of the approaches to penalties was anticipated to be the same route, so that this is not a mystery, so that, Mr. Chairman, without going into electioneering, the question that anybody in Barbados in their right mind would have to ask is, why can better not be done, and why has better not been done, because there is no lack, no dearth, no paucity of understanding on the matter, it is really a question of implementing and enforcing that which is there and if there are amendments that are needed to be made to the process then to deal robustly and speedily with the necessary amendments.

Mr. Chairman, you live in Bagatelle so I do not have to tell you, it is a public nuisance when you have somebody living next to you who refuses to cut...

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Well, that is where Mr. Chairman resides. Mr. Chairman, I am being distracted, I do not wish to get into where you live or do not live, I happen to know that you are registered in Bagatelle. Mr. Chairman, the fact of the matter is that as you well-know and you see on a daily basis, the public nuisance that people there and indeed in Prior Park and down the hill in Appleby Gardens...

Mr. Chairman, let us not limit it only to the concrete middle-class structures because if you go into Sea View, if you go into Clarke's Road, if you go through Paynes Bay, Mr. Chairman, all around Barbados we are seeing this problem where somebody owns a piece of land, they may not live in Barbados anymore but would have decided that that piece of land is not going to be sold, which is their constitutional right, to keep it to pass on to family or whomever, but Mr. Chairman, what is not their right is to allow that piece of land to become a nuisance to the people who live next door and for the bush and grass and whatever else to grow taller than the houses next door.

Mr. Chairman, it poses an issue not only in the context of it being a nuisance but it also poses a threat for security and that is an essential concern because these are difficult times, Sir, when streetlighting, even, is hard to acquire. Mr. Speaker, we have to be realistic about this thing, it is easy for a person who is a ne'er-do-well, an evildoer, to lurk in bush waiting there to pounce on unsuspecting pedestrian but Mr. Chairman, it goes beyond that because it is also a question of personal expense. Mr. Chairman, I believe this is a point alluded to by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West because it is a commonplace thing, I myself have had to do it where I live, where you go and clear the lot across the road from you or next door to you because of the inconvenience that is posed by way of the vermin and vectors that leave that overgrown

and abandoned derelict lot to come in at you. Mr. Chairman, so that to protect yourself and your family from that, to avoid having the personal expense of the doctors' bills and all the other things that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South spoke about when the Honourable Member spoke about Zika, Aedes Aegypti mosquitoes and so on and forth, all of that Barbadians are trying to deal with in straightened and difficult financial circumstances at their homes, but they have to look at the piece of property next to them to keep that property clean.

Mr. Chairman, when once you have had to deal with that third issue of the personal expense, it takes you directly into what is, in my view, the most fundamental part of all of this, that is, Mr. Chairman, the social dis cohesion that it is fostering in this country. Mr. Chairman, that social dis cohesion comes when people who might be able to make it cannot make it because they must spend far more to protect themselves and their families, their families' health and well-being so that they go into their personal pocket to do it because the State has not taken the steps that only the State can take in order to make sure that these derelict lots are cleaned and that the people who are the genuine wrongdoers are penalised; instead, a fellow has to go through the financial difficulty of cleaning his property, cleaning the property next door to him - and heaven forbid if he lives in the middle of two lots, then he has to clean both lots, while the owners of those properties go scot-free. Mr. Chairman, that cannot be right, that is the dis cohesion, that is where you sense the frustration as you walk through these communities.

Mr. Chairman, as I say to you, this is nothing that we have to wrestle with because the solutions have been known for a while. Really and truly, it offends me that this discussion in which I am now engaging, what I am hearing in this Honourable House today, echoes completely the tone and substance of that which was discussed in here a year ago and there is really no excuse for it. Mr. Chairman, anyone who cares to take up the legislation and look at it would know that this is not a difficult problem to solve. Then, why has it not been solved?

Mr. Chairman, I must say that as I go forward, because I know that I only for 15 minutes in this matter, the issue raised about \$5 million in the budget, that was part of the speech given by the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs. Mr. Chairman, the fact of the matter does however exist that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs may say so but the Honourable Member may not be able to give the full \$5 million until nine, ten and in some instances, the history of this Honourable House would record, maybe over a year later that commitment cannot be honoured. Mr. Chairman, what happened, in fact, was that the Honourable House came last October to give \$3 million towards this debushing issue and it strikes me, Sir, as not just passing strange but as

wrong that \$1.6 million is utilised out of the \$3 million vote.

Mr. Chairman, now I heard the Honourable Member saying that the rain fell and that there were days when people could not go to work and so and so forth and that may well be true but I am not getting into that. I also believe that it raises a bigger issue, that is, whether the matter has been properly managed so as to ensure that there is a satisfactory level of absorptive capacity on the part of the people who administered the money, to make that that money could be productively and properly put to use. Mr. Chairman, I raised that question because in my constituency, I must tell you frankly, when I considered the absorptive capacity of the relevant Government department, I have seen little or no evidence of that money, or the benefits of that money in my constituency, to the point where I have said to the Honourable Minister -- and I speak in the presence of the Honourable Minister of Public Works and Transport and if the Honourable Member cares to speak, the Honourable Member can bear me out on this -- that there are young men in my constituency who have community organisations. I referenced Bagatelle/Welches Sports and Cultural Club who would be prepared to go and debush parts of the community. If it is that you do not have the manpower to get into the areas, then there are people who we can help.

12.23 p.m.

This is not about promoting one or two people who may be members of the Barbados Labour Party or the Democratic Labour Party. This is about trying to mobilise community resources that are there lying dormant but are willing to be put to productive use for the betterment of the environment in the country which we live in. Again, Mr. Chairman, as I am on that point I must also make the other point that if we are dealing with pollution of the atmosphere, there is a globally recognised principle that says the polluter pays. I have heard the Minister of the Environment echo that principle before. Sir, if we are dealing with pollution of the marine space, there is a globally recognised principle that the polluter must pay. There seems to me to be no logical reason why we abandon that principle here in the communities in Barbados, and let people off the hook when they are the source of a difficulty.

Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to "pooh-pooh" the idea of growing coconut trees or breadfruit trees or any other kind of tree. That is good, but what I do know is that if we look at these residential lots in particular that we are talking about, the fact of the matter is even if the trees are growing on them, it does not get away from the fact that in between the trees there is a tremendous amount of bush, Sir. The bush is then giving rise to its own types of problems, and that is the route of where we have to go, and I do not want

us for a moment to obfuscate this issue and to become distracted from it. There needs to be a clear focus on bringing resolution to this problem in the way that has been discussed and recognised by law.

Sir, it would be remiss of me to take my seat without raising the issue of the public health inspectorate, because if we accept that all of the negatives can flow from these overgrown lots, and if we accept that we are now going to look for millions of dollars every year in order to maintain Barbados in a satisfactory state, then, Sir, we also have to be doing some enforcement along the way and some preventative medicine would have to be applied. I would imagine, Sir, that as it was when I was a child, the public health inspectors would be coming around. I used to see them as a little boy, armed with a ladle and so on, and they would come and knock at your door and go into your house and into your backyard looking to see whether or not the place was maintained satisfactorily. Sir, I am not in a position to speak about what happens up by me because I do not see any public health inspector, but that may be because they pass when I am not home. I can tell you that in my constituency I am not being made familiar with any big lot of work being done by public health inspectors. That is not to say that they are there and not doing any work. The question I want to ask is how many do we have? How are they deployed across Barbados? In each constituency approximately can we hear from the Minister today how many are at work on any given day, attached to whatever polyclinic or wherever their base is? Has there been a change from how the public health inspectors would have operated, say, 20 years ago and how they are operating now? These are things that I think we have to talk through. If it is that there has been a shift in thinking and in policy -- and I have used the timeframe of 20 years deliberately because I do not want anybody to say it is electioneering, so I want to include the Barbados Labour Party Government or part thereof as well -- and that changes took place, let us not now cast aspersions at who made the change, but let us look and see whether those changes were sensible and whether they are fit for a purpose that faces us today.

Sir, it seems to me to be completely wrong that you can have a set of circumstances where private residences are giving life and effect to these national challenges. The national challenges are not being solved right now out of private people's pockets as a penalty, as has been so eruditely explicated upon by the Member for Christ Church West. There is no penalty being applied. What is happening is that the general taxpayers, many of whom may be innocent in the matter, are being asked to foot the bill. I feel that is wrong.

Aside.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: As I wrap up, Sir, what I am saying therefore is that it would be a useful thing for us to be able to ensure and arm ourselves with the ability of going into the private residences to ensure that, where there are things taking place that give life to these difficulties which we have to finance our way out of, those things are corrected and the people who are facilitating that negative environment are properly held accountable. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the discussion has taken a very interesting turn but I beg to move that you do now report progress to His Honour the Speaker and, in reporting, ask for leave to sit again.

On the motion of Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. R.D. JONES, the question that Mr. CHAIRMAN report progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and ask for leave to sit again was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for lunch until two o'clock this evening.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

12.29 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, we were in Committee of Supply with that we shall continue.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is now in Committee of Supply. The Honourable Member for St. Christ Church South.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. I just want to briefly respond to some of the comments made during this discussion so far especially when it comes to the obvious blurred lines that have been promoted when we are not distinguishing clearly between activities associated with the collection of taxes and the delivery of the Estimates during the time of discussion or indeed the imposition of taxes during the Budgetary presentation and when Honourable Members want to conveniently try to blur the lines about a simple supplementary which speaks to a specific programme. The

2016/2017 debushing programme would have been presented in this Chamber and debated and consideration was given to a total of \$3.1 million. Sir, at the end of the programme \$1.6 million had been consumed or used which of course meant that the remainder of the supplementary provision would have returned to the Treasury or it would never left the Treasury more or less. I do not quite understand where the confusion that the Honourable Members on the other side are trying to create between that simple fact and the imposition of a national social responsibility levy during the Budget presentation of 2016, which would have sought to raise funds generally for all areas related to health care and to environment management. I hope that we would get some movement away from that line of thinking. Sir, of course then we have to deal with the point being made by the Honourable Member for St. George South that he suspects that is about feathering beds and that this is the silly season. It may be his silly season so I cannot stand here and argue that he is not in his silly season but I am not in any silly season. When the time come for us to face the electorate, I do not consider it a silly period. Sir, as a matter of fact, I think it is the most serious period of our career and any politician who is prepared to get up and constantly refer to the period when you facet the electorate of Barbados as a silly season really is indicting his own self or her own self and then, of course, to try to come to a conclusion that members of the Government side are seeking through this expenditure to feather beds, when recognising upfront that all the threats that I would have outlined during my presentation exists. Sir, as a matter of fact, going on to recognise too that sufficient is not being done. Sir, in other words, the programme that we would have carried out last year would not have been sufficient as far as the Honourable Members on the other side are concerned.

Mr. Chairman, I want for record because the other point that was hinted at is that this is an occasion where all favour would tend towards the constituencies held by the Democratic Labour Party Government. This is an unfair comment because the programme is not even governed by constituencies or parishes, it is governed by catchment areas for the seven polyclinics associated with the debushing programme. The polyclinics associated with the debushing programme are: The Maurice Byer Polyclinic in St. Peter, the Branford Taitt Polyclinic in St. Michael, the Eunice Gibson Polyclinic in Warrens, the Six Roads Polyclinic in St. Philip, the Winston Scott Polyclinic in St. Michael, the David Thompson Centre at the Glebe in St. John and the Randall Philips Polyclinic in Christ Church. It is not governed by any constituency arrangement. It is governed by the presence of an environmental health unit in the seven polyclinics I have name whose responsibility is to report on areas on which they have investigated where they find they find there is need for intervention of this kind.

Mr. Chairman, as I have said while I was wrapping up or maybe I should have had the opportunity then to spend some more time on it, some 1 410 lots already been identified as lots which will be first on the list for attention during this programme. Sir, I have a little time so I will name them so that Honourable Members on the other side would have a clear understanding of how the programme operates because they can tell you that Tom Adams started it until the Honourable Member for St. Lucy told them that it goes back to Parks and Beaches, so they can worry about these petty parks....

Asides.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: They have parks in St. Thomas, they do not have any beach in St. Thomas, you are right but they are parks. I said parks and beaches deliberately because they are parks in St. Thomas and St. George and except for the efforts of the Honourable Member for St. George North there are no other beaches in St. George North. I think that the Honourable Member for St. George North once promise his constituents a beach. Sir, I did not say this Honourable Member, I said the Honourable Member for St. George North once promised his constituents a beach.

Mr. Chairman, Maurice Byer has identified 250 lots. If you want to write it down, feel free. Branford Taitt, 120 lots; Eunice Gibson, 150 lots; Six Roads, 160 lots; Winston Scott, 300 lots; David Thompson Centre, 60 lots; Randall Philips, 370 lots. If you want the addresses I am sure the office has them and we can pull them out if it is necessary but I do not think we need to into that detail. I think that the broad point must be made therefore that it is not a constituency-based programme, it is driven by the polyclinic catchment area, the area for which the polyclinic has overall responsibility. Sir, that does not only pertain to the environmental health programme, it also relates to the persons who are given appointments at the particular polyclinic.

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I want to make one more point before I sit. At least two Honourable Members on This Side have intimated that they are in support of introducing a punitive tax for persons who leave lots fallow and it should be \$100 or it should be \$200 a square foot and that kind of talk. That is all well and good to say in here but, of course, when the time comes to introduce any taxation Government stands along.

Dr. M. M. AGARD: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. Mr. Chairman, whilst I can appreciate that the Leader of Government Business would find it necessary to make a defence of the Government's position on this issue, I believe that in the spirit of truth I need to ask him to

correct that statement where he suggested that someone from This Side proposed that a tax be made against delinquent owners and that they be charged \$100 and \$200 a square foot. That is what he just said. The point that I would wish to make is that I stood on my feet and I said that I fully support the charging of delinquent owners and that the charge must be a deterrent and that the cost at the moment of 18 to 20 cents is virtually nominal. What I proposed was that delinquent owners be charged \$1 a square foot. That was my proposal. I, Sir, have no objection to what the Honourable Member is saying, but I am asking him, please, do not misrepresent my contribution to this Honourable Chamber.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I thank the Honourable Member for the clarification. What I as getting to though, Sir, was that Government usually stands alone when it comes to those taxes and whenever the increase in levied, I am sure, that Honourable Members on That side will scuttle quickly into their corners and accept no responsibility whatsoever for the suggestion. That is the only point I want to share with the Chamber at this time but if the decision has to be taken to increase the charges to the delinquent owners well then it is one which we will consider. As a matter of fact, truth be told, we have had that discussion in the Ministry of Health already and I do not think it requires any Parliamentary approval or the like but we will have to look into it and see exactly what the technical team would want to suggest in that manner and I hope, Sir, that if I have the task of bringing that measure or a measure of that kind to the Chamber then I will have undivided support. That is all I am trying to get to, that I will have undivided support for the implementation of such a measure. The Honourable Member is already counting who is going to be here and who is not going to be here. I think it was one of our former leaders who said speak not for who the bell tolls because the bell may be tolling for thee. Just be very careful when we are making those points.

Mr. Chairman, I think that the programme is a distinct and separate programme, it is a specialised programme and it is almost an annual programme. There are years in the past where it has not been done under successive Administrations. When we did the programme last year, it was after a lull, I think, of about two years that a particular debushing programme had taken place. It is a specific programme for which money is sought from the Treasury and is the money is not all used, it is not taken, it is there for the provision of services to the country in areas of need.

Again, if all \$4 million contemplated by this Supplementary are not used between now and the end of the period of the debushing programme, one would anticipate that there will be a savings. As a matter of fact, when the Cabinet Paper for this programme was done, it anticipated a start date of August 4. We are already pass

that date so without even thinking any further we recognise that there will obviously some savings on the calculations of the labour and charges related to the debushing programme.

The point must be made and I must thank the Honourable Members so far for accepting that it is a necessary programme. It is a programme not only about clearing an area but it speaks to the question of the health of our nation, the safety of our nation, the aesthetics of our communities so it is a programme which, truth be told, must be embraced by both Sides of the Chamber and I am grateful for the opportunity for this clarification at this time and it would therefore reduce the amount of time I will have to spend at the wrap up, pending some calamitous contribution between now and then.

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

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I rise really to make a brief intervention in relation to this Supplementary in relation to the sum of \$4.6 million to be provided to the Ministry of Health in relation to a debushing programme to supplement moneys to the end of 2017/2018.

Mr. Chairman, at the outset I would want to certain say that the Honourable Minister, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, would have sought just now to clarify the basis for this programme and certainly how the programme is supposed to function. What however concerns me is that I am still a little concerned that certainly Members on This Side and perhaps the general public may still be unclear as to how do persons apply to be able to participate in this particular programme.

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Honourable Members on this side are in no way opposed to a national de-bushing programme to beautify our areas to ensure our environment is protected but I have certainly had first-hand experience of persons from my constituency and elsewhere enquiring about participating in the programme last year and in previous years and they have been told by the Ministry of Health that they must apply by letter through their respective Member of Parliament in order to be considered for participation in the programme. The Honourable Minister is nodding so I believe so far that is the position.

Now, while I accept what the Minister is saying that the various polyclinics are responsible for sending out persons to the various vacant lots that are to be cleared, it begs the question why Members of Parliament, certainly on this side, have not been engaged in any discussion or have not been asked by the Minister of Health to be able to

provide or to even input in this particular exercise because while it may seem to some that a letter from a Member of Parliament inviting the Ministry to consider a particular individual would satisfy the requirements of the ministry I can certainly say from first-hand experience that none of the persons that I have recommended to the ministry for consideration of employment have actually been granted the opportunity to work in the de-bushing programme. I think Honourable Members on this side also share similar sentiments and therefore when the Honourable Member for St. George South raised the issue of feathering the nest of the Democratic Labour Party through these types of programmes I do not think that it was done in a way to cast aspersions certainly on the characters of Members on the other side but I think it is a genuine concern that has been expressed certainly in my constituency and certainly across Barbados as it relates to the selection of persons who are chosen to participate in a number of these programmes.

Now, I accept that political parties at times introduce programmes such as this in order to facilitate employment for persons within their constituency, even to facilitate employment of persons who support them. We have seen that throughout history. I do think that Barbados is any different to any other part of the world but I do feel that there must be some transparency in the application process and certainly in giving us on this side a level of certainty that if we are first of all engage in some discussion about it that we ourselves as Members of Parliament could also assist the ministry in identifying certain areas that we believe in our constituencies need to be cleared. No such consultation have taken place with any of the Members of Parliament on this side of the Floor and I do feel that going forward we cannot take an approach that only Ministers of Government or that the officers within the Ministry of Health alone have the answers and the solution to everything. I am asking for consultation even if it is not that you take on board everything we say but I do feel that we also as Members of Parliament on both sides have an intimate knowledge of constituencies and we may be able to offer some suggestions in relation to the types of the areas that certainly may need to be cleared.

I say that too because I think that particularly at this time there are persons who would have been laid off from the Drainage Unit, some of them have in some cases been asked to come back to engage in these types of programmes, but there are so many other persons out there who would want to be a part of these programmes that in a lot of cases are dependent on a Member of Parliament to make that recommendation, and there is often a concern that unless you support the Democratic Labour Party or you support a particular political party that you would not be given a fair opportunity to have the chance to be able to de-bush an area to earn an extra income.

I think that we have to be responsible with these programmes. We have to appreciate that these are genuine concerns that Members on both sides sometimes have when it comes to these types of programmes and I think the ministry and certainly the Minister should find ways to address it because I do not think everybody is aware of how to apply.

The other thing that concerns me is having heard the Minister speak to whether only individuals can apply or if in this instance if contractors who have small businesses are also entitled to make an application... I know that on the last occasion the Supplementary came before this Chamber last year the Minister would have indicated that small business persons who were in the business of landscaping and clearing bush across the country could certainly apply to the ministry but I have not heard him indicate whether that is going to be the situation on this occasion. I think that the concept of feathering the nest by the Democratic Labour Party again raises its head because there is a concern, and this is again not just my concern but it is certainly a concern I hear expressed daily, about the fact that the contracts, if they are given through the ministry for de-bushing, will go to persons who are aligned in some way to the Democratic Labour Party and I really want to know that there is total transparency in relation to individuals applying to the ministry but also certainly in relation to small contractors who may want to take advantage of an opportunity to clean up the vacant lots in the areas.

On the one hand I accept that there is a dire need to clean the vacant lots but I wonder if we are not putting the cart before the horse because there is legislation in place in order to address the issues of persons who fail to clean their lots. I have not heard the Minister say, apart from indicating that there have been abatement notices served in relation to the properties, how successful this programme has been in the past. Is it that having spent \$3 million or \$4 million that the Barbados Government has been able to in a sense get back some of the money that they have spent from the landowners? Is it that we can be given some assurance that by spending this \$4.6 million that of that \$4.6 million that these individual landowners will be brought before the law courts and a recovery of at least half of that amount will be returned to the Treasury? These are the types of things, Mr. Chairman, that I feel that the public would want to know.

Mr. Chairman, I would also want to know from the Honourable Minister how many persons will be employed under this programme because while he has indicated the number of polyclinics and the number of vacant lots that are to be cleaned I have not heard how persons will be employed, how much the persons will be paid, whether the ministry is going to have to hire tractors or whether they are going to have to hire private individuals and businesses

in order to remove the volume of bush that is going to be gathered from these projects. I think these are things that need to be addressed in the course of asking us as a House to approve this type of Resolution because at this juncture we need to be able to fully appreciate how these moneys are being spent.

Mr. Chairman, I do not often agree with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy but one true thing that he said today was that this Resolution is timely and I do feel that coming on the heels of what has happened in terms of the devastation in the islands certainly with Hurricane Irma and certainly with Hurricane Maria and certainly with Hurricane Jose looming in the ocean I do feel that more than ever Barbadians are more sensitive to the blockage of drains, to the overgrown lots and to the nature of our environment in a way that perhaps they have not been sensitised before. When you see the level of devastation in the other territories you recognise that while we may not have full control over the effects of natural disasters there are still some preliminary things that we as a country could do certainly through drainage units and certainly through the Ministry of Health to ensure that we minimise some of the risk that can occur certainly from these types of disasters, and so I do feel that the intervention is timely.

We have heard in recent weeks that the hurricane season is far from over, that we anticipate that there will be even more hurricanes affecting the islands and perhaps even Barbados and I do feel that we should not be waiting until the effects of the hurricanes are felt. As most of you know, once there is any accumulation of water in this country several roads are flooded. I have the personal experience in St. Michael South East of several roads flooding even when there is minimal water. Whenever the country is under flood watch you have a situation where, whether it is from the wells in East Terrace, whether it is the wells in Stratford Hill or whether it is the wells in Plumtree Road, Salters Tenantry Road, you have a situation where these wells and a number of these lots become overflowing with water and the roads become impassable for the residents and so I do feel that we would be doing an injustice as an Opposition certainly not to support this Resolution if it is that it is clear to us that the moneys are going to be spent to ensure that not only the lots are actually cleared but that Government can actually articulate a policy which suggests to me and certainly to others that the drains are actually going to be cleared as well and that the garbage is going to be removed because I am at pains on occasion after occasion that I have to speak in this Chamber in relation to an area in Golden Rock where there is a Sanitation Services Authority skip which has been placed by the ministry and at times this skip is often overflowing with garbage.

It is a densely populated area of the community, it is an area where children play and roam, where elderly people walk around but even before Hurricane Erma the garbage was overflowing the top of the skip and also on the ground surrounding that skip. Mr. Chairman, it begs the question, apart from even considering just simple exercises like that of debushing, whether a wider national campaign in relation to the environment should not be being articulated today by this Administration.

Mr. Chairman, while it is okay to talk about the Sanitation Service Authority bringing in more trucks, which we have not seen as yet, we are faced right now with a situation where there are rumours of a Board being asked to resign, and we may be placed in an uncomfortable situation in this country where as we approach perhaps an even deeper period of the hurricane season, we then find ourselves not only with a problem in relation to debushing of vacant lots but with a bigger problem in relation to the collection of garbage, which then further compromises the health of our country, but we have heard nothing from the Honourable Member in relation to these issues here today and I think these are issues that must be of concern to every single Barbadian. We cannot speak to the debushing of vacant lots when the Government has the wherewithal through the legislative means to go after private landowners and not to be in this Honourable Chamber addressing the lands that are owned by the National Housing Corporation which are overgrown with bush, that have not been taken care of, that there has been no clear policy between residents and even the National Housing Corporation as to how to deal with these open spaces. Mr. Chairman, there are a lot of spaces in communities that residents would either like to maintain on their own or with the assistance of the National Housing Corporation but there is no clear policy being articulated by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy as it relates even to those open spaces within communities.

Mr. Chairman, I have the largest housing area in the country, there are several open spaces which the National Housing Corporation has neglected. There are several open spaces where there are wells that have been dug for several years that have not been cleaned by the Ministry of the Environment and Drainage, so that the debushing of open lots is but one concern in a community where there are several other environmental issues that this Administration would need to address, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I have had one case in the constituency of St. Michael South East of which I am so far aware, where a young lady would have been the subject of, I believe, the Zika virus and would have contacted the microcephaly which was passed onto her twin girls. I believe she was the subject of a recent newspaper article, but I have seen firsthand the effect of failing to intervene at

the national level to ensure that things like debushing and the clearing of litter are done in this country.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes left in which to conclude.

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Chairman, we may scoff at the issue of spending money on debushing or on the clearing of drains but when it presents a health problem for unborn children or for children who are then born in this country, whose families are then not provided with the necessary resources to be able to look after their children, I am sure that the Minister of Health would appreciate that we need perhaps more than the \$4.6 million spent, because we have to have a backup programme in place for the persons who fall through the cracks who are affected by the diseases that they may have contracted, then only to pass onto their children. Mr. Chairman, whether it is simply clearing the area, I think that we have as a country to recognise that there are persons who may be affected who may not have been intended to be affected, and therefore programmes like these are needed. Mr. Chairman, I would hope that the Minister would clarify some of the issues raised in relation to the format of the programme so that certainly all Honourable Members on this side would have the benefit of sharing that certainly with our constituents as well. I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, I just want to briefly join this debate as the Ministry of Health seeks Parliament's approval to supplement their Estimate with \$4.6 million to activate the 16th programme of the Ministry of Health debushing programme, one which of course is needed at this time because it is necessary and vital, especially in the face of the rainfall that we have been experiencing over the last few months from the several systems that have affected Barbados in one way or the other. Of course, out of those torrents of rain that we have been experiencing recently, a number of areas across the length and breadth of Barbados have increased in their vegetation, occasioning, of course, the employment of those who would be involved in this debushing programme.

Mr. Chairman, because of the bushy areas illegal dumping has occurred in several areas, especially in the country areas. We have the spawning of the rodent population, infestation of mosquitoes and other vectors, and generally-speaking the deterioration of the general ambiance of the country and the environment. Mr. Chairman, in my area I can speak to the fact that we have had several cases of 'cow itch' which not only can affect children and adults but of course if you have outside

furniture the fiber can find themselves into that furniture and can present a very uncomfortable situation for you.

Mr. Chairman, of course, all this is occasioned by the neglect of properties, not only in the developed areas but also in areas such as the older villages and older communities. I can speak to areas in Bank Hall, in Royal Avenue areas especially such as Prince-of-Wales Road, King George Road, King Edward Road, Queen Mary Road, Queen Victoria Road and Buckingham Road, where there are about 20 vacant lots in those avenues, some of them owned by people who reside in Barbados, while some of them are owned by people outside of Barbados. We have always encouraged people, especially those who live outside of Barbados, to contract with some persons locally to have those lots cleaned regularly, because while they may be living outside of this jurisdiction and not experiencing directly the discomfort of having their lots that they own here in Barbados becoming overgrown with vegetation, yet their neighbours in these general areas have experience the discomfort of living next-door to those bush areas. Therefore I would make an appeal from the Floor of this Honourable House to those people who live outside of Barbados who own lots in Barbados to do something about keeping those lots relatively cleaned because of the discomfort that is presented by those overgrown lots.

Mr. Chairman, I have noticed in the Supplementary we are targeting some 1 400 lots in this year's programme. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East questioned whether or not constituencies that are now held by Members of Parliament for the Barbados Labour Party would be positively affected by this programme. Mr. Chairman, the last time I checked, "national" means relating to and belonging to the nation, so that if it is a national programme I would believe that the programme would touch, would impinge and would impact directly on all 30 constituencies, all 11 parishes, regardless whether or not they are represented by Members of Parliament for the Democratic Labour Party or the Barbados Labour Party.

Asides.

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, if the lots in St. Michael South East are affected negatively by overgrown vegetation... Certainly, I am inundated on a daily basis by letters from the candidate for the Democratic Labour Party in St. Michael South East. Mr. Chairman, every time I open my mail folder from my secretary, I am seeing a letter of some kind or the other under the letterhead of Mr. Rodney Grant, speaking in clear and unequivocal terms on the behalf of the people of St. Michael South East. Mr. Chairman, I have not seen any letter from the present Honourable Member for St. Michael South East so that again, like the City of Bridgetown, the

people in St. Michael South East are getting two Members of Parliament for the price of one.

Asides.

2.45 p.m.

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: ... Again, like the City, the people in St. Michael South East are getting two Members of Parliament for the price of one. We will continue to address the matters that are sent to us in a direct manner from the Member of Parliament-in-waiting. The Honourable Member for St. George South, who was the chief respondent to this Supplementary here in the Honourable House, claims that the \$4.6 million that we are asking for here in this Supplementary for the Ministry of Health is \$4.6 million-plus to feather the nest of the Democratic Labour Party's Administration. These things bother me, because how can a Government be coming to the Parliament legitimately asking for \$4.6 million to activate the 2017-2018 debushing programme? He could not constrain or restrain himself, he could not bridle himself, and then I am hearing that he did not mean to cast aspersions on the ruling Democratic Labour Party Administration. He is accusing us of feathering our nest but he is feathering his nest too in St. George South. I live in St. George South. Unhappily, I am a constituent of his, and he is feathering his nest. Every single Saturday he walked around St. George South with little Styrofoam containers of pudding-and-souse. Is he not feathering his nest? He is feathering his nest, going to every single house and insulting the members of that constituency by offering pudding-and-souse. Is he not feathering his nest, Mr. Chairman?

Asides.

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: If he is feathering his nest at the local level, why can this Government not feather their nest at the national level?

Asides.

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: He is feathering his nest but accusing us. Mr. Chairman, if this Democratic Labour Party is feathering its nest, we plead guilty. If it means that over 200 Bajans will be gainfully employed over the next few months, we say, "Yes, we are guilty". If we are guilty of every week, every fortnight or every month that the employees in this programme present themselves to the payroll office and get some money in their pockets, we say "Yes, we are feathering our nest." If every single week 200 or more Bajans can feed their families and spend some money in their village shops and in the supermarkets across the length and breadth of Barbados, we plead guilty to that too. At the end of the programme, if 1 400 lots across the 21-by-14-mile space of this country are cleaned, we plead

guilty to that too. We are feathering our nest. If at the end of the programme, truckers find work, bobcat workers find work and their multiplier effect is triggered in this economy, we say, "We are feathering our nest."

Aside.

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: If the boys on the block get work, and every young girl who is interested in working in this programme can find some kind of work and feed their families across the length and breadth of Barbados, well, we are feathering our nest.

Aside.

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: I really cannot get this understood. Everything you try in this country, everything that this Democratic Labour Party Administration tries, can fall out of favour with the Barbados Labour Party and their operatives. We plead guilty to that, because the Honourable Member for St. George South is feathering his nest in St. George South up and down across the constituency.

Mr. Chairman, I am approaching this debate from the point of view of not only what it can do to the environment, but also from the point of view....

Asides.

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, Project Oasis is an abandoned project. As a matter of fact, far from the oasis it was a mirage on the part of the Barbados Labour Party. The fellows got the things without any underlying training or any kinds of workshops to push them in the direction of entrepreneurship. It was a plain, unvarnished Election gimmick of placing weed-whackers, lawn mowers and other implements in the hands of people who were not trained. The fellows saw an easy way of making some money and they quickly disposed of them. Ask them, Mr. Chairman; the Honourable Members on the other side. Not a single weed-whacker, lawn mower or other implement for cleaning the environment can be found in the possession of any of the people who were recipients of those things back then. Not a single one. It was a mirage; that is all it was.

Asides.

Hon. S.D. BLACKETT: Mr. Chairman, I am approaching this debate from the point of view of the employment angle, because this programme very much dovetails with the programme that was implemented from my Ministry. It is a little bit in abeyance at this time, but I am going to encourage the officers in the Welfare Department to reactivate this programme as soon as possible, especially now we are coming to the middle of the financial year. This is the Poverty Reduction and

Empowerment Programme, better known as the Welfare-to-Work programme. Do not forget, Mr. Chairman, this programme spawned the NEEP (National Environmental Enhancement Programme) that was administered out of the Ministry of the Environment, and those workers who were involved in that programme came out of the Welfare-to-Work programme because we had been trying at that time to wean those able-bodied workers off welfare into productive work in order to ensure that they earned a living for themselves.

We sought at the time to transition those able-bodied workers, those clients, into productive and profitable jobs that would enable them and empower them at the end of the process. Of all of those able-bodied workers who were up to the task of being weaned off welfare into the Poverty Reduction and Empowerment Programme, some of them of course migrated across to the NEEP administered by the Ministry of the Environment. Mr. Chairman, this programme was a national extension of what we were doing in the Ministry of Social Care, and we offered programmes to train those workers who were desirous of being trained in certain disciplines to put them in a position and to equip them so that they could migrate into more productive work. Things like childcare were offered, care of the elderly, the profession of housekeeping, nail technology, hairdressing and barbering; all of those programmes were administered, and I am going to show this Honourable House that we will soon be reactivating those programmes so that the average person out there in the community who is desirous of being involved in these programmes can once again be afforded the opportunity.

Mr. Chairman, I have every confidence that this national debushing programme, which will be activated very shortly, will bring some relief to the general environment and, of course, enhance the ambience of this country in which we live. I am also sure that we on this side will do everything in our power to ensure that these programmes exist, of course, with the adequate financing. Mr. Chairman, I am obliged.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Asides.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I sat and I smiled very sweetly to hear the last Honourable Minister speak about the NEEP and the Welfare-to-Work programme, and I would just like to ask through you, Sir...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, please refrain from speaking across the Floor. Thank you.

Miss C.Y. FORDE: That is the norm and I thank you, Sir. How many persons were trained in the NEEP and

the Welfare-to-Work programme? When did it stop and when will it be reactivated in this harsh economic time when people want employment? I would just like to add that Project Oasis carried out a number of other activities beyond the landscaping and so on.

2.54 p.m.

It also dealt with the nail technology, the multimedia training for young people and so on and so forth but this evening is the time for me, Sir, to really refer to first indicate support for the Resolution because I believe that Barbados is now in the worse condition when it comes to overgrown bush and deterioration of our roads and services for the first time ever in my life of more than six decades. Sir, I am saying this because Barbados needs to be cleaned up, for local first and for the tourism sector after. Sir, I support what was said by other Honourable Ministers on this side to enforce laws regarding keeping or lots and our properties in the country clean. Sir, in the past it never happened because plantation owners who owned a lot of the land made sure that head rows were always properly trimmed especially at corners and junctions for easy passage and at that time, Sir, you know there was not much traffic on the road particularly, there were pedestrians.

Mr. Speaker, I also believe and I know that that Government is the largest delinquent landowner, where bush is growing all over the place including buildings and we see it from St. Michael to the rest of Barbados but I cannot leave out churches as well because there are some denominations that also own large tracks of land and without being cultivated for the last 25 years and 30 years and there are some businesses that have land that are not cleaning them and those property owners have reneged on their responsibility on making sure Barbados is clean. I can only speak with a measure of authority when it comes to plantation owners and so on clearing head rows because I have lived in rural Barbados all my life and I know of the hush-hush grass and how that was cut and cleared and the sugar cane that when the wind blew them over in the road, the plantation owners got the laborers to tie them back. Sir, it is a disgrace that a lot of the plantation owners and other business people who have large tracks of land are saving it to build houses and until they get the permission to build the houses, they are not looking after manicuring those properties. Sir, they are oblivious and they do not care what happens to the ordinary residents who have to walk through these lonesome roads that are covered in bush and the challenges that these people have to face on a daily basis. These overgrown hedges, road and plots are also causing very serious accidents because when you come to the junction at Content, or to the junction at Fortress Hill or Barker's corner or many of the other junctions that you would see in the parish of St. Thomas, there is no clear passage, you have to blow your horns and we have some

young lunatics and some old ones too, who are driving so quickly and causing some very serious accident and the most hurtful thing is that many of them have not got any car insurance or they have not paid any road tax and some of them do not even have any licences. We have an example of that last week. Sir, we are breaching every rule in the book and it is the worse kind of culture I have seen in my whole life especially this new product of citizens who seem to think they can do what they feel like and nobody can tell them what to do, breaching every law. Mr. Chairman, I can share with the Honourable Minister of Public Works some of the information I have because it startles me as to what is happening in the system and on our road.

Mr. Chairman, I always opposed the transfer of the Drainage Unit from the Ministry of Public Works onto the National Conservation Commission. We were hearing that Barbados would never flood again when it happened in 2008 and it pains me Mr. Chairman to see that our conditions are now worse than ever before. The roads are dangerous and the areas are not fit for people to walk or traversed and despite the numerous telephone calls, the letters of which I have about 20 to drop into the mail box, the announcements on the radio asking for certain roads to be closed off because of the flooding sometimes for six months, as is Vacluse Road and, Sir, nothing is being done. All we hear is that there is a lack of resources not even to get the pot holes done that lead to some of the same areas where human beings live and have no choice but to live there. We are not getting the support, we hear lack of funds, equipment, staff and so on and so forth.

Mr. Chairman, the environmental protection officers do the best they can. I can speak to the ones at the Eunice Gibson Polyclinic, what we call Warrens but there is a need for the hiring of more. Why must we wait until the health inspectorate members retire and there is a large vacuum then, then to come out and say that we need health inspectors. I saw the Honourable Minister of Finance speak about custom officers but unless we have a proper succession plan in Barbados, we cannot do anywhere and everybody cannot do the work of a custom officers as everybody cannot do the work of being a teacher, police officer or as a health inspector if there is no adequate training. Sir, I think that it is hurtful what we are experiencing. I commend those residents and companies that assist in the clearing of certain lots but it is beyond their ability at times to be able to do it because of the heavy cost. It is so uncomfortable a situation, Mr. Chairman, that when we see those lots that are unattended how they excite the criminals.

Mr. Chairman, we heard about the vector challenges, the illegal dumping and now we have a lot of persons, some mechanics, who have got so many cars around on open lots that you cannot even see the cars and other vehicles in there. Sir, they too are creating hazards for our

flow of water whenever it rains. There are health problems and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is inundated every day where persons who have to go to get the necessary medication and so on as well as the polyclinics as a result of what is happening from the mosquitoes, rats and other rodents.

Mr. Chairman, we know of robberies where people's houses are being broken into because of where they live and the heavy bush and foliage around them. Sir, when you are passing by you do not know who is following you especially at night because our buses are at zero in Sturges and those communities. The residents have gone to great cost, some of them because everybody cannot afford it but they are putting in security systems, cameras, wrought iron bars and other electrical devices much to the detriment of their pockets. They are borrowing the money and using their credit cards because they want to be safe and, Mr. Chairman, who does not want to be safe?

Mr. Chairman, I think that it is so sad when I know that Canefield road has got some river tamarind trees growing on the hedge that are collapsing every time you get a high wind and MTW has to come and cut it or beg somebody to lend them a chain saw. Sir, this is wrong, or the road is bumpy and people can hardly walk because of the roots that are penetrating those areas. I think it is really sad in the way our watercourses are clog up. I passed Jack-in-the-Box day before evening and there is garbage on the road on the bridge, Mr. Chairman, and you do not have any vision more than three feet ahead of you because of the overgrowth again so I welcome this particular programme and I can also say that I support the sustainability of the programme over the many years that it was in existence. I got very sad to see that it had stopped the year before the last and the year before that.

Mr. Chairman, the residents, ordinary people looked out for it and, Sir, they are looking for it now more than ever because they saw it as seasonable work from between I believe 1994 and 1995 up until 2008 when the programme stopped and they are told to go to the Member of Parliament but what are they going to come to the Member of Parliament for if they want to get work here now when we know it is going to go into File 13. Mr. Chairman, member on the other side are talking about a candidate that just came to the fore, four or five months ago. We have been trying hard and we have been calling and I do not think it is the correct procedure, I do not try it because I go through the Permanent Secretary and the other leaders in the Ministry and very seldom would I say to an Honourable Minister because I know what the parameters are when it comes to payment and so on that it is the Permanent Secretary and whoever is leading those departments.

Mr. Chairman, all Barbadians are reeling under this pressure. I believe that the conservation and preservation of our country is paramount. I have a challenge to see the decay in our system and I have a heavy heart knowing that across the length and breadth of Barbados and in particular and in particularly St. Thomas and St. George, and other aspects of St. Joseph and St. Andrew where we had sugar cane growing, all kinds of ground provisions and so on and now everybody is abandoning those projects. Sequence 19

I agree with what was said by the other Honourable Members, we must feed ourselves, we must grow our own crops and not only feed ourselves but export some of it and, Sir, that is the area you are in and you forever speaking to the issue but to keep the land lying fallow and nothing happening in it except to confuse the rest of the society, I think, Sir, it is wrong. I can tell you, Sir, I can talk from Dunscombe to Highland Canefields, Sturges, Lion Castle, Jukes, Vaucuse, Content, Hillaby, Highland, Mount Hillaby, Grand View, Shop Hill, Clifton Hill, Springvale, Bloomsbury, to name a few of the regular traditional villages and then the Warrens Development, Arthur Seat, Rock Hall, Millennium Heights, Jackson, High Park, Cane Garden Heights, Cane Garden Garden Park, Welches Terrace, Welches Heights and so on, every area, Mr. Chairman, that we traverse. I am not going into St. Thomas central at all because that is another story too but I am talking about the good arable land that are in our parishes, not just the constituency of St. Thomas, our parishes that are lying fallow and hardly anything is happening. I want, Sir, to indicate, I spoke with a lady this morning for almost half an hour because the houses in the community are being ravaged. I have a neighbour, five break-ins in the neighbourhood where I live in the country, in one day, thousands of dollars and the police officers, they are drained too because of resources so they cannot even come back to see the camera footage. When a person is going to lose \$50 000 or \$60 000 in merchandise or whatever it is in the house, it is hurtful and a lot of that is to do with how houses are blocked off. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke in his own way -- and I can only call it that -- but I want him to tell this Honourable Chamber how much money was spent through the Ministry of Housing and Lands to clear those housing lots that were started under the Honourable Member for St. Philip North in Constant, The River, Lancaster Phase 1, Lancaster Phase 2, Parish Land and others because I know that is more than \$1 million and nobody is living in those as yet. Some of them have not even been offered to anybody, they are still there empty but the Honourable Minister had to spend millions of dollars to clear around them and we are living in houses and we cannot even look out of our back door because we are now helping to clean up each other's environs. I call on the business houses to help out in this respect because many of us would like to do more community work but because we do not have the heavy duty equipment, it is an impossible task, Mr. Chairman. I

would rather have supported a \$10 million going towards the cleaning of Barbados to make it the gem we knew it had been than some of the money that this Government has spent hairy-fairy and you cannot even see the returns. I know that the summer camps have almost been abandoned because this year they were the worst ever in the history of summer camps here. I know that the David Thompson Tournament is going on again and that has had millions of dollars put into it over the years. I know that the Constituency Councils are still functioning in their own way but they are not volunteering or coming out and cleaning any community, at least not in St. Thomas, and I would rather some of the funds, Mr. Chairman, being spent be given to this project. I would support a \$10 million. We had \$10 million or more for our independence celebrations and I agree to an extent that we should have had some money. We had \$7 million or \$8 million going toward CARIFESTA, some of that I agree to but when it comes to cleaning our environs and making sure our people are safe and have good health and not the leptospirosis and the Chikungunya and all that. I suffered from Chikungunya, Mr. Chairman, in 2015 and I hear that you used to repeat so I was so sick again last year and again earlier this year for about five weeks and it was not because my environs are dirty but it is because all around people are unable to pay for it, or whatever to clean up. It is difficult when people are coming and dumping their garbage on your property. When our water courses are clogged, as is the case in St. Thomas many times, as is the case in many other environments, I believe that some more money could have been put to it, and I would like the Honourable Minister to indicate where the \$1.5 million or whatever was left from the \$3.whatever million, where that went because to put it back into the system, when the financial year starts at 1st April, I believe that more lots could have been cleared and I would like to know if the Honourable Minister would give us a further breakdown as to these locations that Warrens is responsible for because every day in canvassing, every day in the bus, in the church, wherever I go and wherever others go, people are saying, the lot next to me, the open space, this thing and the next thing, with the growth of the trees. I went to Christ Church East, Mr. Chairman, when we had the heavy rains a month ago and I saw large tracks of land that had in massive trees, the place was so unkempt in some areas. I know the Minister feathers his own nest sometimes so his parks get clean and tidy. When I make the request for the ones in St. Thomas, I am treated with scant respect I do not even get a response to say, we acknowledge your letter. It is not about writing letters because if the Honourable Member does not write her letters in the way to the Minister, I write mine to the Permanent Secretary and so on, and I get no response. I did not even get a response for the CAHILL letter, furthermore anything else and to my mind, CAHILL was a massive thing with nearly \$500 million but I did not get a response. I am asking as I close, Mr. Chairman, thank you, that the people of St. Thomas who have made this seasonal work

over the years and still come back asking will get a chance because everybody living in the parish is not a political person and as you know me, Mr. Chairman, I do not separate people with politics. Once there is a need I believe they need the help and so many came from Beautify Barbados and so were sent home from St. Thomas, they want work because local people love to work, they do not want any hand out, they want a hand up. This project will give them a hand up to get to prepare themselves for the university that this Government cause them to pay a lot of money for, to prepare them for the Barbados Community College, to prepare them for everything else they have to do. They want to work honestly and I am pleading for the people of St. Thomas as well to get an opportunity to go and do their craft the way they can because many of them say, "I love dealing with bush and I want to work."

With those comments, Mr. Chairman, I would wish to conclude. Thank you.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to add a few things to the debate. The first thing is to speak to the issue of the resources. I was not, unfortunately, here to hear all of the presentation of the Honourable Minister relative to the Supplementary which was sought last year and provided and I know some questions have been raised relative to the expenditure of those resources. The Minister, I believe, will give the details as we go on and as he wraps up the debate relative to that. Just to say that you get a supplementary and once the programme starts depending on the level of execution of the programme over the space of time that the moneys have been allocated for would determine how the spend flows so if you are given \$5 million or \$3 million for a programme it does not mean that all \$3 million might be spent in its entirety. Before that Head expires, as you know, during the period leading up to the Estimates, Heads die, expenditures are cut off for all intents and purposes and unless, under the accrual system invoices have already been entered into the system, as cost incurred, that expenditure would die a natural death and has to be re-voted again so I do not think it is a question of lethargy or inappropriateness by the Ministry, it is just that all of the resources were not expended at the time when the head would have died and sufficient invoices would not have been entered into the system to allow for that expenditure to be considered to be spent and accounted for so that is the reason why you may see that little differential between what is now being asked.

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What we do say to people going into the Estimates in March is that they should not... We try to get people not to

load up Heads and subheads as have been the case particularly with discretionary expenditures. With expenditures that we know are going to be spent definitely you put all in or you put in as much as you want on your best estimate and if it runs out then you come back for a supplementary. If it is a discretionary expenditure, to try for expenditure management and control, you indicate to ministries and departments not to overload the Head with money when you do not have a high degree of certainty that the expenditure would actually happen because it would deny some other programme in the Government from getting those resources that may be able to spend them because what we usually have is that when you get around to January and February and you do a review of resources spent, you see ministries have a lot of money locked in paper-wise in terms of it being allocated but when you question them or when they present the evidence it is clear that the financial year is going to come to an end and that expenditure will never take place, and that is why we instituted a mid-year review which we are doing now as I speak, last week and this week, to help ministries to go through to identify how their programmes have been running, what the levels of expenditures have been and how going forward they expect those resources to be spent. In some instances some people galloped along and they get through well and they are right on top of the spend. Others are slightly ahead, some are behind and some still have not even gotten off the ground and we sit down with them and go through now the point that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is making in relation to the releases of money. Now, that is an entirely different point because that is a cash issue. Remember we run an accrual system of expenditure, so you can put anything in the expenditure book, this is what you expect to spend and we approve it in Parliament. When the time comes however and the Treasury does not have the actual cash on hand, it is not that the Treasury does not want to release it but that they may not have all of the cash to hand that they can release and therefore they would release some of what they have and as we say hold back the rest until the cash flow is in a position to ensure that they can get those resources. In most instances by the end of the financial year it kind of balance itself out, however, in some instances money is left on the table but once we see it in the accrual system you have committed, the person has provided the good or service and you have invoiced it and put it in the SmartStream we try to find a way to ensure that it is settled, so that is the case.

Mr. Chairman, we told the ministry for a programme like the de-bushing that since it is discretionary, well this part of it is discretionary, you put in a small amount, you do some de-bushing, you look to see what happens with both the revenue and indeed what is happening in the country at the time and then later in the year if necessary you come back to us and we will top it up and provide additional resources to do more. This has been the case for years.

De-bushing programmes have usually started anywhere around the middle of the year, somewhere around July/August or so as we anticipate the raining season coming in and they have tended to run from then until around December and then they would cut off for about six months and then they would run again. That is how de-bushing programmes have always been run. When we came to office we found that there were about four or five different types of de-bushing programmes. The Urban Development Commission had one, the Rural Development Commission had one, there was Beautify Barbados, the Ministry of the Environment had one, the National Conservation Commission did some but the National Conservation Commission has its own mandate, and the National Housing Corporation had their own thing for their estates and so forth and so on. There were programmes all over and it was a little untidy to be honest and we felt given the circumstances and the crush for resources that we should do a far more targeted programme for de-bushing and this is how we ended up with this more concerted programme directed and managed through the ministry to bring some consolidation to the programme, and I think that it has been relatively successful albeit resources have been tight.

The other point I want to make is in relation to the issue about - and I hear the Honourable Member for St. George South making this point - the NEEP workers or the Drainage Unit workers and the Beautify Barbados workers. It really is a false comparison in terms of cost because as I said before there were so many programmes to which moneys were allocated it actually worked out to much more than \$12 million. It went, in fact, above \$25 million across all of the thing, close to \$30 million, so it is not a matter of you laying off the workers from these various programmes as we unfortunately had to do and then we are now spending more money. We are actually spending considerably less money than if we had had a broader civil establishment.

I think if there is a criticism to be made about the fact that we had to retrench those workers is that under the NEEP Programme which was developed by this Administration we actually utilised human skills through the Welfare-to-Work Programme. We accept that as an honest criticism because we would have taken those persons off of the welfare roll and have them in a constructed piece of employment and they were able to provide for themselves and their families while other persons who were perhaps more in need of the programmes of the welfare and so forth were able to come through and get support, so that is a legitimate criticism which we can accept and we do not run away from it.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: The NEEP Programme came to an end. The moneys ran out and we just did not renew the money, that is the thing. They were not laid off. We made provision for it because it never existed before. It had a running life and at the end of that running life we took the decision obviously for fiscal reasons not to...

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Yes, some of them are back on but some of them have reintegrated into the private sector, some of them are in the Adopt-A-Kilometre Programme as well and other parts of the society, so not all of them have gone back on.

The other point is a more general point relative to the issue of de-bushing people's lots. I think the Honourable Member for St. James Central made a relatively useful point in this particular regard as I have heard other Honourable Members saying it. The truth is, at the end of the day the Government has overall responsibility for the health of a country and if situations come to the stage where Government has to intervene and spend resources to protect the global good of the country relative to health and security then the Government has to do it but we must accept and I think project from this Parliament, and I agree with the Honourable Member for St. James Central, that people have to take individual responsibility for something. I mean you buy a lot, you keep it there running into bush, you confuse your neighbours, you fret everybody and then you expect that the Government is to come and clean it up. I know the Honourable Member for Christ Church West made a very impassioned proposal that we institute a dollar per square foot charge. The lawyers would have to look at that and see how that squares especially since the Honourable Member for St. George South said to put it on their land tax bill and all of that. We have to look at it and see how that works out. I do not know. I am not a lawyer. I do not know how that works out legally.

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Mr. Chairman, the point is that you have to have...When you reach the stage where you have to say to persons or to go to the law to try to browbeat persons into accepting what should be a personal responsibility for their own lots...Mr. Chairman, open spaces belonging to the Crown then the Crown should take responsibility for those. State agencies who have land, like that of the National Housing Corporation and so forth and so on should take responsibility for the maintenance of their own lands, but individual landowners must accept that they have a responsibility to themselves, to their communities, to their neighbours and so forth and so on to do their part, to ensure that they keep their lots or whatever in a state and condition where it does not become a health or security hazard to either themselves or to other members of the community.

Mr. Chairman, I think that is what we have to project, otherwise Government would forever be spending money cleaning up private lots, running about behind people trying to get back money and stuff like that, it has to come from a more evolved consciousness that the society requires you to accept at least that minimum responsibility for your own self and your community. Mr. Chairman, other than that, I commend this Resolution to this Honourable House and would hope that we are able, in some small way, to ensure that we make this contribution to cleaning up our environment in these rainy months ahead. I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much for engaging this 'wild' boy, as I was described by the Honourable Member for St. James South, who feel some sense of comfort in referring to people from a social background as thugs, vagabonds and thieves, but when the Honourable Member is looking for a vote these people become the most significant people in guaranteeing his return to the House of Assembly. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member can only be successful in this manner if the Honourable Member perceives these people to be ignorant of this reality, Sir, to tell the people exactly what type of human-being the people in Haynesville keep supporting.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy that the young people in our different communities, especially the unskilled, and I also know that there are some who would be part of the academic core of our land who would have to find comfort in the offering of these jobs, because the stability in the unemployment market has been so disrupted as a consequence of the manner in which this country has been governed, that many young men and women of academic value cannot find employment to suit their academic qualifications, so that probably this is an opportunity at least so that they can get a dollar or two in order to survive through these difficult times.

Mr. Chairman, in all this I would hope... I am not as impressed as many others. Of course, I love to know that ordinary people are getting work but I am not as impressed as many others because on the last occasion that there was an expansive and intensive debushing programme, I could not have gotten one job in the constituency of St. Michael East and the Government has found a way to justify this intervention at this time because of the fate of nature. Mr. Chairman, the rationale for having this sounds very good because at this time, as a consequence of all that has happened across the Caribbean with hurricanes and so on, one believes that efforts must be made in order to clean up their mess that we have had to endure for over the last four

years: lots of bush, blocked drains across the country, overflowing well, with debris floating into these wells.

Mr. Chairman, obviously it is a justification to say these things but it is what I call a Jonestown model. Mr. Chairman, do you know what Jimmy Jones did in Jonestown, Guyana? He made the people believe that the brew which he had mixed was a divine provision, that it was something good for them and therefore he had confused their minds so much that they did not understand that that was the last moment for them on the face of the earth and therefore Jimmy Jones wiped out an entire village in Jonestown. Mr. Chairman, I know that this is the eve of an election and that in order to clown, to disguise - and I wish I could say and to deceive -- at this point in time many different things are going to occur, people who are at a great disadvantage would be given apple pie, not that they are not in need of it but that there were latent sides behind all of this. Mr. Chairman, I am not going to be fooled, I would expect...

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Well, you can tell anybody that but this perspective must be heard as long as the Chairman is willing to accept me.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Chairman, I heard all kind of big talk about getting two Members of Parliament for the price of one and all kinds of things. I understand how one maneuvers in politics, I understand what happens in the western world in this type of politics on the eve of an election. I understand that well, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Chairman, I want to suggest a more noble approach to this, that if we have our community oriented approach to it, then all of us can feel a sense of comfort knowing that each pocket across the country, knowing that young men and young women in all the different constituencies -- small portions of it because I do not know how many people would be employed as a result of this sum of \$4.63 million.

3.34 p.m.

I believe that if you apply that community model and place the communities into zones, especially at this time when there is a need to make some level of adaptation to what is happening in a contemporary period, then I know that the people's representative of St. Michael East would be able to consult with the Minister on giving him that portion of support that is deserving to the constituency which I represent. I am not happy speaking in general

terms or speaking about national issues and a fund being put at the disposal of Barbadian young people when I know, based on the attitude and the things that people say in here and outside of this Chamber, that it is unlikely that I will get a job for a man in Licorish Village.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Or that I will get a job for a man in the Ivy or in Tichbourne or in Haggatt Hall. I have a whole body of people in my community, large pockets of people unemployed, and the only reason that they do not get any work is because the Minister from St. James South clearly indicated that nobody from St. Michael East must have work because the representative is a rogue.

Aside.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: I understand the name of the game, the paramountcy of the party, the paramountcy of the individual.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: I am very concerned, Sir, about how we treat to these important issues. I am very concerned, and I am hoping that the Minister would also demonstrate some level of lucidity and not be influenced by certain people in this society about how this particular sum of money ought to be spent. You cannot be making people believe that you are doing something which is righteous. I am not saying that it is sinister, but sometimes people have a justifiable reason to be suspicious about what it is about this coming at this specific time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very concerned about that. I know these petit bourgeois people. I know these petit bourgeois people well. I know people who build massive swimming pools around their houses and paint up their houses as if they are on Walt Disney Land. The aesthetics are so important to them. It makes them have a sense of importance.

Aside.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, I have to protect these people. I have been privileged before to hear these men speaking about their origins and their fathers being fishermen but on the outside of buildings and institutions, they have Mercedes Benz costing over \$400 000 with a lot of nickel around it, and telling people on the inside that they came from poor origins and still are poor today. I have to keep defending these people. Mr. Chairman, I respect the time you have allowed me to speak on this one. Is it 15 minutes, Sir? If there is any extra that you have given me, I am grateful. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I come back in this debate to make a few additional points.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, you only have about ten minutes.

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: Ten minutes?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: Fifteen minutes?

Aside.

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: Okay. I would just touch. I want to defend the Drainage Division. Mr. Chairman, any time you have to denigrate a country, denigrate the character of an individual, or denigrate a community in an attempt to elevate yourself, it speaks more to your character than the character of the person you defile. There is a verse which says that in order to be exalted, you must first humble yourself, and I believe it is important that Barbadians understand that this mad rush to smear people and to call the country the worst ever is an attempt to elevate other people. If that is the basis upon which you choose to elevate yourself, your fall from grace will be faster and harder than you can ever imagine.

Mr. Chairman, can you imagine this? I am hearing for the first time that Barbados is so nasty and so bushy. Mr. Chairman, I walked as a youth from Cane Garden in St. Andrew to Mount All in St. Andrew just on the outskirts of White Hill for most of my young life. To get up that hill, you would have to sometimes weave yourself through bush overgrowing the streets to get up there, and now all of a sudden I am hearing that Barbados is now the worst ever. Let me speak to the Drainage Division. Now, Mr. Chairman, the Drainage Division has as a mandate and said as a mandate, April to August 2017, the cleaning of 620 man-holes, 15 814 concrete drains, 425 wells, 403 culverts, 15 outfall drains, 773 earthen drains, 8 470 debushing projects, and 18 215 weeding projects where you weed communities and the like. To date, Mr. Chairman, the Drainage Division has completed in most cases 100 per cent of that work, 85 per cent of concrete drains have been cleaned, 84 per cent of wells cleaned, 100 per cent of culverts, as the target was established, already cleaned; 24 per cent of the outfalls, 11 per cent of the earthen drains, over 100 per cent of the debushing projects, 100 per cent of the weeding projects, and the work goes on. I am saying, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that to come in here and to throw hogwash on the Drainage Division is a disservice to the men and women out there working every day, and that does not include the number of jobs they responded to as a

result of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma; the number of situations where there were water settlements, Mr. Chairman.

Aside.

Dr. the Hon. D.S. LOWE: Do not talk about Headley's Land that was corrected by this Government through the Drainage Division, and since then there has not been a single complaint. Down Hometown is the same thing; where every time the rain fell, down Hometown was flooded.

3.43 p.m.

You could not get down the streets but now you have work being done.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying, look, there are concerns, and there is more work to be done but to come in here and give the impression that this is the worse state of Barbados speaks more to the character of the persons who espouse that view than to the character of the country, that is the point I am making.

Mr. Chairman, we also talked about the NEET Programme. There were no layoffs. The NEET Programme was established for a time period and when the time period came to an end, the Minister of Finance did not have the resources to continue the programme and the programme was not continued. The Beautify Barbados Programme was designed to be the same but because of poor management it ended up being a continuous, indefinite programme that ran the Government into problems with the compensation of the workers. We are not suggest that the workers should not get their just due because they should I heard the the Honourable Member for St. Thomas talk about her going through Christ Church East after the hurricane and seeing big trees but what the Honourable Member should tell the house is that she really does not go through Christ Church East. She paid a visit and you know that the Queens visit is more frequent than hers. She paid a visit there and I should also say that she made promises that she did fulfill but I am not going there now because there will be a time for that so do not pay the chatter any mind. Sir, you know when you park your radio too close to a Spanish station, if you go too far left you run into a Spanish station and if you go too far right you run into a Spanish station but sometimes it is just best to leave it on the Spanish station and let it run because I do not pay that Honourable Member and mind.

Mr. Chairman, finally there is talk about the SSA and collection. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East makes complaints about the SSA and about garbage collection. Sir, the Pine is a hot spot and everybody knows that and the services make a special effort to ensure that the skips are clear.

Mr. Chairman, listen to me. If the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East makes a visit only when the skip is full, I cannot blame the SSA, I have to blame her because I know and I can call names of individuals...

Asides.

Hon. Dr. D. LOWE: Sir, they do not want you to tell the truth and I understand that but the truth must be heard. I say to the The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East that if she has specific concerns to write the SSA like how Rodney Grant is doing.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. What is the point of order.

MISS S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. I am always in the constituency of St. Michael South East and I have had the opportunity to speak with members of the Sanitation Service Authority who have indicated to me that the skip collection, it is a private skip I believe that is placed in the area but because of the volume of garbage that is sometimes dumped in the skip that they do not have the resources in order to have an increased frequency into the community so they have made the excuse that persons from outside come into the community and are dumping in the area. I have simply asked the question: In the same way that we offer rewards to people for all kinds of things surely members in the community know who the persons are from the outside who come into the community.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have clarified the point. The Honourable Member please proceed.

Hon. Dr. D. LOWE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am saying here today without any fear of contradiction that the Sanitation Service Authority pays special attention to St. Michael South East because of the volume of waste and really, it is not because of consumption habits, it is just because a lot of people live in the area and just as Mr. Grants writes the Ministry almost weekly and calls for assistance the parliamentary representative can do the same thing and get the results that Mr. Grant is getting because Mr. Grant organise tours, he gets the Drainage Division, he gets the works Ministry and he get the SSA, and he gets people to go there. Sir, you know why because he is a true representative of the people.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

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

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE Mr. Chairman, just very briefly I rise to close this debate and to thank Honourable Members for their contribution. It is very interesting to hear how the arguments ebb and flow and of course, the Honourable Members on the other side kept saying that what they were saying now was because in their estimation elections is six months away, or three months away, or whatever they think it is away but I reflected on and I quickly peruse the Minutes of the debate which took place last year and then with elections a year plus, whatever they anticipate away, the same thing was said about feathering your bed, that nobody from their constituency was being employed and that no lots from their areas were being clean. Sir, the truth will survive all of this and I am sure there will be opportunities to speak to it.

Mr. Chairman, I agree with the Honourable Member who just sat down. The The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East needs to take a leaf out of the book of the person referred to by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East but if she does not want to do that because she does not like that Honourable gentlemen, she could take a page out of the book of the Honourable Member for City. The Honourable Member for City can boast that he has about 150 applications in the Ministry of Health for work in this debushing programme. The Honourable Member is smiling. He writes the Ministry when he has a need and we engage him but the The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East for some reason believes that she should be consulted on these matters, she needs to be able to participate in the design of the project of who works. I think she is missing some of the elements of political representation 101, and she needs to go and consult with her father for instance and allow him to take her through the steps of how you go about representing people.

Mr. Chairman, I do not like to respond too much on what the Honourable Member for St. Thomas says because when the Honourable Member spoke I had to go and dig up the pages of the last epidemiologic report that we would have considered in September because we do a management every week. She said she had dengue about 10 times and all the people she knows had Zika and I asked what is going on?

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

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Miss C. Y. FORDE: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. The Honourable Member cannot say I spoke about receiving dengue 10 times. The Honourable Member needs to go and clean Oistins and the sea that he bathe in

that had a whole lot of sewerage and I think he is spouting it now out of his mouth.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I am going to ask the team at the Ministry to publish and up-to-date summary of the incidence of these diseases in Barbados because there is no indication that there was this Chikungunya. I thought it was dengue but it look like she had Chikungunya. If we give the Honourable Member enough time she will get Zika too.

Asides.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I am I going to ask the team at the Ministry in all seriousness because this is a serious matter. You cannot have a Member of Parliament giving the impression that there is this outbreak of disease in the country when the facts speak to something else so I am going to ask the promotional unit at the Ministry of Health to publish the latest data going back three years of the statistics relating to the incidence of these viruses in Barbados and when that is published the Honourable Member can bring the publication into the Honourable Chamber and then speak to the facts and stop trying to create panic and anxiety in the community. The facts do not indicate that there is any outbreak of any of the diseases I spoke to and that the incidence of these diseases. From time-to-time there may be a little blip on the scale but there is no indicate of outbreak of disease so we have to conclude, Sir, that the approach being taken in the Ministry of Health in conjunction with related Ministry actions in the Sanitation Service Authority, the Department of Drainage, the Ministry of Transport and Works and all the related ministries, the approach that is being taken is headed in the correct direction, there is absolutely no need for any anxiety on the part of the Barbadian society and I will publish ask the Ministry to publish the data in a full page or half page paid advertisement so that the public will have an opportunity to see what is going on and then we would put to lie some of the exaggerations enunciated by the Honourable Member.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to, as I said, thank Honourable Members for their contributions. The ideas being put forward will certainly be borne in mind, those that can be borne in mind, and certainly I look forward to executing this programme with the team at the Ministry at the very earliest opportunity subsequent to this consideration here today. The Members on This Side, although they have reservations, have indicated that they support the Resolution so it is really only left to me, Sir, to move formally that Head 23 Stand Part.

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

The question that Head 23 Stand Part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 21

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

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, Head 21 deals with legal fees as it relates to Head 75 for a legal matter that arose between Barrack Construction Limited and National Housing Corporation. These came out of a decision by Sir Denys Williams who was appointed as sole arbitrator in 2004 which saw the completion of the matter in 2006 where Barrack Construction Limited was awarded the sum of \$34 490 518 together with interest at the rate of 10 per cent per annum from July 25, 2002 to September 2006. As you know, Sir, this matter was settled only a couple years ago and as was stated previously, it dated back as far as 2002 even though the construction would have started as far back as August 1998. Along with the award to Barrack Construction Limited there was an award of costs of the sum of \$5 897 250 that was not paid at the time, and then there were other legal battles which saw the total settlement amounting to \$74 702 042 of which the National Housing Corporation would have turned over the property at Warrens to Barrack Construction Limited which was valued at \$60 million which meant that the addition cost would have been \$14 702 042 that the Government would have paid out in cash.

There were a series of lawyer operating for Barrack Construction Limited in this particular case and the matter that we are dealing with today, Sir, is that the we are dealing with a sum, and total legal fees for two sets of attorneys in which one attorney, Sir Richard Cheltenham, Q.C., would have been awarded \$9 571 797 and the other attorney, Sir Maurice King, would have been awarded \$6 159 875 of \$2 million would have been paid previously. The balance now is \$13 731 672. Along with this, there would have been other attorneys by the name of Mr. Douglas Trotman and Sir Trevor Carmichael, Q.C., who would have followed Sir Richard Cheltenham, Q.C., in representing the Barrack Construction Limited. Sir, this is a matter that has been pending for a long time and in these economic times, this Government has had to find these sums to pay this large bill.

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This has nothing to do with the previous construction cost because when one considers that the previous construction cost would have been in the range of \$77-something million and then the legal cost on this particular matter is another \$77-something million, it means that as it stands right now the Government of Barbados would have paid out nearly \$150 million on this particular project but

the interesting thing about it is that even though these sums have been paid we are still without a building and we are now leasing the building from Barrack Construction Limited because it was not settled when the judgement was given.

Mr. Chairman, people sometimes ask why it is that we cannot find money to do de-bussing, roads and so on, but when one considers that coming to Government having not only to deal with the accrual system where we had to pick up all of the expenditure that was not previously paid by the Barbados Labour Party, we are saddled now with a bill of over \$77-something million which has nothing to do with the prison or with the other payments.

Mr. Chairman, when one considers the economic situation in the world at this time one could understand the type of strain because surely the Minister of Finance would have been glad to find this money to pass on to the Minister of Transport and Works and the other ministers so that they could carry out the work of the Government and people would not now be complaining about potholes or roads to be constructed and so on because instead of having this money to do these things, they would have to be diverted to this particular project because when the money was flowing as was said by some persons even though we know better because of the cash basis it appeared that money was being plentiful but if we really had applied the accrual system one would have recognised that Barbados' financial position was much worse prior to 2008 when the Democratic Labour Party came to Government but the only difference is that, as the former Prime Minister said in 2004, any Government coming after him in the next three to four years will not only have to deal with money spent but would have also have to deal with money incurred previously and present, so one can understand the type of hand that this Minister of Finance had to deal with and why the situation appears to be as grave as it is.

Mr. Chairman, when one really analyses what has actually happened in the last nine years, and if you had to treat it only on revenue versus expenditure one would have recognised how we have been able to manage this economy and that we would have been able to balance the books and in some cases we might have had a surplus if we did not had to deal with the accrual system. Mr. Chairman, that is why we keep saying that a lot of people say things and they do not analyse what they are saying. It is only because we had to deal with expenditures that we came and found that makes the situation looks as bad as it is but in truth and in fact if you really were to extract the current revenue in the current period you would recognise that we did not do badly. It is only because we had to take up expenditures over the period of time that were never accounted for that we now find ourselves having to finance that. Mr. Chairman, that is why we keep making the point that we have to be very careful because in this day and age we have

to recognise that if we were dealing with losses that it would have been easier for people to appreciate the situation we are in because everybody knows that when you have a loss you cannot throw cash at losses but when you have a deficit especially in the public service people always expect that to solve the deficit you throw cash. The only way you can correct a loss is by reducing expenditure or increasing revenue. Mr. Chairman, that is why it is amazing sometimes to hear people not understanding the scenario that we are in and the expenditure that we have to deal with... and that is why the Minister of Finance had no other choice than to find a revenue solution to the losses that would have occurred over the years and that is why he had to come up with creative ways.

Another thing that we must recognise is that when this matter was being dealt with the taxation system at the time shifted from product to services, that was when the VAT was introduced and it carried the inclusion right across the board which allowed the revenue that was given up at the Port to be taken by the private sector. Mr. Chairman, that is why it would be very interesting if we could find a system where we can now get them to invest some of the money because this present Minister of Finance finds himself where the revenue went to the private sector but the expenditure went to the Government and the Government could not find the matching revenue for the expenditure that was increasing but at the same time the private sector did not have the expenditure but they had the revenue and that is why you see that a lot of people will say that the Government does not have any money but when you look in the banking system the money is in the banking system because the private sector has been able to collect the money and instead of investing it the way we would expect it to be invested - I am not saying that there are not some who have invested it wisely because we can see that there are some who have picked it up - today we are here dealing with a situation where we have been able to pay out over nearly \$150 million but yet we do not have one asset to show for that \$150 million that we have been paying out because of this Barrack situation.

Mr. Chairman, as I said previously the \$30 731 672 went to two attorneys, Sir Maurice King and Sir Richard "Johnny" Cheltenham, and we expect that there are some other attorneys once they submit their bills for them to be taxed because there were two other attorneys as I said previously who also worked for Mr. Barrack and most likely based on the evidence they would also be submitting bills, so I hope, Mr. Chairman, that when they are submitted that we could then come back to this House and complete this matter. I understand that there is also a pending matter dealing with Mesne profits and so on.

Asides.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Pronunciation. Mean profits. If the lawyer says 'mean', it is 'mean' but if the English people say mesne, it is mesne.

Mr. Chairman, we have this matter before us and we have to solve it. We did not incur it but we have the burden to carry and we will carry the burden to the best of our ability and we will seek conclusion to this particular matter.

Sir, one of the things we must say is that it is a lesson of what not to do. Mr. Chairman, that is why I have always said that we have to be very careful how we draw out these matters because there is a cost when you keep them before the courts, and especially when one considers what has been happening lately it is in our interest to ensure that these matters are closed quickly because it reduces the cost to us and it also reduces the legal cost and the burden is not as great.

This matter, as I said, Sir, has been pending now for over 19 years and we need to bring it to closure today because nearly two decades on a particular matter is a very long time and we should not be here because every time it stays that long there is interest incurring especially when one considers the interest rate that has been placed on it because as I said previously the interest rate was 10 per cent and in the banking system today you cannot even get a 1 per cent from the bank so naturally what you can easily say is that you are getting nearly 9.9 per cent higher than the going rate if the money was in the banking system.

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Mr. Chairman, almost two decades on a particular matter is a long time and we should not be here because every time it stays that long it incurs interest, especially when one considers the interest rate that had been placed on it. As I said previously, the interest rate was 10 per cent and in the banking system today one cannot even get a rate of 1 per cent interest from the banks, so that naturally what you can easily say is that you are getting almost 9.9 per cent higher than the going rate if the money was in the banking system.

Mr. Chairman, we are bringing closure to this matter under Head 75. We should also bear in mind that we have some other minor matters and I would hope that we would also be able to bring closure to these matters pretty quickly and that we can reduce the cost. Mr. Chairman, we cannot tell you how much is that cost because as I said, some of these costs have to be taxed by the court and negotiations are still going on, et cetera, so that I hope that closure can be brought.

Mr. Chairman, one of the things I would say is that this Government cannot be blamed for the procrastination of this particular matter, it is a matter we found, it is one

that we have dealt with. We have fought to bring it to closure and we have done everything possible to bring it to closure. We did not incur the legal cost because as I said previously, Sir, this matter was supposed to have been settled since September 6, 2006, and for some reason it was not settled, so that today we are seeking to bring closure to it.

Mr. Chairman, with those few remarks, I beg to move that this Head do now pass.

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

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, if only because the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has served to confuse this Honourable Chamber, I too am happy that this matter has now been brought to a close. I forgive the Honourable Member because it is evident that an absence in any training in law and an understanding of the cost structure it would have been as difficult for the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to explain what has happened, as it would be for the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs to explain the downgrades of Barbados, with the Honourable Member not being a trained economist.

Mr. Chairman, I too am glad and I think that every Honourable Member on this side too is glad that this almost sordid matter has now been brought to a close.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: No, so do not go that way. Absolutely not. Mr. Chairman, the point is this, there are several fundamentals that have to be observed and perhaps commented on in this context. In the first place, this Administration is hardly able to say that they did not incur this or that they did not incur that. Mr. Chairman, that side always says that Government is a continuum and the facts clearly show that arising out of a dispute -- and disputes happen every day -- the parties took the matter to arbitration. Now, I do not know what school of thought the Democratic Labour Party has emerged from but we have an Arbitration Act, we now have an International Arbitration Act, the current Chief Justice and all of his judges are saying please carry matters to arbitration and stop bringing them before the seats of the court. Madam Justice Kentish as she then was, she is now retired, in fact, on an application by the National Housing Corporation directed that the matter should go by arbitration.

Now, the arbitrator, Mr. Chairman, was a Barbadian jurist of great renown, Sir Denys Williams, now a blessed memory, also a former Chief Justice of Barbados. Mr. Chairman, in 2006, Sir Denys ruled that Barrack Construction was entitled under the contract to an award of damages in the sum of \$34.5 million. Mr. Chairman,

whatever criticisms the other side may have, Sir Denys Williams found that Barrack Construction and that company's contentions in fact and law were correct and that his company was to be paid \$34.5 million. Mr. Chairman, that is a finding of fact and a finding of law. Mr. Chairman, nobody in 2006 in the Barbados Labour Party Cabinet sat down and said that we were going to give Al Barrack and his company \$34.5 million, it went to a binding arbitration and the arbitrator decided that. If the arbitrator had decided that Al Barrack's company was entitled to \$3, it would have been binding and I happened to have been the Honourable Attorney-General at the time. Mr. Speaker, the National Housing Corporation, based on the legal advice that they got from their independent counsel, felt that they ought to appeal.

Now, Sir, the Executive can do many things, but the one thing that the Executive has to do, and I appreciate that the current Executive does not understand this concept, is to exercise good and considered judgement. Mr. Chairman, imagine, had the National Housing Corporation said to the Minister of Housing that they wanted to appeal the matter and the Minister of Housing had said no, do you know what would have been said? It would have been said that the Minister of Housing does not want the Government agency to have his full day in court, that the Minister wants to put money into Barracks Construction. Sir, there is a whole set of things that could have been said.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister of Housing at the time rightly decided that it was not a matter for his decision, that it was a matter for the National Housing Corporation. If the National Housing Corporation had legal advice that said they had good grounds on which to appeal to the court, then no Executive - meaning no Cabinet - should overrule that. Mr. Chairman, the National Housing Corporation, as it was its right to do, appealed the matter and at the end of the appeal process...

Mr. Chairman, you should be aware of this, Roger Forde Q.C. was acting for the National Housing Corporation at the time of 2008 when the Barbados Labour Party lost the Government and the new Government led by David Thompson appointed Sir Maurice King to continue the case. Mr. Chairman, that speaks volume, Sir Maurice King is easily one of the most erudite lawyers ever to have appeared before a law court in this country and if when Sir Maurice King was handed the case by the National Housing Corporation after the Government changed and Sir Maurice King had felt that there was no case to be heard, not to proceed, that is exactly what Sir Maurice King would have said, I have no doubt about it. Mr. Chairman, so that the mere fact that Sir Maurice King continued with an appeal that the National Housing Corporation started, an appeal against the decision of Sir Denys Williams, tells me that Sir Maurice King felt that the National Housing Corporation had a good and arguable case.

Now, Sir, this Administration was very anxious to shove their two lawyers in there to continue a case that they now want to stand here and self-righteously declare had no merit. In fact, in 2006, the decision was appealed, so that when once the decision was appealed by the National Housing Corporation the matter then is before the court.

Asides.

4.23 p.m.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: ... In fact, in 2006 the decision was appealed. Once the decision is appealed by the National Housing Corporation, the matter then is before the court.

Asides.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, here is the point. This bunch of Ministers wants to get in here and pretend, "Oh, this case does not have anything to do with us." They want to say that they can shake the dust of the Barrack case off their feet, but it is not so, Sir, because in their judgement if they felt that the National Housing Corporation had no case, they should have said to Sir Maurice King, "Give us your advice. If you do not believe that they have a case, let us know", but no, Sir. Sir Maurice King continued the case. He continued the appeal, and had he won, we would not be in this mire now, but he lost. If he had won the appeal, the Government of Barbados would not have owed Barrack Construction a cent or they would have owed him less, but they lost the appeal. That is the simple fact of it, so by the time of the loss of the appeal...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, wrap up. Fifteen minutes.

Aside.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: By the time of the loss of the appeal, the interest component had increased, so the issue is this, Sir: This Administration chose not to pay because the obligation to pay was not an obligation that was settled in 2006, because it was appealed. The obligation to pay would have arisen at the conclusion of the appeal, so what did this Government do after that? Nothing. They dog-danced, they dippy-doodled, they did this, they pleaded, they cried, all kinds of things. They did not pay. They paid \$2.8 million and said to Barrack, "Hold that and give us a break," and that was it, and so we are here today, Sir. I will speak again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I want to join this debate for a lot of reasons but most of all to ask

some unanswered questions. These questions need to be answered for the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East too, because I can see her confusion turning to absolute doubt and disbelief when she heard the culmination of the presentation by the Member who just sat down. First of all, I want to thank the Honourable Minister, though, for presenting the position in respect of the Barrack Building. A lot of Barbadians probably would not be aware that although we are committed to all this money for the Al Barrack Corporation -- I had better say corporation now in very broad terms, because of all the associated Barrack issues -- we still in fact do not own the building at Warrens, and this is a very important fact that must be known. Whenever the settlement is finally made, there is still the question of what do we do in terms of the assets. Do we acquire the assets finally or do we not? These are matters which will be dealt with by persons other than myself, of course, in these terms. What confused the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East and myself was that the Honourable Member who just sat down made it very clear that in the Year of Our Lord 2006 an arbitrator made a ruling which, according to the Honourable Member, should be a clear directive to any decent executive who understood law. Those were his exact words: "Who understood the law of the land." Those are the exact words of the Honourable Member who just sat down, but he has conveniently slipped away from 2006, Mr. Chairman, when that matter was settled, to 2008 December when the General Election was held and the Government of Barbados changed.

My question is, "What happened between 2006 and the end of 2008?"

Aside.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: You were the Government. You said that any decent executive would not have appealed the judgement of an arbitrator. That is what you said. If you did not say that, I will sit down and let you repeat what you said.

Asides.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the Honourable Member...

Asides.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Do not worry about the depth. I have goggles. I wear goggles. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member who just sat down said that no executive would have sanctioned an appeal of the judgement of the arbitrator, but his attorney...

Asides.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please, the language. Honourable Member, hold on. I can understand the passion but let us control it. Understand first how you are addressing the Chair, and it is really at my pleasure that you speak in terms of another Point of Order. So let us hear the Point of Order. Calm down.

Mr. D.D. MARSHALL: I will make my Point of Order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. I never said that. I said that an executive must exercise good judgement and that if the corporation decided to appeal, it would have been improper for the corporation to have been countermanded by the executive. That is what I said, and if he is in any doubt, Sir, you can call for the Hansard.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you. Go ahead, Honourable Member.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, we do not need Hansard.

Aside.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Everybody is hearing exactly what the Honourable Member on that side is saying, because he said quite clearly he was Attorney General. What he did not tell us, of course, is the real origin of this whole story; the 1999 "tender", the 1999 acceptance of the tender process by the Administration of the day, which is when it started. Barrack, a totally un-recommended company by the technical team of the Ministry of Housing, would have been foisted upon the people of Barbados to construct, up until then, probably the largest Government building in Barbados; a project which, it was generally felt among the technical staff, the company Barrack Construction was not capable of completing successfully. We have lived to see the tale, because Barrack Construction did not finish that building. As a matter of fact, the Chinese company which came on to work after Barrack was taken off the project was paid in the region of \$43 million for their work to complete the building.

We can go back as to why the National Housing Corporation all of a sudden moved away from its stated mandate of building houses for poor people in Barbados to constructing Government offices. There is another one that they did under the same Barrack; that is the present office of the Ministry of Housing and National Housing Corporation. Go over to Country Road and have a look yourself, Honourable Members, and see what conclusion you would reach in terms of the quality of that building. Put those things aside for a moment and let us hasten quickly back to 2006, because that is where the crux of this matter lies. Why is it that I am or we are being told by the Honourable Member that no executive should challenge the position of the arbitrator, but he is present in a Cabinet of

the day which sees the National Housing Corporation go an entirely different route?

4.31 p.m.

We are being told by the Honourable Member that no executive should challenge the position of the arbitrator but he is present in the Cabinet of the day which sees the National Housing Corporation go an entirely different route because he is presenting some esoteric convenient...

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

Mr. D. MARSHALL: I do not know if I have to go back to primary school to help the Honourable Member to figure this out.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, what is your point of order?

Mr. D. MARSHALL: The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. I have never said that the Government should not challenge the arbitrator. I have maintained that the Corporation as was its right took a decision to appeal the decision of the arbitrator. I have here a section of the Arbitration Act which says you have the right to appeal to the High Court. I am saying that the Government should not challenge the right of the Corporation to appeal. Sir, what can he not understand that. It is English.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have made your point. Honourable Member for Christ Church South, proceed.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: Sir, the truth is, the Honourable Member should declare an interest in this and recuse himself from this debate. Sir, that is the honest truth because he was the Chairman of the National Housing Corporation when the whole debacle started. Sir, do you understand.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Members on the other side believe there is some kind of compartmentalization of the memories of Barbadians in respect of to these truth but, Sir, they are not compartmentalise for me because at his grace, I have lived through it. I have read about it every day. I do not talk about it every day but when I get the opportunity I defend this Party of which I am a member. Sir, when I hear the kind of two-mouthedness that I am hearing from the Honourable Member for St. Joseph today in respect of this situation I have to intervene, attorney or no attorney, I have to intervene because the Honourable Member is hiding away behind a nebulous argument about the authority of the National Housing Corporation, and entity of the

Government of the day to try and pretend to me and to this Honourable Chamber that the Executive of the day could not have told the National Housing Corporation, "Give us a break man", the arbitrator has spoken, the arbitrator's ruling is binding, the same words that he using now, the same words that he is throwing at us now but trying now to heap in a whole pan cart of rubbish about David Thompson and about Maurice King, skirting around the fact that Roger Forde, he called his name, was the attorney for the National Housing Corporation when the appeal was first made in 2006.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have to be there at the wheels of the National Housing Corporation to know when rubbish is happening because I can read like the Honourable Member and the truth is, if you put a law book in front of me, I can read it and understand it too, once it is written in English. I am going to read it and I am going to understand it and what I do not understand, I will ask somebody who knows law. I will not ask the Honourable Member because I do not think he would give me the right advice. I will ask somebody who knows law to help me through the issue.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is talking about connecting pipes, that is smart, because all the legal luminaries reside in the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, that is what they think but I seek and obtain advice on these matters often before I speak. The Honourable Members on the other side have got to understand that this issue of the monies being paid by the Government of Barbados to the extent that we cannot meet some of the many, many noble objectives that the Honourable Minister of Housing has stated during his presentation, this is the kind lasso, this Barrack lasso is what stopped up, and this Barrack lasso has contributed to the downgrades of Barbados. The Honourable Member used those words and everyone of the words that he used, I am going to use back on him. Bring the Hansard. Yes, these are the lassos. Sir, the truth is that the whole issue started as far back as 1999 or before because the plot would have been hatched. When we speak to that matter, we are going to talk about not only the Barrack matter but we are going to talk about the Housing Credit Trust Fund and the \$5 000 loans to the members of the Barbados Labour Party. We have the reports of the technical people associated with the Housing Credit Trust Fund and the management of the National Housing Corporation, the same entity that you referred to so often in your presentation.

Mr. Chairman, I have said in here already that when you go to Haggatt Hall, whenever you plan to go, I want to assure you that Haggatt Hall is not going to be closed after that and that we are going. We will go back to Haggatt Hall because all these Honourable Members bar probably two or three were part of that plot in 1999, which has resulted in the kind of economic chaos associated with the construction of a Government building at Warrens in St.

Michael and the kind of economic lasso in which this country is being held by the decision of 2006, the one which has been applauded by the Honourable Member who just spoke, the one of the arbitrator and the bad decision of the National Housing Corporation in 2006. Sir, by the Honourable Member's own argument the \$34 million that would have stated to be paid by the arbitrator, a blessed memory, yess, to Denise William in 2006, should have been paid and there is absolutely no reason on earth, and I daresay in heaven, which you can bring to this Chamber to tell us why that was not paid in 2006 and then coming here to try and pretend that the Appeal was started, so David Thompson decided to continue the appeal and getting now to try and get his lawyer to endorse the cou-cou. He is now getting ready to endorse this cou-cou. Well the cou-cou was stirred in 2006. By your own comity, the legal luminary who represented the National Housing Corporation in your full knowledge and support was a Mr. Roger Forde. I do not know who you are speaking about but that is whose name you called and he would have acted in what he considered the best judgement given, the instructions of his boss, the National Housing Corporation and the executive of the Government of the day. Mr. Chairman, there is nothing that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph can get up in here and say that would not still hold the Barbados Labour Party of 2006 guilty of his heinous economic crime, of course, ending on a sequence of malfeasance, starting as far back as 1999 with the award of the contract in the first instance, a deviation from the central role of the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Chairman, I get angry when I see people trying to be smart and trying to force things down Barbadians' throats espee when they are not totally correct. The Honourable Member must wheel and come again and if he gets up and repeat that nonsense, I will be up again to repeat chapter of what really should have happen and why we are here where we are today.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

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Mr. CHAIRMAN; The Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: To continue the saga, we have now a Minister of Housing who, as he said, wants to bring this matter to a close and seeks the acquiescence of this Chamber for a Supplementary to the tune of \$13 plus million. We in the Opposition, and I must confess that we do not have the facts as to how this money is made up but certainly the Minister does and I have to confess to being a little bit challenged at trying to connect the dots as have been set out by the Minister. The Minister has said that there was a taxation of \$5 million of costs for the attorney

for the National Housing Corporation at some point in time in the past - I wrote it down.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Yes, but the Minister said that there was a taxation of cost to the tune of about \$5 million for the arbitration. Mr. Chairman, we now understand that of the \$13 million a figure of \$9 million has been taxed for Mr. Barrack's attorney. The question we have is whether that \$9 million is a figure which relates only to the High Court appeal or whether that figure includes the earlier figure of \$5 million. Also, having mentioned that Mr. Barrack's attorney taxed his cost, we are left to assume that the National Housing Corporation attorney did not tax his and we would like to be clear.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: The issue is this. Having mentioned specifically that the Barrack Construction's attorney taxed his cost, the inference is that the attorney on the other side, the National Housing Corporation attorney, did not tax his cost. If it is that the attorney for the National Housing Corporation did tax them, then we only want the Honourable Member to say to the Chamber that the National Housing Corporation also taxed his cost and this is the figure that was awarded.

Let me say here, that the process of taxing cost is one of, not only tremendous vulnerability, but it is perhaps the most useful tool in terms of determining what legal fees should be paid to people for various things. Let me say to you, Mr. Chairman, that the manner of taxing cost also relates to non-contentious matters because This Side hears that the fees payable on the BNTCL with the sale of the terminal to SOL that the fees being charged to the Government is a hefty sum of US\$2.5 million.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: A Yearwood boy from someplace down near Brittons Hill.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, do not go that far, address the Chair.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, the point is that I am delighted that the lawyers in this litigation taxed their costs because all across this Administration costs do not get taxed. You happened to hear that this body charged \$5 million for CAHILL, that body charged \$1.x million to Barbados Industrial and Development Corporation and another \$1.something million to Barbados Water Authority, figures that just get ... The Honourable Member who spoke

talked about a “pan-cart”? I believe he mentioned at “pan-cart” and that is where the real “pan-cart” comes in, Sir. There are systems that are established which put any blemish on block on fees charged by attorneys-at-law beyond question so we have to ask then: inasmuch as the National Housing Corporation attorneys came in late in the day, on what basis is it that they would not have taxed their fees? Either they were taxed or they were not. We are in no position to challenge it.

I have already given, Sir Maurice King, in my view, a humble but sincere commendation as being one of our finest attorneys and a man who is worth his salt but the Minister has an obligation, especially since this whole Barrack thing has been, as the Honourable Member just called it, a lasso around the development of this country. Now I did not know that could be a lasso but obviously it is. It might be a thread in the lariat but he is saying that it is the whole lasso. I am happy to know that the Minister of Finance is now rid of this particular lasso and has to deal with all the other lassos that he so likes to deal with. We want the Minister to answer a simple question, whether fees were taxed on both sides or just one side and give the Chairman that assurance.

I have also to say that you cannot say to the Chamber that the matter is now at an end when there are professional fees outstanding to other people. I worry, Sir. Barbados incurred great shame over not paying Myrie her cost for about five or six years. Either the matter is at an end or it is not at an end. If this is such an issue, in my view, and let me advise the Minister accordingly because if they are other individuals who are due fees, there are mechanisms where National Housing Corporation can initiate that issue. It does not have to wait until the other side sends in what its fees are. The National Housing Corporation can apply to have the fees taxed and the other attorneys who say they are owed money would have to come to pot, plain and simply. Mr. Chairman, why would this Chamber be expected to revisit this matter at some point and time either in the near future or in the distant future perhaps when we could simply deal with it now? It is not satisfactory that we are saying that we are bringing it to a close but the Minister is able to say to us that there are other people who are due fees and we do not know what they are and we have to wait until they submit. I do not know a single man in this depressed country today who is owed fees who is not in a hurry to collect them. I do not buy it. People who are owed fees in today’s world are anxious to get them so for the Minister to come and say that, Mr. Minister that does not pass muster with me, it does not pass muster with This Side. What is the true position? Either the people are due costs having been awarded by the court or this Government does not owe them a single penny, plain and simple. Let me repeat myself. Either they are awarded costs by the court or this Government does not owe them any money and they are

two lawyers on That Side so you can ask any one of them. You do not get to claim fees from the Government because you go and push in your mouth in something. It does not work that work. You either get it awarded by the cost or it agreed in a contract so any of the other people who might have pushed their fingers in and pull it out and push in their foot and pull it back out and went swimming in the sea up wherever it is they went swimming, they are not entitled to any fees unless it is awarded by the Court.

Asides.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: There is a lawyer sitting down right next to you, ask him. It would not take long. So either we are bringing it to a close or we are not bringing it to a close but to suggest to this Chamber that at this time there are outstanding matters and you are going to have to come back to deal with that is pointless.

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The only other matter I wish to opine on before I take my seat is to explain to the Minister of Health, and I believe that as an engineer he has an understanding of maths and he clearly claims to have an understanding of English, that Sir Dennys Williams, the arbitrator, gave his decision in 2006, and his decision was that as the date of the starting of the arbitration, a date in 2002, the amount of money due to Barrack Construction was \$34.5 million but interest had to be added to that up to the date of the decision in 2006, so the award of Sir Dennys Williams was a bifurcated award, a word that I am sure the Honourable Member understands. There is the debt of \$34.5 million and there is an interest component at 10 per cent per annum, so the total award was \$50.9 million or something of the sort. The point is that there was never an occasion as at the date of the decision by Sir Dennys to say alright, you say that in 2002 we owe you \$34 million so let us pay \$34 million, it does not work like that. At the date of the decision interest would have been added on because that is the period of time, that four-year period, that the claimant would have been out of his money and the interest is calculated then to cover that, so the total award of Sir Dennys, the arbitrator, would have been \$50 or whatever millions it is, so you could not say well we are only paying \$34 million because that was not the award, the award is the debt as at 2002 and the interest. With those few remarks, Sir, I am obliged to you.

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

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I join this debate a bit alarmed at what I am hearing from the Opposition really. This is the action of the Government go tidy up literally some mess left back by the Barbados Labour Party Government. I consider it, having

looked at the facts, as perhaps the worst happening in terms of the actions of a Government causing the taxpayers such horrendous amounts of money and perhaps the worst single act of misdirection by a Government in office that has landed us where we are at.

At first blush, Mr. Chairman, I really felt that given what was before the House that the Members of the Opposition would have been very cautious in even speaking to the matter at all. In fact, if there was ever a time that you could probably call for the resignation of all the Members of the Barbados Labour Party over an issue I feel that the issue is this one. It really speaks to one example of the kind of public liability left in the wake by a Barbados Labour Party Government that surpasses the kind of destruction left across the Caribbean by the last two hurricanes that have impacted the Caribbean. This is a major thing, Mr. Chairman. When I look at the facts my research tells me after all of the dramatics of the man who was at the table at the time, he should know of the fact, the last Honourable Member who spoke, he should be very familiar with it because it is not really a pleasant day in relation to public life in Barbados...

This matter is perhaps one of the most disgraceful acts because this matter had a continuant and had the Government of the day, and I fully agree with the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, lived up to its responsibility and paid the debt it would not have gotten to where it is today, that is the point. This is only one act because in 2008 when the then Prime Minister came to the House with a Budget and literally had to scratch his head over all of the liabilities left for this Government to pick up, it was not an easy time, the amount of debt in a difficult economic situation that the last Government left and we are now in the afternoon of the second term and we are still reeling from decisions left back by the Barbados Labour Party Government.

Mr. Chairman, what the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development has come to this House to do is really to try once again as part of the continuant to settle a matter left on our plate. Really and truly it does not call for any legal mumbo-jumbo or any legal gymnastics. I am hearing explanations that the Executive could not do this or that. Do you know what they said we should have done? The Executive should have acted and its failure to act is responsible for where we are at today. The biggest set of bungling in office is responsible for the millions of dollars in debt left for the Barbadian taxpayers that they claim they are so concerned about, you now have them stranglehold, and for the Government having to find in very scarce economic circumstances millions of dollars to not only pay a debt but to pay lawyers. Yes, the record shows that the fees were taxed by the Registrar of the Supreme Court, but there is a beginning, there is a middle and of course there is

an ending and all around that you see the Barbados Labour Party, the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Chairman, this issue even goes back to the whole question of the selection of the contractor because questions were raised in relation to the whole Barrack saga. My research says that Barrack Construction was awarded a contract by the Barbados Labour Party Administration led by Owen Arthur related to the erection of the National Housing Corporation Complex at Warrens and a dispute subsequently arose between the Government and the contractor. What is missing from this is that there is no information that says that this contract was put out to proper and full tender and whether or not any other Barbadian companies were allowed to tender for this contract. There is a void in the history of Barbados as to whether or not the very prudent Barbados Labour Party Administration did what it should have properly done. Every single day I hear them walking about Barbados saying what this Government should be doing in the interest of prudence and good governance but this is one of the things that they should have done in relation to prudence and good governance that they did not do. In fact, they have not changed. The Barbados Labour Party that existed in 2002 is no different from the one that is here now, the one that is clamouring for Government and office. There is no difference, it is the same old thing. The last speaker on that side was there and he still wants to have Government again. He has not repented of his sins in relation to what has happened. Now they are like born again.

Mr. Chairman, contentious issues were submitted to arbitration on July 25, 2002 and remained under arbitration until September 6, 2006, four years. A question has been raised by many people as to whether or not the Barbados Labour Party Government did not subject the contract and make it available to other Barbadian contractors, but Mr. Barrack got the contract and a dispute arose. Big questions are still being asked and at the end of each question is a huge dollar sign. Why did it take four years for an arbitration to resolve a matter? Where was the Executive at the time? What did they do? Was they comatose? It is the same Executive. That is the kind of executive action that should have followed from it.

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On September 6, 2006, the arbitrator ruled that Barrack was entitled to a payment of \$34.5 million back in July, 2002.

Asides.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: You can call it whatever you want to call it, it is 'nough' money and since the amount was not paid back in 2002, it should accumulate at an

annual interest rate of 10 per cent up to the date of ruling and that after September 6, 2006, any amount unpaid would attract an annual interest rate of 8 per cent. Mr. Chairman, that is what my research says.

Mr. Chairman, the \$34.5 million owed to Barrack in July, 2002, had accumulated to \$50.9 million by the time the arbitrator gave his ruling in September, 2006. The Barbados Labour Party Government, Mr. Chairman, blatantly refused to pay the \$50.9 million in September, 2006. They refused to pay it, the Executive of the day refused to pay the man the money and the arbitrator found that he was owed the money, that the facts were there, and they blatantly refused, and they had money based on what they said. They said that this Government has somehow squandered money, that we cannot run an economy, but they had plenty of money at the time, but refused to pay the \$50.9 million that was due to Barrack.

Mr. Chairman, we are now at this point in time where everything has now come home to roost: the lawyers' fees, plus all of the fees that flowed from this negligent act by the Barbados Labour Party Government are now at the feet of the taxpayers of Barbadians. Now, you give me the answers to that, tell me where the governance is, tell me where you acted prudently and timely.

Mr. Chairman, they say that we do drag our feet, that we do not make timely decisions. Now, if there was one time that it was necessary to make a timely decision, it was back then in 2006, but you allowed it to drag through all of the court systems and at the end of it interest accrued phenomenally to the point that the taxpayers are burdened, that is why I call it the worst act of public administration perhaps in the history of Barbados, compliments of the Barbados Labour Party who claims that they are all for good governance. Mr. Chairman, it is the worst decision that I have ever seen and one of the most costly for the taxpayers of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, what is the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development doing? The Honourable Member is simply trying to tidy up the mess. The Honourable Member has come to this Honourable House and has given the facts. The Honourable Member said that the fees were taxed. The Honourable Member gave the history of what the Barbados Labour Party already knows.

Mr. Chairman, what hurts me is that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph gets up. The Honourable Member is privy to the facts, the Honourable Member being at the centre of the whole debacle and wants to pretend that this is now a legal issue, that the Executives could not interfere with the appeal and therefore they had to wait. Mr. Chairman, do you know what? Mr. Chairman, the record shows that the Barbados Labour Party Administration

refused, blatantly with no proper reason whatsoever. Mr. Chairman, having agreed to an arbitrator and having agreed to be bound by the ruling of the arbitrator you then turned around and said that you were not going to pay out any money.

Mr. Chairman, do you know what? It was in 2006, so no doubt, sensing their demise because they would have never gotten back in office in 2008 anyhow, they decided to prolong, to punish the Barbadian taxpayers by prolonging a matter where we then had to inherit in 2008 and riding through in a difficult economy. Mr. Chairman, imagine this, I am sure that the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs has had to be scratching his head both literally and figuratively in relation to how to meet this debt, which is only but one, in difficult economic times.

Mr. Chairman, I thought that the first thing that the lead spokesman for the Barbados Labour Party would have done in this Honourable House would have been to stand up and tendered a public apology to Barbados. Mr. Chairman, I would not have intervened into this debate had the Honourable Member done it, the Honourable Member should have stood and admitted that they failed to do what should have been done. Instead, they come with all of these grandiose... Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Labour Party is very good at trying to paint a brush as though underneath that wood is not wood ants. Mr. Chairman, the wood is termite-eaten and they would paint it pretty, and the only way that you would discover that something is wrong would be when you push in your finger and the whole thing would fall apart.

Asides.

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I had to smile as I listened to the Honourable Member for St. Joseph. As I actually listened to the Honourable Member with acute attention, I told myself that this cannot be for real, that the Barbados Labour Party Government has incurred this debt and refused to pay it and is now coming to this Honourable House to try to tidy it up by wanting to heap some more blows on the Democratic Labour Party Government. Mr. Chairman, I find it amusing, but this is only an indication of the true characteristics of the Barbados Labour Party, and this is only one.

Mr. Chairman, if we were to bring a Resolution here to deal with all of the debt... Sir, do you know what? We probably do not say enough because people say we should not look back, but this is an issue that relates back to 2002 that continues to haunt the financial affairs of Barbados. Mr. Chairman, therefore, I had to intervene, I did some research, I want to put it before this Honourable House and before Barbados, but to really say that this is really a good example as to why we are here to deal with this Resolution. Mr. Chairman, it is a good example and perhaps it should

be studied by the students at Cave Hill Business School. Mr. Chairman, it is an excellent example of what happens when an Administration bungles, when an Administration blatantly refuses to act.

Mr. Chairman, I would want that when Honourable Members on that side get up that they would explain to Barbadians why they refused blatantly in 2006 to pay Al Barrack his money that was properly owed to him. Mr. Chairman, there was no dispute as to the fact that the money was owed, it appears to me that they gave a contract to a man without any tendering arrangements, one in which no other Barbadian company got a chance to apply to tender. In other words, they violated every rule and now that a dispute arises they do not want to deal with that dispute.

Mr. Chairman, you have to hear the facts from me, so I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that this is what this is about. The Resolution is here, it is about settling a debt which was incurred, yes, by the Government of Barbados. As a matter of fact, it shows that Government is a continuum and therefore that is why we are before this Honourable House. Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, the public of Barbados who are listening to this debate are most likely sitting in amusement in hearing the arguments of the other side on this matter. Mr. Chairman, the Democratic Labour Party spokesmen here today are getting on as if they are completely absorbed from any responsibility for this. Mr. Chairman, in the first place, the presenter of this Resolution said that this is a 19-year-old matter. Mr. Chairman, my mathematics tells me that the Democratic Labour Party has been in office for the last 10 years. Sir, 10 certainly is more than half of 19, if the Honourable Member needs to know that or if the Honourable Member for Christ Church South needs to know.

5.12 p.m.

For the last ten years, the Democratic Labour Party has been the executive of this country and has failed to act on this matter. No-one else could have acted on this matter besides the executive of this country, which was the present Democratic Labour Party Government. It came into office in January 2008 when this matter was under appeal, and anyone who knows any semblance of law, as I would tell the Member for Christ Church South -- if he does not fall into that category -- knows that an arbitration decision can be appealed and can be so appealed under the Laws of Barbados.

The Democratic Labour Party came into office and changed the attorneys-at-law. I mean they had competent counsel doing it and, as I understand, they had prepared all the leg work and all the legal documents. They changed it, naturally enhancing the legal fees automatically for so doing. My recollection of 2009 certainly is great on that issue, and the appeal decision was given confirming the decision of the arbitrator. The Democratic Labour Party was in office at that time, and interest was accruing all that time every day, every 24 hours at the rate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE: The Honourable Member cannot start in 2009 in discussing this, Sir. It is misleading the Chamber. The Honourable Member owes it to the public to go back through the history of this situation, and he just jumps into 2009 because that is where he finds his greatest pleasure, Mr. Chairman, Sir. You cannot start there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, proceed please.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, I hope I get back my one minute, Sir, because the Honourable Member cannot tell me what I am to talk about.

Aside.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: This matter in January 2008 when the Democratic Labour Party came into office, as we have heard, stood at \$50 million. It suddenly moved after all this time, when Barrack was finally paid all his money, to about \$75 million; \$25 more million in interest comprised of eight per cent every 24 hours adding onto the money. The Democratic Labour Party never settled the matter. I recall certainly, Mr. Chairman, the late Prime Minister David Thompson saying publicly that he was going to pay or the Cabinet of Barbados was going to pay Barrack \$2.5 million every month to settle the debt. One payment was made. One payment of \$2.5 million was made, and then no more were made. That would be criminal negligence in some countries and the cause for resignation of a whole government that now costs the taxpayers of Barbados an additional \$25 million in contractual fees, being interest that you had to pay to Barrack. He had to lock down the building and all kind of thing. Government workers were unable to go into work many a day because he took those kinds of actions, put on a mask like a white man, and all of that kind of stuff, saying that if he was a white man he would have had his money long time from the Democratic Labour Party Government. All that kind of stuff, and then we are going to have the gall to hear Democratic Labour Party front-benchers talking about they are absolved from liability.

This is one of the problems with this Government; nobody takes responsibility, from the Right Honourable Prime Minister down. The Minister of Education, he takes no responsibility for the hopelessness of the youth of this country. When he came, the Attorney General said, "I do not take responsibility either" for everything, and then the Honourable Minister of Agriculture came and does not take responsibility either. The Honourable Minister of Transport too: "The responsibility is not mine." Five front-benchers in the space of two weeks last year saying that they take no responsibility. What are they in office for? What are they being paid \$200 000 a year for, plus all the per diem when they travel first-class, plus their restored ten per cent, if they can take no responsibility as an executive? They are the facts. After ten years of being able to make a decision on this matter, it is now brought before the Parliament of Barbados, when for ten years there was an executive comprising 17: the highest number of Cabinet Members ever in the history of Barbados, including some who were rejected totally by the people of Barbados, one beaten by the Honourable Member for the City here on my right but still in a Cabinet making decisions contrary and adverse to the people of Barbados. They are the taxpayers of Barbados in hard times. Thirty per cent new or increased taxes on their tail. Cost of living increased 40 per cent. Nineteen downgrades. A fiscal deficit of six per cent. Debt-to-GDP ratio of 160 per cent. The fourth most indebted nation in the world which now has to look for millions of dollars. Increased legal fees for this. Where is the governance stacked up on this?

We have heard so far in this debate that the legal fees for Barrack's attorneys have been taxed all the way; that they were taxed at the arbitration level before the arbitrator; one of the brightest legal minds in the Caribbean, Sir Denys Williams. They were taxed at the appeal stage in the High Court, and the legal fees...

Aside.

Mr. E.G. HINKSON: The Honourable Minister of Housing, you know this is political time, as the Honourable Member to my left now, the Honourable Member for St. George South, said earlier. This is silly season so he only called Sir Richard Cheltenham's name because of his association with this party, but you had people like Sir Fenton Ramsahoye, one of the best attorneys-at-law in the Commonwealth, involved in the case. Some of these fees, of course, are for the experts, the engineer and the quantity surveyor, all of that included, but you never mentioned whether the fees for Sir Maurice King and his son were taxed. We had to bring that out that they have never been taxed, so where is the governance? The Honourable Member for St. Joseph, a former Attorney General, a Queen's Counsel, had to tell this Parliament that the proper thing to have done would have been to tax the costs of the NHC's lawyers who were Democratic Labour Party-

selected; Sir Maurice King, with all respect. Yes, one of the best lawyers around, but the proper thing -- if you are dealing with governance with accountability, which the Democratic Labour Party in its rhetoric or in its Manifesto says it stands for but which, by its every action, shows that it does not honour -- even now would be to tax the costs of the NHC's lawyers rather than come to Parliament where you have a majority and ask the Parliament to sanction the fees for the NHC's attorneys-at-law.

There is a cost committee of the Barbados Bar Association. There are registering officers whose job it is to tax costs. This is taxpayers' money. If the money was being paid by the 13 front-benchers here and the other four that they have in The Other Place, I could understand, because they could afford to pay the \$17 million among themselves. All of them are multimillionaires now after ten years in Cabinet, so if the money was coming out of their pockets, I could understand. So be it, but do not come to Parliament here and seek approval with your parliamentary majority for the hard-suffering taxpayers of Barbados, including those in St. James North who are suffering and who call me every day for some kind of relief which cannot be delivered by the Government of Barbados, and expect us to sit down there and approve this?

5.20 p.m.

There is absolutely no way we can, as this is a trend by this Government. The Honourable Member who just sat down the Honourable Minister of Culture should be ashamed of himself talking about how the contract was given without being tendered and he is part of a Cabinet that has continuously given contracts, million and millions of dollars in contracts, \$500 million to someone whose initials spell the same M.A.M. as the Leader of the Opposition without being tendered, contracts to Cahill, money down the drain that the Honourable Minister of the Environment said did not cost the taxpayers any money but yet the Attorney-at-Law, who is extremely closed to the Right Honourable Prime Minister and the de facto Prime Minister could get \$1 million for legal fees but yet the Honourable Minister of the Environment says no money has been spent and that there is no liability on the taxpayers. Sir, every piece of legal work given by this Democratic Labour Party to their friends and their families have been \$1 million plus dollars. We know very well that it was laid as a document during the Budget that it was \$1.5 million by a pal and former law associate of the Right Honourable Prime Minister. Sir, \$1.5 million was paid by the Barbados Water Authority, who this weekend when I called and informed of a whole in Mount Standfast in my constituency that they dug out and has been there for three months that we have been calling on, I was told that we do not have any money to pay the contractor to cover it up but yet you find money, \$1.5 million to pay the pal and legal associate of the Right Honourable Prime Minister for

attending three meetings and reading a lease agreement and looking at a conveyance, none of which he prepared. Sir, those costs have been taxed because anybody with a modicum of common sense would know that nothing so is worth \$1.5 million but we have a situation where the public servants of this country for 10 years now cannot get one cent in increased salary but a restoration retroactively by the 17 Cabinet Ministers and all their Senators, Personal Assistants and politics associates and everybody else. This is a Government that is acting against the biblical philosophy and principles that there should not be greed, there should be malice, there should not be spiritual wickedness in high places. The consequences of that...

Asides.

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: They might be living very well now in life on earth but I believe that all of us in here are Christians and believe that there is life after death and that is what the Democratic Labour Party Front Bench should understand. We have situations, because this is fundamental principle, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member should wrap up.

MR. E.D. HINKSON: Very well, Mr. Chairman. This is a fundamental principle because Attorneys-at-Law, friends and families of the Democratic Labour Party getting all kinds of legal fees, hundreds and thousands of dollars, sometimes millions of dollars, when a cousin of a Cabinet Minister got \$750 000 and arguing real bad for his fees at the Caves of Barbados, another Democratic Labour Party parliamentarian, Barbados Investment Development Corporation, \$750 000, all of these legal fees, where under the scale of fees, which is part of the law of Barbados, say they should have got one-fifth or one-sixth of what they have charged. Sir, this is the fundamental point why the Barbados Government finds itself in almost a bankrupt situation here today, where the Chairman of the Urban Development Commission could admit three days ago at a Democratic Labour Party Town Hall meeting that Urban Development Commission has no money to repair anybody house, and the same thing could have been said about Rural Development Commission. I know that for a fact because it has not repaired one house, not a piece of wood, not a road, not a street light in St. James North but that is why we find ourselves in these situations.

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

MR. E.D. HINKSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I rise to enter this debate. Of course, the Honourable Member for St. James North, who just spoke, I was a little alarmed that he got up and turn the debate into challenging his friends at the Bar about fees, and as a senior counsel, who I respect, I believe that once an Attorney-at-Law works for his fees, as we know that Attorney-at-Law should be paid. Sir, as I have said, once it is in accordance with the scale of fees, he should be paid.

Mr. Chairman, let me say that when we examine this matter and go back to the history of it, I recall that the National Housing Corporation decided, I think that it was it was about 1998 or before that, that there want to shift the focus of the National Housing Corporation. Sir, that focus was set out in the House of Authority Act and then later set out in the National Housing Corporation. Sir, at the time, it was the Honourable Member for St. Andrew who was the Minister of Housing and Lands.

Mr. Chairman, at the time, National Housing Corporation entered into a contract and started negotiations for a commercial building. The contract was awarded and indeed, when you look at the facts surrounding the award of the contract, there was a prequalification bid and a number of firms were part of that prequalification bid and the technical team from the Ministry of Transport and Works were responsible for examining those bids and selecting the most suitable contractor or the contractor they believe would be qualified to build such a building and had the necessary technical capabilities and the financial wherewithal to deliver the building. The facts subsequently reveal that the person we are here debating the All Barrack Company was awarded the contract.

Mr. Chairman, thereafter, it was reveal that All Barrack did not even qualify for the job. In fact, the technical team at the Ministry of Transport and Works and other persons responsible for looking at the bid also stated that this is not the person suitable for this job. Sir, that is a fact. Mr. Chairman, the other legal hurdle that happened is that they subsequently found that National Housing Corporation had no legal capability of entering into a contract to build office buildings so, Sir, what happened thereafter. Sir, I am speaking to the Honourable Member for St. James North and he can dispute me on this. They came to Parliament, amended Section 5 of the Housing Act. It was amended, gave the functions of the Minister, meaning the Minister responsible for housing and said that the Minister shall be responsible for the formulation of housing policy. Sir, that was the original focus of the National Housing Corporation, it was set up for that but then it was included policies relating to property development other than housing and building investment activities for the financing of housing development and redevelopment schemes.

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The then Minister came to Parliament and amended the Act so as to facilitate the contract with Al Barrack. It is a fact, because there was a legal problem and they had to come here to change the law. That was the second hurdle. When we speak about how this matter originated I believe that we should have started back then. The focus of the National Housing Corporation was entirely shifted to building a commercial building. One single Act of Parliament, one single amendment of Parliament caused the National Housing Corporation to end up in the debt that it is in now. It is a fact, but it was not this Government that was in power that amended the legislation. In fact, Mr. Chairman, I recall when I read the debate when the Minister brought the amendment to Parliament I remember, I think it was the late Prime Minister Mr. David Thompson, and I believe there was a Member, Sir Branford Taitt, he was asking why this amendment was coming and what was the reason for the amendment. He was asking some very searching questions to the Minister at the time. What was the mischief, what was the reason for the amendment and lo and behold we found out what the amendment came about for. I came as Minister of Housing with some 30 000 people on a housing list and at the time, if my learned friend, the Honourable Member for St. James North, is raising the question about now we have to pay legal fees and that we have people out there suffering, at the time when this Act was done by the National Housing Corporation they had people suffering too. In fact, they had the money and if the focus was not shifted then, of course, the 30 000 people on the waiting list would have been dealt with because it is over \$100 million that could have built, not only houses and we would actually love that money now to build some more houses, do some roads and do a number of things so as to engage the people of Barbados, and so that the money can be utilised to assist the poor in this country, Mr. Chairman, but the fact is that the National Housing Corporation had no time to focus on its original activities at the time because it was caught up in a legal wrangle in the court. They had to seek counsel, had to pay legal fees and not only that the remedial work that had to be done also engage costs too and also other professional costs to the National Housing Corporation. Sir, it was not this Government that caused that. It originated from the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government so I do not understand that the seeking here today to have a debate about whether costs are taxed and whatever, the case is, and I like how the Honourable Member for St. James North tried to shift the blame, but he cannot shift the blame. In fact, he ended up prosecuting himself. It was like throwing gasoline in a fire to out it.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, that I did not walk with the documentation because the

evidence is so clear that a contractor did not qualify for a job and was given the contract by the Cabinet of the day. I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that we have nothing to fear and they cannot absolve themselves from liability or negligence in relation to the Barrack matter. I challenge anyone of them to get and answer the question: why was the Housing Act amended? What was the fundamental reason behind coming to Parliament to change the housing Act at that time? Why did they change Section 5? Mr. Chairman, I am saying to you that when we look at what developed, in fact, when I was Minister of Housing, instead of focussing on the housing policies of the day, we had to be grappling with actions or inactions of the contractor. Yes, we believe the contractor worked, he constructed the building and he must be paid. If an attorney-at-law worked for his fees, once his fees are justified, we have to pay him. That is the reality, and I will repeat again, the reality is what caused this scenario that we are in now and why we now have to grapple with this matter when we could be dealing and getting on with our programmes. I am sure this money that we are paying out now as a result of this fiasco would fit well in relation to social services, for example, in Ministry of Environment and Drainage, it could buy buses for Barbados Transport Board, it could buy trucks for Sanitation Service Authority and it could fix the roads. The Minister of Finance would have enough elbow room and I want to say again, Mr. Chairman, I want anyone of them to get up and challenge and contradict me to the fact that the contractor did not qualify for the job. The next question we have to ask is: how did he get the job? He did not qualify for the job as the result of all the experts and all the technicians but indeed ended up with a big job to build a building.

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: I would hear that talk now from the Honourable Member for St. James North but, Mr. Chairman, I ask him as a lawyer to get up and read Hansard, read the debate and get into the debate. I thought that he had recognised that the Act was amended. As a senior counsel he should have known that the Act was amended and the mischief behind it and if he believes as a right thinking Member -- I use the words "right thinking" -- of this society, if he believe that Parliament should have engage in such an act by coming to Parliament, having and institution set up to assist poor people and you will come to Parliament to shift the focus away from assisting poor people, when at the time you had a White Paper on Housing, you had studies done on White Hill, all of these reported that the people of White Hill and the Scotland District needed help but yet we shifted the money into a contract to build a commercial building. Can you imagine that?

Asides.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Instead of building houses, they built office rooms and that is the difference between the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) and the Democratic Labour Party (DLP). We have never amended the Housing Act to shift the focus. It was never ever done. I am not getting into any talk about whether a Registrar, or about cost and tax payments because I am not involved in that. The poor people of this country are not interested in that. They want to know that an institution that was built primarily to assist poor people who could not get a piece of land or a house wanted to be certain and they wanted some help from the Government of the day to instead a ??? institution to the course to give them help.

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What the Barbados Labour Party did, they came to Parliament and moved it away from its focus to assist one man who did not qualify for a job.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I will come back in.

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

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, I take this opportunity to intervene again in this debate because I do not know that the public is fully interested in this “you are responsible fully attitude” that the Democratic Labour Party is trying to put on the Barbados Labour Party. We have demonstrated, between the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and myself, that the Democratic Labour Party has to take at least 50 per cent responsibility for this.

Mr. Chairman, we are lawmakers in this country.

Asides.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, if the Honourable Member on the other side would allow me to speak.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please address the Chair, Honourable Members.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, we are lawmakers in this country and the public of Barbados in this time in the harshest economic circumstances ever to beset Barbadians since independence under this Democratic Labour Party Government is looking to this Parliament, indeed to all of us especially the Cabinet, as to how we are going to improve the system. The fact that contracts may have been awarded without being tendered is irrelevant.

Asides.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: I have not finished, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, just a minute please. Honourable Member, you are rising on what?

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: On a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, in relation to the matter of contract, there was a prequalification bid and firms were asked to bid. The process went on and the technical team and the experts, when they examined persons who sent in the bids, recognised that Al Barrack who got the contract was not qualified and in fact did not have the technical capabilities or the financial capabilities to do the job.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Okay, thank you very much. Proceed.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, I will respectfully ask back for my minute. Mr. Chairman, I was trying to make the point when the Honourable Member for St. Philip North sought to intervene is that my constituent with five children to feed tonight and to send to school tomorrow is not interested in how somebody got a contract, my constituent is now interested in the fact that the Ministry of Social Care cannot deliver her Welfare cheque that she used to get a few years ago and my elderly constituent of whom I have written letters for at least 20 of them over a period of time to the Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development is concerned that the roof still continues to leak and the boarding of the house is still bad. In urban Barbados as the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, one the most decent men to enter politics in this country, would tell you, the issue of pit toilets is still a prevalent problem as the Director of the Urban Development Commission said that he cannot fix them but the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has vowed to remove the scourge of every pit toilet in Barbados if it is the people's will for her to become the Prime Minister of this country on the next election, that is what the people of Barbados are concerned about today. I thought that Honourable Members in the Executive, the decision-making, policymaking body of this country, would have taken the opportunity in this debate to say what systems they are going to put in place to stop this kind of shenanigan.

The Democratic Labour Party in its 2008 Manifesto spoke to bringing in Contractor General's legislation. That is what they said. They spoke to accountability and proper governance and that at the end of every Cabinet meeting press conferences would be held to inform the public of

what decisions have been made. Three years ago I heard the Honourable Minister of Finance say that he is bringing to Parliament procurement legislation and we have not heard anything about that since then and the Democratic Labour Party Government continues to go on its merry way awarding contracts of millions and millions of dollars, the public has no knowledge of this, contracting hard-earned taxpayers' money by signing legal documents that the people of Barbados know nothing about as if they are signing their own personal property, that is what we should be talking about and that is what I would like to hear.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I am just trying to connect the dots here. I can understand you trying to make a reference but if it is too prolong and it does not go back to the core subject you are really being irrelevant so you need to come back to the core subject.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: With great respect, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: The issue has been brought up about how the contract was awarded and all I am trying to do is to urge those Members who have the power and the authority as Members of the Executive of Barbados is that as of today they should bring to Parliament Contractor General's legislation, procurement legislation, which would prevent them from awarding contracts just so to their friends and with the real possibility of adverse implications to campaign financing because we are into a campaign season. In all of this we know, studies done throughout the world, that these issues raise the cost of living and make life more difficult for the most vulnerable in society while fattening the pockets of the fatted calf to use the late Prime Minister's words. This is the issue that we have to deal with today, and I am here, Mr. Chairman, as a representative of 7 600 people many of whom are within that study which recently came out showing a 2.4 per cent increase in the poverty level of Barbadians, that is what we should be concerned about, how we are going to deal with this...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, again I will ask you to come back to the Resolution. You have deviated substantially from the Resolution and I really want you to come back to the Resolution that we are speaking about because you have not tied in the points, so please come back, if not you are going down a very irrelevant road and you are not relevant. What is the relevance?

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Sir, I respect that. Sir, the relevance is that we should never be in a position where in terms of a country that ought to be striving for proper governance and accountability where after 10 years of being the Government of Barbados we find ourselves in a situation where a matter ought to have been paid off a long

time ago where a late Prime Minister, the Head of the Cabinet, made a promise to pay \$2.5 million a month to settle the debt and thereby to reduce the \$25 million in interest that amounted, but only one payment was made and where a Government has placed no legislative capacity after promising to do so in 2008, that a Government has so far failed to bring into this Parliament legislation which would deal with the transparency, accountability and good governance under which they were elected.

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They are the fundamental issues that address the people of Barbados today who are suffering greatly by the maladministration and financial wastage by this Government. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, I rise to add my bit to this debate. I note the Honourable Member who has just taken his seat has made a very interesting point at the very beginning of his presentation before, I am told, the Honourable Member ran out of gas the Honourable Member was looking for a petroleum pump. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member said that the Barbados Labour Party is responsible for 50 per cent of this fiasco but I would want to know how is this 50 per cent going to be allocated.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, just one moment, please. The Honourable Member for St. James North, what is the point of order?

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is certainly misleading this House, and I will repeat what is said. Mr. Chairman, I said that the Democratic Labour Party Government is responsible for at least 50 per cent of this debacle, that is what I said.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please proceed, Honourable Member.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member and I both attended the same secondary school. I suspect we may have both experienced a man called Mr. Albert Williams who was a mathematician. Mr. Chairman, now if you have 50 per cent, using less than or equal to ($\leq$), obviously the antithesis would be so for the opposite end, so that I do not understand the point. Mr. Chairman, I am agreeing with the Honourable Member, 50 per cent means 50 per cent. I understand that the Honourable Member went in the direction of the arts. Mr. Chairman, if it is 50 per cent, I would want to know how the Honourable

Member is going to allocate that 50 per cent, because we have the former Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew still in the Honourable House; the former Parliamentary Secretary, the Honourable Member for St. George North is still in the House, and to boot, the former Chairman of the National Housing Corporation, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is still in his Honourable House, so how is the Honourable Member going to share out this 50 per cent? I just want to know, that is all.

Mr. Chairman, I am glad, to some extent, that Honourable Members, including the Honourable Member for St. James North who, in spite of being a trained attorney-at-law, sought to shift this debate to really what is at the base of it. The truth is that you cannot properly come to this Honourable House and explain why it is that \$13 million of our scarced dollars has to be spent in this manner, without looking at how we really and truly got here, therefore, I think it is only appropriate...

Mr. Chairman, if indeed again that the Honourable Member is right in that the Government is saying that they are at least 50 per cent responsible -- and notice that the Honourable Member used that term -- so it means that it may be even greater than 50 per cent, I would like to think that perhaps the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central is correct, that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph was speaking, not on his own behalf because I do not know how much of that 50 per cent goes to him, I am saying speaking on the behalf of the Barbados Labour Party that we understand might be anywhere between 45 per cent and 65 per cent responsible. We are not sure, really and truly, because we were not speaking in absolutes, but maybe an apology would have been in order.

Mr. Chairman, in trying to take digs at what is presently happening in Government... Mr. Chairman, the truth is, you can say whatever you want to say about this Government having to use public-private-partnerships and procurement practices with some of the State-owned enterprises, we do not have anything that compares to the Warrens Office Complex, let us be clear on that. This Government for its entire life from 2008 to date, all of our projects have come in and/or near where their budgets are supposed to be. Where in cases they have gone over-budget there have been explanations. We certainly did not have anything like the Warrens Office Complex which is three or four times the budgeted value. There is also Crab Hill Police Station, the St. Leonard's Boys' School, et cetera. Sir, the list goes on and one, it seems as though there is a pattern.

Mr. Chairman, it is really therefore perhaps a good thing that we are having this debate and that we have had a little confession of sort. The Honourable Member for St. James North referred to himself as a practicing Christian.

Well, we all know that God's grace and the blood of Jesus is for all of us, we can all confess. Mr. Chairman, since the Honourable Member has at least half confessed on the Warrens Office Complex, how much percentage is the Crab Hill Police Station, for example? What about the Hotel and Resorts Limited debacle that we also had to clean up? What about Greenland? What about the prison? Mr. Chairman, the list goes on and on. I am not even talking about the criminality, the Trinidadian man there by Highway 2.

Mr. Chairman, I know that again the Honourable Member has now shifted gears, the Honourable Member wants to talk about a Contractor-General. Well, Lord have mercy, if there had a Contractor-General around the time of this, do you know how many people he would have had to put in prison for this? Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member has declared that he is a Christian, he has declared, I assumed speaking for the Barbados Labour Party Government, that he was half responsible.

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member said that he and I went to the same school but I wonder. Mr. Chairman, I want to repeat now for the third time...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, on what are you rising?

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: And what is the point of order?

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member and Acting Prime Minister is misleading this House and ought to know better. Mr. Chairman, I repeat myself now for the third time, I said that the Democratic Labour Party Government has to take at least 50 per cent responsibility for this.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have already made the point. That is not a point of order. Please proceed, Honourable Member.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, I do not know who is supposed to take the other 50 per cent, the point still remains that I think that this debate is still important in terms of putting the whole exercise in perspective. I think that this Government has had to operate on a shoestring and with respect to our projects there has been a discipline that was totally absent between 1994 and 2008 and that fact cannot be challenged.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member can call one or two things now, the truth is that nothing can compare to this Warrens Office Complex. Nothing. Mr. Chairman, the language that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central used may seem a little extreme but it is the truth, a case study of maladministration at every single level, from the start to the finish and everything that happened in-between there. Mr. Chairman, to this day we are still paying for it because I am told that the building, in spite of the best efforts, has inherent problems in its day-to-day operations. I have only passed through there a few times but it still has its challenges.

Mr. Chairman, I think that we just have to put things into appropriate context, we need to understand where it is that this whole exercise started. Sir, while we welcome the newfound wash-in-the-blood-of-the-lamb position of the Barbados Labour Party on these things and trying to... Mr. Chairman, they have accepted at least 50 per cent responsibility, so that we understand we are getting somewhere, this debate has brought us somewhere.

6.00 p.m.

I therefore sincerely hope that we can, in going forward, look at our procurement practices certainly. I do not have a problem with that, but having gone through that exercise, the discipline of how we manage our large infrastructure projects is something I think we can also look at. Having said that, I certainly am very proud to be part of a team that has in every single instance made sure that we have tried to bring discipline to how we manage these projects, including the ones we inherited and had to sort of get a grip on. I think the Harrison's Cave redevelopment comes to mind right away when we actually had to commit the Cabinet; they had to take that by the scruff of its neck and bring it back into line. It was spiralling totally out of control at the time. We have been able to get these things all covered, and I think that we have to put these things in order.

Mr. Chairman, I think that we should also be very honest with ourselves, and once again I want to establish, having understood that blame has now been accepted in part at least by the Barbados Labour Party team, who is going to assume this blame. Most of the players, as I said, are right here in the Chamber. I do not have to go anywhere. Is it the former Chairman, the former Parliamentary Secretary, the former Minister, the former attorney-at-law for Mr. Barrack, or all four of the above? These are the questions we have to ask and which people are going to ask. In the meantime, of course, we have to get on with the business of running the business of Government.

I can assure the Member for St. James North. It was the Member for St. Joseph who said Government is a continuum, and the Member for St. James North needs not worry. During our third term in office, we will be able to implement a number of those things that he speaks about; having spent the last ten years being quite disciplined in how we have managed all of the capital infrastructure projects which this Government has undertaken, and certainly having nothing like this Warrens Office Complex debacle, which I think all Barbadians would like to see the end of. It is a project that literally will cost probably five, six or seven times what it started out as, and all because of incompetence and arrogance of individuals involved in the Barbados Labour Party. Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I rise to wrap up this debate and to say that as early as 2008 the Democratic Labour Party sought to solve this particular problem and to bring it to closure because that was when the late Prime Minister would have made an offer and would have suggested that, after finding out the precarious situation with the finances, he offer to pay on a monthly basis to solve this particular problem. I also want to say that when the contractor at the time was given the contract, the engineer at the time proffered that it should have been a foundation on piles. The contractor objected when he found out the land he had to build on, and he went for a raft foundation. Not only did he go for a raft foundation, but he also went to the University of the West Indies and got some assessment testing done, which proved that there were caves. He was then able to use that, so that his conclusion that it should be a raft and not piles was proven to be correct by the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to remind the other Members that the legal costs have been taxed. The lawyers subjected themselves to the court so that their costs could be taxed, and we are hoping that once the means topics and so on are settled, the court can decide and it can be reported to the court so that the final judgement can be made on this particular case and we can bring final closure. I never said that I would bring closure today, because I pointed out that there are certain loose ends which had to be tied up and that is exactly what has to be done. I want to say that it has been a difficult task. The Honourable Member for St. James North made some comments. It had nothing to do with us objecting to an opinion because, as signalled earlier, as early as 2008 in the first year of coming to Government when we saw the financial position of the country, the Cabinet of the time sought to bring closure to it and to work out terms.

I also want to make the point that I totally agree with the Honourable Member for St. Joseph that when the matter went to arbitration, both sides agreed with the person doing the arbitration. One can only come to the conclusion that it was accepted by both sides that the judgement would be one that they would abide with. I found it rather strange that the Government of the day would have accepted this distinguished gentleman to do the arbitration, and after he had studied the case and made a judgement, the Government would have embarrassed this gentleman -- a very distinguished lawyer and judge -- by allowing another lawyer or allowing a Board to overrule the decision of the Cabinet. Most likely it was the Cabinet that would have made the decision to take it to arbitration, then for a Board to overrule the Cabinet, and then to land this particular amount of costs against the country of Barbados. I find it rather strange, because not only was that decision embarrassing to the arbitrator but it was also embarrassing to the Cabinet of the day, if you were to accept what was said.

Mr. Chairman, we have to be very careful because if there is a law about arbitration, then one expects that when that decision is made that you abide by the decision. I find it rather strange that NHC would be so presumptuous to go against the Cabinet and to come to this particular conclusion on this particular matter. I am hoping, Sir, that as we get to 90 or 95 per cent of this particular case, one thing I would say, Sir, is that I am not about dragging out this case and I am not about going back to court for legal fees to mount up and so on. I want to bring closure to this particular matter, and I think what I have proffered will bring closure to it, and the sooner we put this behind us, the better it is. One thing is that I will not allow the Board or anybody else to make a decision that happened in 2006 when the NHC Board went against the Cabinet of Barbados, as we were told today, and caused the country to end up paying over \$39 million more than planned. The truth is that once the arbitration was done, the case should have been settled and we should not have been here today discussing this particular matter.

With those few comments, Mr. Chairman, I beg that this Head now stand part.

The question that Head 75 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

5.20 p.m.

On the motion of Hon. M.A. LASHLEY, seconded by Hon. A.D. BRATHWAITE, Mr. Chairman reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of two Resolutions in Committee of Supply, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE, seconded by Hon. D. KELLMAN, the two Resolutions were read a first, second and third time and agreed and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, with that, we have come to the end of Government Business for today and I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, October 3, 2017 at 10 o'clock in the morning.

Hon. D. KELLMAN: I beg to second that.

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, October 3, 2017 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

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SUTHERLAND, Mr. D. G. (St. George South)
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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

Q2. Committee of Supply, Head 23, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, take-slip about 10.53 a.m.. The source repeats the paragraph on the Environmental Health Unit's abatement notices either side of take-slip 'H:D17(2)10.53 a.m.'. The fuller second version is printed and the first (about 70 words) has been left out. Please confirm.

Q3. Papers, item 1. The title reads 'The Fifteen Actuarial Review of the National Insurance Fund', presumably 'Fifteenth'. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Committee of Supply, Head 23, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce. Three paragraphs of the Minister's speech, from 'Mr. Speaker, in the case of Zika there were 688 reported cases' to the paragraph on the vaccination programme, are marked in the source as procedural text and so print in italic. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Committee of Supply, Head 23, Mr. K. D. Symmonds. The Chairman calls 'The Honourable Member for St. James North' before Mr. K. D. Symmonds speaks; Mr. Symmonds is elsewhere the Member for St. James Central, and the Member for St. James North is Mr. E. G. Hinkson. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Committee of Supply, Head 23, closing speech. The Minister's reply closing the debate on Head 23 (about 430 words) follows the Chairman's call 'The Honourable Member for Christ Church South' and is printed under the label 'Mr. CHAIRMAN', with 'Hon. J.D.E. BOYCE' run into the first paragraph. The passage is Mr. Boyce's. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Committee of Supply, Head 21 / Head 75. The heading reads 'HEAD 21' and Hon. D. St.E. Kellman says 'Head 21 deals with legal fees as it relates to Head 75', but the question put at the end of the debate is 'that Head 75 stand part'. The sum and title of this second Resolution are not stated in the source. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Speech labels. Some names are spelt more than one way: 'Mr. E. G. HINKSON' and 'MR. E.D. HINKSON'; 'Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE' and 'Hon. Dr. D. LOWE'; 'Mr. D. D. MARSHALL' and 'Mr. D.

MARSHALL'; 'Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN' and 'Hon. D. KELLMAN'. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 26th September, 2017 at 10.00 a.m., with Mr. Speaker, His Honour M. A. Carrington, in the Chair; prayers were taken by Rev. Father Mark Harewood. The Minutes of 25th July were confirmed, and Mr. Speaker welcomed members of the Barbados Youth Parliament. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce laid five papers, among them the Actuarial Review of the National Insurance Fund as of 31st December, 2014 and the Waste Characterisation Study for Barbados 2015, and Hon. R. L. Sealy laid the Barbados Port Inc. Annual Report for 2016. The Latin American Development Bank (Amendment) Bill, 2017 was read a first time and Standing Orders were suspended.

Under Order No. 19 the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. J. D. Paul in the Chair, on Supplementary Estimates No. 2, 2017-2018. Under Head 23, Ministry of Health, Mr. Boyce sought \$4 639 775 for the 16th debushing programme, run by the Environmental Health Unit across seven polyclinic catchments to clear overgrown lots that harboured vermin and blocked drains. He noted that owners largely ignored abatement notices, that the charge for clearing was 18 or 20 cents a square foot, and that from 2012 to 2016 there had been 11 533 cases of dengue and 2 034 of chikungunya, with 688 reported cases of Zika; of \$3 155 344 allocated the year before, only \$1.6 million had been used.

Mr. D. G. Sutherland said \$12.79 million had been allocated for debushing and asked whether the money would feather the Democratic Labour Party's nest; Hon. D. St.E. Kellman replied that the programme had begun under 'Tom' Adams. Dr. M. M. Agard supported the Resolution but asked for an account of earlier sums, and the debate, joined by Dr. the Hon. D. S. Lowe, Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, Hon. S. D. Blackett, Miss C. Y. Forde, Hon. C. P. Sinckler and Mr. T. A. Prescod, turned to employment programmes such as NEEP and Project Oasis. Mr. Boyce replied, undertaking to publish current disease figures, and Head 23 stood part.

Hon. D. St.E. Kellman then sought funds for legal fees arising from the dispute between Barrack Construction Limited and the National Housing Corporation over the Warrens office complex. An arbitrator, Sir Denys Williams, had in 2006 awarded \$34 490 518 with interest at 10 per cent, and the total settlement of \$74 702 042 had

been met partly by handing over the Warrens property, valued at \$60 million. Fees of \$9 571 797 to Sir Richard Cheltenham, Q.C. and \$6 159 875 to Sir Maurice King left a balance of \$13 731 672.

Mr. D. D. Marshall, the Member for St. Joseph, argued that Government is a continuum and that interest had grown after the Corporation's appeal; Mr. Boyce said he should declare an interest as a former Chairman of the Corporation, and Mr. Marshall rose on points of order to deny remarks attributed to him. Hon. S. A. Lashley called the matter a mess left by the Barbados Labour Party; Mr. E.

G. Hinkson said the sum had stood at \$50 million in January 2008 and reached about \$75 million, and was directed by the Chairman back to the Resolution; Hon. M. A. Lashley and Hon. R. L. Sealy called the Warrens project maladministration. Mr. Kellman wound up and the Head stood part.

Both Resolutions were reported and passed, and on the motion of Mr. Boyce, seconded by Hon. D. Kellman, the House was adjourned until Tuesday, 3rd October, 2017 at 10.00 a.m.