
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2018 – 2022

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly Worthing Corporate Centre, Worthing, Christ Church met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, October 13, 2020.

PRESENT

His Honour A. E. HOLDER, B.Sc. (Hons.), MSW, LL.B.

(Hons.), L.E.C. (Speaker)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Q.C.

Hon. R. St.C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of Industry and International Business)

Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment, Minister of National Security and the Civil Service)

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P. (Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs)

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B. (Hons.), (Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs)

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Energy, Small Business and Entrepreneurship)

Lt. Col. the Hon. J. D. BOSTIC, MVO, B.A. (Hons.) (Minister of Health and Wellness)

Mr. E. G. HINKSON, LL.B (Hons.), L.E.C., LL.M.

Hon. D. G. SUTHERLAND, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.B.A. (Dist.) (Minister of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment)

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW, LL.B. (Hons.) L.E.C. (Leader of Government Business) (Minister of Education, Technological and Vocational Training)

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY, J.P., B.A., B.Sc., PgD. (Leader of the Opposition)

Dr. the Hon. W. F. DUGUID, J.P., B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S., F.D.R.C.S., (Minister of Housing, Lands and Maintenance)

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of Home Affairs, Information and Public Affairs)

Hon. C. S. V. HUSBANDS, B.A., M.Sc. (Hons.) (Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Trade)

Mr. R. A. THORNE, Q.C., LL.B., L.E.C., Dip. Theology

Hon. I. A. WEIR, M.B.A. (Minister of Agriculture and Food Security)

Hon. A. R. FORDE (Minister of Environment and National Beautification)

Hon. C. McD. GRIFFITH, B.Sc. (Minister in the Ministry of Water Resources)

Hon. P. R. PHILLIPS (Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security)

Hon. J. A. KING, B.S.S. (Minister in the Prime Minister's Office with responsibility for Culture and the National Development Commission)

Hon. I. G. P. GOODING-EDGHILL (Minister of Transport, Works and Water Resources)

Hon. C. E. JORDAN, B.Sc. (Hons.) (Minister of Labour and Social Partnership Relations and the Third Sector)

Dr. S. E. BROWNE, M.B.B.S. (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY, B.Sc., M.S.C., M.P.A. (Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy)

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN, B.Sc., M.Sc. (Minister in the Ministry of Finance)

Hon. Miss M. K-A. CADDLE, B.A., M.Sc. (Minister in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Investment)

Mr. N. G. H. ROWE, J.P.

Prayers were taken by Father Reverend Mark Harewood.

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

MINUTES

Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its Meeting of Tuesday, 29th September, 2020 be confirmed.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: 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

PAPERS

Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Annual Report for the Central Bank of Barbados for the year 2019.
2. The Audited Financial Statements of the Grantley Adams International Airport, Inc. for the financial year ended 31st March, 2019.
3. Medicinal Cannabis Industry Regulations, 2020.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Mr. SPEAKER: I beg to give notice of the Appropriation (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW, seconded by the Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS, the Appropriation (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was read a first time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDINGS ORDERS

Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: 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 this day's Sitting.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

SUSPENSION

Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 11.00 a.m.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House do now suspend until 11:00 o'clock was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (RESUMED)

ORDER No. 4

APPROPRIATION BILL, 2020

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

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. The matter before the Chamber relates to an amendment to the Appropriation Bill for this fiscal year. As you would recall, Sir, some two months ago, approximately, the Government was restructured in the sense that there was a reshuffling of the Cabinet which saw a reconstitution of some programmes across Government and as a result of that change there is cause for the amendment to the Appropriation Bill.

More substantively in this COVID-19 environment, in the early part of this fiscal year as the Honourable Prime Minister would have indicated in the wrap up to the Second Reading of the very said Appropriation Bill for this year, just as we were about to enter a lockdown there were a series of initiatives which you would recall, Sir - we came to this Chamber on the very first day of the financial year -- that I remarked then that it was extraordinary that the Parliament would be meeting on the very first day of the financial year to do supplementaries given what we forecast the impact of COVID-19 would be in the context of the lockdown and so over the course of the last six months, the first half of this financial year, as the Government has sought to navigate and respond to the clear public health threat that COVID-19 has posed to Barbados, and as we have equally responded to a myriad of social protection measures that we put in place to ensure that Barbadians can stay afloat and that we can keep the economy in as stable a pattern as possible given the impact

of COVID-19, this Appropriation Bill, today is just but a reflection of some of those changes.

As you would appreciate, Sir, we have been, through the Ministry of Health and Wellness, responding to the changes that were required as we continue to deal with the public health threat of COVID-19. There is still a public health emergency arising in Barbados and indeed globally as the pandemic seems to be taking on a new head of steam and therefore as a result of that we have had to make and continue to make additional resources available to the Ministry of Health and Wellness with respect to the ongoing management of the pandemic and to ensure that we can first and foremost keep Barbadians safe as we go ahead and reopen the economy with respect to the imposition of certain protocols.

Sir, I take this opportunity, Sir, to continue to urge all Barbadians to ensure that they take a sense of personal responsibility for their actions because if we all do what we are supposed to do then we will be able to keep the economy open, we will be able to maintain livelihoods in this environment and indeed reduce in a sense the pressure on Government to have to respond more directly in terms of the interventions for social protection.

Sir, we have given the commitment, and in discussions I have heard a number of commentaries about what the Government should do and what we should not do and how BERT (the Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation Programme) is not appropriate for the time and all kinds of things being said, the reality that we have been in a position to respond in the way that we have been able to is simply because we did in the first two years of this Administration quite a bit of work stabilising the Barbados economy such that we have been in a position to respond in the affirmative to the demands from the Ministry of Health and Wellness with respect to being able to deal first with the public health threat.

I want to say, Sir, that this has not been an easy task by any stretch of the imagination. I know that the Minister continues to work diligently with his staff, the doctors, the nurses and the other personnel involved in the testing regime, because they have been on the frontline protecting Barbadians, but equally I know that they have been concerned about the fact that the economy has to reopen and therefore the management and risk becomes a critical component of how we move forward. Sir, I think Barbadians, rightfully observing what is taking place outside of Barbados, are concerned about the reopening of the economy but I can say that as long as we remain focus and we remain responsible within the context of being able to do what we can to mitigate our own individual risk and to have confidence not just in the Minister of Health and Wellness and the personnel within the Ministry but certainly to appreciate that they have a Government that is

committed to doing all that we can do to keep people safe but by the same token ensure that we make the resources available to ease the burden and to ease the stress on ordinary Barbadians but the only that we can do those things, Sir, is if we have and adopt a very aggressive and dynamic risk management protocol as it relates to the management of the public health threat for the pandemic but equally understanding that that personal responsibility required on the public health side is equally important with respect to maintaining economic activity in the economy such that we do not have a relapse with respect to an increase in cases locally, and therefore that is absolutely paramount in respect of us being able to move forward and to respond certainly over the course of the next six months.

The Appropriation Bill, Sir, is before this Chamber even in the midst of the fact that we continue from a budgetary perspective to monitor very carefully the performance of the revenue and the performance of our expenditure because we are clear that we have the financing required to take us certainly to the end of this financial year very comfortably with respect to the predicted shortfall in revenue.

Sir, I must say to you that having gone through this exercise, it is incumbent upon Barbadians that when we presented to the Social Partnership the context in which we would be operating in this financial year... I am pleased to report that up until now that we are on track, and this is all things equal, indeed to do better than what we would have initially anticipated, but what is required as I said is that absolute commitment by Barbadians to continue to follow the public health protocols so that we can do better than that worst-case scenario that we anticipated and therefore it is critical that every Barbadian play their part so that the Government can focus on ensuring that we can keep families in this country whole, that we can have as many businesses stay open that can employ people and equally to maintain a level of social and economic stability in this country at this very important time. Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is not an easy exercise because there are challenges every day to which we have to respond; there are challenges [both] domestically and internationally given a number of negative references that we have received in recent times from namely the European Union, but we are not deterred by that because we have given the commitment to Barbadians that we will fight for them, Sir, and [that] we will continue to ensure that we defend the interest of Barbados because it is important for us, especially now in this pandemic, but [that] we understand that a Government has to respond of multiple fronts and that the responses are multifaceted and therefore while this is a Bill about dollars and cents, the reality is that the allocation and the reallocation of any expenditures as we have to do (and you would have heard in the Throne Speech a number of initiatives which were designed specifically to respond to the people of Barbados in terms of the immediate short-

term needs but equally, Sir, as we seek to continue with some of the transformational efforts to turn Barbados around, and therefore it is not simply dollars and cents, (as I would say, Sir,) but equally it is about ensuring that people in this country, and that a number of businesses (small and medium size businesses, Sir, and even some large businesses) that they too can stay afloat and continue to employ people because that is what is required now to ensure that we can maintain a stable economic environment in the context of the pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the changes to the structure of Government, as demonstrated in this Bill, reflect (as I said), the reorganisation of the ministries, but as we have done over the last six months, Sir, we suspended some of the sub-programmes and focussed more on what we needed to do to keep people safe. We will continue to ensure that we put Barbados in a position that we can recover as quickly as possible going forward and therefore these amendments to the Appropriation Bill, 2020 just reflect some of the more immediate needs that are required at this particular time and therefore in that vein the Government continues, Sir, to monitor on a daily basis with respect to our fiscal performance. We are still very much committed to ensuring that the Government's fundamental response to people is as strong as we can deliver in this environment, and that too will continue to be monitored and where resources are required to be ramped up, then we will ramp up those resources to ensure that nobody is left behind in this country,

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want also to take this opportunity to address, very importantly, a matter that has seem to have come to the force, and I will [address that] very quickly. Mr. Speaker, Sir, there seems to be some level of misunderstanding in the public domain in relation to our debt suspension request, and let me be very specific in the language that I am using. Mr. Speaker, Sir, you would recall that under the Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan, (BERT) we committed ourselves to a 60 per cent debt to Gross Domestic Product ratio by 2033 and we have successfully both our domestic, as well as our external commercial debt, to ensure that we move from 171 per cent when we first came to office, to just about 118 per cent of just prior to COVID-19. Now, since the onset of COVID-19, Barbados, like the rest of the world, have had to borrow to finance, in a sense, what the shortfall in revenue would be, given the commitments that we had made. The Honourable Prime Minister, this week (and certainly over the course of the last few weeks) have been engaged in a number of multilateral discussions with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the various institutional lenders about the how we would treat to the debt incurred as it relates to COVID-19, with respect to how debt sustainability is managed and assessed going forward.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have been advocating, quite strongly, that (and there is consensus with respect to that that is building. It is now to ensure that we get the political will of those in the more (sic!) -- how should I put it, those who are richer, financially) to get them to agree to the principle of it - and in the same way that Great Britain would have benefitted from the War Bonds which they have only just finished repaying for the rebuilding of the WWII, we have been advocating very strongly, Sir, that the debt that is incurred with respect to COVID-19, that the workout of the debt (meaning the pay back of that debt) should be done over a much longer period than the existing debt that persons may have already had on the books. And why is that, Sir? because as you may appreciate, as it evolves, you have a situation where households, as well as many businesses, are under stress and therefore, Sir, even if the economy were to recover within two years, the debt burden that we now hold as a country (and it is not just Barbados, so I want to make that point very clearly) that you would find yourself where the economy is back at the same level as it was at the beginning of this year, but your debt level and potential debt service would be over and above that which the potential carrying capacity could be, which then triggers potentially some level of financial implosion, not just in Barbados but certainly there are a number of countries that are not as fiscally a strong position as Barbados and certainly we have to be equally concern with respect to that.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have been advocating within the context of the multilaterals and even in the context of discussions that we have had with a number of the rating agencies about, (1), how do you actually either redefine what debts sustainability is, or find a way to ring-fence or treat very differently the debt that has been incurred with respect to COVID-19 such that over the course of the longest possible period, that that debt could be serviced without necessarily creating a debt-overhang or stress for economies such as Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, so that in the event that it might have been interpreted that Barbados was somehow contemplating new debt restructuring, I can say to this Honourable Chamber that that is not what is being contemplated, because if there were no COVID-19 this year we would not have needed to borrow any of the moneys that we had borrowed already. equally, a number of the countries, small, medium and large globally have had to respond in ways that nobody had anticipated that they would have needed to this year and therefore this is a global issue and therefore Barbados is leading in these very important discussions because that will make a difference to the quality of life that Barbadians can expect, because as you would appreciate, if after this recovery we have to expend more resources than anticipated servicing that additional debt, then that would mean that we cannot allocate those resources to dealing with some of the more

structural issues which we were committed to when we entered The Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation Plan, (BERT). Therefore, we will continue those discussions within that space and therefore I want to give the public the confidence that what is being contemplated is not in any way associated with what the Government is not contemplating a debt restructuring in the nature that would have taken place with respect to the domestic and external debt, that more importantly, Sir, understanding that we were not going to borrow these monies this year but we had to, given the shortfall in revenue and the response that the Government has had to respond to, and that this is a global issue and that we are leading within that context to be able to bring about or to avoid a very uncomfortable discussion and potentially a significant global debt problem, which we certainly have the ability to respond to.

Sir, these are some of the very complicated things that confront Barbados, because while we are indeed responding to the public health crisis and trying to stimulate as much domestic activity as possible, we equally have to ensure that down the road we are putting the things in place today to ensure that we would be able to maintain a sustainable debt trajectory as well as a sustainable fiscal situation going forward. Sir, let it not be said that this Government has not committed itself to responding to whatever confronts us in this pandemic. Sir, we have had discussions with the IMF which, equally, understands very clearly how dynamic the situation has been. We have also been committing that on both sides there is a response with respect to being able to ensure that households can remain solvent or as solvent as possible, and that as many businesses can remain as solvent as possible.

Sir, this is perhaps the most critical thing because in a small, open economy like Barbados' it is absolutely important for these economic agents -- the very people we were elected to represent in our constituencies across this country -- as we navigate a very uncertain evolution of this pandemic over the next two years or so. Barbados will also have to chart a course that will allow us and our constituents and their families, along with the businesses which they own and work for, to remain as solvent as possible. The Government has given a commitment that we will respond where we need to, working collaboratively with the financial sector to craft the appropriate responses to allow us to get through this very stressful time.

Therefore, the Amendments to the Appropriation Bill is just a reflection of the fact that we are faced with a very dynamic set of circumstances, and you will see much more dynamism with respect to the way in which the Government will be allocating its resources. In that vein, Sir, we have given a commitment that we will come to this Chamber to inform the country as to any of the significant changes which may occur, and in so doing observe a level

of transparency with respect to the conduct of the public and the management of the public finances in this country.

Sir, that said, today's exercise is relatively straightforward in that there are a number of initiatives that we have given commitments to. Therefore, as we seek to move forward and make the resources available to the Ministries, we have to come to this Place, we have to vote the monies and we have to give account for the people's money, which is what we are doing. However, what is perhaps very, very critical is the execution of Government's programme now in response to, firstly, ensuring that families can remain stable and, secondly, that we can get as much economic activity occurring in the shortest possible time. That is what is absolutely critical now in being able to respond to the stress which persons have been experiencing over the course of the last six months as a result of COVID-19, Sir. This is just one part of that exercise, and you will see a number of initiatives being rolled out and monies being made available for the execution of said programmes.

Therefore, Sir, the Parliament is playing its role with respect to responding to the needs of the pandemic, we are giving account to the people in the way that we ought to, and while we are working as quickly as we can to ensure that we can get as much economy activity in order to create as many jobs as possible, you will see that over the course of the coming weeks there will be a number of supplementary requests coming to the Chamber so as to give account for that which the Government will be responding to. Sir, it is simply to reflect the fact that we have had to, in a sense, do almost an almost 180-degree turn in respect of where we started in March when we began the exercise for the Appropriation Bill. Circumstances have changed, Sir, and they will continue to change but I give the commitment that any monies that are re-allocated to where we are going will, naturally, come to this Chamber and be fully ventilated for the benefit of the public.

I, therefore, beg to move that the Bill be read a second time, Sir. I am obliged to you.

Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY: I beg to second that, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is no-one else speaking on the Bill?

Asides.

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

Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. In supporting this Bill I find myself -- as Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy, and like my colleagues -- amidst a most difficult time for many of us and a most uncertain time for all of us; a time when we are forced to re-evaluate our approach to the way we govern our Ministries and the priorities that we had set for ourselves going forward. Sir, each of us made a listing of the things we would have wanted to achieve in the year. If ever there was a normal year, 2020 certainly is not it, Sir. Therefore, the normal approach to managing our affairs will not work and those of us who come to positions of leadership and who do not adapt as the situation changes, who do not make the necessary changes so as to be relevant, who do not do the things necessary to make themselves, their Ministries, their programmes and their policies fit for purpose, indeed all we do then is waste time, Sir.

It would not be in anybody's interest to say that we are going to stick to what we had originally agreed to do because we had originally agreed to do it. It makes no sense, Sir, and if the circumstances now demand that we make changes then those of us who are right-thinking would have to agree that the changes are necessary. Sir, I say so in the context of managing a Ministry that found itself desperately in need of some love and attention. Sir, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy is a composite of various, different Ministries. I had a bit of tourism when I came in with the portfolio of international shipping, Sir. I had a bit of agriculture with the portfolio of fisheries. Sir, under the purview I also have a bit of the environment with the coastal zone portfolio. It is a bit of here and there but pulled together for one strategic purpose, Sir, and between 2019 and 2020 we were bringing to fruition a number of things that made a lot of sense. We did so because the times demanded that we did so.

Sir, I now have a number of changes which I need to make to be able to address some things that were left unaddressed in this country for years, and when I sat down to do my Estimates last year we listed the things we wanted to do very clearly and very strategically, but COVID-19 shook the foundation of things as we knew it. It has shaken the foundation for us even as Members of Parliament (MPs), not only as Ministers. What we would have gotten away with in 2018 to 2019 we cannot get away with in 2020. Sir, we found ourselves doing things like acting almost as if we were social institutions, trying to meet people at their needs.

Sir, if we at the individual level had to change to be able to find ourselves fit for purpose and relevant, it is not surprising that the Government will also have to make the necessary changes to find itself fit for purpose and relevant. This year I set out to bring changes to the markets and fisheries as we understood it and to bring changes to

coastal zone and all of these things within the context of COVID.

When COVID first came to our shores, we were all not sure when going forward what we would be able to do. I am so proud of this Government, because we have not compromise on the delivery of services to people in the most difficult of circumstances. Let me explain why I say that. When we came into office, Sir you may recall and I am pretty sure you do, that people were having conversations all over the Caribbean like St. Lucia, Dominica, and Grenada. When those economies were growing and becoming more stable before we came into office, the Barbadian economy was becoming worse. The former Government was making the argument that because of a recession, they found themselves underperforming while the rest of the Caribbean was doing better. That made no sense to me.

Sir, fast forward to two years under the leadership of our current Prime Minister in the support of the Honourable Member Christ Church East Central, the leadership of the Ministry of Finance. Remember, two years ago, everybody around Barbados was doing well and Barbados was doing terribly.

Now, in the circumstances with COVID, Barbados is now performing better than everybody in the region. While everybody is now struggling in the face of the World's most serious recession, Barbados finds itself in a position where Barbados could do more than the other countries in the Caribbean could do, because of the leadership of this Government in the last two years. Sir, it has to be said, because the former Government would have you believe that the reason Barbados was suffering was because of the recession. However, this is the biggest recession of all times and Barbados is performing better than the rest of the islands in Caribbean. Sir, it comes down to leadership. Sir, it comes down to the decisions that we make and it also came down to the decisions that they made.

Sir, I began by saying that I wanted to do some things in the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy. When COVID came we were all asked to readjust. Sir, to send in some of the money I thought that I would not be in a position to come work to the markets, I would not be in a position to do some things for the fishermen. If ever there is a Ministry that shows the ineptitude of the last Government, it must be the Ministry responsible for markets and fisheries, because everything in markets and everything in fisheries found itself in a state of complete disrepair. The markets are all broken, every single fish markets. As a matter of fact, I am now doing some work to the ice machine in Bridgetown, it has not been properly serviced in years.

Sir, I am going to show you the pictures of the place. We took out the ice machine and the entire infrastructure was corroded, which in a way is a microcosm of the state of things under the former Government, everything corroded Sir. However, I am so proud of this Government, because even in the face of COVID, when I went back to the Prime Minister and Cabinet, I said, even though I know we are facing hard times, things are things that I need to do and the Cabinet supported it.

Sir, I will tell you now some of the things that we are doing. Some the changes that we made were not to hurt people, not to hurt the industry, but to bring proper health to the industry and to support the people who supported all of us during COVID. Sir, you may recall that during COVID when almost every other sector was closed, we allowed fishing. We allowed the vendors in the market to operate and they were so kind to us that they gave back. I remember a picture of them on the front page giving 1 000 pounds of fish to the Ministry of People's Empowerment to give to poor people. When people start hearing that we are making changes, people may start to get the idea that every single change this Government has made is to cut back on spending or to cut back on the delivery of social services. In fact, the opposite is true and that we strengthen the spending to the social services sector during COVID because the Government put themselves in a position in two years to do what the former Government could never have done in forever. Sir, that is the story that must be told, regardless of what other story is told in this Honourable place today Sir.

When you hear people say that we are making changes the average person may hear that and say look the Government is going to cut service. Sir that has not been the case.

Sir, in the markets for example, you would see in today's paper that we are now some work at Pile Bay. Sir, Pile Bay has a culture of its own. If you visit Pile Bay on a Sunday, it is a place that is so Barbadian and well kept. It is almost like the best kept secret in Barbados. Sir, I was speaking to a fisherman friend today and he said, Pile Bay has been able to survive even though places like Skeete's Bay and Tent Bay have not been able to survive in the same way.

Sir, we are putting \$1 million towards renovating Pile Bay. We are going to convert that place and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West can feel proud because the former Minister of Finance was MP for the area never did it and we are going in this recession so the next six months we are going to convert the entire place for the fisher folk. We have already done Speightstown and the Honourable Member for St. Peter is aware. We have done Bridgetown, the Honourable for the City is aware and

we have done a lot of work in Oistins and the Members for Christ Church are also aware.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY: Sir, we are doing all of that in the face of the most stringent of circumstances. It brings a smile to my face and heart that I could go to the Cabinet of Barbados and talk about few things. I could go to the Cabinet of Barbados and say this is the state of things and have my colleagues support me on these matters because we know what is important. This is a people focus Government, do not let anyone tell you different.

Sir, we found ourselves in the sir in the situation in the markets where everything was falling apart. Mr. Speaker Sir, when I say everything, I mean everything. They have a forklift tied up with string, the ice machines broken, every single jetty falling apart, and what hurts the most is that at the same time, the former Government took a decision and bought a hoist that they said was to be used in fishing for nearly \$700 000 and it was never used once. It sat in the car park at fisheries and it rusted out. However, Sir, I said that that is their sin and I am not going to deal with that, it is not political. We asked the maker to come Barbados and take a look at this thing, because if we could salvage it, let us salvage it.

When they came and took a look at they said we cannot use this, the most you can do with this now is used it for parts. We spent \$700 000 to take a machine down and use it as parts. Not us, the former Government Sir. Such was their disregard for the people in the industry Sir. I went to Cabinet Sir, because you have to also understand the changes that we are making in this context. I went to the Cabinet of Barbados and I said I need to make some very important changes in fisheries. Sir here is what is happening.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I had a meeting at Oistins and I am not talking about a meeting with my PS or my SAO, I had a meeting with the fishermen. Sir, the fishermen took me to a shed in the back, you the place and we sat under that shed in Oistins and we had a conversation. They told me, Mr. Minister there are three things that we want in fisheries for Oistins. Sir, please allow me to call one more name. There is a gentleman named "Belly" who is a well-known in Oistins. He is a very strong character, if you know what I mean. He is a fisherman. We had a conversation under the shed with other people. They told me there were three things they wanted from me. One request was to fix the ice machine which was not working. Sir, the ice machine is fixed. They said to me, "Mr. Minister, people talked but these jetties have not been repaired for over two decades, nearly three." Sir, I brought a paper to Cabinet. Cabinet approved the paper and there is a supplementary before this

House to fix the jetty in Oistins. We will start the repairs there this year.

The said to me, “Sir, we want a slipway”. The Honourable for Christ Church East asked me to tell people what a slipway is. Sir, as you know, a slipway are two slabs that go into the water. It is a concrete structure. It allows the hoist or crane to go in onto the slipway, the boat comes and then, they use it to haul out the boat. It allows the fishermen to haul out their boats. We looked at Oistins to install one there and in conversation with them people were brought in to examine the area. We found Oistins to be difficult but I promise we will do one in Oistins. We agreed at that meeting to do one in Bridgetown. I have a supplementary here to do the slipway in Bridgetown too.

When I left there to visit the fishermen in Bridgetown and had my meeting in Bridgetown under a tree with the fishermen, they said to me, “We want to have the jetties in Bridgetown repaired.” Sir, if you saw the pictures are in a complete state of disrepair. I believe the neglect is so evident and I keep saying that if there is ever a manifestation of the neglect of the people by the last Government, you just have to visit a fish market. Each jetty, and there are about four or five, are broken. Along the dock where the boats actually come in, the fendering is gone completely.

The fishermen are using tyres like back in the day. When the tide is low, the boats go below the tyres. When the tide is high, the boats hit against the tyres and it destroys the boat. Therefore, we are actually the fisher-folk. We have here too a supplementary to fix all of those jetties and the things that the fishermen, and not the things that the Minister and Cabinet identified as important, but the fisher-folk determined were important, Sir. We are addressing each and every one of them, so that in two years and by the end of our term in five years we would have addressed all of the major concerns of the fishermen in this country when the former Government did not do it in 10 years.

Sir, those are some of the changes that we are going to be speaking to. For example, I have a quotation for Oistins. The Oistins jetty is going to cost the people of Barbados \$1.3 million. We had in our Estimates some money to do other things. I want you to understand the changes. We are moving that money now to the do the jetty because it is important for us. The fact that we allow the fisher-folk to fish during the COVID-19 pandemic and allow the markets to be open is a reflection of the principle nature of the Government. These are principle decisions. Therefore, we are moving those funds to the jetty because it is important for us to allow fishing to continue in Barbados. We cannot be party to the destruction of one of the oldest professions in this country and the world.

We talk about who cares for who. If the BLP Government is not the most caring in Barbados, then

none is. Who cares for who? Sir, you go take a look. Do you know what hurt me the most? It is slowly changing now. When I visited the markets with the Honourable Member for Christ Church South and we said we were going to fix Oistins, the vendors said it was mere talk and that all politicians do is talk. We fixed the market. I turned around and said we were going to do the same thing in Speightstown and Bridgetown. We fixed all of them.

I said to the fishermen at the meeting not to worry that I would go back and believe that I would get the support from my colleagues because they care. I told them I would get the support of my colleagues to fix the markets and jetty in Oistins. The fishermen at Oistins told me the same thing. They said, “All of you all politicians do is talk”. We are done talking, Sir. This is action. You can see it in everything we do. Sir, you see it across all of the Ministries. You can see it in every Ministry that something is happening. I feel now like the song. It is so exciting.

The jetty is going to cost us \$1.3 million. If you were to visit the Oistins jetty and you go from slab to slab, it is almost like when you were young and playing hot scotch. You would have to jump here and skip. Such is the state of disrepair. If you watched as they try to move the forklift but they cannot now because the slabs are so far apart. It is like a rough cart road ride. Sir, we are going to fix all of that. The funds have been provided to do that. I want to people to understand why it is that there are changes being made.

Sir, we are doing that in the face of COVID-19. Therefore, when people do not understand the importance of what we did in the first or two years under the leadership under the Minister of Finance and her two deputies or do not understand the reason that Barbados is in a position to do what we are doing now is because Barbados did in the first two years under the leadership of the Prime Minister what they did then to give us a bit of breathing space. We are going to fix that jetty for \$1.3 million, so people in Oistins can rest easy knowing that work will be started this year. In Bridgetown, we have a quote to do the four or five jetties for \$2.6 million. The reason that we have to spend all of this now is because nothing was really spent before.

As you know, Sir, if you have a problem and leave it to fester it gets worse, worse and worst. Therefore, instead of spending \$100 for a regular check-up, you are spending \$100 000 to try and save your life. Basically, we are now trying to save the life of what is happening in Bridgetown. It is \$2.6 million. We are also providing money to address that, Sir, but I feel that I am so charged up to be able to address all of these problems. It feels almost like you are trying to do everything at the same time. Do you know

why, Sir? It is because we have to do everything at the same time. We inherited so many problems across every sector. People are saying to us that we have to slow down, we are working all the time and need to take a break.

However, we feel like if we take a break given the magnitude of the task that we inherited, these situations would continue. We cannot take a break until the people of Barbados get a break. This is why we are working so hard. Sir, this is why if you look at the Bridgetown jetty now and see the number of boats, you have some piers that you cannot put boats next to them because they do not have any fendering. If you do not have fendering, you know that putting a boat next to that will destroy your boat immediately. Sir, we are going to put fendering on all of the jetties.

I mean top class fendering. This is not a conversation that a lot of people in the Caribbean are having because you cannot have this conversation at this time. It is not a conversation the rest of the Caribbean is having. I read today's paper regarding the situation in St. Lucia. It is not a conversation that they can have about spending money on these kinds of things. Sir, this is not one of those cases where you are stopping a bleeding. This is not us going there to plug a hole. This is real transformative work on behalf of the people in a time of COVID-19 and these are the changes that we are making, Sir, because we say people matter. The evidence is in the things that we do not necessarily in the things that we say. Sir, I went to a funeral service over the weekend and the gentleman who preached the sermon made the point that you reap what you sow in life. In fact, it is one of the better sermons I have heard in a minute -- you know that is young people talk -- in a while. Sir, the point that was being made, Sir, he made reference to some fruit. He said something to effect that if you planted paw-paw you cannot get soursop and if you sow the wind you will reap the whirlwind and when you look at what happened in the last 10 years, when they sowed the wind, they reaped the whirlwind and all of a sudden we have an Opposition ... well they are not even the Opposition. We have members of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) who are claiming now to care so much about people, Sir, when every single bit of evidence suggests that the contrary is true. Everything suggests that the opposite is true and they want us to forget, Sir, what has happened in the 10 years that they were in Office. All of a sudden all pillars of virtue. All of a sudden there is no sin amongst them, but I know what is inside a man will eventually come out and it is only a matter of time. I know that this Barbados Labour Party (BLP), what is inside this Barbados Labour Party (BLP) is good and that too will come out so you will see it in the Ministry of Maritime Affairs as I go about my daily business trying to make sure that what we do is for the people.

The other thing that we are doing, quickly because I do not want to detain the Honourable House. I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Michael West has gathered his thoughts, my good friend ...

Asides.

Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY: Sir, the Honourable Member, ... Sir, let me stay focussed. The other thing that we are doing in the Bridgetown Market is we are currently constructing this slipway and why is that important? Sir, every year fishermen have to haul out their boats for repairs. Do you know there is really no proper place in Barbados to haul out a boat?

Sir, when we are done -- and this is so important -- we have now a small slipway at Consett Bay, this is where you can safely haul out your boats that are in need of repair. We are going to repair that. Barbados has half of one right now. We are going to repair the one at Consett Bay; that is one. Sir, we are repairing Pile Bay and installing a slipway in Pile Bay; those are two. Sir, we are doing Bridgetown and putting in a large functional slipway that will allow us to haul out the bigger vessels; that is three, and at the Bridgetown Port ...

Asides.

Hon. K. D. M. HUMPHREY: That is alright. I will save that for the Honourable Member there. Sir, at the Bridgetown Port we will have another one; those are four. I just want the public to understand some of the work that we are doing in the market and in the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and to understand that when you hear that a Government is making changes, it is not necessarily anything negative and that people will try to give the impression that every time we make adjustments it is almost like there is a cancer or a canker in the finances of the Government. That is not true, but you have to make the adjustments to deal with the circumstances that you find and the circumstances that emerge over time. As the circumstances change, Sir, you have to change because the difference between leadership and management is this. If things are good and on a steady course, you need a manager. He can come in, he just has to come to work on time, do the exact same thing, keep the ship steady, a steady hand in easy times is good, but when the road is rocky or when the ocean is rough - which is no act for me - a steady hand is not necessarily what you need because you have a steady hand in rough waters, Sir, you will guarantee to cause a major collapse and capsize the boat. Sir, what you need when times are as suspect as these, is somebody who is going to keep their eyes on the prize and try a thing, but it has to be an informed approach. Sir, that is what we are doing so when we come to make the changes it is because we have seen the changes that are happening and we are adjusting to deal with the circumstances that are

before us. Do not let anybody come now and try to fool anybody in the public but saying because we are making changes this, and this, and this. Failure is not making changes. Failure for us will be to not make changes in the face of Covid-19.

Sir, those are just my few remarks. I am sure I will have the opportunity to say more before the day is done, but at the same time, Mr. Speaker, it is clear to me that I would never have trusted any other Government given what I am hearing from the Other Side to be handling the affairs of the people in Barbados. The only Government that I would trust now to handle the affairs of the people of Barbados so God knows what He is doing. That is why in these difficult times, Sir, it is the 30 of us, 29 now who occupying This Place to allow us to make the difficult circumstances to take Barbadians to safety. I commend the Bill that is before the House and Sir, I will offer it my fullest support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Bill before this Honourable Chamber and I agree with my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, who just so spoke. Sir, we came to Government and we found what I would describe as a healthy, perhaps, a most violent distrust of politicians and all things political. The word of the politician at that point in time meant nothing. When the Honourable Member was made the Minister of Maritime Affairs and Blue Economy, in the early days I went with him to the Oistins Fish Market and people kept talking about the fact that there was no haul out facility. There had the complaint about the ice machine, there had the complaint about the jetty, but one of the critical things was that there was not adequate haul out facility. There is a boatyard next to the Oistins Fish Market, Sir, and what often happened was when boats had to be hauled out at Oistins, the boats would have to go all the way down to Bridgetown to be hauled out at Bridgetown and then put on a trailer and taken all the way back up to Oistins to then be worked upon at Oistins and this involved the expense of hauling out in Bridgetown, transportation up the road on a big vehicle and then when you wanted to relaunch your boat you had to take it the same way in reverse. Sir, this might seem like one of those things that people say it is a job hazard or it is a requirement of your occupation, but it does not have to be so. We are not fishermen. Quite often, it is very difficult to understand where a man is coming from and what is important to him. Sir, there is a song that says, everyman thinks his burden is the heaviest, but for that man his burden is indeed the heaviest. We listen to the complaints of the Oistins fisherfolk. I sat down in Silver Sands at a Bar called London Bar and I was lectured as to the failure of successive Governments to address the problems in the

market to treat fishing as a viable and honourable occupation, or tradition, or job, or vocation, Sir. Fishing was looked at as one of those default things that other people did. Fish appeared in the fish market, but the average Barbadians gave no thought as to what was involved in getting the fish from the sea to the market, fresh for you to consume and I will admit, my exposure to the fish market was going with my father to the fish market to get fish. I remember when flying fish was 30 for \$1.00 and 25 for \$1.00. Sir, now I cannot even begin to tell you if you can get a flying fish and how much it would cost, but I used to go with my father to the fish market because it was exciting. You saw people there, you saw people with big machetes cutting fish, the smells of it and it was all exciting. That was exciting as a child. The average Barbadian who goes to the fish market... Actually, the average Barbadian does not go to the fish market. The fish get from the fish market into a supermarket or a freezer, so many people do not understand the beauty of fresh fish, the difference between how a fish fresh from the sea taste as opposed to one that has been frozen for months.

Fishing is an important part of not just the livelihood of Barbados but the tradition of Barbados. Out of bad comes good. COVID-19 has been a blow for our way of life, it has been a blow to us in how we perceive things and it has been a blow to what we considered actually to be normal, but say A and say B we had an issue with a lot of overgrown fields in Barbados. If you drive around Barbados now a lot of the fields that were running into bush and had cow-itch now are planted and are in cultivation and production.

Sir, Barbadians who had not eaten eddoes or sweet potatoes in years, who prefer parboiled rice or the imported boil corn or whatever else you want to use for your starch, have now gotten back to what our old people used to eat that enabled them to live to 100 years old.

Sir, I make the joke that people were complaining that they put on weight in COVID-19 but during COVID-19 I dropped ten pounds because I cooked for myself.

Asides.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: As I was saying that, Sir, I knew that there would be some news in the plot, but I cooked for myself delicious nutritious meals. I knew what went into my pot. I bought it from the market myself. I went to the fish market all of the time during COVID-19 taking precautions of course...

Mr. SPEAKER: Sir, you said you only cooked for yourself though.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: No, Sir. I cooked for myself and my wife, those within my 'bubble'.

Sir, the point I make is that I knew what went into every single meal that I had. I had never eaten so much fresh vegetables, I had never eaten so much salads, I had never eaten so much grilled fresh fish, and without doing anything more just by eating properly, eating what came out of the ground in Barbados and eating what came out of the sea or came from the sea around Barbados, just simply by regulating my diet to include what my grandmother and my great grandmother used to eat and all of the people say that they eat up to now, the old people that would outlive us, I was able to drop pounds and I felt better than I have felt in years.

The point here, Sir, is that we must not lose the opportunity that has been presented to us by COVID-19. Yes, it has crippled our social activities and yes it has caused our economy to contract to the point where the Honourable Member who initially had these great plans for the market had to have his funds side-tracked to be allocated for COVID-19 relief as we all had but we are back in a position now where he can complete what it is that he started, where we can actually bring some relief and make a meaningful difference to the salt of the earth on whose backs we have built Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Oistins is a fishing community. Christ Church East is largely a fishing community. Almost every person who lives in Silver sands has some connection to the sea, has somebody, or one generation or at most two generations above them who made their living from the sea. It is a legitimate part of our Barbadian culture and we owe it to the people who make their living that way. In the same way that we want to build or that the last Government thought it appropriate to build a skyscraper in the middle of Vacluse dump to address concerns that they put on the members of the Sanitation Services Authority, in the same way that the people who work at the Barbados Water Authority have a brand-new spanking state-of-the-art building at great cost but they have the building, and in the same way that we look at trying to make those who work in offices comfortable, we must also put the facilities in place to ensure that those who make their living from the land and those who make their living from the sea have everything that they need to properly run their business because for them it is a business and a livelihood and we as a Government have to cover all sectors of Barbados.

Sir, the Prime Minister and almost all Members of Cabinet have a singular focus to enhance the lives of all Barbadians. We do not deal in sectors. The last Government used to say we are the bourgeoisie party or we are the party for rich people but this current Government has done more to enrich the lives of the average Barbadian, to uplift the poor Barbadian, to look out for the workers who were disenfranchised and to put social services and social securities in place to help the most vulnerable.

Sir, the efforts made at social outreach and social cradling over this period of the pandemic have been nothing short of phenomenal. No Government in Barbados has ever had to embark upon a social salvation in the way that the Barbados Labour Party Government has had to do so since COVID-19 struck Barbados, and we cannot forget that. It was almost as if it was little bit too easy. It was made to look a little bit too easy that people feel that nothing was actually done but for those fishermen in Oistins, for those constituents of Christ Church South and for those constituents of Christ Church East that have been for year pleading on it, the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Oistins Fish Market now looks a whole lot different than it did a year ago and that is thanks to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South. The popped down, broken down stalls, the unsanitary conditions in the fish market, the poor drainage and the poor facilities, all of that has been addressed or is in the process of being addressed. The enhancement to the jetty and the creation of the slipway and the haul out is simply another step in the Honourable Member for St. Michael South delivering on his promise to the fisher folks of Barbados. When he was made Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy people asked: "What is that, we never hear about that before, that is a joke ministry" but it is not a joke to the people who depend on it, it is not a joke to the people whose lives have been made better by what he has done and it is not a joke to all of the fishing communities that use Bridgetown, Pile Bay, Consett Bay, Speightstown and Oistins.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South is delivering in a focussed way that has never been done before in the history of Barbados. Fishermen are now important again. Fishing is now seen as an honourable profession again. Fishermen do not have to 'scrunt', they can feel comfortable knowing that the Government is looking out for them for their safety, they are trying to get renewable energy on the boats, they are trying to put things in place and the radar is being improved to track boats. Sir, everything that can be done we are going to try to do not just for the fisher folks but for all Barbadians who ply their trade in Barbados and depend on the Government to help support them in that trade.

Sir, I am very glad to be here now speaking on this supplementary, this Bill. I am glad because I felt the pain of the Minister when the funds that he had allocated for these projects were diverted. It was necessary because Barbados is more than the fishermen, that is true. Barbados is more than the fishing communities, they are but one part of it, and when called to divert the funds to save a nation and save a people as a whole and to protect our country for the biggest threat to our existence we have ever had none of us could say anything. When the Prime Minister gave an instruction: "Look at your budgets and turn back in the

money, whatever you can spare put it back in because the focus now has to be on health” we could not say anything, it had to be done. It was a blow to all of us who had these plans in our ministries, these life-changing plans, these socially changing, socially important initiatives. But you have to look at the bigger picture, we are stabilised in some measure: health is on its feet, and I wish to commend, Sir, the Minister of Health and Wellness.

Truthfully, Sir, when we came to Government and I was tackling the issues on the South Coast, I thought to myself that it could not get worse than that. I cannot even imagine stress greater than this. Sir, I looked at my good friend, the Honourable Minister of Health and Wellness and Sir, he was a good-looking fellow just after elections, (asides). He is still a good-looking fellow but he looks tired. I feel his pain, but equally I could not think of a better more organised person to handle what it is that we are going through. His cry of: “No retreat, no surrender” has become the rallying call for all of us. He said it one day in Cabinet, he said it in a Press Conference and we have all taken it up. Barbados has taken up: “No retreat, no surrender”, a la Jeffery Bostic. Sir, may be it is his military background, may be it is his commitment, may be it is a combination of all of them, but I want to thank him for the work that he has done. He has gotten a lot of funds from my former ministry. He has gotten a lot of funds from all of our ministries, but unlike the last Administration we can see where those funds went and we can see what they went for, and I am confident that every cent was well-spent. I thank him.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the last thing I am going to say is [that] I want to firmly support the Honourable Member for St. Michael South in his quest. I want to tell the Honourable Member not to give up, it is a lot; it is a lot to change the way of thinking; it is a lot to re-establish an indigenous industry; it is a lot to change the mentality of people, so it is a lot to try to get the average Barbadian to see the folk who depend on fishing for a livelihood as being valuable and contributing members of the society but the Honourable Member has turned that around. The Honourable Member has brought our focus back on to marine and things marine. He has rekindled a love in the hearts of children for swimming. He has rekindled and exposed children who would never otherwise have had the chance to be drives of sailing, and he has delivered on what we can deliver so far with his promises made to the fisher folk of Barbados, so I happily support this Bill and having happily supported it, I wish to tell him that while the Honourable Member is concentrating on St. Michael, that as soon as he gets the stuff right with the Bridgetown Fishing Terminal, please turn to the left, face the east, come back down to Oistins, and sort out the stuff for the people and the fisher folk of the Oistins Fish Market.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I am greatly obliged and happy to support this Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James Central, you have the Floor.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it would be remiss of me if I did not, in my capacity as a Minister with responsibility for entrepreneurship and small business development in Barbados, say a few words on the matters which have attracted the attention of this Honourable House, especially by virtue of the contributions of the last two speakers.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church, could you [please] turn off your mike?

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to reflect ever so briefly on the fact that I take a sense of pride as I look at the work that is being done by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South. Sometimes it is very easy to forget that the Honourable Member is an officiate member of this Honourable House. The Honourable Member has approached his stewardship in a ministry that is without precedent in Barbados in a most commendable manner and has displayed a degree of gravitas. I worked with him when I was Minister of Tourism and International Transport and I have found that the Honourable Member has readily understood and accepted the importance of issues which were of similar and coterminous interest in the two sectors. Sir, so that sustainable tourism meant a lot for maritime affairs in Barbados, and we worked together on that: Conservation of the coast means a lot to tourism, obviously, but equally we were able to work together because it means a lot to maritime affairs. Mr. Speaker, Sir, Honourable Members have to be willing to accept that which sets us apart from the Government that we replaced is the fact that our Cabinet, I think, has done an excellent job at demonstrating partnership towards the development of the people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, speaking more specifically to the contribution that I want to make in this matter, I now turn again to reflect a little bit on that which was said by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, because the Honourable Member quite appropriately, I thought, placed within the context of business development that which is happening in the fish markets across this island. Mr. Speaker, Sir, let the record reflect that business facilitation for far too long in Barbados has been treated in a very bastardised way as being something that was relevant only to those people who were of lighter hue and complexion, [who] were coming from foreign climes and locations, and spending millions and millions of dollars by way of investment, so that this Honourable House under the last Administration would have had repeatedly to endure the

utterances of an Honourable Attorney-General, a Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment and a Honourable Prime Minister (when the Honourable Member cared to speak at all) on matters relating to the performance of the Town Planning Department, as though that was the beginning and end of business facilitation; the Immigration Department as though that was the end of business facilitation; the Corporate Registry, the speed at which you get in and out of that department, but you know, Mr. Speaker, Sir, black-skinned Barbadian men and women who are earning a living legitimately in business have to be facilitated too, and what this particular debate has taken us to is the point at which we needed to be a long time ago, to reflect on the fact that a fisherman who has invested hundreds or thousands of dollars in a vessel, can have that vessel severely damaged if the fendering that he must pull up alongside is not there. Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a challenge in the structure of this economy where even as I speak to you today availability for insurance for some of those persons who are plying their trade legitimately, earning a living legitimately as a business, (fishermen in Christ Church, St. James where I represent are known not to have one vessel alone, sometimes two and three) people have formed little partnerships and own more than that, in some instance. Mr. Speaker, Sir, then when you hear that you cannot get insurance for your boat, it is a nonsense, but it happens in Barbados and we have as a Government now to confront the issue of how can we make sure that we so transform and restructure the way in which financing is available to small business people in this country, that we make them equal before.... (In fact), that we make them equal at the bar of public opinion and in the eyes of the country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a very serious thing, we have to begin now to talk to Barbadians about secured transactions, in the context of a collateral registry, understanding the need to monetize the process of secured transaction, having laws in this country which secure transactions, and develop a collateral registry in Barbados so that we can have an appropriate level of impact on the quest for economic development. Collateral, Sir, is the oxygen. Let me say it again. Mr. Speaker, Sir, collateral is the oxygen for free flowing credit in any economy. It is a foolishness to suggest that small fishermen, small plumbers, small contractors, and artisans who have a wealth of resources by way of assets...Mr. Speaker, Sir, small farmers have their crops. There are small businesses in Barbados which have inventory. There is almost every business in this country, especially now in these difficult financial circumstances, which has Accounts Receivable but there is nowhere in this land of ours that you can secure financial assistance and loans against your Accounts Receivable and the inventory that you have. Sir, in this case we are speaking more specifically about the fact that you may own two fishing boats. As I made the point, the insurance industry does not want to hear you in many cases

because the boat is too old, though the boat has value. Again, we in this country have to stop cherry-picking who can get insurance for a vessel and who cannot, because there are several people who may be of a different complexion in Barbados and may come from a different part of the island and whose addresses do not read "ridge" or "terrace" or "terrace loop" or "gardens" as opposed to "land" or "village", and they are not told that their boat is too old, Mr. Speaker.

Sir, it is a reality that we have to get right, and these things stand in the way of people. As I say, we deprive small businesses of the essential oxygen that is necessary for them to succeed. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the securitisation of transactions is vitally important. It is also important because it reduces the potential of losses which can be faced by people who are prepared to lend, so it works both ways. If we are to be truthful to ourselves about what is happening right now in Barbados, there are a lot of transactions which are backed by a new car, a car that is two or three years old and you get a little money against that, but in many instances if you talk to the banking community they will tell you that their fear is that it is not properly securitised, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, if there is bad weather and the car is lost, there is a risk. Mr. Speaker, Sir, if we do not get these things right then we do not bring the level of equity that we need either for the people who are developing their businesses and trying to penetrate markets and grow, nor on the other side of the coin do we give the level of security to those persons who we are asking to lend money to develop businesses in Barbados.

Sir, we have locked ourselves into a box where traditionally we have approached this matter in terms of land that can qualify, so if you have some land then you go to the bank and you can get a loan. If you have a building that you own, then you can go to the bank and you can get a loan, Mr. Speaker, Sir, but there has to be legislation now that must assist us in the registering and the governing of transactions where we can use moveable assets as security, so that we empower those smaller players amongst us who own the moveable assets. That is why I use this opportunity in this very important debate about fishing in Barbados, because that industry has not only fed and developed thousands of Barbadian families in this country but it has, much like motor vehicle transportation -- whether it be the taxis or ZRs -- been a mechanism which has empowered black Barbadian people to make a little bit of money about here when otherwise doors would have been shut in their faces.

What do they have, Sir? In many instances they are not land-rich entrepreneurs. In most instances they are not land-rich entrepreneurs, Mr. Speaker. In most instances, because they are not land-rich they cannot place a second mortgage or third mortgage on buildings that they own, Mr. Speaker. If you do not own the land, you cannot own the

building, but what they have is the asset, Mr. Speaker, Sir. They have the motor vehicle, they have the fishing boat, they have the inventory and they have the equipment. All of these moveables must now be placed at the disposal of this community and leveraged so as to put us in a position where there is additional access to financial oxygen and economic opportunity in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wanted to make that point because small and medium enterprises are the backbone of economies around the developing world, and when you start to analyse this....

Again I will make this point politically because even though he has passed and gone away since 2010 and may now be reduced just to ashes and dust: There was a Prime Minister who sat in this House under the Democratic Labour Party who used to pooh-pooh contributions of this nature by saying “you are intellectualising politics”. That was how the then Honourable Member for St. John felt, because any time you came to explain or sought to explain the struggle of working class people in a post-colonial developing economy or under-developed economy, it was a time to pooh-pooh and make sport at the plight. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the stench of that still reeks in my nostrils, to be honest with you. The stench of that still reeks in my nostrils because if you want us to intellectualise it, then the study of the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank -- the private sector arm of the World Bank -- on small and medium enterprise in this part of the world is compelling reading. In fact, it should be compulsory reading, Mr. Speaker, Sir, because what they have made clear is that there is approximately 12 per cent of the total credit leveraged in the Caribbean and Latin America that goes to small and medium enterprise. Yet the vast majority of enterprise in the Caribbean and Latin America are small and medium enterprise, so that the access to finance is a legitimate concern and it is a concern that we have to fix now, Sir.

Having said all of that, let me say what the solution is. This Ministry which I am privileged to lead is going to be coming to this House very soon and to the Cabinet with the proposal for the Collateral Registry, because we have to go there. Mr. Speaker, in the same way that the Ministry of Agriculture has finally been able, under the watchful eye of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, to come to Cabinet with a Paper -- I signed off my Ministry's comments on it the other day so I know for a fact that the Paper exists -- on trade facilitation, specifically looking at sanitary and phytosanitary measures. What are they, Sir? Those are the things which will allow our fishermen now not just to sell fish in Barbados but to start to export. Since 2008, we signed a contract with the European Union (EU) -- an Economic Partnership Agreement -- which was supposed to allow us to sell all the fish that we could have produced and that we did not want to eat about here to the EU, but do you know you cannot sell one? Not one, because we do not have the necessary sanitary and

phytosanitary rules in place and the capacity to make sure that what we sell we can verify in terms of its quality, Sir.

We know our fish is good. We eat it every day but men up there are going to ask you, “How do I know?” That is what they ask the Minister, and therefore they put a legitimate barrier to our ability to export. For ten painful years between 2008 and 2018, the Democratic Labour Party allowed that barrier to exist while coming to Parliament and going through a pappy show, talking about how one has to find a way to earn foreign exchange. The way to earn foreign exchange was to put the legislation in place, as we are now going to be coming here to do very shortly, Mr. Speaker, Sir, and to enfranchise working class black people in Barbados in the parishes of Christ Church, St. John, St. Philip, St. James, St. Michael and all around the coast where we have fishermen and fish markets, Sir.

What did you need to have? You needed to have the beginning of the transformation of the markets in terms of their structure, such as what we are seeing in Christ Church. There is more to be done. The wood has to be replaced by the steel. You can go into Hansard and find about ten speeches which I have given on this matter, at least. Estimates after Estimates in the Senate, Estimates after Estimates I have gone through it. I preached to them, Sir. I even told them to go and take a little tour over to St. Vincent and the Grenadines where they do not have a fishing fleet as Barbados has. They do not have any iceboats as we have, Sir, but they took out the wood and put in the steel wash-down basins. They put in provisions so that you have a certain minimum temperature, so that you do not go from room temperature or “hot-sun” temperature back to cold storage again, because that is what gives the Europeans and Americans a chance to say we are not so sure that that meat is not spoil when it changes temperature. There are no flies and blood all over the place because you are keeping it in certain pristine condition. That is what we have to bring to the process. That is why the Minister of Finance is the best person to lead this because he more than anybody else have to make the money available. It is a developmental process. You do not sit in the Ministry to say that you look good and sound good. You sit in that Ministry to help shape from a bird's eyes view the developmental path of the economy of Barbados. Mr. Speaker Sir that is what the issue has to be about.

Now, it is unfortunate perhaps that you have to speak in these terms and in this tone, but Mr. Speaker Sir it is about the empowerment of working class people that sent us to this Parliament and the preservation of their ability. However, larger than even that, it is about the enfranchisement of these people, so that they can be industrialists, exporters and earners of foreign exchange in their own right. If it never mattered before it should matter to us now, because we have seen that the dependence we

have had on tourism brought and entire economy to bended knee.

However, even as the tourism based economy crumbled, you know that every Barbadian goes in a fish market and get fish. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that if we were exporting it or able to export it, we would not have a Minister of Finance who came to this Parliament with a head full of hair but now can hardly find any and it is not because of a low haircut, it is dropping out before our eyes. That is because he has to struggle to find where the foreign exchange will come from. The foreign exchange opportunities are there, but we have to lock them in. Sir, at the bottom of the ladder, that is what hurts me about this matter, that we have thousands of people in the fishing community that could be doing the value added, getting into the industry, the packaging, and the exportation. Mr. Speaker, also in tourism, because they are people who want to export into the fish market they export into tourism. They want to come into a market and learn how scale and bone fish. I had this discussion with my friend, the Honourable Member who is Minister of Maritime Affairs.

Sir, these are opportunities that we cannot afford to let pass us by. Sir, the fact is that it helps us to transform people who were looked down on by the well to do in this society and put them in a position where they can be uplifted to be what they are. Equals, it is for that reason that there is on the silver dollar of Barbados, the Coat of Arms on one side and when you turn it you see the flying fish. Let us take pride and industry and take pride in the industry that can be given to this country via that particular mechanism of fishing and fisheries.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I had promised not to speak very long on this matter, but I wanted to make that intervention on behalf of the community that I have to represent. I am obliged to you Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I also rise to join in support of this matter before the House, because as you would appreciate it constitutes a change to my Ministry since water resources was added to the Ministry. Mr. Speaker contained in the Estimates and the revision to the Heads will be several programmes designed to execute programmes across Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to stand before you in this August Chamber, to say that notwithstanding what the pandemic has caused us, this Government continues to execute works on behalf of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, one such project is the commencement of works on Highway 1. As result of the Highway 1

rehabilitation programme, for the first time in about 20 years, those who have to traverse that road, on their way home or to conduct business, in a very short period of time will be realising the benefits of their Government hard at work improving the infrastructure of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, consistent with our practice and our very pragmatic approach, we have engaged the residents and representatives of business in a virtual town hall meeting, because obviously of the pandemic that we are experiencing globally. We had two virtual town hall meetings, one October 7 and the other one yesterday. As a result of those virtual town hall meetings, we were able to explain to residents, business representatives and other persons interested in that area the proposed works that we are planning to undertake commencing next week, from the junction of the Frank Walcott Roundabout at the bottom of the University Hill all the way going to Sea View in St. James.

Mr. Speaker, I hasten to add that that will constitute phase 1 of Highway 1, because we are planning obviously perhaps next year to execute phase 2, which will commence from Sea View and go all the way to Six Mens.

Mr. Speaker, specifically as it relates to phase 1 and the rehabilitation programme, what we are proposing to do there, is that for a very long time we have had major disruptions as it relates to the supply of water because as you would appreciate mains that have been there for an excess of 100 years. That would always cause us a problem, because based on the practice of cutting across the roads and so on, you would find yourself in a situation where the road would have been destabilised. It has now reach the point where we have to start thinking and planning for the future of Barbados and that this progressive Barbados Labour Party Government has undertaken perhaps another visionary step in ensuring on this occasion that when we execute the works on Highway 1 in the first phase that we will be replacing 100 year old mains on both sides of the road, the western and the eastern side.

Mr. Speaker, permit me to just detail some of the works that we intend to undertake in respect of Highway 1. We are going to be relaying a new 12 inch main, which will be on the western as referred to on the seaside of the road. We are going to relaying a six-inch main on the land side. We are also going to be installing a new gas main thanks to the National Petroleum Corporation and Flow cables and other utility companies will on this occasion also install their mains there. We also have for the first time on the Highway 1 a duct system, effectively for the Barbados Light and Power Company to facilitate future connectivity with underground mains. In other words, what this visionary Barbados Labour Party Government intends to do, is to overtime on that stretch of Highway to move

away from the practice of having power lines above ground and lay them underground.

Now, this will not happen immediately, because the Barbados Light and Power will take time to connect entities to the underground facility. However, we are making provision for underground ducts on the land side of the road.

Mr. Speaker, we go further. We are going to replace six covers with larger ones, and we are going to improve

ducts on the landside of the road. We are going to replace six culverts with larger ones and improve the drainage system on that coast. We are going to improve and make good existing footpaths. We are going to ensure for the first time that we have manhole covers that are flushed or level with the highway. Mr. Speaker, we are also going to improve existing signage on that road and that through our Ministry's depot will improve the signage. Where there is none, we will create new ones. However, we also involved significant trenching works but when we have completed the trenching works, we are going to mill and pave Highway 1 in that first phase.

Mr. Speaker, in the interest of transparency because this BLP and certainly my Ministry will have nothing to hide, we have gone record and announced that we are engaging experienced contractors in trenching operations along the first phase on Highway 1. What we have sought to do is to ensure also that we divided the highway into five sections because we understand the economic value of the land on that side and the contribution to Barbados economy. What we will be doing is that we have five contractors and have identified five sections. I will repeat them, Mr. Speaker, for your benefit.

From the Frank Worrell Roundabout going to Jordan's Road which is 1 600 metres; C.O. Williams will be engaged there. From Jordan's Road to Holders Hill which is about 1 800 metres; Arthurs Construction will be engaged there. From Holders Hill to Sandy Lane; 900 metres; José and José will be engaged there. From Sandy lane to Molyneux; Ajax Construction will be engaged there. From Molyneux to Seaview, Infra Construction will be engaged there. Mr. Speaker, those five entities will be involved in trenching works. The overall project is estimated to cost \$15.2 million approximately, including trenching and paving, and to be funded as you know from the Consolidated Fund.

I have already said to you, Sir, that we have to do these works because we find ourselves in a position where the infrastructure is not what it ought to be and we have to restore the infrastructure of Barbados. If we wish to compete, keep our people happy and have businesses going, including small businesses going on the stretch, then

we have to build out our infrastructure not only on Highway 1 but we have to build out our infrastructure across Barbados. Since it is one of the most heavily trafficked roads on the Island, a decision was taken to execute the works at this time. Mr. Speaker, we are going to ensure that there is a traffic management plan and to that end, during the virtual town hall meetings we had the officials of the Ministry, including the Chief Technical Officer, the Acting Deputy Technical Officer and other members of the Traffic Management Department talk to the country, including residents and representatives of businesses, through the traffic management plan.

We are going to commence works from 6.00 p.m. until 6.00 a.m. Some contractors, perhaps, may start a bit earlier. However, I want to make this point, Mr. Speaker. At all times during the construction and rehabilitation works on Highway 1, there will be traffic flow for Public Service Vehicles (PSVs), Transport Board vehicles, Sanitation Service Authority (SSA) trucks, Route Taxis and all others will be allowed to drive through this area. Mr. Speaker, in everything we do we have a duty to communicate. One of the steps we took is to ensure that we effective communication going throughout the project and its duration. Also, we have agreed that we will hire two persons from within the community to ensure that we maintain dialogue and constant communication with residents.

It is a new initiative, Sir, and we refer to this as our Community Liaison Officer role. This will happen. We have also invited the Member of Parliament for the area, the Member for St. James Central. He was present at both town hall meetings. About three weeks ago, we took him also on tour of the area to explain what we are doing there. What will happen in respect of the road works is that at all times the road will be drivable because what we are going to do is that as they trench between 80 and 100 metres per day, they will also backfill at the conclusion of the trenching works.

If for whatever reason there is any open trenches, they have metal plates and contractors have agreed they would secure the area. The plan is an ambitious one. We know and have heard that before I got to the Ministry

it would take probably three months or more. I understand the importance of productivity. I understand the importance of commerce. I understand the challenges that these matters would pose to residents through disruption and access to their homes. Mr. Speaker, I have made it very clear, and you know that I come from the private sector, so I am a bit anxious to get things done. However, I have made it clear that notwithstanding that originally the plan was to take about three to four months, I would wish to undertake an ambitious project and to ensure that works are completed no later than mid-December, Mr. Speaker.

It is an ambitious plan, Mr. Speaker. I am an ambitious man I must admit but I also know that the contractors have indicated to us that they too need work and are prepared to work around the clock, but we will not disrupt people's lives and rest to the extreme. We will do it in a manner that will facilitate heavy trenching works during a specific period and then lighter works to compact the trenches at later hours. We have to be mindful of rest periods. I met with them and said that we need to get the works done by mid-December. They have committed, albeit that is an ambitious programme, that they are willing, will cooperate and are prepared to make this a reality, Sir.

I accept that we are also in what you may refer to as the wet period. Therefore, due to inclement weather we could experience some challenges. Notwithstanding that, I believe that the contractors will do what they must do. They have calculated based on the number of days and the metres they must excavate. I believe, Sir, that it is doable. Like I said, we will maintain communication with residents. We will ensure that we do this in a very orderly manner, notwithstanding temporary disruptions, because it is absolutely necessary that we get to work on restoring Barbados' infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, there may be some temporary disruption of services. It is possible because when you are undertaking works it is likely.

What we will have, Sir, is all the utility companies will be on standby to ensure that we work through these problems. I want to also make the point, and for the avoidance of doubt, that one of the things I ensured we accomplished was that we had the utilities companies warrant to the Ministry that it had all available supplies ready for the project. In other words, there would be no stop and starting. When we start the project, we will continue the project and not have to wait for any supply of materials, Mr. Speaker.

The utilities company also warranted that to the Ministry. They have warranted also that there will be rapid response teams on the spot on standby to address issues as they occur. I also want to say, Sir, that we met with the residents, we met with the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA) and like I said, we did so because we understand the value of communicating with the public especially when we are undertaking major projects such as Phase 1 of Highway 1.

Mr. Speaker, you may ask: why are we executing works on this project at this time? We all know that there is a lull in tourism activity across the globe and Barbados has not escaped. As a result of that lull, Sir, we have taken advantage of the situation to commence works and that is why we are trying. If we did not have a lull in tourism activity and particularly on the west coast, there is no way that we, perhaps would have been able to commence work at this time, but not withstanding that there is a current lull,

Mr. Speaker, if we can complete the works by mid-December and as to be expected, business will pick up, at least we know that when business returns to the numbers that we are accustomed to in the tourism sector, we would have infrastructure that works for the businesses and residents on the coastline, we would have mains that are laid and we would have roads that are paved. I know the occupancy levels because, you know, Mr. Speaker, I spent some time on the west coast of Barbados so I would be familiar with some of the occupancy projections even though I no longer serve in an executive capacity on the coast but I also took that into consideration. My ministry worked with all the available information to plan this programme.

I will admit that there will be some noise as a result of the works as I alluded to earlier but at the end of the day I give the public the assurance we will work through these matters. I also gave the public the assurance, Mr. Speaker, that on a fortnightly basis, as we have done, for example, in other projects under my ministry's control, we will, as Ministers, including the Honourable Member for St. John, that we will tour fortnightly and we will also update the country as necessary on the road project.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on. I have not come here to start to tell you about some works that we intend to do that will transform areas in the Scotland District, Mr. Speaker, to an extent that Barbadians have never seen before, but I will not say it yet because I may an opportunity to come back, maybe in a second week, perhaps. The Barbados Labour Party (BLP), notwithstanding a decline in revenue, and not only the Government because their businesses are experiencing declines as a result of the pandemic, but the caring Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government committed \$15 million to this highway project and we are about to embark on a major road programme for communities in the Scotland District. When I say the Scotland District, what I am referring to? I am referring to St. John, St. Joseph, St. Andrew and St. Thomas, Mr. Speaker, and at a later date we are going to announce the projected cost of that programme, the number of roads that we are going to execute under that programme, and not only roads, there will be bridges too, but we are going to transform the Scotland District. I have not disclosed yet to the Parliament that we are currently negotiating with another major institution for another \$100 million to facilitate roadworks in Barbados, Mr. Speaker. A lot of work to be done in a very short period of time, Mr. Speaker, but I am happy to tell you, Sir, that when I met with the contractors, the contractors expressed a willingness to work. They said we will work morning, noon, and night, if necessary, because we did not have work for a very long, long time. This \$15 million plus all the other roadworks programmes that we are going to announce in very short time is about putting people back to work, Mr. Speaker. When you hear people

complain that for years they did not have any business and that they had to lay off their staff, Mr. Speaker, but that a caring Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government, notwithstanding decline revenues in a Covid-19 period, can make substantial investment in the infrastructure network of Barbados. It is about putting people back to work, Mr. Speaker. When you have the opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and you can walk for a good exercise like me, and you walk the highway you will see what I am referring to when works commence down there, but this is about putting people to work. When a construction company told me they had to lay-off staff and they had workers on short time and as a result of the projects that we are announcing their people will return to fulltime work and in some instances, earn overtime. Mr. Speaker, we must be happy for that because we came to public office to help people and to transition the lives of people. That is what the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) is about.

Sir, I will not go on and on, but I will say this. We also have community roads to address and I have it in hand. I know that I have only been on the job perhaps nine weeks but it feels like nine years, but I give this Honourable House and I give this Honourable Chamber the assurance that as long as I have responsibility for Public Works, we will get it done. I have a different approach to how we do business, Mr. Speaker. We have to get things done and we have to get things done in short order because when we get things done, we are satisfying the needs of the people of Barbados. It is about service delivery, Sir. It is about ensuring that we help the people who are in dire need of assistance. We are going to discuss, at the opportune time, the other roadworks because there will be occasion to come back here for other supplementaries, but not only here, Sir, because there are some programmes we will have to announce outside of this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and we will do so. I have not even gone on to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we will also, very shortly be embarking on an upgrade on the South Coast Sewerage Plant. Mr. Speaker, I want to give you, the Honourable House and the public at large the assurance that there are substantial works in the pipeline and that this Government is committed perhaps to the most ambitious capital expenditure programme across the Government that we have seen or will come to know in many, many years.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that as I support the Bill before the Honourable Chamber that I want to assure you, because you would like some roads too, and you will get them. Believe you me you will get them because like you, not like you so much, but I came from the Back Bench and coming from the Back Bench I know the struggle. I give the Honourable House the assurance that we are going to go to work, and we are going to fix the roads, Mr. Speaker, and we will have those roads done in short time.

Mr. Speaker, I walked with a list of roads that I know we have to do. I also walked with a list of roads that we executed too, but we will deal with that at a later date but I want to assure the country, I want to assure residents, especially residents in communities, that we are going to look after your plight as a caring Government. I want to give them the assurance and I want to give them the assurance that I will work hard on their behalf to ensure we improve the road infrastructure in Barbados. We are improving the water supply; we are doing a lot of works. Mr. Speaker, I have gone on record. We have talked about vineyard, we have talked about what we are doing in the north, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of money that the Government of Barbados committed to improve water supply in the country improve water supply in the country including reservoirs and there are many things. Sir, some of them started before I joined the Ministry nine weeks ago but there are other things that we must put in place to ensure we maintain a consistent supply of water. It is not only roads. There are also

improvements to ensure we have a consistent supply of water. There are also going to be changes in the Ministry to allow for the more efficient use of resources and to also, more importantly, improve service delivery. We have to improve service delivery and that is what we are working on.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the officials in the Ministry as well as to thank all those members of staff who worked very hard in the Ministry to ensure that they accomplished the stated objectives. I know since I got to the Ministry, Mr. Speaker, that I have pushed them at a pace... Perhaps they would wish that I probably was not there, but we are pushing on and pushing on and we have to do so because we have a lot of work.

We spent a lot of time as a Government trying to fix the economy to get it to a stage where we could execute works so in short time we had to correct the fiscal imbalance and we had to redirect the course of Barbados and that took some planning and some time. Now, Mr. Speaker, is the time for us to execute our programmes and this Government led by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has assured us and has given us her support and blessings and the required financial support in the Ministry to execute the programmes, so we have had to fix and stabilise the economy in almost the first two years and now it is our turn to execute the project works within the Ministry and I give all Honourable Members in the Parliament the assurance that we are going to improve the infrastructure in Barbados to ensure that their constituents like my constituents continue to benefit from the infrastructural works that are required.

On that note, Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

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

Hon. A. R. FORDE: I want to thank you, Mr. Speaker,

Sir. I want to start by saying that I wholeheartedly, unreservedly and unequivocally support this Bill before the House, but I want to take off my vocal shackles to support the supplementary, of course, that would be allocated to the Member of Parliament for St. Michael South, the Minister responsible for Maritime Affairs and the Blue economy, knowing of course that in a fulsome way what happens in the Hydrosphere as I call it like the blue economy directly affects what happen in the Ministry that I am responsible for, the Lithosphere. If you look at all of the spheres in a circular way, Mr. Speaker, there is the Troposphere and the Spirosphere.

Invariably, Mr. Speaker, global warming, as we know it, which has seen an increase in temperatures - and I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church East spoke about the issues as it relates to weather patterns and stuff - and the vagaries thereof have presented us with an increase in temperature sometimes over 7 Degrees (7°) Celsius one day and flash flooding the next, that is the idiosyncrasy with which we are faced.

As the Minister responsible for the environment, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have to be mindful that there must be a symbiosis between this environment and the blue economy in such a way that we are able to mitigate those challenges so that they would not have the swells in the ocean that would affect the fishermen and so that we would not have the destruction of the coral and the reefs, as we know it, which would affect our fish stock because there is no discussion about fishing that would be meaningful if our fish stock and our fish population continue to die and that is what we have to guard ourselves against. That is why I told you earlier, Mr. Speaker, that I have to lend my voice to the discussion because for me fishing, as a fisherman once told me in Oistins - and that is the sister constituency, the good constituency of for Christ Church West Central - is not an escape from life, and I want every person in earshot to hear this quote: "He said fishing is not an escape from life, it is a part thereof" and in a circular way what he is saying is true.

The fishing industry has been a part of the Barbadian folklore. The fishing industry, Oistins Town, Pile Bay and all the other fishing villages as we know them, is a part of our psyche and has supported our families, our friends and our neighbours. Fishing has a holistic affect in the entire country. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that although I am not too good a swimmer I must admit, I would not even go as far as to say that I can swim as good as two former Ministers, the effluent Ministers, who swam in effluent, but

I understand that I came from an environment that is surrounded by the sea... Barbados is surrounded by the sea. Some people call it the Caribbean Sea and may call it the Atlantic Ocean based on your geographical scope and your visual acuity. It is based on how you see things, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say today that what the Honourable Member for St. Michael South is doing across Barbados after the 'ten lost years' according the Member of Parliament for St. Peter, the ten lost delusional years, under the Democratic Labour Party as it relates to the fisher folks in the Berinda Cox Fish Market and in markets across Barbados, in terms of bringing a sense of ownership, enfranchisement and empowerment to those fishermen is something short of amazing. It is amazing and I say so without apology. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South has worked with every single sinew and an entire ministry to ensure that those fishermen have a tangible stake in the fishing industry in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Member of Parliament for St. James Central spoke about enfranchising our fishermen and as Minister of micro, small and business enterprises, he said that he was willing to walk the walk with the fishermen not only talk the talk. That is not the type of leadership that we have brought to this country in governance, we are leading by example and being involved in every single sphere of development in this country. As I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South said on many occasions we will not walk in front of the fishermen because they may not follow and we may not walk behind because they may not lead, he will walk at their side because he understands the importance of having a partnership with these fishermen, that is what he said.

Partnership is about economic enfranchisement. Partnership is about social development. You cannot talk about a sustainable economy and sustainability unless you have the ordinary people at the core. Mr. Speaker, as I said this Government certainly under the astute leadership of the Prime Minister will not leave one single person behind in their quest as it relates to opening the door so that their future could walk in before them. Mr. Speaker, that is what we are about, giving persons the opportunity across this country. It is not only about giving fishermen the opportunity but allowing them to operate in an environment...

Mr. Speaker, the transformation I saw at Oistins Town, I call it that now - I am proud to say that it can be called Oistins Town because of the commercial activity and the enterprise and the excitement in Oistins Town, I am not ashamed to say it - over the last couple of months in terms of the phytosanitary conditions that have been brought to Oistins Town because of the hard work of this Minister I am saying that I cannot imagine what took place over 'the

lost decade'. It was a lost generation of fishermen over the 'lost decade' and I say so without apology.

Mr. Speaker, fishermen can now sell their product, market it and put it to the international arena because we have provided those conditions for the fishermen. We have given that space where they feel that their product is world class. We said as a government when we came to office that we are going to create world class citizens. The Minister responsible for Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy has created and is creating real time and world class fishermen, that is what we said. He has done it not by talking the talk, he has done it by walking the walk and doing the do for the fishermen, the fisherfolk and the blue economy in this country. He has brought a new industry as it relates to seafarers, the boating industry -- marketing.

I must tell you and I want to thank the Argentine Ambassador, I want to wish him all the best in his future endeavours. He certainly has worked with me in partnership with me as former Minister of Youth and the Minister of Maritime Affairs understanding fully that 65 per cent of our fish base is seen as awful or silage. In a circular Barbados, because that is what we are talking how we can recirculate everything for profit. Mr. Speaker, Sir, he said to us let me bring in the machine, let me give you the technical assistance and we are going to start training young persons to be able in a circular way to take that 65 per cent of the fish that would normally go to the dump because the space is limited and put it to agricultural usage in the agricultural industry for feeding of the livestock. Hence, the program took life under the leadership of the Minister responsible for Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy. The man who represents St. Michael South and will continue to do so because he understands the importance of giving small and ordinary Barbadians the opportunity. That is what he understands. Look across Barbados and you would see the development in every single sphere in terms of the fishing industry.

When you talk about slick ways this is not rocket science. You do not need to be in the stratosphere to understand what is a slick way and how important it is for the boats when you have abnormal swells. As I said before these are the deliveries of our climate change and natural disasters which prior to COVID has been on the lips and mouths of every single person in the world when it relates to our existential threats. Global warming, abnormal swells, so it only takes a matter of time before a fisherman can get his boat out. We hear about disaster, the crime, the aberration as it relates to the crane that was left there to rotten. They say that it was made out of steel but there was no steel in there. Nobody took the time to ensure that it became a profitable piece of equipment that could grow to the usage and redound to the benefits of the people in Silver Hill and even Gall Hill, we have good fishermen there too. Young fellows all across Christ Church. I am

saying that young people from these surrounding constituencies, this geographical space known as Christ Church must have the opportunity to build boats, nets and see the fishing industry as an industry that they can feed themselves, family and take care of the unborn child. It must be seen as a future industry to carry them as global citizens in this world and that is what we are working to do. We said as a government, we are going to produce global citizens and the fishing industry can carry Barbadians all across the world representing this small little country. That is what we are doing, we are producing persons with the talents and skills that can carry this country.

Asides.

World class, I heard that from a world class representative of St. Thomas. That is what we are saying as a country. Let us build on that which has been the backbone of our country for the years. Let us build that which we are good at. All we are saying to the fisher folk is it is time for us to recognise your worth after ten lost years. Ten lost years! Let us recognise the importance of having you as a part of an important cog in Barbados. That is all we are saying.

I am happy to be here to lend my voice. To tell all of those people in Gall Hill, Silver Hill, and Lodge road and surrounding areas of Christ Church -- Maxwell, Kendall Hill, Sergeant's Village and Vauxhall -- all the areas that their voice will be heard and I will be that convict to take it all across Barbados as it relates to enfranchising you and every single Barbadian.

I want to say to the Minister that he is doing a fantastic job do not be side tracked. I am a Minister responsible for the Environment and National Beautification, I have to use these terms by the atmospheric bulges. Do not be side tracked by them. Keep focused because you are in the right fulcrum. The Blue Economy, the fisher folk, the hydrosphere you made it, make sure that the ordinary persons in Barbados that they have a tangible state. That is all we are saying as a Government. They must be able to own their own industry. I know a lot of fellas will see the Blue Economy and may get blue vex. Blue sometimes is the only thing that save them at night but that is another story.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to you that I am happy that the ice machine is working ... imagine it: you have fisherfolk, you have a fishing industry, boats, jetty, fish and you do not have any ice. Mr. speaker, you have everything else except the one thing that would maintain the fish and stop persons from being sick in this country, stop the bacteria from infecting the fish. You must have certain standards and that is what the Minister is doing. I do not think that you walk in here and sit down pretending that that which you sit in is a chair and there is nothing before

you. You cannot have every single thing and the most important thing that you need, you do not have, an ice machine. Down for ten years. Nobody found the gumption, the fortitude to see it and even the mental acumen to say that the level of delusion has no boundaries. It is as simple as that because I could not believe a responsible Government that cares about ordinary people would allow something like this to happen.

Mr. Speaker, last point before I go. I do not know how the Minister would seek to deal with this issue but there is an issue, about six or seven years ago a youngster died on the jetty. I mean young people for years they see the jetty as a part of their Sunday exercise, they see it as part of their activities. They go on the jetty during the day, they fish on the jetty. Mr. Speaker you know about jetties too, you probably represented a couple there that went there for other things. However, the jetty has always been a place for activity all types of activity level on the jetty. Young people will go on the jetties, they fish on the jetties, and they dive off the jetties. Mr. Speaker, unfortunately they had an incident that I want to pay homage to the young man's family today, the great-grandson of Berinda Cox, whom the market is named after, dived off one Sunday and the boats were anchored onto the jetty because when they are offloading fish they use the jetties as well, and apparently the boat came and crushed his head while he was diving and he died. I would like the Minister responsible for Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy to certainly let us regulate the boats coming in and let us get some signage so that young persons can enjoy their pastime. If you did not dive off the jetty when you were a youngster coming up, then something is wrong. Even when you dived and made a body-splash and people laughed at you, that was all part of the fun and excitement along with going fishing and so on. That is it! What I am saying is that as a result of the unfortunate incident, we need to regulate, put something in place and allocate an area so that this pastime can stay the test of time, where young persons can enjoy themselves diving off the jetties because that is what they like to do. We must allow young persons the free spirit.

Asides.

Hon. A.R. FORDE: I am saying it was an unfortunate incident and we have to look to curtail it, we have to put some order in place where a certain area off the jetty is allocated for that sort of pastime and that sort of activity from our young people. They are going to do it if you tell them to do it or not do it. It is a part of our maladaptive patterns of behaviour. We do things sometimes by learnt behaviour. It is a part of experience and rite of passage; sometimes there are good experiences and bad ones, Mr. Speaker, but we do them, nevertheless. It is all part of living and learning. I am saying to the Minister that I know he will put a system in place which can be

regulated or a special area for the jetties, but one thing for sure is that he will allow for once in a lifetime the opportunity for those youngsters to walk across the jetty because it is currently in a state of disrepair. I would not even carry one of my goats down there. That is the truth. It is in a horrible state and it has been in a horrible state for the last ten years. More than ten years but for the last ten years nobody was responsible or saw it fit to give some attention to the jetties in this country. There was no attention or detail given to the sprucing up of the markets or certainly what has been happening in the hydrosphere.

Sir, I am saying today that I want to thank the Minister. He is doing a fantastic job. I want to stretch the minds of those young, aspiring fishermen. I want you (the Minister) to continue to stretch their minds with new experiences so that they will always rise to the end of the horizon. I do not want them to ever see the horizon as the line that separates them from the rest of the world or the line that separates sea and sky. I want them to see it as a new frontier, where they can live the Bajan dream all across the world as fisher folk, as fishermen and as businessmen. I want to thank you and applaud you. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

Asides.

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

Hon. Miss M.K-A. CADDLE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to say a few words in support of this Appropriation (Amendment) Bill, 2020, and in particular the Schedule wherein the Honourable Members for St. Michael South and St. Michael West Central are bringing before us certain supplementary provisions to give effect to works that they have identified. Sir, given that so many Members have given particular support to the maritime issues, I will choose to say a few words in support of the works contemplated by the Ministry for which the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central has some responsibility. Sir, I want to do so in the context of the way in which governments are meant to operate, the orderly way in which this Barbados Labour Party Administration does its business, and to say that we have a certain approach and one that went missing during the previous Administration. The business of Government is not by whim and fancy or by whimsy. This Government operates according to something called a public sector investment programme.

In the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Investment, for which I have responsibility, there is something called a Public Investment Unit and the most important subcommittee of the Cabinet is a Planning and Priorities Committee. Those are a lot of "Ps" and that is a lot of information, but in terms of the Public Sector Investment

Programme (PSIP) I repeat and say it a lot when I speak to the people of Barbados because I want to emphasise that this is the logical and orderly and structured way in which Government must carry out its capital works programme. It is by plan; it is by planning and it is by the establishment of priorities. Sir, my Ministry is responsible for identifying the financing for this PSIP. It is responsible for helping the Cabinet and that subcommittee of Cabinet, which is the Planning and Priorities Committee. Colleague Ministers, it is also responsible for helping to prioritise the works, the roads, the bridges, the drainage issues, the housing, and the major capital works which this Government has identified. It is a process.

Sir, it is a process that the last Administration seemed to let fall by the wayside. Hence when we came to service in June 2018, we had to re-establish the Planning and Priorities Committee. I am not sure by what structure the Cabinet then was doing its business but we had to re-establish the Planning and Priorities Committee because it is the way in which we are able to allocate resources and plan the execution of major capital projects. Therefore, I say all that to say that when we come to this Chamber and vote monies and go through this process of the Appropriation Bill and the Estimates, it is because we have done the work and prioritised how, when and wherefore we will do roads, according to what schedule and according to some prioritisation. Similarly, for matters related to transport, to works, to water and to housing; that is how the Government does its business. It is a process of prioritisation. It is not that somebody just jumped up one day and decided that these things should be done, except where there is an emergency or there is a critical issue to which we have to quickly respond.

Sir, I sat today and I heard Members “mushing up” the Minister in the Ministry of Finance, but in my estimation and experience men are not always the best at figuring out who it is they are to “mush up”.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.K.-A. CADDLE: I do not know but I have always heard “love who love you”, Mr. Speaker, and so I am just seeking to highlight that there is a balance with respect to finance and economic affairs; a balance where the Consolidated Fund finances some things and the financing for the PSIP is done on the other side, mainly through multilateral and bilateral and other funding sources.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M.K.-A. CADDLE: Sir, I say all that because I also want to draw attention to the matter of the reserves and the fact that the foreign reserves held at the Central Bank right now are the highest they have ever

been. This also has a lot to do with how we have planned our priorities. You heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central refer to our engagement with multilaterals, which is also something that is led through the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Investment. It is not just about building the foreign reserves as we had to in order to maintain the stability of our currency. People will always have opinion about what is the source of the foreign reserves and what is propping up the foreign reserves and how we have been able to get them there.

As I always say, while we have been able to negotiate for concessional lending, which the last Administration could not even do because they did not have the creditability to do it. The fact is that over the last two years, if we had not done the work with the multilateral community to be able to negotiate these agreements, can you imagine where we would be in respect to COVID? If we had not prepared the pitch, could you imagine how fast we would have been bowled out following this pandemic?

While the foreign reserves are not at all simply the result of borrowing and are in fact also reflecting also significant confidence and trust and economic activity in the international business sector. The point is that these are the types of areas of planning and preparation that have allowed us to do what we need to do, it have allowed us now to be able to air mark some of those reserves, to be able to address some of the issues that need to be addressed in the Ministry of Transport Works and Water Resources. To be able to air mark some of those resources to be able to build in the infrastructure that is going to mean that when the tourism sector returns and the other sectors that we are preparing for like medicinal cannabis, renewable energy and others, are in full flight that we have the kind of enabling environment that means that they can take off. We have the kind of roads and broadband connection and all of the other parts of the environment in which people want to do business that means that people want to come here, that means that Barbados is a place where people can live their best lives.

Sir, however, the Public Sector Investment Programme is not just about the list of projects that the Government is executing. When we came to service, we found regrettably that that was the kind of policy guidance that was given by the last Administration. It was a just a matter of writing down a list of projects that people managed to get signed and that would be your PS idea. We said no, that is no way to run a mauby shop far less a whole country.

What you need to do, is to come together as a Cabinet, identify based on our engagement with people, what are the things that are going to make people's lives better and make a plan. In the Government's Public Sector Investment Programme, you will find that the majority of

what we have already identified financing for, but some of it are pipeline projects based on the priorities of the country that we have identified. This is the reason that we have been able to identify financing for the Scotland District Stabilization and Road Repair Programme.

This is an area of the country, one seventh of this country, that have been long neglected and that is an issue that is not just about making sure that people can move around and do their business and have roads in the areas in which they live and work. However, also making sure that quite simply people are safe, that the area is stabilised, because this is an area where we see shifting, where we see physical movement, and where we know that there is prone to land slippage. We have to make sure that we do the important work of securing the area, maintaining its biodiversity, because in Scotland District is also one of those areas that potentially and already is, whether it is so recognised by the international community or not, an area of heritage and biodiversity that we want to maintain and we want to have internationally recognised.

However, it does not make sense having it internationally recognised, if when people walk down the hill they are going to slide to the bottom. Hence, we took the decision in the framework of the Planning and Priorities Committee, in the framework of this Government's Public Sector Investment Programme, to be able to identify the financing and make sure that we have an executable plan. The Member for St. Joseph was extremely instrumental in making sure we have that agreement settled, but to make sure that the people who live, who occupy one seventh of this country are able to feel secure and able to go about their business as Barbadians.

Sir, the Constitution River Flood Mitigation Project that I had the pleasure to launch yesterday is also a part of that PSIP. I have to say that I do not often like to speak at the beginning, I like to show the evidence at the end. This is a project that will take 18 months. It is about making sure that we have proper drainage in the area, that we alleviate the flooding issues that have been going on in that area for the residents of Halls Road and the surrounded communities. That we make sure that the water is properly aerated as we address water quality, so that they are not the mosquitoes and the other vermin that have been plaguing the residents. There is also going to be a small craft birthing facility on the side by Queen's Park, because if anybody passes that area you may notice that from time to time on the phase 2 side, leading up to Queen's Park, that some of the youngsters in the area often have their little kayaks and vessels and they go down the canal.

In doing these works, what we have also will be able to do is to beautify the area and to make it a place where people can recreate. What we have been able to add to that again within the framework of the PSIP and with the

collaboration of the Member for St. George South and his Ministry, is on the embankment a part of the Building Blocks Programme which would be dedicated to what we are calling the Halls Road Commercial Village. Hence, that by the time this area is complete those entrepreneurs who have been trying a thing in the area can now do so with some legitimacy. They can now make sure that they can get up in the morning, take a shower, dress and powder and feel proud that they are going to a space where they can know that they are part of a vibrant private sector in this country.

Sir, I issue the notion that definition of a private sector in Barbados is about men and women in jackets and in air-conditioned offices. We know that that is not what it is about. It is about people who get up to earn an honest dollar based on things they enjoy, based on things they want to deliver to their communities. We are happy that as a part of this programme we would be able to add some value in that regard.

The Speightstown Flood Mitigation Project up at Salt Pond is the next phase of that. It is separate project where we are also going to be able to address flooding and drainage issues.

However, Sir, before I sit, I want to say something brief about our approach to capital works in this COVID-19 environment. In an environment where a private sector has so had to slow down that we have seen almost a complete cessation of any activity at all. That is one in which a Government, a public sector has to step forward and that is what we have done. Sir, you have heard it in the Throne Speech delivered some weeks ago. We have had to step forward with a \$40 million dollar capital works programme. That programme that we estimate would be able to create around 2 000 jobs or so has nothing to then with the Barbados Employment and Sustainable Transformation (BEST) Programme largely around the tourism sector where we anticipate that 6 000 or so workers in tourism and related sectors will be re-engaged in their previous employment.

Another 2 000 workers will be able to find work based on the greening, technology, and digitisation part of that BEST Programme. This is what happens when you plan in a framework instead of waking up in a cold sweat in the middle of the night and making policy on that basis as we saw happened under the last Administration. A lot of what the Member for St. Michael West Central was able to explain to you and start to share with you is based on that planning. It is based on the fact that with that Ministry, the Public Investment Unit of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Investment is in negotiations with the Latin American Bank for \$100 million Road Programme which will also add to the works that the Minister has come to this Chamber for approval of certain continued allocations.

Also, we have been able to enter negotiations with another entity with respect to upgrades in the area of housing. One of the things that we have identified is the fact that in order to be able to talk about roof stabilisation, climate resilience and disaster management, people's homes have to be in state that is sound and secure for them to inhabit. It does not make sense having a roof that cannot go on top of any sound structure. As a part of the Roofs to Reefs Programme we are focusing on making sure that people's entire housing structure is sound, we are also in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing negotiating to make sure that we can do these kinds of works.

Sir, I wanted to give a bit of that perspective because I wanted to assure Barbadians through you that while you may see a road done today, another done tomorrow and wonder when this will happen in your area, be assured that this is a part of a plan. Ministries come together based on what Members understand are the needs of their constituents not just in the constituencies they are sent here to represent, but in the sectors that they also represent. I do not know anyone who has met with more fisher-folk than the Member for St. Michael South because we have to listen to the constituencies that we represent in both respects; as Members sent here to do a job and as Ministers who had the good fortune to be appointed to do work on behalf of the people of this country.

Sir, with those words I simply want to support this Bill and say to Barbadians through you that their Government is working with a plan. We want to make sure that we bring everybody along and continue to hear from the Barbadians and those who live here who continue to be affected by these trying times. I am obliged to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Hon Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I really want to thank Honourable Members for their very spirited contributions to what ordinarily would be just an accounting matter but in the circumstances that we face as a country, Sir, I think the Members of the public and taxpayers of this country would appreciate that we have committed ourselves to transforming Barbados in its own right but in a COVID-19 environment where we look globally and recognise that there seems to be a lack of leadership, this Government intends to lead Barbados out of this very dark hour. We will commit the resources of this country to ensure that ordinary Barbadians in these circumstances will derive the benefit with respect to not just a stabilization effort but with respect to being able to engage meaningfully in the recovery that we anticipate will come.

It means that we have to be very focused. As the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central just

indicated, our philosophy is to ensure that the different constituencies, and as Members of Parliament while we are elected on the basis of geography, when we come to this place and take on the various portfolios that we hold, then we have to ensure that in order to keep Barbados and our communities stable there are linkages between and across the various communities, demographics and industries in this country that we have to pay particular attention to. Such that, the employment of somebody in Bridgetown may very well depend on what happens in St. John. Therefore, to the extent that we are making investments to ensure that whether it is at Consett Bay in the Ministry of Maritime Affairs or road works contemplated to deal with the issues in the Scotland District, there is connection with all of us across this country.

We know what is required to be done because we have engaged in a wide range of consultation with the people and the stakeholders. We have crafted what we believe is a response that once executed will redound to the benefit of ordinary Barbadians. Sir, I am very proud to be here today to wrap up this debate. Equally, I just wanted to reiterate that the works as contemplated between the Ministry of Transport and Works and Ministry of Water Resources with respect to the Ministry of Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Blue Economy, we will be making an amendment to the existing Bill's Schedule to reflect the supplementary request which is actually on Resolution NO. 6 at the moment dealing with the specific works that are there.

Again, it just speaks to the fact that as we go through this process of re-focusing and re-purposing our public expenditure for this financial year that our ability to be flexible in the way that we administer the people's business and ensure that even as we go through this very tough time that the Government will always be aware this is a dynamic situation, things can turn at a moment's notice and will utilise all of the various tools that we have at our capability. If there is need to come to Chamber, Sir, to be able to give legislative authority for new tools we will do so in order to be able to respond swiftly to this pandemic.

Sir, let me thank again Honourable Members for their contributions. This is very important, and I want to urge the public of Barbados to continue certainly to follow the protocols with respect to those issues by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. COVID-19 is real. It will be around for some time, but Barbados has to manage in a very concerted way the risk associated with being able to keep this economy open. We believe that so long as we are able to effectively monitor the protocols which are rolled out by the Ministry of Health and Wellness and with the active participation of every Barbadian and resident we have welcomed here to ride out this pandemic, so long as we continue to do that Sir, we know that we will keep this Barbados economy ticking along until the rest of the world

has figured out that they need to demonstrate the same discipline that we as Barbadians here have continued to demonstrate under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and Wellness. Sir, I want to commend this Bill to the Honourable Chamber and beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Bill be read a second time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN and seconded by Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS the House resolved itself into Committee, Dr. S. C. BROWNE in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

MADAM CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee.

HEAD No. 46 --

MINISTRY OF MARITIME AFFAIRS AND BLUE ECONOMY

\$16 979 613

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: Madam Chairman, as indicated previously, the amendment before the Chamber from the existing Bill reflects the supplementary request with respect to the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Blue Economy to deal specifically with the repairs to the jetty at the Bridgetown Fish Market as well as provision for the slip way at the Bridgetown Fishing Harbour in addition to the installation of buoys along the corridors for water sport vessels and so I beg to move to move that Head 46 stand part as amended.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: I beg to second that, Madam.

The question that Head 46 stand part as amended was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD NO. -- 81

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, WORKS AND WATER RESOURCES

\$89 717 377

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: Madam Chairman, again as indicated previously, the sums being requested in addition to what is in the existing Bill relates to rehabilitation works for Highway 1 as well the junction from Frank Worrell Roundabout to Sea View in St. James

which is \$15 281 656 as well as an additional amount for \$1.58 million which is to provide funding for the vehicle registration data base which is part of the electronic vehicle registration system which the Ministry is in the process of being able to execute and therefore the total amount as indicated, I beg to move then that Head 81 stand part.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: I beg to second that, Madam.

The question that Head 46 stand part as amended was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: Madam Chairman, just for further clarity, you would appreciate that with the reorganisation of a number of ministries due to the reshuffle obviously in the Supplementary it would have referred to Head 80 specifically as it relates to Minister of Transport, Works (MTW), a new Head has been created with respect to Head 81 to reflect those changes. In addition to that, Heads 91, 92 and 93 are new to the Schedule given the reorganisation from the previous structure of Government, but those have no immediate changes with respect allocations, it is just the creation of a new Head. You would also note that the funding associated with the Ministry of Culture has been amalgamated under the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) therefore that reflects those sums that were previously there.

In addition, Head 34, the Ministry of Finance, the Office of the Supervisor of Insolvency now rest within that Ministry and therefore, no new appropriation but just a shifting of that specific department within there. All told, Madam Chairman, it means that the total amount being requested under the Appropriation Bill is now \$1 597 527 727 therefore, I beg to move that the Schedule be amended and stand part.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: I beg to second that, Madam.

The question that Schedule stand part as amended was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Clause 1 -- 2 inclusively were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN, seconded by Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS, MADAM CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of one Bill as amended in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN, seconded by Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Appropriation (Amendment) Act, 2020.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of Government Business.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, with that we have come to the end of today's Sitting and I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, October 27, 2020 at 10.00 a.m. in the morning.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, October 27, 2020 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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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. Government Notices. The notice of the Appropriation (Amendment) Bill, 2020 ('I beg to give notice of ...') is printed under the speech label 'Mr. SPEAKER'; the Bill was then read a first time on the motion of Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, who may be the Member who gave the notice. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Order No. 4, heading. The order is headed 'APPROPRIATION BILL, 2020', but the Bill debated and passed is the Appropriation (Amendment) Bill, 2020. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Committee, Head 81. After Hon. R. R. Straughn moves that Head 81 stand part, the procedural line reads 'The question that Head 46 stand part as amended was put'. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Committee, Head 81. The amount under the heading is '\$89 717 377'; the Minister names \$15 281 656 for Highway 1 and \$1.58 million for the vehicle registration database, and his sentence is cut off at 'I beg to move then that Head 8'. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 13th October, 2020 at 10.15 a.m. at the Worthing Corporate Centre, Worthing, Christ Church, with His Honour A. E. Holder, the Speaker, in the Chair; prayers were taken by Father Reverend Mark Harewood. The Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed. The Leader of Government Business, Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, laid the Annual Report of the Central Bank of Barbados for 2019, the Audited Financial Statements of the Grantley Adams International Airport, Inc. for the year ended 31st March, 2019 and the Medicinal Cannabis Industry Regulations, 2020. The Appropriation (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was read a first time, Standing Orders were suspended and the Sitting was suspended until 11.00 a.m.

On resumption Hon. R. R. Straughn, Member for Christ Church East Central, moved the second reading of the Appropriation (Amendment) Bill, 2020. He explained that the Cabinet reshuffle some two months earlier had reconstituted programmes across Government, and that further resources were being made available to the Ministry of Health and Wellness for COVID-19. He said that the stabilisation of the economy under BERT, the Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation Programme, had allowed the Government to respond, urged Barbadians to take personal responsibility, and said more supplementary requests would come to the Chamber in the coming weeks.

Hon. K. D. M. Humphrey, Member for St. Michael South and Minister of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy, described works at the Bridgetown Fish Market and slipways at Consett Bay, Pile Bay, Bridgetown and the Bridgetown Port. Hon. W. A. Abrahams, Member for Christ Church East, spoke on fishing and on fields returned to cultivation during the pandemic. Hon. K. D. Symmonds, Member for St. James Central, spoke as Minister responsible for small business on secured transactions and a collateral registry, saying that 'collateral is the oxygen' for credit. Mr. G. P. I. Gooding-Edghill, Member for St. Michael West Central, whose Ministry had gained water resources, set out the first phase of the Highway 1 rehabilitation, with new water mains, a gas main and underground ducts, and a second phase from Sea View to Six Mens. Hon. A. R. Forde, Member for Christ Church West Central, linked the blue economy to his own Ministry and to climate change, and Hon. Miss M. K-A. Caddle, Member for St. Michael South Central, spoke on the Public Sector Investment Programme and said foreign reserves were the highest they had ever been. Mr. Straughn replied and the Bill was read a second time.

In Committee, Dr. S. C. Browne in the Chair, Head 46, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Blue Economy (\$16 979 613), for the Bridgetown Fish Market jetty, the slipway and buoys, and Head 81, Ministry of Transport, Works and Water Resources, for Highway 1 and the vehicle registration database, passed as amended. Mr. Straughn explained that new Heads 81, 91, 92 and 93 reflected the reorganisation of Ministries and that the total under the Bill was now \$1 597 527 727. The Schedule and clauses 1 to 2 passed, and the Bill was read a third time and passed as the Appropriation (Amendment) Act, 2020.

The House was adjourned until Tuesday, 27th October, 2020 at 10.00 a.m.