
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2018 – 2022

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

At a meeting of the House of Assembly at the Worthing Corporate Centre on Tuesday, October 27, 2020, pursuant to the adjournment.

PRESENT

His Honour A. E. Holder, B.Sc. (Hons.), MSW, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Speaker)

Mr. G. W. Payne, Q.C.,

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

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.), L.E.C. (Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs)

Mr. T. A. Prescod, J.P., 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. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (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., F.D.S., F.D.R.C.S., M. Min. (Minister of Housing, Lands and Maintenance)

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

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

Hon. A. R. Forde, RPh. (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, BSS (Minister in the Prime Minister's Office with Responsibility for Culture and the National Development Commission)

Hon. G. P. I. 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.Sc., 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.

Hon. D. G. Sutherland, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.B.A. (Dist.) (Minister of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment), Hon. Ms. C. S. V. Husbands, B.A. (Hons.), M.Sc. (Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

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

Mr. Speaker took the Chair at 10.15 a.m.

Prayers were taken by Rev. Father Mark Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: This Honourable House is now in Session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of Government Business, you have the Floor.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, 13th October, 2020, be taken as read.

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second that, Sir.

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

MESSAGES FROM HER EXCELLENCY THE
GOVERNOR
GENERAL

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, a Proclamation from Her Excellency the Governor General:

“S.I. 2020 No:

By Her Excellency Dame Sandra Prunella Mason, Dame Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Dame of St. Andrew, Queen’s Counsel, Governor-General of Barbados. A PROCLAMATION

“WHEREAS it is provided by Section 60(1) of the Constitution that each session of Parliament shall be held at such place and commence at such time as the Governor-General may appoint:

AND WHEREAS by Proclamation dated 7th day September, 2020, the Governor-General appointed the Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre, Two-Mile Hill, Saint Michael, as the place at which the Second Session of Parliament shall be held at 10:00 hours in the morning, and the Worthing Corporate Centre, Worthing, Christ Church, as the place where the Second Session of Parliament should continue with effect from 22nd day of September, 2020:

AND WHEREAS by Proclamation given by the Governor-General on the 28th day September, 2020 a state of public health emergency exist in Barbados by reason of which it is impracticable for all of the Members of the House of Assembly and the Senate to continue to meet physically at the Worthing Corporate Centre, Worthing, Christ Church;

NOW THEREFORE by virtue and in exercise of the power and authority in me vested, I, Dame Sandra Prunella Mason, Dame Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Dame of St. Andrew, Queen’s Counsel, Governor-General of Barbados, DO HEREBY DECLARE that the Second Session of Parliament which commenced on the 7th day of September, 2020 and continued at the Worthing Corporate Centre, Worthing, Christ Church, with effect from the 22nd day of September, 2020 shall from the 27th day of October, 2020

be held with some Members present in the Chambers and other Members participating virtually for the purpose of complying with the protocol relating to physical distancing commencing at 10:00 hours in the morning.

Given under my hand and the Public

Seal of Barbados, this 26th day of October,

2020, and in the sixty-ninth year of Her

Majesty’s Reign.”

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, on a matter of privilege. Just to suggest that what was brought before the attention of this Honourable House sounds a bit out of order and improper for me, far be it for me to be critical of any action taken in the name of Her Excellency but it would seem to me that if the Parliament of Barbados is shifting to a situation where there is the participation of Honourable Members, virtually, even in the existing situation with the COVID-19 protocols, that this Parliament should be given the regulation to govern in the context by which Honourable Members do participate. It seems to me that this is out of order. It seems to me that those regulations which would amend the Standing Orders should be brought here first, that Parliament could discuss and vote on them and then later perhaps a Proclamation from Her Excellency. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I do not even know that this is the time to be discussing these matters but inasmuch as you have given the liberty to the Leader of the Opposition to raise a Point of Privilege, I would think that what the Honourable Leader of the Opposition asserts ought to happen is a bit in reverse because under the legislation that governs Parliament, such matters are in the authority of the sovereign of the Governor General. Just as it required Her Excellency’s special permission to meet in this Place, just as it required her special permission to have our State Opening after the Prorogation of Parliament at Sherbourne Conference Centre (Lloyd Erskine Sandiford Centre), any such arrangements as we may think to put into place also require her prior permission. That permission having now been given by her Proclamation, it is for the Chamber now to restructure its Standing Orders in such a way as to facilitate or as to give life or animus to what has been proclaimed.

Sir, I do not know how the Leader of the Opposition feels about COVID and I cannot anticipate what is to happen, but there is an Item on the Order Paper today to deal with matters relating to COVID. These matters are firmly set in the country's mind, and in the same way as other arrangements for other places are restricted, we must consider the same thing here. Some of our Members have comorbidities so I do not know if my friend is objecting to Parliament going both virtual and physical. That is a practice that is now taking place in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. If the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is objecting to it, maybe he should just say that but if he is not objecting to it because he is wise, and we know that he is, then the only issue is what the rules are that will govern the arrangement

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

Bishop the Hon. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Whether or not I would object to it would be dependent upon whether the matter is brought to the House. It has not, in my view, been brought to the House. What we have heard was a Proclamation coming from Her Excellency which, I would imagine, is coming under the advice of the Government now in office but there has not been a word to us of any intention to change to virtual participation and no idea as to how that is going to function. The Honourable Attorney General who is a lawyer, of course, may very well be right and I may very well be wrong but I just want to place on record that I object strongly to what has happened here because it seems to me to be a bit improper and that the House should be treated to the courtesy of a debate or discussion on the matter of virtual participation before we come to this stage.

PAPERS

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of Government Business.

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

1. Caribbean International Airways Limited Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year ended March 31, 2019.
2. The Caribbean Aircraft Handling Company Limited Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year ended March 31, 2018.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss. S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the First Reading of the Pesticides Control (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Dr. the Hon. W.F. DUGUID: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that this Bill be read for the first time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss. S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of today's Sitting.

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: I beg to second that.

The question that the mentioned Standing Orders be suspended was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is now the Order of the day. Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon. Miss. S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, before we commence proceedings, I beg to move that Order No. 2 on the Order Paper be withdrawn formally. We would have debated the Resolution on the last occasion when we met.

The question that Order No. 2 be withdrawn was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and His Honour the SPEAKER withdrew Order No. 2.

ORDER NO. 1

To move the passing of a Resolution to approve in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, CAP 225, the lease to the Maria Holder Memorial Trust of certain parcels of land, property of the Crown, and more particularly described in the First Schedule to this Resolution, for the purpose of the construction of nursery schools.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. the Hon. W.F. DUGUID: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pride to be able to come to this Honourable House this morning to put in place an opportunity for the Maria Holder Trust to lease two spots

of land from the Government of Barbados: The first one being that at Sayers Court, Christ Church, in the amount of 6 270 square metres, roughly 62 000 square feet, and the other one at Holder's Hill, Durants, St. James, at 5 785 square metres which is approximately 57 000 square feet. Sir, both of those will be used to erect nurseries. Mr. Speaker, you would be aware that the Maria Holder Trust has done some excellent work for the Government of Barbados, erecting nurseries in several locations. The first one was in Gall Hill and then the other in Oldbury; both excellent, well-designed nurseries. I must say that whenever I pass by, especially the one at Oldbury, I am always amazed at how well it has been kept, how well it is being maintained and what a wonderful and innovative structure the Maria Holder Trust was able to design and develop there for the people and, more importantly, for the children of Barbados.

Clearly Mr. Speaker, you would agree with me, that in order to have a good and successful life and opportunity to be able to contribute to the country of Barbados. All our people need to have a well-grounded and a well-rounded foundation. That foundation obviously starts from nursery and goes all the way up to tertiary education.

I am extremely proud to be able to come to this Parliament and beg the approval of the Parliament to have the lease of these two spots of land. There is a third one that is under construction and it is almost finished at Government Hill. Hence, clearly the Maria Holder Trust has not only shown that they are able to put their design capability and also their impetus behind it, but they have a proving track record now with three nursery schools being built in Barbados and two more to be done very shortly.

Let me say a few words about the Maria Holder Trust. The Maria Holder Trust as I understand it and I have done a significant amount of research on it, have done tremendous work, not only in Barbados, but also in other Caribbean islands. You will not only be familiar with the nurseries that they do here, but they have also supported the Barbados Cancer Society significantly. In fact, if you permit me to pronounce her name, just the other day I was reading about Miss Dorothy Cook-Johnson, who was a former teacher of mine. She was remarking on I think their twelfth anniversary as a charity that they had contributed and committed to the Barbados Cancer Society going back over 35 or 40 years.

However, even though the Maria Holder Trust is only recognised as a charity of the last 12 years, that whole idea and concept of giving back to society and giving to the country of which you are a part of, is something that has been there with Maria Holder and now of course her son who is now the Chairman of the Maria Holder Trust. However, that whole concept and ethos of giving back to

society is something that she passed on to her son and is something that all of Barbados should look at and cherish.

It is not everybody that is in an economic situation that they can give financially, but you can give of your time, expertise, and labour. Come to think of it, when I see people who are giving just by painting a garbage can, beautifying an area, I think about a gentleman who comes from the Christ Church East constituency. He spends all his time cleaning the beaches. I would not want to call his name, but I am hearing an Aside about a Mr. Collymore. It is things like that in terms of giving back to society. There is nothing that can give more pride than that volunteerism or that opportunity to share some of what you have. The Maria Holder Trust exemplifies to one of the highest levels on what you can do. You have an idea; real thought and you are willing to share it with a community or country. I really must applaud all the work that the Maria Holder Trust has been doing. I look forward to working with them to do these other two nurseries.

This lease gives them the opportunity to access this land, then they will be able to build the nursery. Essentially it will work in terms of a license. The term will be for 30 years. The rent for each site will be \$200, which is a one-time payment. The premises are then being leased for the purposes of the construction of the nursery together with the lands and all improvements shall then be handed over and licensed to the Crown. Hence, once they build the nursery, the Crown will then operate it by the Ministry of Education and Technological and Vocational Training as a nursery school.

Their main concern and I must agree with them, is that once they build the nursery that it is well maintained by the Crown. This is important, because too many of our building after we build them are not maintained appropriately. I join with them in making that call for maintenance, because even when you pass by and see these buildings and the design of them, it is clear that a lot of work went into the design and preparing it and of course these buildings cost thousands of dollars, maybe millions in some instances. Therefore, after going and looking at what wonderful work they have done, I anticipate that they will very quickly get these two nurseries constructed at Sayes Court and Holder's Hill as they have done the first few nurseries. I therefore ask that we agree that the Crown lease these two parcels of land to the Maria Holder Trust. I am obliged to you. I beg to move that this resolution do now pass.

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

Hon. Ms. C. S. V. HUSBANDS: I want to thank you very much Mr. Speaker for the opportunity just to share for a couple of moments my sincerest gratitude to the Maria Holder Trust for the provision of a nursery at Holder's Hill.

It means a lot to the communities of St. James South and St. James Central. This exemplifies the type of partnership that needs to exist between Government and the civil society. I think COVID has made us realise even more intensely that a community and society cannot go forward, except that there is partnership between all of the categories of persons and groupings, which looking at Government, civil society and business. This partnership is meaningful.

I just want to share what this means for the people of St. James South and St. James Central. Insufficient nursery space has put tremendous pressure on families seeking to get clean, hygienic, conducive, and attractive facilities for taking care of their children. Whereas, the mother has the confidence that when she leaves her child in a public space for their care that she is comfortable in her mind that that child will get the best care and will be in the best surroundings and be in a space that provides the necessary stimulation that infants will need.

Hence, the provision of the nursery facilities at Holder's Hill will do that for several parents who lives in the Durants Village, Holder's Hill, Kings Village, Grenham Road, Hoyte's Village, Haynesville and Thorpe's area. One of the struggles that we have had in those communities has been the fact that the one available Government nursery space is in such high demand that several children are unable to be place there. Many working parents have to struggles on mornings to take their children to other spaces and very often it has to be in the private sector, which is a great burden to many families, because they do not the money to afford the private nursery care for their children. Certainly, in this COVID environment it has been made worse. Hence, this could not come at a better time to assist families who need to have easily accessible and affordable nursery services within their community where the children can be safe.

The other challenge is with parents who work shift and who work very far need some place that is close enough that a relative can quickly go and collect the child if need be, whereas, when that child has to be placed elsewhere far away from the family location, it presents a major challenge to that family. Many women have had to turn down work because the cost of nursery services versus what they are getting does not make sense for them. Therefore, they had to opt not to accept jobs because there is no one to take care of the children and the cost is beyond their means. It puts that family in prison. It cannot move forward. They cannot get out from where they are at. I really want to sincerely thank Maria Holder Trust for the

provision of these nursery service. I really look forward to its completion and use by the people in the community. I want to express my thanks to my fellow Minister for his diligence in bringing this to Parliament and making this entirely possible.

I look forward to engaging as this is built because the facility at Holder's Hill is quite large. It has quite a lot of room at the back. Also, I want to see if there is a possibility for other community engagement in the bigger space. I am very happy and extremely delighted. I want to express my thanks.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is considerably brighter. I understand that he is taller, more handsome and can play a musical instrument which I cannot do, but I can learn. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Maria Holder Trust because there are a couple of trusts in Barbados that we are aware of because of the volume of work that they do on a consistent basis. The establishment of this trust has served Barbados well over the last few years. As I understand it, it is an intention on the part of the Trust to do more work. It is totally and completely philanthropic.

The work that is done by the Maria Holder Trust is aimed solely at benefitting Barbadians and making life better for a certain segment of Barbados. Also, I want to thank the Honourable Member for Christ Church West because he is approaching his mandate and new Ministry with the same vigour that he brought to his former Ministry. I met with the representatives of the Maria Holder Trust about 18 months ago and discussed the plans they were looking. They explained to me all the projects they plan to do with respect to nurseries, how they are trying to prioritise and indicated they would try based on the need factor to prioritise Sayers Court.

You accept these words with a hope, but you do not pin too much hope on it because the needs are great all around. There is a song that states that every man thinks his burden is the heaviest and that every man's aim is to achieve the best. What I may want for my constituency is the same thing that all other 29 people in here want for their constituencies. Therefore, I am very glad that we have now taken the step to allocate the land and put it in a position that it can be used and accessed by the Maria Holder Trust to bring to fruition its plans for the persons in Sayers Court, Silver Sands and the surrounding area.

Sir, why this is also necessary is that my constituency has a geographical divide. There is up the hill and then, there is down the hill. My constituency is literally half up the hill such as Parish Land, Fairy Valley, and the remainder. There is half down the hill which comprises of

Sayers Court, Silver Sands Hopewell, et cetera. It is not just a geographical divide. The two sides do not really mix but what you have currently there is an existing nursery that is very small. Persons from Parish Land are trying to get their children into the nursery because you can just walk down the hill and deposit the children.

In a strange way, Sir, that leads to integration at the lowest level. It is integration at the level of babies who would then form friends and harmonise in the whole constituency. It is a very hard constituency to canvass and make plans to do things because if you plan a children's party in Parish Land, the kids from Sayers Court and Silver Sands are not going to attend. If you plan one for down the hill, those from up the hill are not going to attend. It is almost counterintuitive as we move on and try to form linkages with other countries, uniting through Zoom and the world is becoming place that we can still have those artificial divisions in one voting bloc. I will be very glad to have a nursery being constructed there that can accommodate the needs of most of the constituency.

Sir, the other thing is that I am very impressed. If you see the Maria Holder Trust nurseries, from outside you will see these things are purpose-built. They were purpose-built and futuristically intended to serve the needs of children. We keep forgetting that a nursery is not just four walls. How you construct that nursery must bear in mind the eventual users of the nursery. You cannot say here is a building and cut it up into a sleeping area, roaming area and put two swings in the backyard because you would not be stimulating the children.

As children - Sir, I am lumping myself with you who is significantly younger than I as is immediately apparent- I remember gathering and waiting for Auntie Olga to come over Rediffusion. The teacher would pull everyone together who sit and look at the Rediffusion as though it was a television. We were excited because something was broadcasting, and we would gather together. It was turned on and we listened. It was one segment. Perhaps, it was the most excitement we had at the St. Giles' Nursery School. If I cast my mind back to St. Giles' Nursery School, it was probably the most excitement I ever had. Recently, a parent approached me and asked for assistance with a tablet for her child and I have been trying to help parents with tablets for their children.

I asked her how old was the child and she told me two years old. I asked, "Two? Your child using a tablet at two years old?" She said, "Minister, come and see." She took me to her house and gave her two-year old child the mobile phone. The two-year old child reached for the mother's finger and put it on the phone to unlock the phone. They know how to get to YouTube and select the children's cartoons, et cetera. These children are two and three years old. This would have been beyond

contemplation for us. The whole point of this is that what served us as nursery and primary schools with relation the physically built infrastructure and the curriculum is of no relevance to children who are living and growing up in this time.

Nursery schools need to be built specifically for them. A swing and monkey bars are not enough. They need to have games and areas that they can see colours that stimulate. They also tell you that the sleeping area should be painted in one colour because that colour brings the children down. The classroom should be painted in another colour because that improves stimulation and acumen. These are all the things that we must be faced with in trying to design what is right for our children, so I do not envy the Minister of Education. I really do not envy her.

Education in Barbados is affected from the cradle to the grave. We are educating children a lot earlier and people are going into university a lot older. We have an entire cadre of mature students coming out of university all the time. Every year someone older is graduating from university. The Honourable Minister of Education is tasked with trying to manage and accommodate all. As a Government with all that is going on simply does not have the capacity now to build all that is necessary to develop our children. We cannot at this point in time build the nursery schools that are required to start the stimulation of those young minds so that they can realise their fullest potential. We can only do this with the assistance of institutions like The Maria Holder Memorial Trust and I also want to urge corporate Barbados, this is give back time, Sir. You do not have a to give a lot but as things become more difficult in Barbados, as Covid-19 drags on and the pull on the government's purse is more aimed at health than anything else because we have to actually forestall the effects of Covid-19 and any other diseases that may affect the people in Barbados, then we now look to those corporate citizens who would have benefited over years for assorted concessions from various graces and gratuities from successive Governments and ask them. You may not be able to build a whole school but there is nothing at all wrong with putting a part of your budget towards a charitable endeavour and education is a most worthwhile, charitable endeavour because right now, at this point, the Government is doing the best it can but those who are going to suffer are those children whose parents are unable to provide them with all of the devices and all of the requirements that they have to push an evolving curriculum and evolving school agenda.

Sir, I cannot over emphasise the importance of what The Maria Holder Memorial Trust is doing. I wish to thank them fully for starting the fast track of the Sayers Court Day Nursery. It is long overdue, I am not saying it is long overdue on their part, but one is needed desperately and I am here, Sir, smiling as I think of the enduring benefit of

having a state of the art nursery in Christ Church East because that, Sir, will lead to giving opportunities for children who otherwise might not be able to afford the opportunity at that level. Sir, for us to grow as a society we have to invest in our young people and that investment now has to come earlier and earlier because as the world is evolving, children are evolving and the children of today require a lot more, a lot more in terms of stimulation, a lot more in terms of curriculum, a lot more in terms of investment that we did and I am glad that some charitable organisations are turning their eyes to the children of Barbados and investing in our future.

With those few words, I wish to entirely support this Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to align my support for this Resolution. I am mindful that this Resolution is long in coming as are many others relating to the investment of The Maria Holder Memorial Trust.

The entity, as my learned colleagues have indicated, has been doing invaluable service to this country, particularly in the areas of education and certainly in health for the past few years. They have made this country their home and they have treated to the people of this country with tremendous respect and we, I believe, Sir, are eternally grateful to them for the contribution that they have made. I, too, am proud to be a part of a Cabinet, Sir, that did not come to office and disregard the work that had gone before and the initiative that would have existed between the former Administration with the former Minister of Education and certainly The Maria Holder Memorial Trust because this project actually started for the construction of the six nursery school all the way back, I believe, in 2016.

The genesis of it would have started coming out of the CARICOM Secretariat where all countries in the CARICOM region would have been urged to facilitate full educational provision for all children between the ages of 3 and 5 by the year 2015. The then Government of Barbados, obviously, was not in a financial position to do many things and amongst those things was also being able to build out nursery schools to be able to fulfil this particular objective and in stepped The Maria Holder Memorial Trust with a certain level of investment to be able to propose to the then Government the possibilities of constructing the six nursery schools across the island which had been identified by the Ministry of Education as being those locations where it was densely populated, locations which were in dire need, as my colleagues have indicated, with respect to providing the necessary nursery schools in those particular areas.

Sir, the intention at the time, I believe, was to build on what had been recommended at the level of the CARICOM Secretariat and given that The Maria Holder Memorial Trust had the necessary funds to be able to invest, the intention was that it would have been done over a period of time to be able to first acquire the land to be able to obviously construct the respective buildings in accordance with the Ministry's specifications and then to be able to have a number of our young people being able to enter the respective institutions. They have been frustrations, Sir, and I really could not stand here and not speak to it because I do know from meeting with the trust and with some of the other entities which have been doing this type of work in this country, that on many occasions they are frustrated by the level of bureaucracy that exists in being able to allow them to achieve and to accomplish what they would like. I think, Sir, it is fair to say that all of us at some point are frustrated with the level of bureaucracy that exists across the Government of Barbados, this one and others in the past as well and I know that we are trying our level best to be able to free up some of the hurdles and challenges that a number of these entities are confronted with. I know that certainly at the level of the Government Ministers and certainly in the Cabinet, there is a commitment to ensure that not only entities like The Maria Holder Memorial Trust but certainly all other entities that are doing this type of work that have really been carrying Barbados for the last couple years that all of them are able to be recognised and that the process of idea to actually execution is as seamless as possible so that the work can be accelerated as quickly as is possible. The reality is, Sir, that we cannot do it alone. I think everyone knows that we have had significant difficulties with a number of our schools, not just at the nursery level but in terms of whether it is environmental issues or school closures as a result of a lack of investment over the last decade where significant sums would not have expended on the plant and the plant infrastructure and as a consequence it has meant that we are pretty much playing catch up every single year trying to make good the existing school plant and to keep our students and our teachers in a safe and healthy environment. That too, Sir, is not without its challenges, but I think that this type of investment is really what it is that we have to aspire to because many of our buildings have really not been renovated for the last 30 years. Many of them are soft stone, some of the nursery school are within soft stones buildings, many of them are plague with their own level of environmental issues and as a consequence, the welcoming of any newly constructed plants into the landscape of the schools across the island are indeed welcome.

With respect to the school at Government Hill, the recommended size for that school is going to be 120. I think others would have alluded to the fact that there has been heavy overcrowding at Charles F. Broome Primary Memorial School and the currently enrolment at

Government Hill Nursery School is in excess of 100 students. I am mindful, Sir, that this project is nearing completion and I believe that within the next few months, I believe, probably early January we will be able to have the intake of the students there. That is one of the projects that has been ongoing by the Trust and we look forward to the completion and the welcoming of those students being able to be settled into better surroundings. With respect to Holder's Hill the size of the capacity for the school is 90. The reality is that there are no pre-primary facilities within close proximity of the proposed Holder's Hill facility. The attempts to, and I believe the Honourable Member for the area would have also spoken to this, again, there is a dire need in the community to be able to have proper facilities for young people and particularly at the early age and also with respect to Sayers Court, the recommended size there, Sir, is 90 and this is intended to, again, service the surrounding community as it is some distance away from the high level commercial activity. The lone primary school which services this area in Sayers Court is the St. Christopher Primary School which is presently under capacity. Sir, the proposal by the Trust to construct these nursery schools is certainly welcome from the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training and it is welcome by the people of Barbados and certainly will enrich the lives of our respective communities. I certainly in education have been looking at discussions with The Maria Holder Memorial Trust as it relates to other types of facilities. We are in dire need of additional primary schools and additional secondary schools. There are only so many repairs that I can possibly do to old institutions.

You would be mindful, Sir, that a few years ago under the last Administration we lost the opportunity to be able to acquire a loan from the Caribbean Development Bank for about \$64 million which would have helped us to improve significantly a number of our school plants. I suppose it would be fair to say that we lost that just like we lost other opportunities not only in education but certainly across the entire sector of Government. As a consequence of coming to office we have really been trying our best to be able to acquire new funds. I know that those in the Ministry of Finance have been working assiduously to try to acquire as much as they can to assist us and I am grateful to them for so doing.

I am also mindful, Sir, that the investment being made by The Maria Holder Memorial Trust, once we are able to get past this issue of the lease arrangements, we will certainly be able to start the ball rolling. In many cases they have already prepared the plans for the area. There is a model I think that they have been using at a number of the school plants so it is really a case of replicating on a number of the parcels of land the similar structure because there is a design that is obviously approved at all levels.

Sir, I would want to take this opportunity to encourage other corporate entities across Barbados to get involved in assisting education and assisting us in trying to build out suitable plants that our students and our teachers can feel comfortable in going into the school environment because it really is a very difficult task to have to manage a process where there has been so much neglect for so many years across the various educational institutions. Notwithstanding, our teachers and our students have also been doing exceptionally well in difficult circumstances and I think we owe them a debt of gratitude in the way in which they have managed the circumstances knowing that they have not been easy but I do feel that we would wish that more persons and more entities would be able to join hands with both the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Maintenance and the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training and indeed certainly the Ministry of Health and Wellness to be able to help the Barbados Government to do some of the heavy lifting that is necessary.

I know that the Prime Minister has spoken on several occasions too about creating an investment environment where entities not only would apply for concessions to be able to construct these particular properties but certainly that we recognise a mechanism by which they are able to access things quickly and that the necessary facilities are put in place for that. I look forward, Sir, to being able to see that come to fruition so that some of those frustrations that many of them presently have are put to rest once and for all, so I suspect that would be coming in the near future.

Sir, again I just want to endorse this Resolution and say thank you to The Maria Holder Memorial Trust and also thank you to the Ministry of Housing, Lands and Maintenance for being able to work quickly and to the Minister for being able to work quickly to bring these Resolutions. I believe that there are a few others that are in the works as well, and we have all been given the respective directives to make sure that these are pushed through as quickly as possible being ever mindful of the importance and the significant investment that is being made by The Maria Holder Memorial Trust.

With those few words, Sir, I am obliged.

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

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Thank you very much, Sir. Just to say that I would want to be associated with any complimentary remarks which are offered on behalf or towards The Maria Holder Memorial Trust. I think the work done in Barbados already through their generosity is to be applauded and it is very much appreciated by the people of Barbados.

I would want to suggest to the Honourable Minister of Housing, Lands and Maintenance and perhaps the Honourable Minister of Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, that they perhaps research a little further the origins of the efforts of The Maria Holder Memorial Trust in Barbados with respect to their desire to assist with the development of educational facilities and other facilities. They would find that it goes beyond the last Administration and in fact it originated with the last Barbados Labour Party Administration, the Office of the Honourable Prime Minister, and I had some particular responsibility for seeking early to facilitate that, but then of course we had a change of Government in 2008. We lament the long lag in terms of the time which would ensue before projects would get going but we are happy today for what we are seeing materialised and become a reality. It is a nice-looking facility which is going up not too far from properties owned by myself and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West. Of course, with respect to ownership of properties we are talking about two different leagues when talk about those two gentlemen, but we applaud the work of The Maria Holder Memorial Trust and we are glad to see these projects coming to fruition.

Mr. Speaker, I do have a question as to what are the particulars which are considered when areas are identified for such projects and the extent to which the political directorate advise us as to where these facilities should be located. We would ever want to know that when entities, charities, demonstrate a desire to be generous that their efforts are not negated or nullified to any extent because of political considerations, political dynamics. I am not here to challenge today because I am not in a position to, that this facility is not needed in Christ Church Central or in St. James South or in St. Michael South East. I do not have the information which would suggest to me that they would be better placed elsewhere and that the other place would have commanded a greater priority, I am simply asking how is it determined as to what facilities, where and when. I am strongly suggesting that we do not have a situation where political considerations become the prime motivator as to where and when these facilities are constructed.

Mr. Speaker, I do have a recommendation for my honourable friend from Christ Church West and that is that there is a property along Country Road, one might say east of or north of Skeete Road depending on how one looks at the geographical pointers, which used to house a facilities for elderly folks which is now vacant and if it is to be considered and others of these facilities are to be constructed there is a spot there that you may want to give some consideration to in the interest of the communities of St. Michael West that are still part of the Barbados electoral map and the Barbados geographical space.

Asides.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am asking on the behalf of the people of St. Michael West. In fact, in early conversations with The Maria Holder representatives we were thinking very, very, very strongly that that could have been one of the locations because of the dynamics operating in that area vis-à-vis the presence of any other such facilities and the heavily populated communities that exist around that area.

While I am on that point, I would want to draw to the attention of this Honourable Member (I had drawn it to the attention of the former Minister of Housing and Lands) is the National Housing Corporation had use of a building east of it and for a long time it laid unoccupied and unused. I think it is still unoccupied and I do not know the extent to which it is being used for any wholesome or positive purpose. As the duly elected representative for St. Michael West I had prevailed upon the then Honourable Prime Minister, and Leader of the Barbados Labour Party Administration at the time, that the communities of Hindsbury Road, Garden Land, Bank Hall, and some parts of your constituency Mr. Speaker, and some parts of the City of Bridgetown could have benefited significantly from a training facility established there at that building could have been put to such use. That was at a time when there was that much emphasis led by the late Honourable Prime Minister and former Member of the Barbados Labour Party Administration on establishing Community Technology Resource Centres and I had asked that in fact if one could have been put in that facility. In fact, the Government of the day, had acceded to that request. The building now existing there had existed there for quite some time was refurbished and in fact, there is an extension to the building made to facilitate the computer labs. To date, I do not know that anything has happened, the Government was changed in 2008, the extension was left unused, the previously existing part was left unused, as far as I know, and it remains that way today. While we are happy to have charities, local and international, do what they can to help us with our developmental facilities, we really ought as a Government to be responsible, firstly and primarily, for our people to ensure that all of the existing capacities which we have is to put to good and proper use, and to have a building like that just not used and a new extension later not be used, I do not think it is something of which we are to be proud.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I take my seat I want to say this because I think it is important to say this: It is all right for charities such as the Maria Holder Trust to help us with these foundations, it is all right for us to have other charities to help us in other ways, and we are looking to provide for our children when we provide day care facilities, or when we facilitate others in helping us to provide day care facilities, but it continues to me to be a

matter of sore concern that we have many parents (Mr. Speaker, you see this is St. Michael Central) who cannot feed their children on a daily basis. Therefore while we celebrate the construction to take place at Government Hill and other places to provide day care facilities for our children, while we celebrate that, while we compliment generous donors, this Government should always realise and should not forget, and should pay more attention to the fact that we have parents out there in Barbados today (multiple hundreds of parents) who cannot feed their children. They cannot feed their children, so [that] you can erect nice facilities up the road where those who have 'nice' jobs and those who are fairly well-off will take their children there and go to their income-generating enterprises while there are many others who cannot feed their children, and I make a plea from this Honourable House on their behalf. Mr. Speaker, there are not only in St. Michael West, but they are also all over Barbados. I know they are in St. Michael Central (and I am hearing in St. Philip North). Mr. Speaker, we need to pay attention to that matter because there are too many parents who cannot feed their children and something has to be done (more robustly something has to be done) to address that situation. I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West, you have the Floor.

Dr. the Hon. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, Sir, first, let me thank all Honourable Members who spoke. Mr. Speaker, it has made me think of a couple of things. Mr. Speaker, first, I would want to say that I have not had a child of nursery school age for quite some time and therefore I did not think of the colour stimulation, the colours to allow the child to get to sleep faster or to dissimulate faster, that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East has noted, I want to thank the Honourable Member for that because it took me back to those wonderful days. The younger of my two children is 22 years so that would tell you that it has been quite some time since I have had a child of nursery age, but I understand that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East is now about to embark on that journey and so I applaud his endeavors and his exuberance in looking forward to having that experience in life.

I also would appreciate the Honourable Minister of Education, Technological and Vocational Training to give a full idea as to where the locations are, so to answer the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, these locations were chosen under the previous Administration, actually, in 2012 and we have not sought to alter them in any way, we are following through on these locations. Now, I would not imagine that the Maria Holder Trust would choose locations based on political persuasion. I am pretty sure that it was based on needs and on densities. Mr. Speaker, when I look at the locations I do think that they may be highly-dense areas that may not have had those kinds of

facilities and so I do not think that I would want to suggest that there has been any politics involved, I think that it was strictly based on densities and the needs.

Mr. Speaker, this goes back to the need for building good foundations. With respect to the building next to the National Housing Corporation, to which the Honourable Member spoke, yes, we are looking at it. We are actually looking at that building to be used as a location for our building renovations project that we are embarking on. However, the wider and greater point, Mr. Speaker, that came out from the other presentations from the Honourable Members, and I take the point, we need jobs in this country, badly. I heard the Honourable Member talk about people that cannot feed their children. They cannot feed their children because we are in a pandemic. We have a problem, and we need to get jobs now and I agree. This opportunity to build two nursery schools once we provide the land gives an opportunity to maisons, carpenters, labourers, electricians, plumbers, gardeners, landscapers. All of these things this will give an opportunity. I am supporting the Honourable Member, and he rises.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: I thank him for his support but he is misleading the House a bit, Mr. Speaker. It is not true that there are parents in this country who cannot feed their children because we are in a pandemic. That situation existed before the arrival of COVID. If the Honourable Member is saying that that started with COVID then he needs to be clear in saying so. However, my view is and I am sure that there are many in agreement with me this thing pre dates COVID.

Mr. SPEAKER: Continue Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. the Hon. W. F. DUGUID: We need jobs in this country and we are looking forward and pressing on. We are going to be building houses. We are going to be renovating buildings. Every opportunity that I see to be able to create opportunities for jobs in this country for our artisans. Let me also say that what this does is free-up the mother, who otherwise would have to stay at home to mind the child but now has an opportunity to put the child at the nursery and then go out and get a job for herself as well. This provides jobs on multiple levels, and I am laser-focused to make sure that we get jobs provided in this country for our artisans, for our young people, for our womenfolk, for everybody who wants a job and who should be able to get that opportunity to get jobs, to get training pre-COVID, post-COVID and intra-COVID. Whatever it is, we must get jobs in this country for our people so that they can feed themselves and their families. I am focused on that, and with every bit of my body and my

capability and my ability and my intuition and my knowledge and my experience, we are going to get jobs in this country. Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Asides.

Hon. A.R. FORDE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Resolution now be passed was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORDER NO. 5

To move the passing of a Resolution to extend the Public Health Emergency.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, we have now done this particular exercise, I believe, on at least three occasions and we are here in part because it is a constitutional and statutory obligation, but also because it is the right thing to do. I speak specifically of the State of Emergency that exists in Barbados as having been proclaimed a month ago by Her Excellency under the provisions of the Emergency Management Act. In March of this year we took a decision to declare a State of Emergency and to shut down Barbados. I do not need to recap any of the events that have happened since then. What is clear, though, Mr. Speaker, is that we are not at all out of the woods. When we started to talk about COVID and how it impacted Barbados, strangely enough the world was still in a very different place. The COVID numbers were low and we were coming to grips with having one, two or three cases in our country.

Globally today 43 million people have contracted COVID. Twenty-nine million have been reported as having recovered, and 1.6 million have died. Mr. Speaker, in March the numbers were nowhere near so high. Every day we watch CNN, BBC and other international news channels and they are reporting news in relation to COVID statistics in jurisdictions with which we trade and do business and perhaps, most importantly, jurisdictions which represent source markets for our tourism sector. In many respects, as far as the steps taken by international bodies and countries are concerned, we are but spectators. With respect to what happens in Barbados, we are not spectators, Mr. Speaker. We have our own destiny in our hands. I believe a high-ranking United States official said only yesterday or the day before that they cannot unfold the pandemic and what they can control are the therapies, the vaccines, and things of that sort.

An individual whom I have had cause to read on many occasions, named Jeffrey Sachs, is a professor and expert on sustainable development, economic development, and the fight against poverty. Anybody who reads

international law and development -- and I have read a little bit of it -- would have read Jeffrey Sachs. He describes that giant of a country to the north of us as not having lost the fight against COVID but as having given up in the fight against COVID; as having surrendered itself to the pandemic and, rightly or wrongly, having decided that they are going to focus on the back end. How can we make it better? Those are not options that are available to us, Mr. Speaker. In a population of about 300 000 people we do not get to decide that we want vaccines for Barbados and Barbadians on the day the vaccines become available. In fact, we know only too well that because of our size, because we are not a major financial player, vaccines for us and St. Lucia and Trinidad we will get, I am sure, but we will get them after everybody has been fed and watered.

Mr. Speaker, we do not get to say that we are going to surrender to the pandemic. We must fight tooth and nail every step of the way to make sure that we are not overcome. Mr. Speaker, the last six or seven months have been a learning experience for us. It has perhaps been the worst of times to have been involved in governance, perhaps the worst of times to have been involved in trying to run a country, but how we have dealt with the COVID pandemic in Barbados, I hope, will represent a case-study in years to come as to how small, nimble economies are able to respond to things that cause giants to grind to a halt, Sir. I believe it is a case-study that will serve to vindicate the kinds of decisions that have been taken by this Administration, both in terms of protecting the livelihoods of our citizens and protecting the lives of our citizens. At no step of the way has the decision-making process been easy. I remember being absolutely petrified at the notion that we as a country were about to embark on a curfew. Curfews are things that are imposed in Jamaica, in Trinidad and other parts of the world but certainly not in my memory, and we have been hard-pressed to find anybody in living memory who can testify to a state of emergency in Barbados and a curfew.

Sir, we had no manual to guide us. We had no case-studies, no best practices to tell us how we should approach this and that, but what we did have, Mr. Speaker, and what we treasure most has been our ability to sit with people and to work out how we walk this journey. Mr. Speaker, at the outset we met with the senior public servants. We met with the parliamentarians, the Leader of the Opposition was involved in that, we met with the private sector, we met with the workers' unions and we said, "We, Barbados, are facing an issue and the waters ahead will be rough, so let us reason together and see how we can get across." Mr. Speaker, I think we have done a remarkable job and it would not be a bad time to thank all of those individuals who have sacrificed, all of those individuals who have suffered but remained patient, all of those individuals who share our optimism for success and a brighter tomorrow for staying the course with us.

However, Mr. Speaker, having a determined a month ago that we needed to embark on another 30-day state of emergency, we are at the point where under the law as a Parliament, we are required to make a decision. Under the provisions of the Constitution under the Provisions of the Emergency Management Act, a state of emergency can only be declared by Her Excellency for a period of 30 days and thereafter in order for it to continue its life it must be by way of resolution of Parliament.

Sir, even with that, the drafters of our Constitution and the framers of our laws have determined that we should not have an unfettered discretion in relation to how long a state of emergency should last. They have said that we as a Parliament, the highest law-making body in this country can at most extend the state of emergency up to six months. We have already had a six-month state of emergency and we are here today to determine whether it so suits this Parliament that we should agree in this resolution to extend it for a further five months. What does that mean? Mr. Speaker, we have several COVID directives still in place, and those will continue to be the law.

Mr. Speaker, however, essentially it speaks to the fact that the foundation factors that caused us to move to a state of emergency in this country have not yet been removed. Now, you know Barbadians have in some ways gone back to their ways of life. The feting and social events have started back. Regrettably, the work force has not been able to get back to where it needed to be and tourism certainly has not, but places that were closed during the early days of COVID have reopened to business. It is remarkable that just six short months ago they were long lines outside of our supermarkets and people were fearing shortages of toilet paper and food, none of which came to pass.

However, that was the early panic. Perhaps it is human nature that when once the turmoil has settled a bit and the panic has dissipated, we feel as though things are alright now. Mr. Speaker, it is this duty as a Parliament to remind our citizens that things are not yet alright. It will take a long time before things are alright, but as a Government and as a Parliament we have an obligation to ensure that the structures that are needed to be in place to get Barbados safely over this chasm are in place.

It is our constitutional responsibility to reflect on what has happened over the last six to seven months and to consider whether it is appropriate for us to maintain the state of emergency for a further five months to take us to the sixth. At the end of that period, the first step would be a proclamation and as a Parliament we may well have to come back here and seek to also extend that.

Mr. Speaker, one thing is sure and all of the commentators are saying and if you watched CNN or BBC

this morning, you would realise the kind of COVID spikes that are being seen all across the globe. It would be a wonderful thing if Barbados could be in a proverbial bubble, but that is not the case. Hence, Mr. Speaker, our duty as a Government as I wind up this brief end treaty, is to say to Barbadians that as comfortable as you may feel you are in respect of COVID, we cannot drop our guard.

Mr. Speaker, this morning in the message from Her Excellency there was a proclamation made by her that the Parliament of Barbados would with effect from the day be able to meet part physically and part virtually. It is not a mandatory requirement; it is in fact permissive. It is not a direction from Her Excellency. We as a Parliament have the responsibility to determine the mechanics, what will it look like.

However, we must be responsible leaders. Our last three Cabinet meetings took place virtually. I do not know if everyone has been following the news across the region, but almost all the Cabinet of the Bahamas had to go into quarantine just two weeks ago. Now, the Minister of Health and his fine officers, the officers at the Airport, the systems that he have put in place with the protocols have been serving us well as our gate keepers, but there is always the possibility that someone may slip through. We had a recent event involving a lady who was not in quarantine. People are behaving as though she was in quarantine and left quarantine. Nevertheless, as it turned out she proved to be positive for the virus in her second test, but we followed every single protocol that was required. Now protocols were not arrived at whimsically, but it happened, and they are reports received periodically where people have tested negative continuously and then weeks later for some bazaar reason, they turned to be positive. We cannot behave as though we know everything about COVID, though we probably know a hell of a lot more about it than we have most other diseases.

If the Cabinet of Barbados can say to itself, brothers, and sisters we must take precautions and where possible let us meet virtually so that should something happen the functioning of the country can continue. I can see no harm; in fact, I see every good with the Parliament of Barbados taking a similar stance.

Mr. Speaker, in England, anybody who watches the debates of the House of Commons, the Chamber of the House of Commons used to be full, in fact in our Chamber we each sit in separate chairs, but they sit on benches crushed together. If you look at the House of Commons now, you see a seat here and then about three yards down the road another person. A Chamber that accommodates hundreds of people probably has at most 20 or 30 people in it at any given time.

Sir I am going to finish now. It is an important exercise in judgement, and that is why are in this Chamber, because the people of this country have elected us as representatives in part based on the reliance on our judgement. I hope that the Leader of the Opposition will recognise the important precaution by enabling Parliament to sit part physically and part virtually.

The rules of engagement are now to be determined and I believe that the Clerk will very shortly have a proposal for him as to how we can participate in Parliamentary activity, but it is an important precaution to take ensuring at all times that the voice of a democratic Parliament is as loud as it ever was.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this Chamber to support this Resolution to extend the state of emergency as proclaimed by Her Excellency until 27th day of March, 2021. It will be at the end of the financial year and around that time is when we will have the Estimates debate. Even that we will have to consider how that debate will work. What will the well of Parliament be like? You must consider all these things but nothing that we do is written in stone. Nothing that we have abided by over history and long practice as a legislature must be considered as so binding on us that we are unable to take prudent measures to safeguard not just ourselves, but the country that we have been chosen to lead.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that Members give this extension of the state of emergency their fullest support. We are not doing it for ourselves but for the country we have been chosen to lead.

I am obliged to you. I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. J. A. KING: I beg to second that.

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

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Thank you, Sir. We have heard and clearly so, the voice of the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, the Attorney General, on the matter of the extension of the state of emergency in Barbados. I would want to simply say as I start to make this brief submission that it is one thing to suggest we are still faced with the COVID-19 situation which threatens our well-being in several ways and, therefore, as a country we need to be guarded. Part of that guard is that we live life and allow our institutions to function in conditions governed and influenced by a state of emergency. The question is that it be extended for five months until the end of March or six months, however long that is.

The case can be made for an extension. I would have wished the Honourable Attorney General would have suggested to us in a stronger fashion why six months because though the legislation allows you to extend for six months, it does not say that you have to go six months. I am sure that three months from now, God willing, this Parliament will still be meeting. I hope this Parliament will still be meeting. Why are we extending this for three months? We had extensions for one month. Why are we going so far as to go six months down the road? I do not know that we have heard that. One might suggest that we anticipate the conditions which now exist will be existing six months from now. Well, that is fine but if that is the case three months from now, we can come back and extend for a further three months, two months or one month.

I am simply saying that I would have wished you had spoken more clearly to that aspect of the matter because I am a little bit worried as to why six months at this stage. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph referred to the fact that we have seemingly forgotten that we are under a COVID-19 threat and so we see feting ongoing and social events ongoing as a dynamic of complacency seemingly sets in. He made a case as to why Parliament should be meeting virtually and attested that Cabinet in the last three sittings has met virtually. Now, I am very concerned about the mixed signals sent by those who speak with authority from the Government's side on these issues. I have always said on my feet in here and elsewhere to listen carefully to the voice of the Government.

We must assume that there are taking the best advice from the health professionals and, therefore, listen to the Government and follow the protocols. I persist in saying that. I am concerned about mixed signals because when you stand in here and tell me we have to extend this state of emergency for six months, the world is being visited by a second wave and we are still faced with a threat, we are allowing flights to come from these second wave places of origin and every day bringing new cases to Barbados. You are saying that, and it seems to me that mixed signals are coming from the voice of the Government. Fetings are ongoing and social events have been amped up. We are concerned about that. Cabinet has been meeting virtually. Parliament would like to meet virtually.

I have been seeing images of last weekend in which some of the same voices in here and the embodiment of

those voices were principals in hugging, feting, and celebrating without any thought for physical distancing. You have seen that, Mr. Speaker. I have not seen your image in any of those that I have seen but I have seen the images of others. You cannot stand and tell Barbados that we have to keep our guard up, we must extend the state of emergency for six months and not two, three or four, but six months, and tell Barbados it is getting complacent

because you are feting again and your social events represents situations where physical distancing is not being observed and those who are our political leaders and the principal voices of Government hugging and congregating.

Churches can only do that if they observe the physical protocols. You cannot lay hand on a fellow to pray for a fellow. You can pray for him from a distance. You cannot lay a hand on a woman to pray for her. You must do that from a distance. You cannot lay a hand on a child to dedicate or baptize that child, whatever terms you would prefer to use because social distancing protocols are in place. Yes, Mr. Speaker, all these things are in place wisely so and necessarily so. When you come to the Parliament of Barbados and you say to us, "You know what? We must watch it in Parliament. Some of us are not well so we have to meet virtually and as a Cabinet we have to be responsible, so we will meet virtual and extend this for six months because we have to keep out guard up." What you do otherwise?

This is what is playing out right before our very eyes. If I am wrong, those on the other side can tell me. I saw it reported that the Commissioner of Police stated that violent crime in Barbados is on the rise. The police force is concerned about that, gun related crime in particular. He associated that with the conditions of social fallout from COVID-19. The Honourable Member for St. Joseph is the Honourable Attorney General as well and he spoke for a while in range far and wide on issues relative to COVID-19. I did not hear any concern expressed on his part or any response to the concern expressed by the Commissioner as to what is happening regarding the phenomenon of crime in Barbados in relation to the impact of COVID-19.

That concerns me and it concerns others. I simply voided it here to ensure that we do remember why we guard ourselves in here against exposure to Covid-19, why we guard ourselves at the level of Cabinet against exposure to Covid-19, why we extend this State of Emergency for six months, why you tell Barbadians stop being complacent and simply add to the mix, we have to remember as a Government of Barbados there are matters that we need to treat too, as well which are urgent and critical and what the Commissioner of Police is raising as a concern, the way it is expressed as reported in the Press is contrary to what Government has been trying to say to Barbadians that they have got a handle on crime and the statistics show a decline in the numbers. I do not know that any Barbadian believes that. When it comes to gun-related crime and violent crime we have shooting in the middle of Bridgetown in the middle of the day. We have shootings just outside churches, disturbing services, we have shootings one minute's walk away from police stations, we have shootings every day and every night. The Commissioner of Police is saying some of it is related to the Covid-19

situation, but the Government needs to address that and address it honestly.

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

Lt. Col. the Hon. J. D. BOSTIC: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to give my fullest support to the extension of the State of Emergency Resolution, and I do so recognising, of course, exactly what is still confronting us as a country. I would forgive those persons who may feel that we are not in the Public Health Emergency given the nature of things here in Barbados but I want to give or to emphasise the fact that the Public Health Emergency called Covid-19 still remains a clear and very present danger. As we speak, the public health emergency is seen all over the world and indeed, in all of the source countries that we do business with they are now experiencing spikes in Covid-19 positive cases. In fact, I can say to you, Mr. Speaker, that all of our countries, in terms of tourism where our source markets are, are actually now considered as high risk countries and that in European and North America the rate of Covid-19 cases being experienced at this point in time in several countries is worse than during the so-called first wave. We have the international situation and even within this region we have seven CARICOM states that are included in the high-risk category ranging from just over 3 000 cases to as high as just over 9 000 cases. We are in a situation where this thing remains a clear and present danger. The reason why people in Barbados may not feel that way is because we have been able to enjoy a relatively normal standard of living here in Barbados and that has to do with the protocols that we have in place, it has to do with the work of the technical people in the various ministries that are working in terms of the Covid-19 response, it has to do with the discipline and the level of cooperation and support from the majority of Barbadians and it has to do with this Emergency legislation because this is the element of the plan that gives teeth to everything else that we do and in terms of the time frame for this extension, we must recognise that with the winter tourist season upon us, with the significant increase of flights to this country -- and that has already started -- that we can anticipate that we will continue to have cases going into the early part of the year, but I will say that they are cases that we can deal with and I will come to that. The Emergency Resolution has to do with other things as well. The legislation is what allows us to be able to have annexes to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) like we did with Blackman Gollop, like we have now with Harrison Point and with all the other facilities that we have at our disposal, facilities that we have not even used up to this point in time, knock on wood, because we have plan A, B, C, D, down to Z. We were worst casing this situation and so we were planning obviously for the worst. The Emergency Resolution also is what facilitates the presence of the Cuban nurses here in Barbados and those nurses have been

working. Fortunately for us, we have not had to deploy them in the way anticipated at Harrison point because of our particular situation but we have started to redeploy some of those nurses to the Airport and other facilities to enhance our testing capacity so that we are now using some of those nurses to be able to swab, take samples from persons because of the increase numbers. The Emergency Resolution also allows us to have designated quarantine facilities and also provides us with the opportunity, the last resort as far as I am concerned to be able to deal with people who breach the Quarantine Act or with designated facilities that do not follow protocols so that it is a very, very significant piece of legislation and we cannot continue to do what we are doing without that legislation so it is against that, that I am saying that I give this my fullest support.

Where are we? I am going to say one thing upfront. I heard the Honourable Leader of the Opposition just now as he spoke to the fact that we are allowing flights in from countries that are having cases; from high risk countries, and I want to say this and make this and make this very, very clear. We had a situation here that is very challenging, is a very complex situation and so we have to manage the complexity of the situation in ways that would allow us to be able to take the best care that we possibly can of the persons who reside in this country, our countrymen and women, our visitors and our residents here in Barbados and the fact is this, we depend on the international trade and we depend on tourism to generate revenues. The very health sector that I have the honour to lead depends heavily on revenues generated from tourism. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) which requires contributions from the Health Services Levy to be able to do the day-to-day operations of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH). Obviously, with tens of thousands of Barbadians of Barbadians being made unemployed or who became unemployable or unemployed as a result of the shutdown; the lockdown, that significantly impacted on the Treasury and so the anticipated revenue was simply not there and there are other things to this as well. If you are locked down, we have utility companies in this country that depend on persons, technicians, maintenance people, from overseas to come to be able to do maintenance work. Even the very lab that has done over 33 000 tests, depend sometimes on people to come in to fix equipment, refurbish equipment and in some cases even install and validate new testing equipment so that the notion of not allowing flights in is one that in itself can result in consequences that are worse than the public health emergency itself. I am saying to Barbadians that what we have here is a situation that yes we have about 233 or so cases having done about 33 000 tests and our strategy is to test and test and test and we have been testing per capita more than most. The cases that we have are cases that we are more than capable of managing. When we had the Blackman Gollop Facility before the completion of Harrison's Point, that facility was

never overwhelmed, in other words, we never used half the capacity of that particular institution to do what we had to do because there was no need.

At the moment at Harrison's Point I believe we probably have between 10 and 15 persons, I am not too sure of the figure right now but it is no more than that, in Harrison's Point which is a 220-bed facility. We purchased almost 100 ventilators of which we have only had to use five so far thank God. We also have other facilities. If we were in a situation that required us to do otherwise there are other facilities that we would have been utilising in terms of quarantine and so on. We do not have to go there, and I am saying that we have the capacity to manage what we are managing at the moment.

Mr. Speaker, I want for Barbadians and the Chamber to understand that in the initial stages of COVID-19 we had a family cluster and we dealt with that. We had the situation with the National Assistance Board, another challenge, and we dealt with that. We had the situation in the church, a challenge, and we dealt with that and recently we had the situation involving the two students from the school and we dealt with that. We tested those over 500-and-something persons, we contained it and we dealt with it. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that to say that I as Minister of Health and Wellness am asking Barbadians to have confidence in the team of Bajans that are here doing what we are doing because it is a very competent team and they have more resources at the moment than are necessary for what we are doing right now.

Mr. Speaker, we have another thing, we are able to determine before we ever get overwhelmed when we need to put the foot down on the breaks, we do, so that the situation is not going to arise when we reach a state where we cannot control this thing, no, no, no, we are not going to allow that. The reality is that we have more control and more capacity to deal with positive cases in Barbados at this point in time than we would have economically to deal with tens of thousands of Barbadians who are unemployed. Even with the best will of generous benefactors and all of the charitable organisations that is unsustainable so that we had to deal with what we have in terms of positive cases.

Mr. Speaker, what is it that we are facing? We have some protocols that other countries do not have especially they would tell you that second test and we are capturing persons at source. Those coming from high-risk countries they have to go into quarantine and then there is the mandatory second test and I want to say that of those persons since the resumption of flights into this country that have tested positive on second test I am telling you now that we are dealing with about 50-odd persons who have tested positive from second test.

We have had about 129 persons testing positive since the resumption of commercial flights between 12th July and 25th October. Of those 129 persons there were 47 Barbadians returning, we of course had the 13 Ghanaians, 20 from other CARICOM countries and 49 from other countries, so our major source of positive cases at the moment are 42 from the United Kingdom, 35 from the United States of America and 17 CARICOM. What we are saying is that since flights started to ramp up yes, we have had an increase in second cases. In September, for example, the number of second cases really was about 29 per cent of the total cases for the month and by October that jumped to 78 per cent of the total cases about 39 or so out of 46.

We have been monitoring this situation very, very carefully and I would say up to this point in time we have the situation under control but this could change overnight by one drop of the ball, it can, and that is why we have to be vigilant and that is why we need the legislation and the extension of the emergency powers because we still have a few places where people are not doing as they are supposed to do and it is a constant effort on our part to be able to deal with that particular situation.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that even though we have had an increase in the number of flights and obviously the number of visitors arriving on island, what we also have is a far greater capacity to respond than we did six months ago and that is a reality and that is thanks I must say to the Ministry of Finance, the Prime Minister and the team for putting those resources at the disposal of the Ministry of Health and Wellness to be able to effect a proper response given the magnitude of the situation and also the dynamics involved with managing the COVID-19 situation. What am I speaking about in terms of capacity? We have doubled the staff at the laboratory to be able to do testing and another six or seven persons have been certified as laboratory technicians to work in the laboratory working with COVID-19; we have increased the numbers at the Airport and the other testing centres to be able to do more swabbing; we have also made it possible for four polyclinics out of hours, after normal polyclinics hours and on weekends, to become available for testing especially for the second test; we also are making it possible shortly to be able to have a testing facility at Harrison's Point and also one at the Best dos Santos Laboratory in the carpark to be able to conduct the second test; we have also increased significantly the number of testing kits that are required; we have introduced couriers and we are using three couriers to be able to collect samples at various time slots from throughout the country to ensure that the laboratory can transition to a 24-hours service because previously most of the samples, if not all, were arriving in the evening and because of the increased numbers there was a need for the laboratory to be able to start conducting tests from morning and so we have been able to transition to that by

providing more personnel and we have also been able to deploy our Community Health Liaison Officers. They are playing a significant role in this effort and I have to credit them here for the work that they are doing. They are really doing a very good job and especially as the hospitality sector opens up they are certainly requires to do what they have to do especially in relation to the COVID Monitoring Unit, so those are some of the things that have happened so far in relation to the management of COVID-19.

We also have, as people would have heard from time to time, increased the number of hotels that are designated as quarantine hotels because obviously if most of the persons entering the country are coming from high-risk countries then that requires additional quarantine facilities to be able to cope with those numbers and I am happy to report that that is going very well. We have had one or two issues, and I have spoken to those, in relation to one or two of the quarantine centres and we are trying to deal with that particular situation, so far I have met with the hoteliers and others and we have had some discussions and I think that we are seeing some improvements for the most part although we still have one or two areas that we need to keep an eye on, but one of the more significant things, and I think the Emergency Powers even apply to that, is that in the coming weeks we are going to be utilising a digital platform to be able to really manage COVID-19. This is something that has been in the works now for a few months. There has been some integration works going on in terms of various systems and I am very happy to report that in the very (very) near future we will be rolling out those apps. What am I speaking about? The first mobile application is something called "game safe" and this is the gate-way for in-putting information, online forms, even the test results and so on of course from persons coming in, health monitoring, and systems tracker. That is well on the way.

The other one "Bim Safe Tracer" is an anonymous contract tracing that will significantly enhance our capacity to be able to do contract tracing in this country. The third and very, very important one is "Bim Safe Band", that is defending, health monitor and symptoms and that is a water-resistant, tamper-proof wrist band (it involves about 150 000 of those) because when we put that on you when you are in quarantine, we will be able to monitor your movement. If you are restricted to a room in a hotel and you leave, we will know. If you try to take it off, we will know. That gives a level of protection to this country that I think every Barbadian citizen will feel safer than they do now.

Mr. Speaker, when I say to you that we have to continue the capacity to deal with this particular situation, I meant every word I said. Therefore, the legislation and the extension of the legislation will take us very close to the end of the winter season and predictions are that it is going

to probably get worse in those countries. As it is now, it has already skyrocketed in those countries and we have to be able to deal with that. We have to be able to cope with what is coming. We are doing well. We can do better, and we seek to do that by ensuring each and every single day. Sometimes we get comments or criticisms coming from the general public, some of which are useful and we do take heed and try to improve what it is that we are doing but at the end of the day the ability of the Chief Medical Officer who is empowered to do so, to be able to deal with people who breach protocols or who break quarantine in this country, that is a significantly component of COVID-19 response and the fact that we are still designating places for quarantine and so on, that is also what this extension will cover.

Mr. Speaker, my final point on this at this time is the fact that we have been able to keep COVID-19 out of most of our healthcare institutions; in fact, all of our healthcare institutions thus far. Mr. Speaker, the good thing about this is that that was not done through any legislation, that was achieved because Barbadians complied with the protocols, and I congratulate the people of this country for so doing. Mr. Speaker, we have gone through many peaks and valleys, it has not been easy, but we are where we are and we would like to be able to continue on the present path, [we would like] to even get better, but the reality is that we cannot stop what is happening globally, internationally or regionally but that we have it within us to be able to control, to contain and to manage to be able to make Barbados safe for everyone who visits and particularly for everyone who lives here.

Mr. Speaker, that is the pledge from the Minister, that is the pledge from the Ministry and I sincerely thank the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs for bringing the extension to this Honourable Chamber and I can give the assurance that as long as the pandemic continues there will be a need for such legislation and if it has to be extended beyond that because COVID-19 may still be around then so be it.

The thought of a vaccine, that is something that everyone is talking about these days. We are also monitoring that. We are part of a consortium of countries also with PAHO. We are looking for vaccines. We have made down-payments on vaccines so that initially we can get 20 per cent of the population, then move up to 40 per cent and then whatever else is available so that when a vaccine comes on board that Barbados and the rest of the Caribbean working through PAHO and the PAHO Revolving Fund, that we will be able to obtain vaccines to at least be able to vaccinate a certain percentage of the population and that will help us whenever that comes and I am really, really, glad for that because as a Small Island Developing State we are at the bottom of the food chain when it comes to these things but this particular

intervention makes it possible for small countries to be able to access vaccines whenever they become available.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I would hope that people would understand the rationale, the reason for this Emergency Powers Act, because there is still a public health emergency and we are still very, very vulnerable to what is happening around us but we built up capacity, the direct capacity, that is why we were able to move from a 14-day quarantine period to seven days and to where we have it now because our situation has suggested to us that the incubation period of between two to five days that is when we are catching the second test positive cases and we will continue with that but we still continue to monitor those persons. Mr. Speaker, we are here in this world, we cannot do it alone, we depend on the economic activity for the survival of the entire country for the health care system itself, but in return we who are responsible for managing the pandemic from a public health perspective we pledge our all (our all) to this effort. Also, I do commend the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs for bringing the extension to this Honourable Chamber. I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, on the behalf of this Honourable Chamber -- in fact, on the behalf of the entire Barbados, let me thank the Minister of Health and Wellness and his team for the vast amount of work over the last few months and also for their dedication. Mr. Speaker, it is not known by the country, and I will not say, it is not known that today is the birthday of the Minister of Health and Wellness and I will not say that it does not become known but if it does become known one would have to consider that a day such as today that the Minister is standing here carrying out his solemn responsibility as a Minister of Government and as a Minister of Health and Wellness to try and make sure that Barbadians are safe. The Honourable Member has not done it alone and the Honourable Member is so modest, he was the first person to acknowledge that he has not done it alone, that he has had to stand on the shoulders of all the people in the Ministry of Health and Wellness and elsewhere who have helped to bring us safely thus far. With those words, I thank the Honourable Chamber for their support. I have already asked that this Resolution do so pass but I do so again in the hope that this Honourable Chamber, all of this Honourable Chamber, including the Honourable Leader of the Opposition will stand united with the Government as we fight for the greater good of Barbadians in the face of this pandemic. I am obliged to you, Sir.

The question that this Resolution now be passed was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of Government Business.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss S.J.O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move the suspension of the Sitting until 2 p.m.

Lt. Col. the Hon. J.D. BOSTIC: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2 p.m. for lunch was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and His Honour the SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This session is resumed.

ORDER NO. 06 – TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVE ITSELF INTO STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE
CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR
THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND

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

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that you do now leave the Chair and the House resolves itself into Standing Finance Committee.

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

STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE

Madam CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Standing Finance Committee.

IN THE NAME OF THE MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$139 971 839 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2020--2021 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 06 2020-2021 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION

HEAD 13

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

IN THE SUM OF FIVE MILLION DOLLARS

Madam CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: Madam Chairman, thank you very much. You would recall that as result of the Throne Speech, the Government had articulated several initiatives that would be required to respond to the COVID environment. Therefore, this resolution before the Chamber this afternoon is intended to put at the disposal of a number of Ministries to be able to execute between now and the end of the financial year in order to respond to a number of those initiatives that we had announced with respect to the Throne Speech.

As we had said at the very beginning and the outset with respect to this COVID-19 pandemic, Madam Chairman, you would recall that we met on the very first day of the financial year April 1, to approve additional supplementaries which is unprecedented and therefore within that vain we continue as a Government to be dynamic and be able to respond to what clearly has been a very trying and significant circumstance in the life of this country.

Head 13, in terms of the development of tourism potential, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central will articulate a little further. However, Madam Chair, this is really within the context of being able to ensure that we can generate as much economic activity. Not just within the next five to six months but over the next 12 to 18 months as we respond domestically with respect to the fact that we know and expect that there may be some challenges with respect to the resumption of international and commercial flights into the country. Therefore, the Government's response is to ensure that we can have as many businesses stay open to generate as much economic activity over the course of the next 18 months and to ensure that we can keep households solvent over the course of that period so that we do not leave anybody behind in that respect.

Therefore, there will be a multifaceted approach from each Ministry in order to ensure that we can meet that mandate and the resolution before the Chamber this afternoon is intended as I said to ensure that we put the monies at the disposal of the various Ministries and departments to be able to execute in response to a number of initiatives that we have announced under the Throne Speech. This particular sum of money is entitled to do just that. With those few words Madam Chairman, I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

Hon. J. A. KING: I beg to second that.

Madam CHAIR: Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Hon. Miss M. K. A. CADDLE: Thank you Madam Chair. I want to give a bit more detail as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central has indicated. I think that it is fitting that these works and this Head 13 lead us off this afternoon, because it really is about transformation and reimagining what Barbados will and can be, at not just post COVID, because I think what we have realised is that the word is not going to be the same as it was.

However, the Barbados Tourism and Investment Inc. in the Ministry of Investment is really at the heart of reinvigorating Bridgetown and its environs and the entire tourism product, but understanding that Barbadians and the Barbadian imagination is perhaps not going to be transformed or would benefit most from a transformation of the capital.

Some time ago we developed Carlisle Bay and its environs tourism investment portfolio. What that did was to really start to imagine what Bridgetown and the greater Bridgetown area could not just look like, but how it could engage in and involve all people to make sure that Bridgetown could be a place that we can feel invested in, that Barbadians can once again feel like Bridgetown looks like and represents who we are and that we have stake in its success and it is place that we can live, work, play, invest and thrive.

Hence, this \$5 million that is here as a supplementary for this Head helps us initiate that process. What we have here is \$1.25 million that relates to the Fairchild Street market project.

Madam Chairman, that project is symbolic of the fact that the whole thrust of this Government in a COVID-19 environment is to demonstrate through our policies faith in the Barbadian worker and entrepreneur. It is to demonstrate faith in the fact that when we talk about a Barbadian private sector it must look a certain way. It must represent the core and the heart of the Barbadian people. For too long we have seen vending as an “also” or “another”. For too long we have considered it or seen it as something marginal to the private sector and those days, Madam Chairman, are over. In conceptualising the Fairchild Street market redevelopment, we are sending a clear message that vending is business and something that allows people to meet and reach their full productive capacity that allows people to explore their imagination, develop whatever it is they would do and make an honest living.

Not just to make a dollar but to really thrive, scale up, employ other people, and make this something that people can aspire to be and to do. Some part of this money will go to a new butcher’s block for the Fairchild Street market, as well as the paving of 39 car park spaces in the general car park area of the redesigned and refurbished Fairchild Street market. We are not stopping there. These funds are meant also to give Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTI) a start in terms of how we really consider living in Bridgetown. At the moment, I think there is a notion that there are residential areas of Bridgetown and that there are commercial areas. What we really want to emphasise is that the Bridgetown we imagine, and I am really starting to take on the persona of the Member for the City of Bridgetown because it is an exciting prospect.

The Bridgetown that we imagine sees residential and commercial activity taking place together because that is the only way that people are going to feel that they are a part of the commercial life of Bridgetown. If I am able to live my full life in this place, then that is when Bridgetown starts again to be the real heart and capital of the country. It is important that we put all of effort and energy into making that happen. We do not want to just consider that people live in certain areas but that all of Barbados can feel that Bridgetown is somewhere that they can live. We have been talking a lot about mixed use; residential and commercial. The Treasury Building as it now stands is one of those places that we feel will benefit from the kind of reimagining that we are talking about.

Therefore, we want to encourage people who have ideas for its design and how we can have residential and commercial, art and culture, and all kinds of interesting things happening there to give us those ideas. We want to start to encourage designs and expressions of interests for the residential development of the Treasury Building as well. Some of these monies are going to be used for the greater Bridgetown area, the development of a conference centre. I am sure those of us who are involved in the tourism sector would understand the importance of the meetings and conferences market, and how Barbados as destination is extremely attractive for those kinds of events.

What we have said as part of our tourism redevelopment project is that where the Government Headquarters are now located is really prime real estate. Where Government Headquarters is now located in Bay Street, if we can have in that location the kind of

conference setting that would mean people come, do their business, leave and walk out onto a newly redeveloped boardwalk area where there are restaurants, shows and people selling food and items, this is the kind of rejuvenation that we have in mind. We need to start the process of making that happen and getting those on-board who can do that.

I want to make a very important point about all this redevelopment. It is that it cannot and under this BLP Administration it will not be a matter of people who have traditionally been the ones delivering goods and services in this area being the only ones who are benefitting. It must be that fairness and equity are the principals that guide us in all this redevelopment work. This is why just this morning we sat again with the team that is with BTI and the other team dealing with these works and made it clear that through our procurement processes and ability to subcontract and to engage others, we have to make these works available to all Barbadians.

All must eat in this COVID-19 environment. This is also a part of our COVID-19 Relief Programme because it is the way we do the work that Government needs to do to make opportunities available to all people. It is important, Madam Chairman, that these resources be allocated to this activity because it is an opportunity for people to work, use their skills and the redevelopment of the capital of their country. The final thing that I will say on this matter is that a lot of the work of BTI and one of the big projects which it is engaged now is the Golden Square Project.

It is so important not just for people to be able to work, eat and provide for their families, but for people to have ever present in our consciousness who we are. The fact that we are here with the freedoms we enjoy because of what happened at Golden Square and through the people who made sure that emancipation was not just a day or an event, but that true emancipation meant that workers could have the rights that would mean they were not tenants in their own country. The work of literally making visible those events and bringing them back to the everyday consciousness of Barbadians, through the opening up of Golden Square and making it a space that is available to all is an important part of that national consciousness raising and building.

I think it is extremely important. Not every infrastructure project has to be about a hotel or another commercial activity. There are some important projects that are about reinforcing the pride of being Barbadian and the fact that these historical events brought us to this place where we can continue to reinforce freedom and reject discrimination in all its forms. That is what the Golden Square Project is about and it is not just about the history of the place, but it is the fact that the current works on this site are also themselves and the fact that the work and contractor will be made available to all Barbadians, that in itself reinforces the inclusion of all. These may sound like lofty ideals or goals for a simple \$5 million but I believe, Madam Chairman, that it is important that we send these very important signals that the work we are doing in this Covid-19 environment to engage all is really about demonstrating our faith in the Barbadian worker, demonstrating our faith in the Barbadian indigenous ideal

and showing that it can help people to thrive, it can cause people to not just stay afloat but to rise about in the Covid-19 environment.

I am obliged to you, Madam Chairman. Thank you.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Thank you, Madam Chairman. We appreciate the enthusiasm and eagerness of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, but the think the Opposition still does have a voice.

I am told this \$5 million is principally about the development of tourism potential around Bridgetown and I have not heard a very persuasive case put to that affect. We have heard ...I cannot remember if it was \$1.2 million or \$1.5 million which would go towards the Fairchild Street Market Project which has been in abeyance for a while therefore we are rebuilding what we knocked down in the first place even though I would imagine the attempt is to modernise it such that vending activity there takes place in a more commodious context. I do not know that significantly and necessarily that plays with the development of tourism potential in Bridgetown but maybe it does. All I am saying is, \$1.2 million or \$1.5 million out of the \$5 million has to do with the Bridgetown Fairchild Street Market Project which really ought to have been executed quite some time ago. We are attempting to build back a market, we want to give central prominence and a level of greater sophistication to the business of vending in Barbados. That is to be applauded and if that is the case, just say that and not try to wrap it in all kind of tourism trappings.

Bridgetown is designated a World Heritage Site and I think both the last Administration and this current Administration have failed to do anything significantly towards ensuring that Barbadians see it as such and that visitors to Barbados know it as such. I do not know that any of the moneys being allocated here; \$5 million; even intended to address that particular situation but a capital city which is supposed to be a world heritage designated site is showing significant signs of degradation, north, south, east and west and in the centre of it, and I am sure the Honourable Member for The City of Bridgetown would join me in putting that case and it is not, I am sure as a result of any delinquency in representation on his part, but I do not think enough attention is being paid to the matter of promoting Bridgetown City as a World Heritage Site, Bridgetown itself and the wider environs of Bridgetown. None of this money seems to be going towards that effort, again.

I have been hearing for some time from the lips of this Administration that we need to have more housing in

The City such that we have residential and commercial activity going on together. I suppose that is a thing which is most desirable. In many cities, we find that there is the commercial and there is the residential and it is being mooted that this ought to be the case in Bridgetown. I do not know how much of this money, if any of it, it was mentioned during the presentation, but I do not know how much money, if any of it, is going towards that project. The Treasury Building has been cited as potentially a place for residential occupancy in Bridgetown. I am not schooled in these matters, neither from an engineering perspective, safety and security perspective, I should say, or any other perspective I suppose, but it does not seem to me as though the Treasury Building sight would be the best in Bridgetown to locate a residential occupancy community. In a sense, that building constitutes an island with traffic all around it and if you are bringing housing to Bridgetown perhaps other sites might be considered. I have heard that it is to be the sight of a particular kind of occupancy and my worry would have been that if you are locating people in Bridgetown for dwelling and you put children in place like that then you are incurring all kinds of potential hazards. You are inviting all kinds of potential hazards if children are to enter and exit a residential facility such as located in the now unused Treasury Building. If it is for a special brand of occupancy whatever that is, whether it be bachelor pads or any other type of pad. I hope it is not intended to be a same-sex pad.

Asides.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: I heard the suck of the teeth, but I will repeat it. You have two rows of teeth, suck the other one. I hope it is not intended to be a building that accommodates same-sex pads because I think that is an issue that Barbadians still have to be heard on and I am not suggesting that is the intended use. I have simply said, in my view, that building does not constitute an appropriate place for housing families in urban context especially if there are children involved but I have also heard it said by those who believe that we could put residential dwellings there that it would occupy specialise or specific groups family types. In today's terms, I therefore find it my duty to express concern that there would be any consideration given to turn it into a pad or a group of pads for same sex couples.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central also suggested that the current location of what is the seat of Government in Barbados, Government Headquarters, is better suited for, perhaps, tourism conference facilities. That is a matter of opinion. I know that there are some aspects of history and legacy that countries do not easily let go of because they bring with them or hold with them potential earnings value because there is a legacy associated with them and because of the history associated with them and we have got to be very

careful in Barbados that in our quest to modernise our infrastructure and our environment we do not do away with sites of tremendous potential value in the interest of catering to some people's taste. Now, if you do feel persuaded as to the merits in changing the Government Headquarters into a conference site facility then I have to ask questions which are very reasonable in this day because we have seen recreational spaces taken away from Barbadians and I know just adjacent to Government Headquarters is a very popular recreational and leisure area for Bajans who go both to the beach, who hang out by the Esplanade, who watch sunsets from there, who indulge in other relaxing therapeutic activities there, who frequent that beach, and I have to ask what happens to that and if there are any implications for that type of activity if you turn Government Headquarters into a recreational facility.

On the other side of the building, of course, there are many dwellers in living in small chattel houses just outside the walls of Government Headquarters, I am talking about the Bayland. As you approach Government Headquarters on Bay Street as you come down Beckles Road on the left there are many families who for decades have lived in working class communities in chattel houses just outside of Government Headquarters at the back of the walls and if you plan to put a modern conference facility that caters to commercial and tourist related activity, then I have to ask on behalf of those people what are the implications for them. I find it very hard to imagine that you would construct a modern conference centre facility where Government Headquarters is and leave those people just outside the walls so what would be the implications for them and has anybody considered consulting them as to their view as to the value they attach to their current location, et cetera.

I also want to say that one may hold the view that we need more housing in the City but I hold the view that we need better housing in The City in the constituency of The City of Bridgetown and I am joining my honourable friend from The City in calling for that. For whatever reason he failed to benefit from the upgrading of housing through the neighbourhood projects intended for Cats Castle and Green Fields. He was significantly denied that opportunity to improve housing for those folks. You could go into the wider Bridgetown and you get out into places like Chapman Street and Chapman Lane and you get into other of places like New Orleans and other areas like that and you come on the other side of it and you come into the Nelson Street/Wellington Street area and I am saying you got a lot of poor quality housing located in these areas within the precincts of Bridgetown and its wider environs so while the Government might make the call for more housing in The City I am joining my honourable colleague from The City of Bridgetown in joining for better housing in Bridgetown City because the people of Greenfield, the people of Cats Castle, the people of the New Orleans,

people in Nelson Street and people in Wellington Street matter too and we cannot cater to the interest of those who are involved in the business of construction and infrastructural development and make secondary or omit any consideration for those who live in squalid working class conditions in Bridgetown. Yes, call for more housing if you would, I would join you in that but I think a greater priority is better housing in Bridgetown and that ought to be the mantra and motto of this Government. I am sure that it beats upon the breast and in very loud terms though no one seems to listen, and the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, that we need better housing for the people in Bridgetown.

We cannot say that the last Administration caused an opportunity to be lost in getting improvements in housing in Bridgetown and we blame then and stop there. The situation still obtains, people live in poverty, people live in squalor, people live in very poor-quality housing and there is hardly any room to breathe between houses. People share lots of common spaces in Bridgetown City and even parts of St. Michael West but this debate today is about Bridgetown City and this portion of this supplementary request has to do with Bridgetown City and I want to join my honourable friend in calling for better housing before more housing in Bridgetown City and better attempts to develop Bridgetown City.

Look, we are talking about \$5 million to help with this and help with that in relation to the development of tourism potential. The truth of the matter is Bridgetown is closing down and closing down not slowly. Every day seemingly almost you go into Bridgetown you see a new business closing down. We are blaming it on COVID-19, but this was in progress before COVID-19, I keep saying that. Bridgetown is closing down, and people are moving out. Businesses are closing down and some are moving out in hopes of a better day and we come here and say we want to develop tourism potential in The City, well we got to stop the slide first and improve housing as well as you even attempt to do that.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Thank you Honourable Member. The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Lt. Col. the Hon. J. D. BOSTIC: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to spend a few minutes in relation to the constituency of the City of Bridgetown and the development that is to take place there and to say that I would certainly agree that The City of Bridgetown requires both more housing and better housing and that has been so for quite some time. Regrettably, we were not able to get the two communities done as was promised with the Housing and Neighbourhood Upgrading Programme but apart from those two communities The City of Bridgetown is in dire need of some housing upgrades and improvement

and I have every confidence that when the funds are available this Government will do what is required to assist the people in The City of Bridgetown. I recall the Honourable Prime Minister herself saying that starting with Murphy's Pasture and New Orleans that there would be some assistance that will be coming to persons and also the fact that the pit toilet eradication programme is going to ramp up shortly so there are some benefits there but they are still a lot more work that is required in the constituency of The City of Bridgetown.

I recall having discussions with the Honourable Member for Christ Church West in relation to a parcel of land that was purchased under the last Administration on Mason Hall Street for housing and nothing was done about that and that is certainly an area that can provide some housing solutions for persons in The City of Bridgetown well as another parcel of land in the Whitepark/Kings Village area that can also provide housing for persons in The City of Bridgetown.

For some time now we have been talking about that project at the Treasury Building and converting that structure into housing units and I recall that the Honourable Prime Minister had indicated that those units would be geared towards persons for starter homes, young professionals who would enjoy the hustle and bustle of city life to be able to come into The City of Bridgetown in those kinds of homes before moving on when they start to make families and so on.

Madam Chairman, I believe that the commencement of the Hyatt Hotel, for me personally, would be a strong signal that we are really making the move towards the rejuvenation of The City of Bridgetown because that facility would provide not only jobs, it would improve the environs of the community, and also bring some level of commercial activity into the city and I certainly will be looking forward to that. The construction of a facility where Government Headquarters is now located, an institution, or whatever it is that they are supposed to be doing there (I am hearing a conference centre) and the movement of the Geriatric Hospital, because they are looking to construct a new Geriatric Hospital somewhere in the Waterford Plantation area, I am looking forward to that for a number of reasons because we have to move in a different direction in relation to the care of the elderly that we have in this country, given the situation that we have with an ageing population and we need to look to redefine, in my view, how we provide geriatric and healthcare services in Barbados and that for me is one thing that is exciting. I also know, and it was stated at several of the meetings that I have attended, (and I know that the residents in the surrounding areas have been engaged in this matter) engaged to the extent that there have been site visits in relation to the relocation of persons and I believe

that in these Supplementary Estimates would be some funds to be able to kick-start that process.

Mr. Speaker, the point mentioned by the last speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, in relation to Heritage Bridgetown is one that I take on board. I take that on board because I do believe (and felt so for a while). I do recall having discussions with the former Minister of Tourism and International Business before COVID-19 on this matter and I had started to see some movement in that direction, but I do believe that as a country (and this is not playing any sort of blame game) but I do not think that we have optimised or maximise the benefits in relation to Bridgetown being a World Heritage Site and I do feel that a lot more can be done. As I said, having engaged the former Minister of Tourism and International Business, Honourable Member for St. James Central, I was satisfied that we were moving in a direction that would facilitate a lot of the things that I felt, not only as the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown but as a person who grew up in the City of Bridgetown, that had we really started to maximise and had gone the direction of cultural tourism, and those are areas that are generating the most revenue now in terms of our entire tourist industry, and that is a fact, and those heritage culture types of tourists seem to spend more money than the other types of tourists, when I did my research on this, and I would like to see something like this being kick-started to the extent that, in my view, that there is a close relationship. Speightstown is not designated in the way that Bridgetown is but Speightstown has a rich cultural and historical legacy and the two of them can come together and I believe that if we really started to look at heritage tourism in the way that we ought to going forward, that this could really be beneficial to the people of Barbados and certainly for Speightstown and Bridgetown and I will say even to some extent to Oistins, in terms of the whole relationship there with the Cromwellian forces being repel in Speightstown and then shifting to Oistins and the Declaration there. We can tie all of that together and the fortifications that are around these three towns. I believe that there is a story there to be told. My push would be to ensure that persons living in these towns would be able to get the chance to be able to tell the stories and we have enough young intelligent people who can be trained to do what is required. I would like to see us really pick this up to the extent that it becomes not only a revenue earner but also a sense of pride for the people who live in these three towns; certainly the City of Bridgetown that I have the honour too represent.

Mr. Speaker, generally speaking, the whole situation of Bridgetown, the revival and rejuvenation is something that has been on my mind for several years. I recall several months ago I was given a pictorial view of what the New Bridgetown would look like and I was excited. I was really excited. If those plans really come true, Bridgetown is

really going to be a City of which every Barbadian would be really proud, and I am looking forward to that and to see the start of those activities. Let us remember too that there are also some plans for the development of Carlisle Car Park and some other facilities around Bridgetown. We have not completed the project that goes from the Careenage right up to the Globe Roundabout. We have done most of that, while in the previous Barbados Labour Party Government and we are now looking to complete that so that there could be boating and kayaking around that area. I really think that around the area of Bridgetown will be really exciting but what I would say is that we need to start some action, [we need to] let people see that it is going to become a reality because these things have been going on for quite some time but I look forward to the day when they are fully realised and so I am really happy that included in the Supplementary are funds to be able to help us to be able to redevelop, reimagine and reconstruct Bridgetown. With those few words, Madam Chairman, I am obliged.

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. James Central, you have the Floor.

Hon K. D. SYMMONDS: Madam Chairman, I think that some very important observations have been made in this debate and I want just to make a very small contribution. The Honourable Member who has just taken his seat has “hit the nail on the head.” The matter of Heritage Bridgetown is very closely linked to the point that was raised (and properly so) by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and I think it is important that we have a clear understanding of the trajectory that has to be followed in order to get us to where we need to be. Madam Chairman, there is a \$20 million funded project in heritage tourism which has been concluded in terms of negotiations. The necessary support in terms of the necessary staffing and so on for the execution of the project, the establishment of the Project Office -- all those things are in place. Then along COVID-19 and almost like, dropped an anchor on the actual execution work. Now, I will use a phrase that I heard a couple of days ago in the first trimester that I am out of the ministry and obviously the new Minister is in the period that she is the first trimester but the fact of the matter is that I think there is no doubt whatsoever that there is continuity and an intension on continuity on the part of this Government and that the new Minister of Tourism will have at the forefront for the execution of work, the continuation of that very important project of Heritage Bridgetown. Also, let us not forget that this is a matter that should be in the top of our minds because the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, I bought this matter to Parliament, Parliament signed off on it, and what you have just been treated to by Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown is his reference to the heritage trail that will take visitors through Bridgetown and allow the average visitor to come face-to-face on a trail, being conducted either by day or night, of all of the historic landmarks --

religious, legal, cultural, et cetera -- that comprise this UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Madam Chair, obviously, when you are looking at \$20 million project or part of that for infrastructure you are going to therefore have to do a lot of refurbishment and a refreshment of the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown and that is what the plan is. Just to remind my friend, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. How does that then become linked to the point that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is making? It becomes linked to the point he makes about housing because, as part of the totality of the developmental vision of the Government, we have identified not only that type of project in Heritage Bridgetown but the need for us to have substantial investments along that crescent which we call Carlisle Bay. The Honourable Members of this House will remember that it was in 2019 in the month of February that we held, for the first time in Barbados, an investment conference on tourism and that we had a number of investors brought here. I enjoyed in particular the opportunity to work with my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, who would have played a leading role in her capacity as the Minister responsible for Investment in helping us to execute that successful conference. There were several people who expressed an interest.

Obviously, a \$200 million hotel is not something that is going to appear overnight, and we had identified about 16 -- I believe -- greenfield locations where people had expressed interest in doing this kind of investment. Again, within a year of that time along came COVID, but how does it get us to the point which the Leader of the Opposition wants us to come to, which is to have a refurbished quality of housing in Bridgetown? We get there by way of the planning gains which this Prime Minister and this Government so astutely introduced into the new Town Planning Act which passed this Parliament. Again, I believed it was piloted by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. Those planning gains allow for the investments to have split investors to commit a percentage of the investment money and plough it back into the development of housing, sporting facilities and that necessary infrastructure which undergirds proper community development in the City of Bridgetown and around the City of Bridgetown, and even in the constituency of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition himself.

It is not, I think, fair for the Leader of the Opposition to come here and shoot a political shot across the bow and make the unthinking, nascent and unsuspecting Barbadian citizen believe that the Government is doing nothing for housing and one needs to get better quality housing. Of course, we do, but the money must come from somewhere. Even the Leader of the Opposition would agree that it really is a stroke of ingenuity to make sure that an investor

who is saying "I want to spend \$200 million on a hotel in Barbados" commits a percentage of that, \$20 million perhaps, towards the development of the sporting infrastructure in the City of Bridgetown, the cultural facilities for the people of Bridgetown, the roadworks and road rehabilitation. Otherwise, we would have to find that money out of the taxpayers' pocket. Therefore, Sir, I wanted just to remind the Honourable Member for St. Michael West of this. I am sure that he did not need to be reminded, Ma'am. I am sure that this is obviously part of the mischievousness that takes place in what is called the silly season when you have an election campaign in the air and all sorts of things that need not be said are said, but the reality is that this is the trajectory of this Government, Madam Chairman, and I just wanted the record to reflect that as we go forward. I am obliged to you.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R.R. STRAUGHN: Madam Chairman, I really want to thank Honourable Members for their contributions. I will just conclude this Head by reinforcing the point that the regeneration of any capital city is a very complicated matter. We have to be very conscious that in an environment where we inherited a Government whose public finances were in absolute disrepair, we have had to bring back a level of confidence once again into this country and we have set about the work with respect to being able to achieve that, Ma'am. The Honourable Member for St. James Central along with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, as just articulated, have started a process whereby the identification of how we will move through that regeneration process through the introduction of planning gains and working with the communities across urban Barbados, would see over the course of seven to ten years the regeneration of Bridgetown.

Madam Chairman, the Honourable Member would appreciate that and knows where we came from as a country. He knew exactly the plans that we were intending to execute as a Government and would recognise that as we stand here now, our primary mission is to keep safe many of those persons in those very urban communities across Barbados, at which the Honourable Member for the City is working and doing a very good job. Equally, at this particular point in time, our primary mission is to ensure that as many of them are working to be able to support their families. That is why the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was at pains to indicate that in terms of the manner in which we execute these projects, not just in the context of the City of Bridgetown but certainly across the country, we have to ensure we bring along as many people and as many small, medium and large businesses in order to ensure that over the course of the next 18 months everybody in Barbados can live in this

country. With those few words, Madam Chairman, I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

Hon. W.A. ABRAHAMS: I beg to second that, Ma'am.

The question that Head 13 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 27

The Ministry of Tourism and International Transport in the amount of \$3 414 578.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R.R. STRAUGHN: Thank you, Madam Chairman. The sums being requested under Head 27 really reflect a couple of key important developments which should come as no surprise to the Chamber. With the onset of COVID-19 certainly, a lot happened quite quickly and in a very short space of time in terms of the complete disruption with respect to air travel, and obviously as a consequence of that there was the cessation of tourism and the related activities associated with tourism. This Chamber is well aware of the longstanding issues as they relate to the financing of the regional airline called LIAT, and at the moment it is currently under administration as we speak. In response to that, obviously, Barbados has had to make some strategic decisions in terms of how we can ensure this once COVID is brought under control so that we can have travel returning to Barbados in a full way and have the capacity to do so.

Therefore, \$600 002 in part is being requested with respect to the newly formed company, Barbados Aircraft and Aviation Services Company Limited, in order to ensure that we can do the preliminary work required to further expand regional travel into Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. Therefore, this particular Supplementary is meant to support the work in that space. More importantly, Madam Chairman, you may recall that the Caves of Barbados, which are more familiarly known as Harrison's Cave, have had a significant hit with respect to their revenue over the course of the last six months because of the cessation of not just air travel but certainly the cruise industry, which would have come to a complete halt as a result of COVID-19.

Madam Chairman, naturally in respect of the fact that the revenue would have fallen off significantly to zero for the most part, there are commitments under which this loan is still due with respect to the Caribbean Development Bank. Therefore, we are making available as a Government these sums to the Caves of Barbados to be able to service its debt with the Caribbean Development Bank in order to

ensure that -- as you would appreciate, Madam Chairman -- having just restructured central Government's debt, it is important that we ensure that we keep our good name with our multilateral partners who have been at the side of Barbados since we came to office so as to help us through the Barbados Economic and Recovery Transformation (BERT) programme. This is intended to cover the debt service payments for October 2020 as well as January of 2021 in order to ensure that the Caves of Barbados' loan with the Caribbean Development Bank for the redevelopment of the cave will not go into default because of the cave's inability to earn revenue at this time. Therefore, the Government being the shareholder is taking the responsibility for being to cover those two debt service payments.

Madam Chairman, in all, the primary work of the Barbados Aircraft and Aviation Services is to ensure that we can have the mechanism in place to be able to restart regional travel across Barbados and Eastern Caribbean. That would be a very critical response on the part of the Government of Barbados given the financial situation that currently LIAT finds itself in. Madam Chairman, I beg to move that Head 27 in the amount of \$3 414 578 stand part.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Madam Chairman, just two things essentially, thank you. The Parliament would really feel like it would have been properly served if we were to be made aware in clearer fashion as to what the new arrangements are for regional travel from the perspective of Barbados Government and in relation to new commercial aircraft entities flying these Caribbean routes. I do not think a full picture has been laid out for the Barbadian public. We are being asked here to spend some money relative to Barbados to Barbados Aircraft Aviation Services Company. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central suggested that we need put ourselves in a better position for the servicing of air travel between Barbados and other Caribbean destinations. I think the House will be well served and benefitted if we can get a clearer picture as to what the arrangements are with the new airline entities traveling into and out of Barbados.

Secondly, some money being requested here to help the case of Barbados in relation to a debt obligation to the Caribbean Development Bank. I would have thought the opportunity could have been used especially in light of recent announcements to tell the House something about the arrangements specifically so with a company called Chukka that would be managing, owning virtually Caves of Barbados. There was nothing said on this matter. It is left to speculation. We heard that the issue was put to public tender and contracts and so forth. We have no information, or at least I do not on the detail surrounding these things.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East comes with a supplementary request for monies for Caves of Barbados. Not a word was said about that arrangement with Chukka and how it came about and what or who the competing bids are and how we arrived at Chukka in the final analysis. Chukka comes with a reputation having served some good outside of Barbados in one or two jurisdictions, but also comes with a reputation of having served some ill and they are those who have made very public complaints as to the detriment done to their own business in commercial operations because of the presence of Chukka in other jurisdictions not too far from Barbados.

Whether you are in transport or providing other tourism facilities, Chukka is seen by them as an evil presence which serves to their detriment. This is a significant Barbadian asset. The Barbadian public will be well served by the Government and the Government will well serve itself if it would put as clear as possible the information picture relative to the Chukka presence, and as well as to the arrangements now in place for a travel between Barbados and other Caribbean islands involving use of the new airline entities. Thank you, Mam.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Madam Chair, once again I feel it necessary to rise to assist the House by way of trying to remove some of the indignity of language because it is unfortunate it is indelibly written into the record, but clarify some of the indignity of language used by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Perhaps not intentionally, he may have done so unwittingly. However, I did hear him say very clearly, and he used the expression virtual ownership of the cave meaning Harrison's Cave, no such thing was ever contemplated, and no such thing has happened.

In fact, a management contract was discussed, agreed and executed and therefore that company Chukka will manage the cave. There is no intent, there was never any intent, and there is no basis on which to even suggest that they will be an ownership by Chukka of the very precious natural resource. I can only conclude that because as I said before that we are in the middle of what is customarily called the silly season. When you have an election in the air, silly things tend to be said.

Having disabused the minds of Barbadians within earshot of my voice of that matter, I will only want to say that I think it is only fair to the incumbent Minister of Tourism under whose watch the final signatures were placed. When I left the Ministry, the negotiations were far advance. It is my understanding that they would have been concluded a few weeks ago and I know that subsequent to that the Minister has done the due diligence things of

meeting with the residence in the surrounding area, part and parcel of what I have already said to this House and to the country, is that when the discussions took place with Chukka after they had been awarded a tender by way of a competitive bid process, a college of negotiators were put in place to negotiate the contractual arrangement. Part and parcel of that which was discussed with Chukka, was that the community, especially that is in the neighbouring area of Allen View, St. Thomas, would have to be borne in mind and their wellbeing would have to be borne in mind. It is a fact and must be written into the records of this House as well that a meeting was convened by the new Minister and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would have been invited and was present to participate in a meeting with her constituents as to how the developments would impact on them and how they can be involved in the way forward.

One of the things that made Chukka an attractive candidate is that unlike all the other people who would have submitted bids, they would have had a very comprehensive view. They did not see the Harrison's Cave as a stop along a series of visits to several attractions in the course of one day. They saw Harrison's Cave as being transformed into an attraction that would be a whole day experience and that you would come whatsoever your age and interest, you would find a range of activities to do and therefore there was a lot of building out of activities around the cave experience. That is what made it so interesting and exciting a bid.

I would say very briefly on the other Mam because I believe it is only fair for the new Minister to be given the opportunity at the appropriate juncture. She is not a Member of this House but a Member of the other place. At the appropriate juncture I have no doubt that she will be able to speak to the country in the appropriate way to speak to all of the nuts and bolts of the new arrangement.

Regarding the aviation aspect of this, it is correct to say that we have taken a larger view as a new Government and that we want to have aviation industry in Barbados. Therefore, these funds are set towards putting us in a position where we can be far more competitive in aviation than we have ever been before in terms of a regional hub. A regional hub must also now for the first time ever speak to the business development opportunities and industry development opportunities of having repairs and maintenance done here in Barbados, the spinoff effect for employment here in Barbados would therefore be considerable. For a long time, we ceded all that vital repair, maintenance and hangarage business to another entity in the Caribbean to the detriment of entrepreneurial and employment opportunity in Barbados and the detriment of small business development here.

Those days have come to an end. We are taking a fresh guard with a fresh vision and again, I think that it is

only fair to allow the incumbent Minister who would have seen this ball cross the goal line to speak the country at the appropriate stage.

I am obliged.

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: Yes, Madam Chairman. It is clear that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is having some difficulty understanding the difference between ownership, leasing and management agreements. It is unfortunate because we have been very clear and open with respect to the way we will deal with the public's assets and that has not changed. Therefore, to continue to attempt to create mischief where there really is none, I think is a very unfortunate thing for one who perhaps maybe aspiring to lead this country at some point far into the future.

Tourism continues to be a very critical part of our recovery effort and as such...

Asides.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Madam Chairman, is it proper and in order for the quite Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central not to attempt to but to say that the Leader of the Opposition is attempting to

perpetrate mischief here? Am I entitled to an opinion? Can I characterise a contract even if it is a management contract depending on its length of time as virtual ownership? Is it proper for that Honourable Member to make that comment and attribute mischief to an Honourable Member of this House?

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: The facts are the facts, Madam Chairman. The Honourable Member would do well to stay within the context of understanding what it is the Government is seeking to execute on behalf of the people of Barbados. The reality is we have been at the forefront of trying to transform this country after 10 years of little or no attention. The arrangements that the Member for St. James Central has already indicated that the new Minister will articulate what the final arrangements are with respect to these matters and as such, that will be forthcoming at the appropriate time.

Madam Chairman, we have to get on with the work with respect to being able to put Barbados in a position to have the complete resumption of regional travel. Therefore, these funds have been allocated to assist with respect to that ground work and to ensure that the cave which belongs to the people of Barbados and will continue to belong to the people of Barbados that by ensuring the Government honour its commitment with respect to the loan agreement that no one can lay claim, no matter how long they may

happen to be managing the resource to ever lay claim to ownership of the cave.

With those few words, Madam Chairman, I beg to move that Head 27 stand part.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAM: I beg to second that.

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

HEAD 33

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS,

INFORMATION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

\$1 047 314

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAM: Madam Chairman, this is in relation to two sections of my Ministry. I will deal with the first one. Under the Fire Service Department, we are seeking \$314 923.50. The reason for that was we would all recall that last year there were two significant fires that affected B's Recycling and Sustainable Barbados Recycling Centre (SBRC) Inc. The SBRC fire was resolved with assistance from the Waste Haulers Association at a cost of \$192 676. 50 and the B's Recycling fire costed approximately \$122 000 with a total of \$314 923.50.

There is no mischief in this. It was an emergency both times. Madam Chairman, multiple agencies were involved. The Sanitation Service Authority (SSA) was involved. The Fire Service was involved. The Disaster Emergency Management (DEM) was involved. What happened on each occasion was that Waste Haulers Association stepped in and utilised their equipment, including tractors and dump trucks in each instance to smother the flames. They did so under the direction of the Fire Service. With respect to the one at SBRC, Madam Chairman, there were about 20 dump trucks and multiple tractors operating under the direction of the Fire Service. It was like a conveyor belt of trucks coming in with earth from somewhere, the tractor dumping it and smothering the flames.

The difficulty came when after the work was done and the expense was classified and quantified, who was to pay them? The bill initially went to SSA, but it said that while the SBRC falls under them, the fact is that the directions were not given by SSA. Department of Emergency Management (DEM) does not have any money to pay them, so it got shuttled around but everyone accepted that at some point in time the people had to be paid. They are owed the money. I firmly believe in one-Government policy and at the end of the day, the Fire Service put its hands up and said that they operated under

the direction of the Fire Service, so we will assume responsibility for it. Obviously, this is an unbudgeted emergency expense and it was not anywhere within the contemplation of the Fire Service when they were allocated funds under the Estimates, so that is why we are here to get the funds to cover the invoices for the Waste Haulers Association in assisting in the B's Recycling and SBRC fires.

To be quite frank, Madam Chairman, these fires occur ever so often and I really did not want a situation to occur where we had another major fire at one of the significant dumps in Barbados and you need to call upon the same people to do the same thing who are owed since last year for the work that they did. This is in relation to that one, Madam Chairman. The second one is a supplementary to cover the expenses of the National Council of Substance Abuse (NCSA). The NCSA legitimate budget tends to run in excess of \$2 million dollars, and they would have budgeted \$2.2 million for this year. What happened is that because of the situation the country was in, they were told that though their budget was \$2.2 million the Government could afford to allocate \$1.5 million only but that it needed to raise the remainder through grant funding, sponsorship and donations.

Therefore, it was pitching on the NCSA is perfectly positioned to secure grant funding or some type of charitable donations. The intention was to take some of the burden of the NCSA which provides a very important social fillip to try to source some other funding, get corporate Barbados on-board and those international agencies that support substance abuse or the fight against illegal drugs to get additional funding from them. However, COVID-19 came. They were only able to raise through funding, Madam Chairman, \$19 000. If your budget was \$2.2 million and Government gave \$1.5 million, but raised only \$19 000 through COVID-19, you will have a significant deficit and the deficit is what we are attempting to cover here through this Supplementary. Just to put it in context for you so people understand how important the National Council of Substance Abuse (NCSA) is. The NCSA does seminars on drug treatment. They go into the schools. The recent report that was highly publicised in the Press about the drug use and substance abuse in primary school students came out of the NCSA budget. They also now, Madam Chairman, must adapt with the changing times. A lot of their seminars are now done online, their research is now done online and they had to fast track. Even though we were looking at deficit in any event, it has become more acute now because the reach to the children and the reach to the schools are not being done online and the NCSA's equipment, Madam Chairman, is woefully obsolete so there is a significant amount in here to cover things like increasing IT capacity, online research platforms and that sort of thing. Quite frankly, how we arrived at how much allocate to them is that the wages and

rent would have amounted to almost the \$1.5 so we say we would cover that and let them try to get the grant funding because the grant funding would normally cover the programmes but not necessarily the wages and the rent. The wages and rent were covered by the Government while the NCSA was charged to go out there and source the funding for the actually social programmes because it would have been easier to do that than to get funding to cover their -- I do not know the correct financial terms -- their repeat liabilities; the wages and rent.

Asides.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAM: The recurring expenditure. Thank you very much. Madam Chairman, the amount sought under this Head is simply to plug what we acknowledge to be the deficit that we hope was going to be financed through grant funding or other charitable donations so we are seeking Supplementary funding in the amount stated to cover the programmes for the National Council of Substance Abuse (NCSA) and also to cover the debt owed by the Barbados Fire Service to the Waste Haulers' Association.

I beg to move that this Head stand part.

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

Mr. E. G. HINKSON: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I rise in support of this Head but to make a couple comments. The Barbados Fire Service requests for supplementals, of course, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East said arises from two fires that we had last year and these fires are, of course, fires of national importance. I well remember the one at Sustainable Barbados Recycling Centre Inc. (SBRC) because I would have been present as the then Minister of Home Affairs and the Honourable Member was there as well that day in his capacity as acting Attorney General and the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was there as well in his capacity then as the Minister of Environment and yes the issue then arose because, I mean, a bill was sent to the Sanitation Service Authority (SSA) to pay for the works and efforts by private waste haulers to out that fire. It went on for, I think, a two-day period and obviously it would have been threatening houses, people's livelihoods, people who were asthmatic and the health of the people in areas, of course, St. Thomas, and in the case with the one at Mangrove, St. James, Arch Hall, Bennetts, et cetera, and downwind, but I think that it is time that we get a set protocol on this. Yes, there is one Government, whether it is SSA who is to pay the Barbados Fire Service or whoever else, but I strongly believe too that the owners of these sites in the case where they are private owners need to bear some of this bill. I understand where it is Mangrove, because, of course, that is owned by the Government and

by the SSA so clearly Government has to bear that cost, but in the case with the Sustainable Barbados Recycling Centre Inc. (SBRC) or any other private waste hauler I think they may be two or three other dump sites that are owned by private people and not by Government they ought to bear some of the cost. You are not getting into law here but certainly in terms of legal principles, negligence on their part, whatever, Government cannot have or should not have ultimately to bear the cost of a fire at a private waste hauler dump. I understand yes, the ultimate responsibility for the security of the people of a nation is governments so yes, Government is paying here but it should be case where in the case where there is a fire at a private dump that they be made to refund the Government some of the money because of their negligence or whatever in letting this fire come about. In a lot of cases it may be that they have too many tyres piled up. There are warning signs. These fires do not just break out and as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East said, this is happening quite often on average, twice a year, I do not think they had any this year yet, but last year they were two, the year before, under the last Administration we remember they occasionally broke out. It cannot be that people just saying Government has to pay all the time and when the private owners of the relevant dump also ought to bear some liability because they clearly are at fault. They are performing, yes, a national service in taking the waste of whatever type it is, metal, tyres, whatever but they have to put proper protocols in place to lessen the probability of the occurrence of these fires which we all concede are of nation importance.

In terms of the National Council of Substance Abuse (NCSA), clearly that Supplementary is in order. Yes, certainly since this Administration has come into office in the Estimates, insufficient money has been voted for the National Council of Substance Abuse (NCSA) which, as the Honourable Member said, carries on a tremendously important task. When I was Minister of Home Affairs I used to say that I do not think the public appreciates the importance of the task of the NCSA and I used to tell them they need to publicise their works more and that started with social media and it has continued now. Yes, the issue of grant funding has come up and funding from corporate persona both nationally and internationally, but we know that what has happened in terms of a health pandemic over the last seven months has put paid to the ability of a Government organisation such as the National Council of Substance Abuse (NCSA) to source funding from corporate entities, therefore, clearly, Parliament has to step up and vote more money for this entity to try to increase its role and to make it more relevant in terms of curing drug abuse, illegal substance abuse, especially among young persons. Yes, I think \$1.5 million was voted and clearly it needs over \$2 million to sustain its programmes and pay all its recurrent expenses and salaries and all of that, and hence I am in full support of this Head as well.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS: Madam Chairman, while I accept that we need to have a protocol to deal with these things, and I think coming out of this incident it has become very, very clear that there needs to be a set protocol for dealing with it, just by way of clarification for those who might be listening you had a situation where the owners of the facility believed that they could have managed it themselves, we had a situation where the noxious fumes from the fire were going down and affecting a number of districts, I think one area had to be evacuated, so while they could have managed it themselves it may have taken five days to put it out and the decision was made that this was an emergency so although they had charge of the facility the decision was made to override anything that they were doing and for fire to take control over it and to deal with the situation. Madam Chairman, we had a situation where pretty much every dump truck in Barbados was pulled off of every single construction site to ferry dirt to cover the fire so the owners of SBRC (Sustainable Barbados Recycling Centre) would have taken the position well we did not ask you to do all of this, we could have managed it, fire took the position and we as a Government took the position that we could not wait for it to be managed in your time and it had to be dealt with now as a national emergency, so there it fell into a grey area as to exactly who was responsible for what. As I said the bottom-line position was that the persons who worked on it worked on it in good faith, submitted their bill and they needed to be paid so the Government undertook to pay it. What happens going forward we probably are going to have to set protocols for it but that does not affect what happens in this instance, so Madam Chairman, I beg to move that the Supplementary of \$1 047 314 under Head 33 stand part with one amendment that the word “dollars” be inserted into the figures. I think there is a slight typographical error in the Addendum.

The question that Head 33 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Madam CHAIRMAN: I just want to remind you that you have about two hours left to pass these Heads.

Mr. CLERK: Madam Chairman, with that in mind we are going to skip a few Heads and then go back so we will go now to Head 86.

Head 86 -- Ministry of Health and Wellness

\$65 805 787

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Lt. Col. the Hon. J. D. BOSTIC: Thank you, Madam Chairman. The Supplementary that we are asking for is a result of the fact that the Ministry for the past several months, and I am including here in the Ministry for the purpose of the debate the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which I also have responsibility for, have been executing the national COVID response out of a pre-COVID budget. That budget obviously would have been voted for in this Honourable Chamber to basically facilitate the programmes of the Ministry of Health and Wellness and also the operations of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but given the urgent requirement to mount the response to COVID-19 we have had to be taking funds from other programmes to be able to get things going within the Ministry and obviously overtime this would have created some issues in relation to cash flow and one or two other things, so that is the first thing I would like to establish here.

Then obviously the sustainability of the COVID response effort obviously requires some recurrent expenditure that we have to take care of as well especially in relation to the isolation facilities, the quarantine facilities, testing sites and so on, so this is the primary reason behind the Supplementary that we are seeking here, but I do not want to spend too much time in terms of the COVID response because I would have spoken to those issues over time including today when I had the opportunity to speak. I say that because it is very important for us in the Ministry of Health and Wellness and also for the Government to get Barbadians and Honourable Members of the Chamber to understand that in addition to COVID we still have the remainder of the healthcare system to provide for and that is a considerable undertaking under normal circumstances. Madam Chairman, I am really happy that we have been able to do both but obviously some things would not have gotten the level of attention that would have been required and that is why we are seeking the Supplementary so that we can get our programmes fully back on track.

Madam Chairman, I would mention, for example, the nurses from Ghana. We anticipated that and the funds for those nurses were already included in the budget but because we had to divert funds to do other things we then had now to be able to continue what we are doing with those nurses. I will report that 95 nurses are employed in the healthcare sector at this point of time, 46 within central ministry and 49 at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Out of the 46 nurses assigned to the central ministry are allocated to the District Hospitals, 21 at the St. Michael District Hospital, our Geriatric Hospital, and 16 at the St. Philip District Hospital and the remainder are spread across some of the polyclinics. At the Queen Elizabeth Hospital they have 49 as I indicated, 17 of them are assigned to the

Critical Care Unit, nine to the Accident and Emergency Department, six to the Medical and Surgical Wards, five to Paediatrics and four to the Ophthalmology Department so those nurses are fully utilised and we now have to be able to sustain this effort for the remainder of the financial year.

We also had contemplated starting the 24-hour service at the David Thompson Health Centre and Social Services Complex in St. John and that was delayed because of COVID and because obviously the nurses from Ghana were kind of critical to starting that and we are now in a position where we are looking to start that process. I call it a process because we have taken the decision to start the process by having extended hour services at the David Thompson Health Centre and Social Services Complex in St. John which is normally is from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. Monday to Friday and we are going from 8.00 a.m. to 8.30 p.m. every single day of the week to see how that works first of all and also because we have negotiated with the Transport Board and they have been very helpful so far so that we can allocate some cross country routes to David Thompson Health Centre and Social Services Complex in St. John so that people from St. Andrew, St. Joseph and St. George especially would be able to benefit from that 24-hour service and once we have been able to see what the throughput is like by the end of March God willing next year then come April we should be able to transition then to the full 24-hour service and by that time we would have be in a position to have diagnostic services, dialysis service also included at the polyclinic, an asthma bay and we will have an ambulance stationed there so that the full works would be there in St. John so that persons in that part of the country would not have to take the trek down to St. Michael to be able to access those services, and part of this supplementary obviously is going towards this effort. Apart from that, the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party, which is influencing what we are doing -- obviously Government policy -- we spoke to the 24-hour service in St. John. We spoke to the Ghanaian nurses coming in. We spoke to the general infrastructure, and we also spoke to the broken infrastructure and the need to do some repairs and remedial work to the health infrastructure in many cases because those structures have not really had any serious work done for a long time and so some of the funds that we are seeking in the Supplementary is to, for example, complete some of the work that we have started at the St. Philip District Hospital where we have nearly completed one ward that was out of the system for a long time. We are also looking to do another ward, including the Children's Ward so that we can have greater capacity in terms of hospitalisation of elderly persons in Barbados. Hence that that works is ongoing.

Mr. Speaker, the Albert C. Graham Children's Development Centre is another project that we have been working on for a long time and we will complete that. We have done a roof replacement, remedial works, the place is

really looking nice. Those children have been out of that school for a while, having to be relocated at other locations and through a generous benefactor the swimming pool has been refurbished and is ready to go so that they can have their training done at that pool, and we are looking around either November 7th or 8th to be able to have the Albert C. Graham Development Centre fully developed again and these funds will be able to have that centre to do what is required for those special children.

Mr. Speaker, civil works are also included in this Supplementary. At the Branford Taitt Polyclinic we were to construct an emergency exit there, it is highly utilised, there have been one or two security and safety issues which we had promised to deal with and we will now be able to do that work. I am sure that the staff and clients who utilise that polyclinic would be very, very happy to know that. We also have the Gordon Cummins District Hospital that also requires some work that we will now be able to do from this financial year.

The other thing from the Ministry's perspective (and I had indicated this earlier) but when we came to office there was a plan to close down the Community Outpatients' Clinic, in St. Joseph, and also in St. Andrew and I put a halt to that because the policy of this Barbados Labour Party Government is to take healthcare into the communities, at the community level and so we put an end to that and we have allocated some funds to refurbish the clinic at St. Joseph, which we were not able to get done, but we now have to do it. We are now looking to get some work done there because especially in a post-COVID-19 environment, because that clinic and the one in St. Thomas have the capacity to deal with patients as the result of COVID-19 was a serious challenge and we have to do some work to be able to sort that out. We are also looking to have to deal with the St. Andrew clinic as well.

Mr. Speaker, those are the infrastructural works that we can now do at the level of the Ministry but there are also a number of things that need to be done at the Q.E.H. that could not have been done because funds had to be utilised to do other things, to fight COVID-19. For example, there are some civil works to accompany the installation of some newly purchased equipment such as medical gas, oxygen plant, equipment, new autoclaves that are required for the sterilisation of instruments and so on for surgeries, a donated CT scan for the Harrison Point Isolation Facility and other equipment to improve the level of efficiency at the Q.E.H. This is an ongoing thing and we are now able to do this because the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is very fortunate, in a sense, that even within a COVID-19 environment the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been allocated about \$18.5 million to replace equipment. It is the most money the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has ever had since its existence. We have a lot of equipment there, while some are on their way and those funds are going to

go a long way to be able to facilitate those new pieces of equipment.

Also, we have to undertake repairs and remedial works at the Pathology Lab because the health and safety of staff there has been severely compromised, and this is an issue for a little while and we want to put that to rest.

The implementation of a National Cardiology Project which was approved by Cabinet recently, I believe that about \$300 000 is required for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital so that we can start phase one of this most important project, in the sense that heart attacks and strokes are occurring in Barbados at an alarming rate and it is absolutely certain that once we get this right, that we will be in a position to be able to save some lives in Barbados, which is very, very important and so the first part of that project will see some training for the Emergency Ambulance Service Personnel and also the reequipping of those ambulances, as well as some work within the Accident and Emergency Department, the training of staff, and some other related matters that would help us to kick-start that particular project.

The digitisation of medical records is a significantly thing in terms of healthcare because in terms of our medical records we are living in the dark ages and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, more than anywhere else, of course, has a large volume of records that need to be digitised so that we can provide services in a more efficient manner, and those funds are also included in the Supplementary that we are seeking.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to mention a few of those things because for the last several months, obviously the only things to which we were speaking were issues relating to COVID-19 and people might not have recognise that in order to really fight COVID-19 it really cost us some money, but [that] we had no choice because public safety, or the safety of the public in this country is of paramount importance to this Government and we had to ensure that funds were provided and I want to thank those from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs and Investment for making resources available to be able to fight COVID-19. However, at the same time we still have to get back, we are still in the chronic non-communicable diseases fight; chronic non-communicable diseases still remain the leading causes of death in this country and we are now going to be in a position to get fully back on track with the remainder of the healthcare services, both at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and at the polyclinics, and also to continue to take care of our elderly nationals and those persons who require those services.

Madam Chairman, that is the reason for the Supplementary. We still have reoccurring costs, as I indicated before. We still have some final payments to

make to some of the contractors who worked on the Isolation Facility at Harrison Point, and the transformation of the Harrison Point Facility to what it now is today. It is really an amazing feat of which all Barbadians should be proud and should give compliments and kudos to those persons who worked in the construction industry tirelessly, and the numbers of teams that were assigned, and the vision of the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment, Minister of National Security and the Civil Service, in terms of that facility and that was why I was able to say earlier today that we have the capacity to deal with what is coming in terms of COVID-19 and what we are facing right now, so that some of those are the bills that we have to pay in relation to COVID-19. Generally-speaking, it has to do more with going forward in relation to the remainder healthcare system, getting things running, doing what we said in the Manifesto that we would do, in terms of the St. John Polyclinic, and I am really happy to see that this Supplementary has been brought here. I want to thank the Honourable Member for doing so and we look forward to receiving those funds so that we can move forward with healthcare in Barbados.

Madam Chairman, I now beg to move that Head 86 stand part. I am obliged to you.

Hon. J.A. KING: I beg to second that, Ma'am.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. Ms. C.S.V. HUSBANDS: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. I really appreciate the opportunity to join this particular discussion because of the central importance that health has taken, especially since COVID, but even before COVID there were so many things that we were fighting as a nation. These include non-communicable diseases, which represent one of the greatest things crippling our nation and truly affecting the output and productivity of Barbados. As I listened to the Honourable Member for the City while he shared what is being done in relation to health, I want to join with colleagues and truly commend him for the tremendous fight that he and his team are making on behalf of this country to make healthcare come right for every single Barbadian.

Asides.

Hon. Ms. C.S.V. HUSBANDS: This work embodies not only what is being done at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and at the polyclinics and so on. This is also part of the fight for the Ministry of Health that also takes place overseas in order to guarantee health to Barbadians, and the fight also goes down to the community level where we as Members of Parliament, representatives and other

community people are seeking to begin to mobilise Barbadians around the issues of health. This Saturday in my own constituency we are launching our first community garden, and we are going to be doing this at different points in the constituency of St. James South, because we believe that we have to guard the community against hunger, we have got to guard it against nutritional deficiency and we have to promote health. I was struck by the fact that if our people are not in excellent health, they stand a lesser chance of combatting COVID, because COVID says if you do not take care of yourself physically at every level, COVID will step in to take us. Therefore, we are all involved in this fight and I really want to encourage every Barbadian to begin to do your part, to take responsibility for your bodies, to take responsibility for your health and do whatever is necessary to be able to take us forward.

Madam Chairman, we have found a broken health system and the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown has spoken on a number of occasions about it; the number of things that are not there, the things which are missing. For the good people of St. James South, this has been a particular burden and a particular pain, a point of suffering. My community tends to have older constituents and they tend to suffer from the non-communicable diseases. Some of them may suffer from cancer, some of them need dialysis, and therefore when the healthcare system is not operating optimally, they suffer tremendously. Therefore, what is being done here, this money that is being voted today, is important for putting into place the necessary things to alleviate that suffering. We just lost a very precious member of our community to cancer, and during COVID the pressure of COVID on the entire social and economic system, plus her capacity to cope with what was happening in her body, was too much and we lost here. One of the challenges was the issue of being able to get your medication from the pharmacies. This was a particular problem for the elderly in my community. Here is COVID, they have comorbidities, and they are vulnerable, and they had to be standing in lines waiting sometimes in the sun, and some of them collapsed. It was so challenging, and that is why I really appreciate what the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown did in trying to put into place some form of delivery service to help alleviate that suffering which our people were experiencing as they had to come and wait for long hours in order to get their medication.

Madam Chairman, there is a lot that has been done and more that will still be done. One of the things I want to just share a little bit on is what is happening on the international stage in relation to the issue of health. One of the things I want Barbadians to understand is that we -- the Barbados Labour Party under the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and under the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown -- believe that good healthcare service is a right, that every citizen in this country, every

human being has the right to expect that he or she can get access to good healthcare services. Therefore, access is important, affordability is important, and effectiveness is important. How are we going to secure that on behalf of our citizens? The fight for good healthcare extends beyond our borders.

Internationally, Barbados must fight and make the necessary representation to ensure that space is accommodated for us to be able to access the care which we need. This is even more important now that we are confronting COVID. Just in April this year, 2020, Barbados was able to sign on to the Protocol of the World Trade Organisation which is part of the TRIPS (The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement. What this allows Barbados to do is to join other countries which will have access to some emergency entitlements. When medication and vaccinations and so on are produced, they can be extremely expensive, and because many countries cannot afford those vaccinations or the medication or because the holders of the patents do not make it possible for them to be produced in quantities or distributed in such a way that these things can get across the globe to the people who really need them, some countries find themselves in a position where they are unable then to provide access to very necessary medication. This is because the economic system governing access to healthcare is structured in a way that only favours where we can get the biggest return on our dollar. That puts a lot of us at a disadvantage.

Therefore, small countries like ours have to be constantly fighting for the opportunity to make sure there is access, and this particular TRIPS Agreement gives us the opportunity that if with the production of a particular medication there is a health crisis in a nation and we are unable to access it from the producers/holders of that patent and no-one has been given a licence to produce it for your area, a country or a government has the right to be able to issue licences with regulations to either a domestic producer or to another producer which they believe is able to produce that medication so that it can be made available to their citizens. One of the deep fears that I had as we encountered COVID was what was going to happen when a vaccine became available. How were we going to make sure that small nations like ours would get it? There are billions of people across the planet and everybody needs it. How are we going to make sure that we are going to get it?

I was so happy to hear the Honourable Member for the City share what the Government has put into place in relation to making a deposit to make sure that we can get some of those vaccinations available to us, but we also have through this TRIPS measure the opportunity that should it not be enough or should we not get it on time, we have the option that we can afford to issue a licence to someone under our emergency powers to be able to help

produce that vaccine or whatever is needed to assist Barbados in meeting this COVID fight. I just wanted to make the Chamber aware of that so that we understand that this is a big one, and as a nation we must pull together what we are asking of our citizens. Healthcare in its costs will continue to rise but prevention is much less expensive. Therefore, every citizen has to work together with the Government, with their healthcare providers and with their families to ensure that we do all that is necessary to reduce the incidence of illness by pursuing wellness and nutrition. I also want to give kudos to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South who has responsibility for agriculture, for the tremendous effort that he is also making in relation to producing the necessary foods, which more and more Barbadians are consuming. I also want to congratulate the Barbadian who have taken up the challenge and have started their backyard farming and are beginning to grow their vegetables and the things that they need that we can transition from unhealthy foods onto healthy foods.

I want to assure the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade will continue to work with him on these matters along with the NCDs and work with the issue of health and trade so that we can begin to use the tools at our disposal to protect our population from things that are harmful to them and that will not allow us to pursue or manage the NCDs that are affecting our population.

I just want to congratulate the Honourable Member and the Honourable Member in the Ministry of Finance for making all this possible.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Thank you Madam Chairman. Just two brief queries. I noticed that there is in the supplementary request in the amount of \$25 million for the QEH related to COVID. I am not going to question that. I understand from what the Minister said it will be running the COVID programme expenditure which would have been voted for other purposes.

What I do have to question is the \$10 652 000 again to QEH. My question really has to do not so much with that sum of money, but with the performance of the health levy that the Government had put in place. Also, to query the Minister as to the level of effectiveness with all things considered of the health levy to date.

The other thing has to do with an approximate \$10 million spent on other personal emoluments. My question would have to be simply just reasonably so. Are these new people or are these people who have been already employed and you have to find money to continue paying

or is this the plan to take on new people, or is it a combination of both?

Now, my Honourable friend from St. James Central had said two or three times today that this is what he calls the silly season and in a silly season people say silly things. Now I know he have been listening a bit closely to his own platform and that is why he has said that. I hope this is not silly thing. I am simply asking are these new people coming on to work that you have to pay or are these people who are working that you now have to find supplemental funds to pay or a combination of both.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: Madam Chairman, I rise to support the request for funds to be placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Health and Wellness. Just to reinforce the point that the Government has been from the inception first and foremost ensuring that we will protect the public and that we will make resources available to ensure that the management of the rest of the health care system can be continued to respond to the health needs of Barbadians in the country.

I just want it make it clear that you would appreciate when the Government came to office we had implemented a number of measures which was sought in a sense to give additional support and more consistency with respect to the operations of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. You would recall that we introduced the health service contribution which is administered by the National Insurance Scheme and remitted to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital monthly once contributions are paid by employers.

Obviously, in a COVID-19 environment as you are aware Madam Chairman, the National Insurance Scheme since the end of March this year has paid over \$120 million in unemployment contributions and that is as result of the fact that just over 32 000 Barbadians have been unemployed as a result of COVID-19. Therefore, the level of the health service contribution that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital received since the beginning of this financial year would have reduced significantly.

What we have had to do as you would recall when we voted here on the Appropriation Bill in March, we had initially allocated \$116 million or so for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and we have been using those funds. Ordinarily those funds would have been disbursed in 12 equal instalments over the course of the year. The health service contribution would have been coming in as normal and the hospital would have been able to do its work. We have had to adjust with respect to the advance of the \$116 million.

Therefore, in response to COVID given what we had voted at the beginning of the year and as the Minister said, the Government through the Ministry of Health has had to respond to a very rapidly changing environment and we have been monitoring the budgets of the Ministry as well as the QEH to ensure that they can get through on the basis of what we would have initially allocated. However, now is the time since we are now at the beginning of the second half of the financial year, to ensure that we can go through to the remainder of the financial year in a smoothly fashion as much as possible.

Hence, monies that you see voted here is really intended to ensure that we can continue to fully support the COVID-19 response that the Ministry of Health and Wellness has mounted very successfully since the beginning of this year. However, Madam Chairman, you would recall that the establishment of the isolation facility at Harrison Point, as well as the operations of the various quarantine centres has a cost. We have a created a specific Head under the QEH to be able to focus specifically on those monies that we are spending exclusively on COVID.

Several resources have been made available to the Ministry of Health and as well as the QEH in terms whether it is the COVID-19 monitoring unit to be able to deal with any issues related to contact tracing. I know the Minister and his team has been working quite hard with respect to that. As we ramp up the testing which we would anticipate that with the resumption of commercial flights coming into the country, the testing regime, personnel, resources for the lab required for that will have to be done. With that, we anticipate it will continue if commercial flights increase on a daily basis.

I really want to commend the Minister and his staff and the QEH for their management of this process, because as you would appreciate it is a logistical exercise that requires a level of meticulousness that is absolutely critical. The resources that we are placing at the disposal of the Ministry as well as the QEH will allow Barbados to continue to remain open. As the Minister said in his opening remarks I think on the Emergency Bill, that we continue to work and ensure that we keep people safe, but we have to keep the economy open in order to be able to deliver certainly the financing mechanism that is required and supporting in the measure.

Madam Chairman, you would recognise that we have made some adjustments to the overall Budget. A number of programmes have had to be scaled back across Government in order to help to finance some of these expenditures and the reality is that is where we have been quite responsive because we have to prioritise on ensuring that we build the capacity within the health system. The Minister indicated that outside of these expenditures, a number of critical pieces of equipment for the QEH as we

would have voted at the end of the last financial year would be made available to the members of the public once they are commissioned.

The truth is that our response has been fully supported by the whole of Government and I think that Barbadians can feel comforted that this Government is actually in a position to focus on not just the COVID-19 response but equally beef up a number of the service delivery across the health service that would be critical. I can only urge as the Minister has urged the members of the public to do, that every Barbadian must continue to follow the protocols. Each Barbadian must take the responsibility for keeping themselves, their families and friends safe and follow the protocols. We know that we have been quite successful in not having any community spread in Barbados as a result of each Barbadian playing their part in allowing us to go about our day to day activities.

So long as we continue to be able to do that, then I am confident that we will be able to keep the economy

open and will continue to be able to do the appropriate risk management as it relates to visitors and all Barbadians returning home with respect to travel. The Ministry certainly has been on the ball with respect to the classification of countries and the protocols that have been put in place in order to ensure that persons not just get the second test, but that they are absolutely clear and comfortable with respect to persons interacting with respect to persons interacting in the society.

As with everything in life, Madam Chairman, there is risk to everything. There is risk to persons travelling into the country. There is risk because everyone might have a slightly different incubation period, if you like. However, I am comfortable that the public health personnel have all the tools that they require at this point to do the various testing with respect to COVID-19, as well as any potential avenue for tracing should that be required. I can only ask that Barbadians continue to work with the officials of the Ministry of Health where required in order to ensure that if something happens, we can get to the bottom of it quickly so that we can contain.

As we go through the next few months, we are seeing clearly a number of cases rising across North America and Europe. Therefore, we must keep the economy open. We have to ensure that we can do so responsibly and, therefore, some of the resources especially as it relates to COVID-19 made available to the Ministry of Health as well as to the QEH would allow Barbados to continue to mount a response that is commensurate with the risk that we have to effectively take in order to keep this Barbados economy open. Madam Chairman, the reality is that while we will continue to monitor very carefully the response from a health perspective as we have open back,

more persons have gone back to work and, therefore, we would anticipate that they will be a small uptake in terms of the health service contribution with respect to that.

I know that on the Resolution there is under the Ministry of Finance and EGFL a request for the initial support of the Barbados Employment and Sustainability Programme. However, we anticipate that as more and more persons go back to work, then the health service contribution will be able to be boosted between now at the end of the financial year so that the QEH and the contribution they would have seen the decline in during the first-half of this financial year we would dearly love for it to recover fully by the end of the financial year. We are confident that even if we do not meet that target that the sums being made available for the QEH would be able to make up for that shortfall to allow for the normal provision of services which they would normally do in the absence of COVID-19.

The reality is that we are making the resources available to the Ministry of Health, as well as the QEH. The personnel certainly with respect to additional testing and contact tracing, we are making those monies available. This is going to be critical in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Madam Chairman, with those few words, I am obliged to you.

Lt. Col. the Hon. J. D. BOSTIC: Thank you, Madam Chairman, I beg to move that Head 86 stand part.

Hon. W. A. ABRAHAM: I beg to second that.

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

HEAD 34

MINISTRY OF FINANCE,

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND INVESTMENT

\$25 081 700

Hon. Miss M. K.-A. CADDLE: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I listened with extreme interest and excitement as the previous Head was discussed. I listened with extreme excitement because it is representative of the stellar, unique and unmatched leadership of the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the Prime Minister of Barbados and the entire Cabinet I would say in addressing the matter of COVID-19 and its response in the area of health. What we have been seeing recently in a lot of research and what people have found is that countries which have been able to limit the impact in terms of number of deaths have also seen a

similarly limited impact in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth.

It means that countries that have been successful in limiting the deaths and having a strong healthcare response have also been able to have a strong economic response or to limit the economic fallout. Barbados is recorded at having to date 20 deaths per million which puts it ahead of 120 countries in the world. Just as we

have had to had that very focused and innovative response in the area of health, we had to be similarly innovative in the area of economic policy. As we have had to expand the National Insurance response to the tune of \$120 million to 32 000 people which would have been five times the scale of unemployment claims we would ordinarily see with respect to any shock. We have had to come up with new governance arrangements, an advance payment system, for example, so that those payments were able to be rolled out, especially the initial payments, were able to be rolled out quickly. Similarly, this request for a supplementary provision under Head 34 is in respect of another kind of innovative policy that we have had to quickly put in place to address the fact that there has been tremendous expenditure related to Covid-19, not just in terms of healthcare, but also in terms of social protection making sure that people have food to eat, making sure that students have the digital infrastructure to be able to function and all the other knock on effects and all the other sectoral responses. We have also had to address a tourism sector that is over 40 per cent of the labour market, over 40 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the fact that having people unemployed for extended periods in that sector is extremely detrimental to the future survival of the country. You are not just talking about lost wages, lost income today but as we know, the longer somebody stays unemployed, the harder it is for them to find employment again so it was very important for us to be able to address direct and indirect tourism services as a part of the economic response. It was important for us to be able to help people get back into work in the tourism sector even as we are now starting to see the return of flights and the return of tourism activity. We could not wait, Madam Chairman, for those people to get back to work and what we have done with the Barbados Employment and Sustainable Transformation (BEST) Plan is to say, listen, we expect that in several months the tourism sector will come back to where it has been before, not in the same style and not in the same form but we expect it to return. In the meantime, there are certain things that we can do to make sure that the Barbados tourism product is much more competitive than others that at that time will be trying to compete with us and so the Barbados Employment and Sustainable Transformation (BEST) Plan that we agreed to roll out last month does a few things. It includes a comprehensive training programme to make sure that people upskill in the sector, make sure that we take the

opportunity to really be able to, as the younger among us might say, to really be able to level up in terms of what we are offering to consumers in that space so we did not want to wait until the sector was fully reopened. This is the time to take this opportunity to figure out what are the gaps and to be able to fill those gaps with respect to capacity development. This is being implemented with the assistance of the National Transformation Initiative being able to set standards of performance and delivery with people who worked in the tourism sector.

In addition, there is a financial arrangement that sees a grants programme and a preference share programme being introduced to provide for a few things, to make sure that there is employee reengagement, and this is extremely important. How that would work is that the preference share programme provides funds to meet 80 per cent of the wages and salaries of employees as of December 2019.

Madam Chairman, there are several jurisdictions that are attempting or that are rolling out a similar plan. Barbados is the only one that is meeting wages and salaries at 80 per cent. Germany, the United Kingdom (UK) and others are providing at 60 per cent, 65 per cent or 75 per cent, but we are saying listen, we believe in this sector. We believe not just in the sector but in the fact that we need to be able to support workers and their families in the largest sector in Barbados and we are going to make that investment. It also supports, Madam Chairman, investment in greening and digitisation. The sector has, for a long time, been calling for better and more thorough use of renewable energy technologies, renewable energy installations including PV systems, water conservations and so on, and what the sector could also benefit from is increased use of technology and process digitisation so that they can upgrade their business processes. There have been similar initiatives in other spaces. I recall that in the United States of America (USA) when the automotive industry was flagging terribly, when several jobs were at stake, when people's lives and livelihoods were hanging in the balance the then Administration had to step in and work with the automotive industry to find and agree on a transformation plan for that sector in which the Government would invest. It had great success and it had great success because it focussed on doing all the things that really the sector needed to do to transform itself so it was not just throwing new money after something that was not delivering. It was a matter of having a frank conversation of what is needed to really grow the sector and having an agreement to invest in that in a particular way. BEST also seeks to invest in what we call Supply Chain Management which is something that many of us, even before we came to This Place have been calling for which is to say the deeper integration of local agriculture, manufacturing, services, and cultural and creative industries in the provision of the tourism sector. We want entrepreneurs in these spaces to be engaged in the tourism sector. We want to make sure that

tourism plants, tourism firms, are procuring locally as far as possible and to make sure that we are building resilience into that supply chain so that if or when there is another similar shock, we hope not, but if there is, that we are left less vulnerable to the vagaries of what is happening in global supply chains and we have developed our local supply chains so that we have some resilience to whatever is happening in the external market. It also focusses on the upgrading of the plants through refurbishment and expansion of the properties and we envision that all of these together, the greening, the plant upgrades, and the digitalisation which is really the modernisation of process are going to create several more jobs in addition to the people who are returning to work under the employee reengagement.

I want to say, Madam Chairman, at this time that in terms of the response to BEST we have seen so far, and more every week, 26 hotels become engaged and 1 600 worker applications associated with that. We expect that this week 1 000 of those workers will be reengaged or are being reengaged in their various tourism firms where they worked before but this is also called, Madam Chairman, for a governance arrangement because the process of being able to receive and review the applications, look at certain financial information that is going to tell us whether these are good investment decisions, that has to be done somewhere and it is being done in the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited. We have had to put a governance structure in place there. I would like to suggest that at the appropriate time, that document that lays out the governance structure be made a document of the House because I think it is important to know and to see that this is a transparent process that is really about workers and their families and not simply about investment in the private sector although that investment is important because of the impact on work. We have set up that structure within the EGFL and it has been working. The \$25 million that is allocated here is an initial outlay to be able to fund the BEST Programme (the Barbados Economic and Sustainable transformation Programme) currently. Obviously, when these Estimates were developed this was not contemplated, we did not know that COVID-19 would happen and we did not know that we would have this tremendous impact on unemployment and implications for severance and so on and so we are asking that this \$25 million be allocated for this purpose.

The other small part of the Supplementary provision is \$81 000 that is for professional services related to certain very important conversations that we must have in the international space. Now, being Chairman of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, having a Prime Minister who is really very involved in leading global dialogues on many things, and global dialogues not just for the sake of them, that are going to have an impact on how Barbados is able to finance its programmes, how Barbados

is able to treat with its debt, the idea of being able to ring-fence or separate out COVID-related debt so that we treat it more as long term debt so that it becomes more sustainable, all these types of conversations that are important. The fact that we have a voice in the International Monetary Fund World Bank Development Committee we have an opportunity that Barbados certainly did not have in the ten years prior to this Administration because if you cannot manage your own affairs at home nobody is going to listen to you if you come and try and tell them how to do things where they are, but now having proven and having gotten great creditability in terms of being able to manage our affairs here locally and in the region, the world is listening to Barbados, but we have to put ourselves in the position to speak with authority, we have to be able to research certain ideas and we have to be able to do the work that is required, for example, in the idea of how we understand risk and vulnerability in small island states.

In a previous life I was involved in some work on a vulnerability index. It is an area of work that the global south has been engaged in for some time to say to the international community you cannot use the same criteria for small island states, for emerging economies, that you use for larger more developed economies. It is a conversation and a decision whose time has come. Everywhere we look we see the differential access to resources, the differential access even to medical resources and the differential access even to supply chains globally that are really impacting how small states can respond to COVID, and so this \$81 000 is to be able to engage an advisor and other professional services for a limited period of five months to be able to put together certain arguments in some upcoming international engagements that the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment will have. The main activity for this relates to determining the most appropriate mechanisms as I said for the financing of COVID related debt, settling how we use our vulnerability index and coming up with some recommendations to improve capacity and skills as well as execution rates in the Caribbean because the Caribbean has an under-execution problem. We have the skills and capacity but sometimes we are not able to execute at the rate that would see the space of development that we would want. We need to look at how we depend the relationships with CARICOM and the Caribbean Development Fund and other mechanisms that were set up to make sure that the Caribbean would start to thrive and have the governance mechanisms that we need to do our business, improving access to grant funding because we more and more need concessional resources to be able to do our business and also looking at facilitating the recommendations of the CARICOM Commission on the Economy which is also about how the Caribbean Community comes together to advocate for better terms for how it does its business, so these two areas of work are what drive this request for supplementary funding, Madam

Chairman, and with those words, I beg to move that Head 34 stand part.

Hon. A.R. FORDE: I beg to second that.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Thank you, Ma'am. Again, just a couple brief remarks. I do not think necessarily that the majority of former hotel workers or hotel workers who have suffered loss of employment as a result of the COVID-19 situation are necessarily persuaded that the BEST Programme best serves their interest. I think there is a large body of opinion among them which would suggest to viewers that this helps the capital interest, the private sector interest involved in tourism economic activity in Barbados. They have concerns about the challenges now posed under the new regimes with respect to their severance benefit regime. They have concerns with respect to the number of days per week perhaps that they may be privileged to have employment under new arrangements. There are already concerns about reduced levels of pay and that is in addition to the fact that we start out with an 80 per cent ceiling already in place and there are, if I am to believe what I am hearing, hotels which would have already gone back into operation who are subjecting some of their workers to these reduced levels of pay, so I am not too sure that the Honourable Member out of St. Michael South Central, the Honourable Minister in the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and Investment, would find large scale agreement with her perspective that that BEST Programme serves their interest above all else.

The concern I have additionally is this. It is a ploy of governments when the pressure is on, when challenges are met and when we reach certain points in the electoral cycle to ensure that they do their very level best to reduce that body of opinion that expresses itself with disfavour on some of their policies. If I may put that into very simple language and illustrate, governments sometimes identify those with credible voices who expressed an opinion in the interest of the masses, in the interest of the country, and not in a partisan way and if they have to be critical of the policies of the Government they are not afraid to do so, they are independent enough to feel free to do so and they are credible enough to be believed and one of the tactics that governments would use is to see how governments could incorporate them into the service of the Government and thereby silence their voices. They do it with people from the Media. Indeed, they do it sometimes from within the bosom of their own Administration. Persons who are not necessarily in Cabinet may be called to function in areas of endeavour that causes them to be silent on certain issues about which they would otherwise be loud. They reach into academia and they take out those again with credible voices and who are not afraid to speak in a critical

fashion about Government policy and the challenges that the country would face and they incorporate their services into the efforts of the Administration and therefore quiet their voices. Hence, you add people to the National Insurance Board, you add people to the Board of the Central Bank, and you create consultancy positions. We have here a consultancy service position, again being identified for an individual who has spoken with some degree of credibility and with some degree of passion with reference to Government's policies and he has not always been in favour, he has not always supported what Government had said or done, but he is now to be recruited as a consultant. I think the figure here is \$81 000 and this would put this individual in a position where he is no longer able to critique, publicly, Government policies in an unfavourable fashion. I have a serious concern about that. I do not think that in the history of this country (and yes, I am sure you will tell me about COVID-19) the Minister of Finance has such a core of advisors. I mean, when does it end? This is another consultant, although only for a brief period. When does it end? When do we come to the place where we say, look, we cannot afford this anymore? Perhaps this money could be used otherwise, and perhaps this service could be provided by some existing individual or entity. When do we come to that place? Okay, we criticised the former Administration on spending \$20 million on consultancy services and then coming every month or every week to engage some other individual to do some other aspect of consultancy work, always seemingly -- almost frequently, I should say, to the Ministry or the Minister of Finance. However, here we go again? The money spent is one thing. The job to be done is important. The services to be rendered are important, but can we not find an existing mechanism or an existing functionary who can do it? Where are we, over \$81 000 to do this over a few months? In so doing we have silenced a voice which could otherwise be unfavourably critical of Government policies. We could silence oppositions in many ways, or we could silence opposition in many ways, and one of the ways to silence opposition is to buy opposing voices into your service arrangements. They will then work for you but cannot openly offer criticism of you and I fear that we are embarked upon that path. I am obliged to you.

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, you have the Floor.

Hon. Miss M. K-A. CADDLE: Madam Chairman, I will endeavour to wrap up quickly and in so doing I will try to (huh!???) some of the usual noise. Madam Chairman, just to quickly respond to the question as to whether there is buy-in for the programme, I think that having signed up 26 hotels and having seen the interest of over 1 600 workers in a couple of short weeks, this indicates an interest. I know that it is very attractive to set up straw men so that people can try their best to fatigue themselves by tearing them down, but we do not have time in this

COVID-19 environment with straw men. As a Government we have time with legitimate concerns and we are always committed to addressing them but the question as to whether or not there is interest, the question that there is worker buy-in is a simple answer. Before we came up with this, in the course of developing this... I mean, I would say and this is based on my limited but growing numbers of years on this planet, that I have never seen a more consultative system of governance than I have seen within the last 2½ years of this Barbados Labour Party Administration. We came from a Social Partnership that had been decimated and disrespected under the last Administration and gave it new life, gave it a new level of respect and engagement and it is on that basis that we have come up with the economic policies that we have in order to respond to the people of this country. Also, yes, there is buy-in. That is the simple answer.

The other thing I would say on the question of contracting services and to the question when will it end. I will say frankly to you, it will not end because the other thing that we have to do to step fully into the third decade of the 21st century is to realise that the structure of work, the nature of work, and the way in which we engage professional services is also changing. And if this work represented under "Professional Services" it would be under the regular wages and salaries, recurring expenditure of the Government of Barbados and so whether it is the permanent contractual arrangements or whether it is under the \$40 million COVID-19 Relief Programme for 12 months of engaging people in a number of ways, the nature and structure of work is changing, it is a conversation that we are having with the Social Partnership, it is a conversation that we are having with Labour, the private sector, the Third Sector because we all have realised that we have to be able to engage work in new and varied ways, and we do not make apologies for that because we are not doing it under cover of darkness, we are doing it right here in this Honourable Chamber and so when we engaged small contractors as part of Fairchild Street, Constitution River, H.O.P.E. project or any other project, when we engage people to work on an at-first temporary basis, that is [all] legitimate work, so I do not know why we are drawing any false dichotomy between the services that are offered by a consultant or an economist in the Ministry of Finance or other kinds of professional services offered by artisans or offered by masons or offered by anybody else, because those are also professional services and I do not hear any complaints about those. The nature and structure of work is changing and I think all of Barbados realises that and so I hope - Although, I mean, I think that that hope might be in vain - that at some point what I would like to see an end to is this false argument that suggests that there is something wrong in the contracting of services. It is done all the time and in a very transparent way and so I am happy to be able to answer that particular question and I am happy to be able to repeat the fact that these Government

arrangements, any contracts for services or any agreements that are signed by anyone who is engaged by this Government are matters of public record and so Madam Chairman, with those few words, I beg to move that Head 34 in the amount of \$25 081 000 stand part.

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

HEAD 35

MINISTER OF PEOPLE EMPOWERMENT AND ELDER AFFAIRS

\$4 457 000

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas, you have the Floor.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Madam Chairman, I wish to indicate that the project that we are working on that merits this budget of \$4.457 million is more or less considered breaking new ground in Barbados in the light that the Community Elder Care programme which is a novel project is really designed to complement what the National Assistance Board is doing.... As a result of COVID we have got so many thousands of seniors across the island who have become so lonely. Many of them are not in family settings so that other relatives and friends are close to them or are able to look after them. Of course, you will appreciate that so many of them -- Madam Chairman, you are in the medical field and you know -- become depressed. They just want someone to talk with, someone to share the history that they have in their heads. Many of them are not bed-ridden but many of them are in homes with no-one to communicate with or to share anything at all with. This concept is for persons living in the communities or the villages and who know these individuals to meet with them, go to their homes, chat with them, do small chores and even worship with them because some of them do require that. They can also read with them. It is about being able to give that kind of personal touch in order to make a difference.

Madam Chairman, it is a concept which we were looking at and have sought to implement, where it would help to rekindle that spirit of community service and community life with these senior persons. We are all aware that our society is an ageing one. We have thousands of people coming on board. Some of them have mild dementia, some have full-blown Alzheimer's and some of them are still in their right minds but because of some disability or illness that may prevent them from moving around, they are really feeling down-spirited after having been in the house for so many months. We have therefore invited persons to indicate their ability or capacity to assist.

Some persons have training, some have no training at all but they have the experience where they have been living with their own elderly parents or caring for other persons, or because of the economic situation and the COVID impact they may not be employed anymore. Relatives of elderly persons have said, "We do not want anybody with our family members now that COVID is in the air," even though those relatives may not be bed-ridden.

Ma'am, you will appreciate that the National Assistance Board has got over 1 200 persons who have suffered numerous illnesses, and therefore cannot be on their own. That is where the Home Help assistants were, but this project is complimentary to helping and working with those who are in mild situations and will not in any way impact upon what the NAB is doing; it is more complimentary. I also want to indicate that having done our investigations since early 2019 when we recognised how our numbers for the ageing were growing and expanding and that there were so many vulnerable persons in our communities, we sought to identify them and to have everything categorised not only from that perspective but also from the perspective of inclement weather when many of those seniors may be unable to get out. We have compiled a book or documentation on the most vulnerable in our communities, and therefore it makes it easier for us to be able to identify them in order to engage persons to work with them and rekindle their spirits.

We would therefore like to see this project start within the next few weeks so that the linkages in the communities can continue and so that our younger persons, who will be engaging those senior citizens, would get a chance to know of the history of Barbados and make sure those generational links are rekindled. The young persons will also be able to do service in the villages and they will have the responsibility of reporting any matters related to abuse or neglect and so on to the respective agencies, including the Ministry of Health, the police and other agencies which would be able to treat to those matters. Therefore, Ma'am, I wish to indicate that the \$4.4 million will go towards the project so that Barbadians can rest assured that the seniors in communities who are not being looked after will get that opportunity, since some of those living among them will be attached to them and will be able to bring some comfort, peace and safety to them. This \$4.457 million is a supplementary for the care of the elderly in the various communities across the length and breadth of Barbados.

Asides.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Please ask that the Head stand part.

Hon. Miss. C.Y. FORDE: Yes, Ma'am. I beg to move that Head 35 stand part to the tune of \$4.457 million for the elderly care programme in the communities.

Hon. A.R. FORDE: I beg to second that, Madam Chair.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Thank you. There being no speakers, can you do the wrap-up, please, Honourable Member for St. Thomas?

` Asides.

The question that Head 35 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 39

Ministry of International Business and Industry in the amount of \$2 286 859.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Thank you, Madam Chairman. The sum being sought today is simply to enable the Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property Office (CAIPO) to secure and implement an information technology system to modernise its operations and improve its efficiency. We all hear the complaints from time to time in relation to that department; some quite justified, some entirely unjustified. We hear that things are taking too long to be processed, and lawyers complain that they are being called and told they need to change things which they cannot understand why on earth they have to change. They rush off and they make calls to every Minister. They call me, they call the Prime Minister with a whole host of complaints. I am asked sometimes to go and intervene and check on things to see if I can get them expedited. Sometimes when I go, I see the complaint is valid. Other times I see that in fact the complaint not only is invalid, but you cannot believe how an attorney-at-law could have submitted so much foolishness. It is a pendulum that swings both ways, Madam Chairman, but the time has come when we have to recognise that there is a genuine need for improvement.

We have to move now from manual and physical to digital. That is the move which we now have to make; to digitalise the Corporate Registry. As it stands now in relation to the incorporation of entities, you have a situation where, yes, an application can be made online but thereafter, really, everything else is pretty much physical. It is not as if when the application is made that the information automatically goes into the database. Instead, it has to then be typed in manually into the database and the processing of the application then is done manually, and

the preparation of the Certificate of Incorporation, again, is a manual process. When it comes to being able to transact any sort of online payment, you must set up an account registered as an agent from which any expense you incur would be deducted. That is clearly, in the context of the 21st Century, a very archaic system, Madam Chairman.

What we have to move to is a straight-through online processing system where you would be able to make your application online, make your payment online, have your application processed online, and your Certificate of Incorporation also issued online with all of the security features involved in the process. That is really what has been decided and which, after a long period of time, is long overdue. It has now been decided that we have to move to that stage. The sum being sought today, Madam Chairman, is to ensure that we secure and install this system. Gone must be the days when what I just outlined continues to be the way things are done at the Corporate Registry. If I may just say this by way of additional information, we sought to ensure that we got the best that we could get. We decided to democratise the process

where we invited users from among the most frequent users of the Registry to witness a demonstration of not only this system, but the system of the competition. It was the view of those frequent users of the Corporate Registry that in fact the features associated with this solution that is to be now secured, the features more than adequately suited the means that had to be met by the Registry.

These sums being sought today will take us through phase one, which will last approximately four months. This will largely deal with the process as I said earlier, from application for incorporation up to the stage of securing a Certificate of Incorporation. After that we will move to phase two, where an additional sum of \$1.9 million will be sought to then take us from the process of incorporation through to dissolution. That second phase should take approximately six months, so that by this same time next year we should be able to say comfortably that we have in fact fully digitalise the Corporate Affairs Department.

Madam Chairman if I may say, that is just part of the overall plan to fully digitalise what I would refer to as the business arm of the Ministry. We have already put in place an IT solution to enable the full digitalisation of the economic substance legislation. All the applications are done and processed online. This will be the phase we move to, now phase one and then as I said, we should move onto to phase two in approximately four months, so that the Corporate Registry would be fully digitalised.

In addition, we are also going to be digitalising the area of the international business unit, where we are going to be implementing another IT solution to facilitate all

applications to the international business unit online as well. That will be spelled out in great detail when actually get to that phase. We should get there very shortly. Then we can say that entirely in its full spectrum, there is a full digitalisation of all aspects of the business arm of the Ministry of International Business and Industry.

Madam Chairman, as I said, I am here today to seek the sum of \$2 286 859 to enable us to have phase one complete of the digitisation Corporate Affairs Department. I beg to move that Head 39 stand part.

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

HEAD 81

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT WORKS AND WATER RESOURCES IN THE AMPUNT \$1 430 000

Madam CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Hon. G. P. I. GOODING EDGHILL: Thank you Madam Chairman. The sum being sought under Head 81 has to do with road improvement bridge study, it is part of a CDB loan. We are currently looking at bridges in the Scotland District as you are aware as part of our overall planning for the development of that area. The bridges in question relates to St. Simons, St. Saviour's, Thompson Bridge and the one at Trio Path. The bridges we investigated, new designs we done and have been submitted. The Ministry is therefore seeking the sum of \$1.430 million to pay the consultants for professional services rendered. Of course, 529 was not an open Head and that is also being address.

Therefore, Madam Chairman, with those few words, I beg to move that Head 81 stand part.

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

HEAD 82

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATIONAL BEAUTIFICATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3 027 375

Madam CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central.

Hon. A. R. FORDE: Thank you Madam Chairman. I want to start by staying that metaphorically this speaks to refuge collection that was supposed to be literally collected prior to 2018 as it relates to matters associated with the last Administration. I want to say that in a year where garbage

was piled across Barbados, no one found it fit to awaken themselves from their slumber to recognise that garbage presented a problem in this country.

I want to thank the former Minister of the Environment and National Beautification for moving with a paste to ensure that they were vehicles brought in to deal with this damming problem that seek to threaten not only the health of this country but the biological and natural diversity as we know it in relation to the ecosystems and the conservational areas.

Garbage presents a problem in every single part of the world. I am happy to say that this money would be part of the payment. We have already started to pay a sum already and the \$3 027 375 will represent payment to the Central Bank that is owed this money.

I want to also say that in between this period of 2018 to present, the Member of Parliament for Christ Church East spoke about two years five months, and I will probably go on to say three weeks several hours 26 minutes five seconds. In between that period of time, this Government bought 26 compactor trucks, two skip truck, two skid steers, one dumper, two ten wheelers, one water truck, one response truck, one DNine, one booming compactor which is being used at the landfill.

I want to also say that over the last month we got two split units that on the standard that we must now encourage Barbados to be involved in the four Rs, which is to reduce, reuse, recycle and recover in a circular way so that every single ounce of purchase from garbage will become part of a circular Barbados, because that is what we are now seeing in these times.

You would see the ads in the papers where we have now extended a tendering process for a shredder which would be responsible for shredding all of those tyres. I want to say that we can have about 8 000 tyres per month being exposed to our dumps and landfill, and we are seeing it again in a circular way because that is what we are talking about across Barbados, whether in the fisheries, whether it is in the part of the diversity in terms of the economy that we must talk about circular Barbados. Hence, the rubber of the remnants of the tyres will certainly go back in the production of roads, sporting surfaces and even in the agriculture industry where it can be used as part of the mulch.

This is one of the type of conversations that we are having in Barbados. Madam Chairman, I want to say that we will continue, and you have already heard espoused the fact that illegal dumping will be something of the past. I have already said that those who dump illegally will be dealt before the law courts. I will say it again and I will say it because I know my mother listens to this Parliamentary

debate. Not because I am her son, but she understands the importance of what this Government is doing. If she at any point in time decides that she going run afoul of the law, I know she like rice and stew and I will carry some wherever she goes when the law deals with her. I am saying to every single Barbadian, illegal dumping is something that will not be tolerated, because it not only destroys the ecological fabric of this country, but it destroys your future of the unborn child as we know it, because when you dump illegally you are killing our country Barbados. We cannot have a song by the iconic Merrymen called "Beautiful Barbados" and Barbados is full of garbage. No, Madam Chairman. I want to thank corporate Barbados who came on-board over the last couple weeks and said, "Minister, if you are serious, then we are serious too." They are going to provide us with cameras at all illegal dumping sites. There is a software application on the phone called, "Minister is watching." I am not a voyeur, but I will see those who are dumping illegally in this country. I have on my phone where I caught two or three persons. Skips in the community are empty but Barbadians are putting the garbage alongside the skip. There must be a paradigm in the way how we treat to our disposal of garbage.

We must come to a Christian understanding in a fulsome way where we recognise that while we destroy our gullies, ecosystem, and surroundings, we are destroying ourselves. I am saying today that this practice must be a thing of the past and I am happy that we will be able to facilitate the collection of garbage with these additional a garbage trucks. We will move certainly with every connective tissue of the being of the Ministry of Environment and National Beautification and with every sinew of this Government to ensure that we have a clean, healthy, prosperous and beautiful Barbados as the songs suggests.

With those few words, I thank you Madam Chairman and move that Head 82 stand part.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: I beg to second that.

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

Bishop J.J. S. ATHERLEY: I appreciate the energy and enthusiasm that my Honourable friend from Christ Church West Central showed. I have just two things I wish to speak on. One is that I may be the only persons in this Chamber possessed of this view or sense, but it seems to me that we have a re-emerging garbage collection problem in Barbados. I have been observing that over the past several weeks. Maybe it is only where I travel, and I travel just about everywhere. It seems to me that the garbage piles up in increasing numbers across Barbados. I do not know if anyone else in the House senses that or would admit to that

if they do sense that. I am not about to attribute blame or anything like that.

It is a concern and if the Minister is not so inclined to be of that view and he may be unaware because Christ Church West Central is all clean, perhaps he can consult with a few of his colleagues. It does seem to me as though we have a re-emerging problem with garbage collection for whatever reason. I am wondering if we have problems with the trucks we have. The other thing is, Sir, through you Madam Chairman, that I have had complaints on several occasions about the dumping site on President Kennedy Drive at the corner of Hoad's Land outside of the Richmond area.

It is a very unhealthy site and has nasty odours when you pass there. It is right in the face of some people's homes. It is not a legal dumping site. I have written to SSA about it on behalf of the residents who have complained, and nothing has been done about that. I am sure that through you, Madam Chairman, that the Honourable Minister once he is aware as he now is will make sure that it is addressed. I would suggest, if I may be so presumptuous as to do so, that he goes to the site with his camera and take the photo so that he may be able to properly impress those at the SSA that it is indeed a problem in St. Michael West which it needs to attend to.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Mr. R. A. THORNE: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central is my geopolitical neighbour and my residential neighbour. It would be a surprise if we were not friends, but I do not rise to speak on account of friendship. I really want to express my deepest admiration for the work he is doing. I do have a vested interest; in that I represent a constituency that has been for some time practising recycling and I want to commend the areas of Atlantic Shores and Graeme Hall.

I want to say to the Minister and to you Madam Chairman that as a result of the work of these two communities, we have been inspired and the Minister who spoke has inspired to extend programmes of recycling into Carter's Gap, I can promise him that, and Ashby Land in Oistins. It is a rather different demographic, but recycling is so important to this country. We have learnt since we have come to this place that a lot of refuse collection becomes unnecessary if we teach our children to recycle. I want to say particularly of the Ashby Land area that it is a small area where a lot of children live. They play on evenings and there is an open area which is unsightly. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central has promised to transform that area.

I hope my colleagues are not jealous. They can also identify areas in their constituency, and he is quite willing to clean and green. He might even come to St. Thomas, but he is coming to Oistins. I do not want to excite any jealousy, but he is coming to Oistins with this project very shortly in a working-class area because even working-class people are entitled to beautiful surroundings. I always say that we go to the United States of America (USA) and to Britain, and it is so pristine, and we wonder how it is done. Again, I want to commend my colleagues that this can become part of a local Government scheme where we no longer have to depend exclusively on a Ministry but where people depend on their own efforts in cleaning their communities.

People live with a lot more dignity when their surroundings are clean. I look forward under this Minister to a physical transformation of our social spaces. I really do look forward to that so that we not only feel good about our Government but feel good about ourselves as people. When we live in clean surroundings it raises our self-esteem. Again, Madam Chairman, I rise to commend the Minister. I rise to commend this scheme to all of my colleagues in here, even the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. Your area needs a lot of work in terms of ...

Asides.

Mr. R. A. THORNE: Christ Church West needs a lot of work. Madam Chairman, I am appalled that I drive along the south coast and outside hotels you see grass growing in the street as though the hoteliers do not know it is there. If that is cleaned and corrected, tourists will feel a lot better about us, but more importantly we feel a lot better about ourselves. Barbados is too untidy. Again, let me commend the Minister for the work that he is doing and that he intends to do. Let me commend him for marrying his work with concepts of community organisation, that is to say, people who live in communities organising themselves to clean their own communities. Minister, I really do commend and want to express gratitude for the work that he is doing.

I am obliged to you, Madam Chairman.

Hon. A. R. FORDE: In wrapping up, I just want to say for the Member of Parliament for St. Michael West that the Clean and Green Project which will transform the entire country will not certainly leave out the constituency of St. Michael West and the parish of St. Michael will not be left out if you want me to be more magnanimous. Of course, in the area of President Kennedy Drive I am already on it. Certainly, we will be putting cameras there because we have to also encourage Barbadians to be part of this process and we need to implore in communities that there must be a type of empowerment and altruism in terms of these types of projects that will seek to beautify their very spaces. We

cannot talk enough, and I think we have to lead from the front. It is exactly what we are doing.

Madam Chairman, I beg to, I beg that the tune of \$3 027 375 stand part.

Hon Miss C.Y. FORDE: I beg to second that.

The question that Head 82 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 83

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

- \$10 186 190

Madam CHAIRMAN: We have five minutes to finish all of the Heads. The Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Hon. I. A. WEIR: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I fully respect your time. One Honourable Member for St. James North once said: "Night is upon us and sleep beckons." Madam Chairman, I would just like to briefly explain that this Supplementary for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security is to increase food production. You will note that the period January to July of this year for the sector had seen an increase of 16 per cent and that increase was due obviously to the hard work that my staff has been doing at the Ministry and I want to use this occasion to thank them and commend them for the commitment they have given especially during the Covid-19 period when we had to increase production in Barbados.

Madam Chairman, it is important to note that what we are doing with this \$10 million is to make sure we address a number of the things that were similar to what were raised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central and that is if you drive along even Graeme Hall by my Ministry when it rains heavily you would see all the dirt washed down into the road. It is very unsightly and we are actually preparing now a Cuscuta Grass and a Lemon Grass programme right around Barbados to make sure that we stop the soil erosion and at the same time we are going to employ close to 200 persons to help us propagate and plant the Cuscuta and Lemon Grasses and then employ some small contractors as well to clear the wells on all of the Barbados Agricultural Management Company (BAMC) Limited plantation so that we can get proper run off. The water will go back to the aquifer and at the same time, drive increase food production because when we clear those lands, we would then use the opportunity to increase production.

At the BAMC we have 90 farmers at River and 50 at Spring Hall and we are putting in the water harvesting or reservoirs for them. It is important for this to be stated and those reservoirs would capture for those farmers who go through prolonged drought periods and lose their crops so based on that rushed and brief presentation, I beg that this Head 83 do stand part.

Hon C. E. JORDAN: I beg to second that.

The question that Head 83 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 87

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGICAL AND VOCATION TRAINING - \$4 254 456

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

Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Madam Chairman. This relates to the 240 monitors that have been placed across the Nursery and Primary School to assist with the Covid-19 Health and Safety Protocols. As you well know, we are still very much within the Covid-19 pandemic and our children, obviously require as much assistance making sure that they have on the masks in the classroom ensuring that they observe the physical distancing and, of course, that they sanitise their hands. I just want to say, briefly, Madam Chairman, that I am very grateful to all of the persons who are lending a hand within the school, all of the persons who have continued to volunteer within the schools, as well as our teachers who in very difficult circumstances continue to be able to work with our children in the classroom to ensure that they have a sound education therefore, with those few words, I beg to move that this Head which is a request for the sum of \$4 254 456 do now stand part.

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Quickly to ask the Honourable Minister, Madam Chairman, through you: what is the process for application for these positions. I happen to be aware that some people in St. Michael West are being engaged for this purpose. I have never been directly spoken too about anybody about it. I suspect you are working through another agent who might find preference with you. That is improper and I just want to put that on the record.

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

Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: I want to assure the Honourable Member for St. Michael West that as with all programmes that this Government embarks on, we ensure that we properly vet the persons who are going into our schools to ensure that those persons are able to work with our children in the appropriate way. I believe what he is trying to insinuate is that persons have been hand-picked in some way and I want to assure the Honourable Member that those persons who have been engaged in our schools are ordinary Barbadians across the length and breadth of Barbados who have applied for the position and have been granted the opportunity to work in our schools.

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: I do not know that the Honourable Member has addressed my concern. Persons from St. Michael West may have been engaged for this process and I would like to know the mechanism for selecting such persons. Nobody has addressed me, the duly elected representative for St. Michael West on this matter, taxpayers' money is being spent to pay these people, people of St. Michael West pay taxes. I believe I am owed the courtesy of being told we are doing this and this is how we are selecting the persons and if Members of Parliament are being allowed to recommend persons for this programme, such courtesy should have been extended to me unless you prefer to work with some other agency on the ground in St. Michael West whom you might prefer to work with. I think that is improper and I have not had it answer as yet. I will ask it out there.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Hon Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: I am mindful of the time, Madam Chairman, but I do feel that the Honourable Member, as usual, is becoming a little bit more rattled than he needs to be. There are many persons who have applied through the Ministry of Education. Some of these persons are men and women who have been working in our schools and who would have indicated through the Ministry of Education that they wanted to work within the schools under this programme, therefore, if the Honourable Member has anyone who wants to apply, they can do so through the Ministry of Education.

Bishop J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Madam Chairman, I would imagine that some of the persons who are engaged in this process are men and women. I did not have to be told that. I would imagine that some are men and women. If they are persons, they have to be men and women, but if they came out of St. Michael West, I want to know the process of selection. You cannot shout at me across the aisle and say if you have anybody to recommend you can do so. Approach me properly as the people's representative

out of St. Michael West, say we are doing this programme, other Members of Parliament have been asked to submit 3, 4, 5, 10, 12 and 40 names; do you have some to submit? That courtesy had not been shown to me. The people of St. Michael West elected me representative here, not anybody else, at least not yet. You all can work on that particular project, but to date, I am the duly elected representative of St. Michael West, I represent the taxpayers down there, they have to fund the money that pays these people and I am not satisfied with the response I am getting from over there.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Michael South East if you may wrap up.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, Madam Chairman. Again, I can only give the Honourable Member the same assurances that I have given to all elected Members of this Chamber. There is process. Persons can apply as they do for all other positions. We have parent volunteers within our schools who assist. We have persons who readily come to the schools to assist. If the Honourable Member has persons who are interested in being a school monitor, perhaps he would do them well to be able to invite them to follow the relevant process and those persons can be so selected.

Asides.

Madam CHAIRMAN: Please do not.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Madam Chairman, I beg to move that Head 87 do now stand part.

Hon. C. Y. FORDE: I beg to second that.

The question that Head 83 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 91 -- MINISTRY OF YOUTH,

SPORTS AND COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT:
\$1 980 580

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

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: Madam Chairman, the sums of money being requested under this particular programme is to do some rehabilitation work at the Community Centre at Bathsheba which has been long in coming...

Madam CHAIRMAN: Please move that the Head stand part.

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: Madam Chairman, I beg to move that Head 91 stand part.

Hon. J. A. KING: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 91 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 92

MINISTRY OF ENERGY, SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

\$12 000 000

Madam CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman. The Head is with respect to the urgent need for us to be able to have the necessary funding for the recapitalisation of the Barbados Trust Fund Limited and also the Barbados Agency for Micro Enterprise Development which will of course enable us to properly provision the small micro enterprise sector with necessary funds for sustainability in the aftermath of the ravages of COVID-19.

Madam Chairman, I beg to move that Head 92 stand part.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: There is a misprint along the way that needs to be corrected. Somewhere in one of the pieces of documentation it says \$12 as opposed to \$12 million and clearly the Government would not want to offer only \$12 in assistance. I am grateful to my friend the Honourable Leader of the Opposition for drawing that typographical error to our attention.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: I have no doubt that all things are possible.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Ma'am, as I indicated there is an error where the request is \$12 as opposed to \$12 million as defined in the breakdown and I would want to propose an amendment that the documentation properly reflect \$12 million for this Head 92, and therefore I beg to move that Head 92 as amended stand part.

Hon. Miss. C.Y. FORDE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 92 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

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

Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN: Madam Chairman, just for absolute clarity in terms of the Resolution, under the Addendum for Head 83 there should be the insertion of the actual numbers 1047316 to reflect the actual text of Head 33. Under Head 86, it should read 65805787 as opposed to 85805787, and the Honourable Member just corrected Head 92 to indicate \$12 million in the actual text, and so Madam Chairman, I beg to move that this Resolution as amended do now pass.

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

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

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 Money Resolution with amendments in Standing Finance Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of Government Business.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: Thank you, 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, November 17, 2020 at 10.00 a.m. in the morning.

Speaking on the adjournment, Sir, I therefore want to take this opportunity to wish all parties in the race a good race and a very peaceful race. I know there will only be one winner and we are hopeful and expect that there will be a call for Moore (more) when that bell is rung, but Sir, I do want to wish everyone well in particular the Honourable Member for St. Michael West so that we can continue our cordial relations and that we will have productive debates when the time comes.

Hon. C.E. JORDAN: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, November 17, 2020 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

Asides.

Mr. CLERK: Mr. Speaker, we have to revert to the process. Normally on the passage of a Money Resolution it has to be read a first time, a second time and then agreed to and that process was not followed.

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

STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE (REVERTED)

On the separate motion of Hon. R. R. STRAUGHN, seconded by Hon. W. A. ABRAHAMS, the Resolution was read for a first and second time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT (REVERTED)

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, November 17, 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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CHAIR, Madam	

DUGUID, Dr. the Hon. W.F.
EDGHILL, Hon. G. P. I. GOODING
FORDE, Hon. A.R.
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THORNE, Mr. R. A.
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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. Masthead and Messages. Although no session line is printed, the Proclamation read by Mr. Speaker refers to ‘the Second Session of Parliament which commenced on the 7th day of September, 2020’. Please confirm whether the session line should be added.

Q3. Messages and Order No. 6. The source has ‘MESSAGES FROM HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL’, the Proclamation number is left blank (‘S.I. 2020 No:’), and the Resolution heading in Standing Finance Committee reads ‘RESOLUTION’. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 1. Hon. W. A. Abrahams’ speech follows Hon. Ms. C. S. V. Husbands’ speech with no call from the Chair and opens in mid-thought (‘The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is considerably brighter.’); something may be missing. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Standing Finance Committee, Head 33. The Head is shown as ‘\$1 047 314’, while Hon. R. R. Straughn’s closing correction inserts ‘1047316’ to reflect the text of Head 33 (under ‘the Addendum for Head 83’). The question was then put on ‘Head 33 as amended’. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Standing Finance Committee, Head 87. After the motion that Head 87 stand part, the question is recorded as ‘The question that Head 83 stand part was put and resolved’. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Standing Finance Committee, Head 34. Hon. Miss M. K.-A. Caddle’s reply contains the words ‘I will try to (huh!???) some of the usual noise’, indicating an unclear passage. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at the Worthing Corporate Centre on Tuesday, 27th October, 2020, Mr. Speaker, His Honour A. E. Holder, taking the Chair at 10.15 a.m.; prayers were taken by Rev. Father Mark

Harewood. Mr. Speaker read a Proclamation of Her Excellency Dame Sandra Prunella Mason providing that, because of the public health emergency, the Second Session of Parliament would from 27th October be held with some Members present and others participating virtually. On a matter of privilege, the Leader of the Opposition, Bishop J. J. S. Atherley, complained that the Opposition had not been told of the change; Hon. D. D. Marshall replied that it lay within the Governor-General’s authority.

Hon. Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw, Leader of Government Business, laid two sets of audited financial statements, moved the first reading of the Pesticides Control (Amendment) Bill, 2020, and had Order No. 2 withdrawn. Under Order No. 1, Dr. the Hon. W. F. Duguid moved the Resolution leasing Crown land at Sayers Court, Christ Church, and Holder’s Hill, St. James, to the Maria Holder Memorial Trust for nursery schools, for 30 years at a one-time rent of \$200 a site; Hon. Ms. C. S. V. Husbands, Hon. W. A. Abrahams, Hon. Miss Bradshaw and Bishop Atherley spoke, and the Resolution was agreed to.

Under Order No. 5, the Attorney General, Hon. D. D. Marshall, moved the extension of the public health emergency until 27th March, 2021. Bishop Atherley asked why six months rather than three. The Minister of Health and Wellness, Lt. Col. the Hon. J. D. Bostic, said about 129 persons had tested positive since flights resumed on 12th July, that Harrison’s Point held no more than 10 to 15 persons, and that only five of almost 100 ventilators had been used. The Resolution was agreed to and the House suspended until 2.00 p.m.

In Standing Finance Committee the House considered a Resolution to grant \$139 971 839 under Supplementary Estimates No. 06 2020-2021. Hon. R. R. Straughn and Hon. Miss M. K. A. Caddle explained \$5 million under Head 13 for tourism development around Bridgetown, which Bishop Atherley questioned; Lt. Col. Bostic sought \$65 805 787 for the COVID response under Head 86, Bishop Atherley asking about \$10 652 000 for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the health levy; and Hon. Miss Caddle said the National Insurance response had reached \$120 million to 32 000 people, with 26 hotels in a preference share programme meeting 80 per cent of wages. Other Heads covered Fire Service costs, community elder care (\$4.457 million), CAIPO’s computer system, refuse collection, food production and small business funds, where Head 92 was corrected from \$12 to \$12 million. The Resolution passed with amendments.

On the motion of Hon. Miss Bradshaw the House was adjourned until Tuesday, 17th November, 2020 at

10.00 a.m. The Clerk then noted that the Money Resolution	had not been read, so the House reverted, the Resolution was read and passed, and the adjournment was put again.