
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2008 – 2013

THE SENATE

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

Senator Ince, you have the Floor.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, I rise in support of the Appropriation Bill laid before this Honourable Chamber. I am going to use the privilege that is granted to me to explain to this Upper Chamber, as well as the listening public of Barbados, what are the social and economic implications of the Estimates and how we should look at the Estimates as far as our livelihoods are concerned, what is Government's agenda for the Financial Year 2010/2011.

Sir, this document seeks to project Government's revenue and its expenditure within this financial year. Sir, the Estimates are sometimes used by individuals as a gauge or as a benchmark towards what the Budget may be. The business environment or the business houses also use the Estimates as a gauge to what they perceive Government may be doing within that financial year, so it is important that we embrace all persons within the society, embrace all those who are at the lower levels, embrace all those who are at the higher levels, embrace the large corporations as well as the small businesses. This is what the Estimates are all about.

It is not about just speaking numbers. It is not just about having a voice and pretending that everything is going well, that the present Administration is the best. Sir, we have the skills. We have the talent, and we are going to take Barbados forward in these trying economic times.

Sir, we have challenges before us, challenges that despite all of the economic theories, what we are seeing

before us in this global crisis has defied all economic principles. Economic principles say to us that is a variable that has important increases, then it should have a direct effect on goods and services. We have seen it in the price of oil, but the price of oil has declined and stabilised, and we have still seen a lot of volatility in the market, not only here locally but regionally and internationally.

The United States despite showing signs of recovery, it is still a volatile market. The Democratic Labour Party, the Government in question, has put systems in place to deal with any issues that are before us.

Sir, the Estimates is a mirror of the challenges that we face in the local economy, and the challenges are a decline in the domestic product for two consecutive years, 2008 and 2009. We came to office in January 2008, and it is projected that we may have marginal growth in 2009.

Sir, we have experienced declines in tourism, our main money earner. We have seen declines in construction. We have seen declines in manufacturing and other critical sectors of the economy.

As I said before, the global economy remains volatile, and the United States, who is the largest importer of goods and services, is now looking slightly to recover, but we in Barbados and the Democratic Labour Party are looking ahead. We are looking at 2010-2014, based on our medium-term strategy as well as our medium-term development strategy for Barbados, 2010-2014.

Mr. President, in these challenging times unemployment has declined. That is a plus. Many of us would have heard the Opposition with their economic theories that unemployment would have been 21 per cent to date. We have heard the prophets of doom and gloom that the Barbados economy was coming to an end; that we were like a ship without a captain; that the Government in office had no clue of what they were doing. We heard all of that

in a presentation, but we have the confidence and the know-how. We have seen this before as a Party.

In 1994, the challenges were tough. The Democratic Labour Party instituted a programme. That programme instituted in 1994, the present Prime Minister was Minister of Finance then. We were ridiculed but the former Government, the Barbados Labour Party, never changed one sentence or one structure of that programme, and the results have shown it. Look at the economic results for 1994 and you would see.

SA28A 10:10 Sequence 1

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 02, 10.10 a.m.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, on a point of order. The Honourable Senator is misleading the Senate. The programme was changed entirely and a completely different policy path pursued, starting with an economic and financial statement by the former Prime Minister, so it is entirely false to say - though it may be politically expedient - that the same path was pursued. It was not. There was a complete departure from it, Sir.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, may I continue?

Mr. PRESIDENT: You may.

SENATOR J. INCE: Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. President, in 1994, and I want Senator Thompson to listen carefully, the Democratic Labour Party implemented programmes, Sir, and one of those programmes was a Statutory Fund and I am not going into all of them. We established a Statutory Fund. They came to office in September 6, 1994, the Budget we presented was April 28, 1994.

We instituted the Statutory Fund to protect policyholders of this country. Sir, they never changed it but in that period 1994-2007 two major insurance companies collapsed. The Democratic Labour Party was not in office and the policyholders got no compensation whatsoever. None.

Sir, let us start to review the strategy. This Government changed nothing but yet they used the Statutory Fund, never looked after it, two insurance companies collapsed and the policyholders today are still crying and you are going to hear Senator Thompson speaking about CLICO, but I will deal with that issue a little later.

Sir, in 1994, Sir, if she wants to discuss 1994, we could discuss it.

Asides.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, it seems sometimes that when you are on the right track, Senator Thompson appears and then when she cannot deal with the issues, she leaves the Senate, Sir, and she is going to return when I finish but I have no problem with Senator Thompson returning because I am going to deal with 1994, so she can leave for the rest of the day. It makes no difference.

Sir, when she said that the Government changed nothing. Nothing was changed and we are going to look at the growth of the economy for that period of time, when we are looking at robust growth. The growth was robust. It is all there and how can you change an economic policy within three months and get the required results, as the Democratic Labour Party has implemented? They came to office for three months, no more.

Mr. President, let us be reminded that despite the criticism that was drawn from the Opposition, the Democratic Labour Party is on the right path. We are pursuing the correct economic goals and the people of Barbados know that. We have explained to them what we are doing. We have explained to them the path that we are going to take.

Mr. President, at the end of the day, let me remind Senator Thompson again that the late Right Excellent J.M.G.M. (Tom) Adams was Prime Minister of Barbados in 1980. The country faced similar economic circumstances. At that time, there was no public or private consultation. At that time, Sir, there was no CTUSAB and oil prices had surpassed those of 1973 and 1974 and that was what confronted the Prime Minister, and in presenting his Budgetary Proposals in 1980.

Sir, when Senator Thompson wants to use the excuse that the Democratic Labour Party and the Prime Minister have to go to the people of Barbados because we do not have any answers so the people are not leading us and we have to go to the public and we have found ourselves in murky waters, Mr. Adams in his proposal and I quote from page 2A, Budgetary Proposals 1980, para. 4. These are the words of the late Right Excellent J. M. G. M. (Tom) Adams, an outstanding son of the soil. He said:

"I consider it therefore necessary at the outset of the presentation of the Budgetary Proposals this evening to appeal to the good sense of all Barbadians which has served us well in trying times in the past to exercise restraint both in their spending habits and in their demands on the domestic economy."

“Unless we can restrict the growth of personal consumption within limits which will permit the attainment of adequate levels of investment, it will not be possible to sustain required levels of economic expansion. All will suffer in the long run, even though some may gain temporarily at the expense of others.”

Mr. President, the late Right Excellent J. M. G. M. (Tom) Adams went to the people of Barbados. This current Administration has embraced all sectors in charting a course forward. There is nothing wrong with that, when you are confronted by challenging circumstances that are unprecedented, that threaten the lives of Barbadians, that threaten the financial viability of businesses, it is important that we embrace society and that is what the Democratic Labour Party is doing and that is what the Barbados Labour Party, they followed the strategy that we had taken way back, and they did it in 1980 because in 1973 and 1974, we were in office. Sir, this whole claim about not going to the public and confuse them, I could understand Senator Thompson’s agony because if you built a public bath for \$422 000, you should be confused.

Mr. President, this Administration leaves no doubt that we have taken the right approach in carrying this country forward. It is against this background, Mr. President, that we have what is before us, called a Medium Term Development Strategy of Barbados, written by competent Barbadians and I compliment them. This is not an IMF document.

The Opposition would want people to believe that we have an IMF document. This is a document conceptualised by professional public servants and persons within the private sector. I have all confidence in this document that we would achieve the objectives. There is no doubt about that, Sir.

Mr. President, this document seeks to stabilise the economy and minimise social dislocation. We know there are many families that are facing challenges economically and that is what we seek to do, not only minimise social dislocation but to protect the vulnerable and maintain the moral fabric of the society.

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 02, 10:20:14

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR J. INCE: Maintaining that moral fabric of society is critical to our economy. If you do not maintain those critical areas, there can be fallouts as far as deviant behaviour is concerned. Mr. President, it is important that these things be mentioned.

Mr. President, when we hear persons speaking about the International Monetary Fund, the Democratic Labour

Party has nothing to be ashamed of. Barbados gained its independence in 1966. Sir, we were no longer under the control of the colonial masters. Barbados registered and became a member of the International Monetary Fund in December of 1970, four years after Independence.

Sir, it meant that we had to establish a path. There were many Ministers in the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow’s Cabinet who understood the importance of Barbados finding its way as far as our industrial development and our tourism industry were concerned.

Mr. President, we joined the International Monetary Fund at that time knowing very well that we would need assistance. The International Monetary Fund was formed in 1944 in a place called Bretton Woods, North West of New Hampshire with 44 countries as members. It now has 186 members.

Mr. President, when we joined the International Monetary Fund we would have received funding. Barbados was now in its growth stage economically. The World Bank was also formed when the International Monetary Fund came into being in 1944. At that time, the World Bank was called the Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Sir, if you needed funds from the World Bank, you had to be a member of the International Monetary Fund. It was one of the conditions. The World Bank is the International Monetary Fund’s sister. Mr. President, at that time for our development, we knew we needed the funding and we pursued that path and we were criticised in all corners by the Opposition. The facts are there. They called what Barbados was doing an economic catastrophe.

Mr. President, it is noted that when the economy, under the Barbados Labour Party, faced economic challenges, they went to the International Monetary Fund and entered into a standby arrangement with the International Monetary Fund. It is recorded. Mr. President, it tells me that the decision by the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow and his Cabinet was a decision in the right direction at the right time for Barbados, and it has borne fruit. We have challenges today.

Mr. President, our medium-term development strategy would not only seek to minimise, as I said, social dislocation but would also embrace a continuous development of the Barbados economy to become a global competitor. This economy of Barbados, a small country of 166 square miles, maintained the capability of sustaining a rate of growth on the average of 3.0 per cent per annum. Sir, that is achievable. I am proud of being a member of this present Administration because we are focussed. We know what we are doing.

Senator Thompson alluded to the fact yesterday that it seems to her and to persons in Barbados that the tunnel is dark and long. Mr. President, this strategy would also seek to generate adequate levels of foreign exchange, the purpose of which is to develop an export-driven policy. That was never done in this country before. The previous Administration had no policy in place. They had no agricultural policy or no educational policy except for EduTech and the policy was to give school children laptops. Some of the school children took the laptops home only to find out that their parents did not have electricity.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. It is entirely false to say that the Barbados Labour Party Administration had no policy on education. There was a White Paper on Education presented to the Parliament which was followed in many respects. In fact, the education policy is still being continued by the present Administration. Following that platform, a clear agricultural policy was also defined and many aspects of it are still being pursued. Sir, I understand the Senator's enthusiasm and his desire to defend his Party, but let him do so with some accuracy.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, may I continue, Sir? I am surprised that Senator Thompson has returned to her seat. Sir, she returned when I am now looking at our medium-term development strategy, but I can shift gears and remind her that in 1994, no strategy of that 1994 structural adjustment programme was changed. The Reports of the Central Bank would have indicated that the economy gained momentum. They came into office on September 6, 1994. Tell me what policies a Government could have implemented to change an economy within three months to gain such momentum? Explain it to Jeptet. Explain it to me. The economy gained momentum.

Sir, in 1994, the economy expanded by 4 per cent. How can you achieve that in three months in office? Senator Thompson wants to say, oh, we had this big strategy when they came into office. Explain it. These are some of the things that the Democratic Labour Party...

When I sat and listened to the Senator going back to 1994, it is important that we clear the issues. This strategic plan that we are looking at is to keep the unemployment rate in single digits. In 2000, the economy experienced robust growth and the tourism sector grew by 8 per cent. Senator Thompson is saying that unemployment is high. In 2000, the unemployment rate under the Barbados Labour Party, the former Administration, was 9.3 per cent and they had robust growth in every sector of the economy, trading and non-trading.

Senate A28A Sequence 3

10.30 a.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, they had VAT receipts, they had moneys at their disposal, still the unemployment rate was 9 per cent. Please explain to me how that happened. I have no problem, call for a point order, I will sit.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please address the Chair, Senator.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, what I am saying is that in that year the economy was robust, any person who would get up in this Honourable Chamber and say that the Barbados Labour Party did not have good solid years of economic growth would be a stranger to the truth. Sir, I am not prepared to be a stranger to the truth. The Barbados Labour Party did experience tremendous economic growth, but we have seen nothing for that growth. What we saw was an increase in the national debt and more than \$700 million in cost overruns in projects.

Senator Thompson spoke about contracts to a selected few but I was puzzled, I smiled. Sir, the reason I smiled is that Senator Thompson sat in a Cabinet with three outstanding economists. Sir, economist number one was an Oxford graduate. Economist number two held First Class Honours from the University of the West Indies. Economist number three, the guru, held Honours from Mona, Jamaica. Sir, with all of the legal brains you could find, yet they sat down and decided to lease a public road to a financial institution. Sir, with all of those brains in that Cabinet, yet they leased a public road to a financial institution. This is unheard of to a financial institution, that the institution could come and block the road if this present Administration were to miss a monthly payment. Sir, we had to correct that. Can you imagine?

Mr. President, the Democratic Labour Party, this present Administration, is focussed on preserving a stable macroeconomic environment by containing a rate of inflation that is acceptable. We are focussed on maintaining what we would call a stable physical debt. Sir, what we are working towards in this strategy is the alleviation of poverty. We want to alleviate or to minimise poverty in Barbados. There is no perfect economy, no policies are perfect, yet we are striving for an objective.

Sir, if you were to listen to the message coming from the Opposition, it would seem as though they have all the answers. It would seem as though they have the answer to everything, yet they created what could be termed an environmental award winning exhibit called "Greenland", at a cost of \$80 million, yet it cannot function. Sir, that is another non-performing asset.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Mr. President, the Honourable Member is misleading

this Honourable House. Sir, the construction cost of Greenland was \$25 million and not \$80 million.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, the preliminary cost, like everything else in which the Honourable Senator was involved when she was Minister, now Senator, was \$25 million. It ended up costing this Government \$80 million. Therefore, the Honourable Member can subtract \$25 million from \$80 million. Jepter is not that very good at maths. Asides.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, Senator Ince is not as brilliant at mathematics as Senator Thompson, so let the Honourable Senator do the mathematics. Sir, if the Honourable Senator wants to contest it, I have no problem but what I am saying is that when you are going to accuse this Government of not having answers of malfunctioning as far as the economy is concerned, what the Honourable Senator must do is to evaluate her stewardship as a former Minister of Government. Sir, that stewardship would receive a failing grade because there is no one project in which the former Minister was involved that did not have cost overruns, or that did not present an embarrassment to the then Government.

Sir, as I continue, we could categorise the performance of the former Minister as one of spectacular failure. Sir, the Ministry of Housing and Lands failed, the Ministry of Health failed and the Ministry of Health failed at the closure of the St. John Polyclinic. Sir, the health strategies were tied up in a black polythene bag and thrown in the back of a truck. That is where our health problems started, when the former Minister took it upon herself to stand at the back of a truck. Our health policies were in that black polythene bag and it went to the dump at Mangrove and our problems started.

Asides.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, we are going to work towards the alleviation of poverty. We have outlined our commitment to health, tourism, education and agriculture. Sir, we are fully aware that these are trying times and it is in these trying times that we need to provide a comfort zone for parents and their children, that is why we established summer camps.

Sir, we were severely criticised by the Opposition that we were hiring inexperienced persons to look after summer camps. The summer camps programme is a success and we are going to have those camps in 2010, which again will be a success. We are going to protect the lives and implement safety standards for the young children of this country so that when their parents are at work, we want those parents to function in a comfortable environment.

Sir, if you cannot function in a comfortable working environment, it means that it is going to affect your productivity and the Democratic Labour Party, this present Administration, has stated that we are going to provide the environment to increase productivity among the persons and employees in Barbados. Sir, we have started that with the construction of the Warrens Towers for public servants.

Under the previous Administration, public servants worked in horrible conditions. There was all talk and no action by the Opposition and we are acting. Sir, public servants' dreams are now becoming a reality and we are going to work and use the skills of the public servants to carry this country forward. Sir, the results are being seen.

We have concluded that if we do not use the skills and resources of the country, if those skills and resources are not properly harnessed, we could find ourselves in difficulty a year, two years or five years from now. It is important and that is why we have paid emphasis on education, on our training centres, on our young people getting a skill and getting an education to maintain the economy of Barbados.

We have also looked after those retired persons. We have embraced those persons in this strategic plan. We have not forgotten them. Mr. President, I marvelled when I heard the Opposition criticising our healthcare system.

10.40 a.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR J. INCE: Sir, they claim that we have two Ministers at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and, Sir, I could understand the sentiments and, in the words of the Leader of the Opposition, "she is underwhelmed". Sir, what they would like us to do is to adopt the policies they had for the health services.

Sir, what was the policy of the 14 years they spent in office? It was mass confusion in the Accident and Emergency Department and non-payment of fees to the pharmacists for drugs dispensed. Sir, that was their policy. There was no strategic plan for the Barbados Drug Service. They ceased construction, as I have said before, at the St. John Polyclinic. Sir, that is their strategy.

Mr. President, they closed what you call the Eye Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital under Senator Thompson's stewardship. The Senator, at the time was Minister and she said that it was not financially viable. Sir, could you imagine that now they are championing the cause of people, that they are now interested in the health of Barbadians, yet they closed the St. John Polyclinic, they closed the Eye Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and now they are championing the cause for health. Mr.

President, it seems to me that the Senator has now found herself at the right hand of Gamaliel and all of us are going to Macedonia.

Mr. President, the Democratic Labour Party and this present Administration have a plan in place and within that plan, we are going to bring to the people of Barbados a health service that is viable. Sir, in these challenging times, it is important that Barbadians can go to the polyclinics and go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Mr. President, as I have said before, no system is 100 per cent perfect, but we are going to create that environment when they do go.

Mr. President, recently the canteen at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was opened after years of being closed. You can now go to the pharmacy within the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, to the dispensary and have private conversations with the pharmacist, without persons having to hear what you are speaking about. Sir, that is improvement and we are getting there.

Mr. President, yesterday you heard the Senator with a lot of talk about building a new hospital. She said that she needs all the information and asked who was reporting to whom. Sir, at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital we are seeing the improvements and at the polyclinics we are seeing improvements.

Sir, cuts in Estimates are nothing new but based on the challenges that we had before us, some of those cuts are as a result of removing what we would call wastage. Sir, in this physical strategy we say to the public of Barbados that we are going to minimise wastage in public spending and, Sir, we know of wastage. It is important that persons are held accountable for the spending of public monies.

Mr. President, one of the things that has happened over the years, with no accountability was the reckless spending of Government's finances and this Administration has promised the people of Barbados that we were going to be held accountable and we were going to put systems in place to ensure that there is greater transparency and efficiency when it comes to spending the taxpayers' money of Barbados.

Mr. President, if they were vigilant, the Barbados Water Authority would never have been in the position it is in today. Sir, as I have said before, they had a top economist as Minister, an Oxford graduate, in charge of the Barbados Water Authority, but could not get the Barbados Water Authority ready for the FTC. Sir, not one financial report was prepared and these are the kinds of brains that they had.

The Barbados Water Authority was bankrupt and riddled in debt and when the Barbados Labour Party came to office, they found a well-oiled machine. The Barbados

Water Authority was financially viable, approximately \$32 million in Treasury Bills and Fixed Deposits and they were making a profit.

The interest from the investment was approximately \$3.1 million a year, that is what the Democratic Labour Party left. Sir, in those years, between 2007 to 2008, the Barbados Water Authority lost \$58 million and it ended up with \$150 million and to this day, we have to ask what is the reason.

Mr. President, this is the type of financial mess that the Democratic Labour Party came to office and found. Sir, as I have said before, Senator Thompson cannot sit in this Chamber when Senator Ince is speaking on financial issues. She has to leave like now and is leaving again. Sir, it is not going to be easy for her when I am on my feet, she has to leave.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, I really just crave the protection of the Chair. The Honourable Member is shouting and shouting my name all the time and I am afraid, since he is from St. Philip that he might pull out a gun.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I wish to draw to your attention that is not proper behaviour for this Senate. I will not accept it. I do not expect you to do that because you are not a neophyte. You are a person with experience in both Houses of this Parliament and for you to do that in those circumstances suggests that you are disrespecting the Chair, I will not have it.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, let me withdraw it and apologise to the Chair, if I am disrespecting the Chair, which is not my intention. Just let me ask for the Chair's protection so that I can be relieved of the shouting. If the Honourable Senator has strong points to make, I can hear them but I do not need to be shouted at all the time. I am just fearing that there may be an escalation in his behaviour from his shouting to something else.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Honourable Senator would have been addressing the Chair. If he is shouting, he is shouting at the Chair and the Chair has not detected any shouts except from time to time, the shout of joy.

Senator Ince, you may continue.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, thank you very much. I appreciate it. Mr. President, I wish Senator Thompson well in her exit but when Senator Thompson returns we will have to deal with the issue of Kensington Lodge and the asbestos roof. We had to deal with the issue of the bath at Silver Sands, where the same contractor who

built the bath at Silver Sands was given the contract for the asbestos roof at Kensington Lodge.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, I rise on a point of order. This is a matter which Honourable Members of the Other Side persist in perpetuating and I would urge the Chair's indulgence relative to the matter. Sir, the Honourable Senator is misleading the House. The bath at Silver Sands was built entirely by the National Conservation Commission, not any private contractor at all.

SENATOR J. INCE: May I continue, Mr. President?

Mr. PRESIDENT: You may.

S/A28A/10:50 Sequence 5

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR J. INCE: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Sir, the Prime Minister made a statement that Barbados is not just an economy, and we embrace that statement. What that statement implied, and encouraged is the participation of civil society and the private, very important, in the management of this economy.

Sir, it embraces the resources of this country, and it is important that when we look at Barbados, we do not look at Barbados in just an economic context, but also in a social context that will deliver the economic viability of businesses, the social responsibility of parents, deliver an education system that we are assured of our young persons in the short, medium and long-term. Sir, what this has done is to identify what are the root causes of family disintegration, the deteriorating values of our society.

Sir, I am confident that this Democratic Labour Party on the premise of Barbados as not just an economy has the right answers for the challenges. We are on the way of meeting our objectives in housing, housing every last person. Senator Thompson spoke yesterday about a big fete, amazing; about giveaways.

Sir, the former Administration raised taxes and duties on large yachts and, sporting vessels that are 15 times the cost of a house. The duties at that time were 25 per cent. Sir, how many persons in Barbados have a cruising yacht? Senator Ince does not. Senator Ince cannot afford one, but if I was given 25 per cent, one quarter, of a yacht costing \$4.5 million, what is the end result? Twice the cost of a low income home at Marchfield. Yet, this Senator is saying that there are giveaways. What more giveaways do you want? This is the type of attitude that

they want to tell Barbadians that we are mismanaging and we are sending the wrong message.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Senator is misleading the Senate. I want to know if the Honourable Senator is trying to suggest that this Administration did not write-off \$25 million to the Turf Club. I do not know if Senator Ince could afford a race horse.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, the Turf Club employs almost 3 000 persons, or more, from grooms to persons who look after the feeding of the horses and vet services. Sir, a person owning a yacht employs how many persons sailing into Barbados? None.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Senator is misleading the Senate. He is suggesting that there will not be revenue benefits from a write-off at that level. The point that I was making and drawing the attention to the Turf Club is, all Governments do write-offs to certain business sectors.

The people who come in on the yachts, the yachts have to be provisioned. You are trying to develop a competitive intervention in the yachting industry and they buy goods and services here. They employ people to provide them with things here, so there is a benefit to it for Barbados in the same way that the Senator tries to urge that there was a benefit to the Turf Club write-off.

Sir, I want to hear the Senator speak to the cuts in this Budget and not what happened 10 or 15 years ago. I want to hear him speak to these Estimates and the cuts in the various sectors. Let him talk about those.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, may I continue?

Mr. PRESIDENT: You may.

SENATOR J. INCE: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The energy policy within our medium-term physical strategy - if Senator Thompson would spend enough time in this Chamber, Senator Thompson would have known that I looked at the cuts within the Estimates, but she was absent. I looked at why the cuts were made, the impact, in my opening statement. I looked at the impact, and she was absent.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the Senate if he is trying to suggest that I did not hear him. He shouted so loud that I had no choice, but outside of this Chamber has a facilitation for Members to listen to the

debate from several rooms and several places within the precincts. That is what I frequently do.

In fact, I note that the Senator dealt with it en passant in a very cursory way, but it represents the hardship facing Barbados and it, therefore, should behoove him to deal with it in a more substantive manner, because that is what Barbadians would be facing. We have already lived through the past, 15/20 years ago, 1992, 1994. Deal with the present and the future.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have the Floor.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, this Administration has outlined what our policies are. If Senator Thompson does not hear, that is her problem. It is not Senator Ince's problem. We have a clear cut energy policy, not the energy policy that the Honourable Senator implemented as Minister responsible for Energy, an energy policy that led Barbadians to believe that we were receiving subsidised energy products, only to realise that we have accumulated a debt of \$180 million. I have never heard of a strategy called "subsidising by debt" and the taxpayers have to pay it. The taxpayers of Barbados have to pay it and you are subsidising energy products by debt.

Sir, we were supposed to receive millions of dollars through an offshore drilling programme. We were supposed to receive millions of dollars. We were supposed to set up a fund. We were told to set up a fund. It was not this Administration that leased a boat, for \$15 million, to sail around Barbados and the Caribbean empty, not a single person but the captain and crew, and Senator Thompson wants us to forget? That is what we came to office and found.

Sir, a cruise liner called "Carnival Destiny", \$15 million. I think that is the right term. It was supposed to be filled from the starboard side to the Port side, Captain and crew. Sir, not one person, and now the taxpayers of Barbados, the hardworking farmers of this country...

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR J. INCE: The hardworking police officers, the hardworking nurses, the hardworking teachers...

11.00 a.m.

Sequence 6

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 07, 11.00 a.m.

SENATOR J. INCE: Sir, the hardworking persons within MTW and all civil society is now saddled with a US\$15 million that we have to repay because, Sir, as I said, the economic brilliance of a team of the times, that is what they called themselves, the team of the times, and we are now faced with a US\$15 million and Senator Thompson is going to say to Senator Ince, I must forget and move on. That is why the cuts are necessary because we have to pay the debt.

Sir, we have to pay the debt at the prison and that is BDS\$700 million. We have to pay the debt at Greenland. We have to pay the debt on the building at Newton Industrial Park, where four contractors were used and the first contractor got all the money. This Side did not pay him. That Side, the Barbados Labour Party paid the contractor all the money, unheard of, economic gurus, financial gurus and then she is going to say to me, you should be like the Queen's son, please do not shout, please be nice. No. It cannot happen my friend. Thank you very much.

Mr. President, may I continue, Sir?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have five minutes more.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, I thank you.

Mr. President, the economic challenges that we face now, as I said before, are unprecedented. The Democratic Labour Party in our two years, we have identified the housing lots for persons in Barbados. They made reference, Sir, that we have not done anything. Country Park towers, Sir, is going to be completed. It took them 14 years and one block never came out of the ground and I would like the Senator to provide me with some answers.

What happened to the 85.3 acres of land at Kent? What happened to the \$16 million that was supposed to go to build Country Park Towers that this Administration is saddled with borrowing money to have Country Park Towers done, when the former Administration had \$16 million at their disposal and it cannot be traced. I would like the answers.

Senator Thompson said yesterday that she wants answers to our health system, well Jepter wants answers now in our housing system. Tell me about the \$16 million. Mr. President, that 85.3 acres of land - I did some research. It never came before this Senate that 85.3 acres of land was removed from the land bank at the NHC, Crown lands. Every time Crown lands are going to be transferred or removed, Sir, it has to come before the House. I have not seen it.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, on a point of order. The Honourable Senator is misleading the Senate. I was not the Minister at the time of the transaction, however, in respect of the Rules, land that is Crown land, if it is being disposed of, has to come before the House. Crown lands are those which are under the control and ownership of the Ministry of Housing. If lands are under the control and ownership of the National Housing Corporation, the National Housing Corporation's Board can take a decision to dispose of their lands, without it coming before Parliament.

When land is being transferred from one source of Government to another, or from private ownership to the National Housing Corporation, or being acquired for the NHC, it comes to Parliament but when the NHC disposes of property - and follow it, there is a certain logic to it - every lot you sell then, if NHC lands had to come to the House, every lot you sell, every single house would have to come to Parliament. It does not have to come, Sir.

Mr. President, to say that there was a breach of the Rules and a breach of the Law is entirely false. As I said, I do not know about the transaction of what transpired but I have a difficulty with the Honourable Senator misleading the Chamber and the public by suggesting that there was a breach of Law in the disposal, if in fact there was a disposal. There is no rule that it has to come to the House.

I am much obliged, Sir.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, may I continue, Sir?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have the Floor.

SENATOR J. INCE: Mr. President, I am going to repeat. That land was owned by the Crown. It was not owned by NHC. Senator Thompson said she was not the Minister at the time but she wants to bring a legal side to it. She wants to bring this legal theory. Sir, 85.3 acres of land was removed from the land bank and I have not seen any piece of paper presented in this Senate about the movement of that land, so all of the legal mumbo jumbo and all of the legal theory, Sir, is not going to change my conclusions or my perceptions.

Sir, when we are talking about housing, it means that we are doing what we are supposed to do. This Government is two years going into three years in office and the Opposition would expect us to move Mount Hillaby in three years, to dig down Mount Kilimanjaro, swim across the Atlantic Ocean. These are the things that the Opposition wants us to do in three years.

Mr. President, the Democratic Labour Party was given a mandate by the people of Barbados.

Asides.

SENATOR J. INCE: We are fulfilling that mandate. We are taking our time. We are going to protect the livelihood of the people of Barbados. We are going to protect the citizens of this country. We are going to protect the economy of this country.

Mr. President, I am obliged, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Sandiford-Garner, you have the Floor.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, as I rise to support these Estimates, I would wish to assure you that I shall not shout at you. I shall speak...

Mr. PRESIDENT: I wish to assure you that no Senator has so far shouted at me.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: I appreciate hearing that, Sir.

I will speak like the lady I was raised to be.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Whoever raised you succeeded, trust me.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Thank you, Sir, I am much obliged.

I am also reminded at this time, Sir, that this country is experiencing the worst economic recession as they say, since the 1920s. Sir, all speakers yesterday, except one, recognised that fact.

I remember Senator Chandler saying that she understood why there were budget cuts and she just hoped that there were sensible cuts.

I recall Senator Newton outlining the cuts at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus and assuring that the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus would endeavour to become a leaner and tighter academic institution.

Mr. President, both speakers also ensured that they made suggestions how they felt Barbados could do things better. Sir, the biggest disappointment yesterday was the presentation of Opposition Senator Elizabeth Thompson.

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 07, 11:10:08

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Sir, the Opposition Senator began by saying that Barbadians are

not interested in who did this or that. We understand that tactic. We are not supposed to remind people, so the first thing that was said is that Barbadians are not interested in who did this or that. The public is interested in solutions, she said.

Senator Thompson said that the public wants solutions to be bipartisan. Senator Thompson said we are to pool our ideas. She hoped that we, the Members of Government, are amenable to listening.

Senator Thompson made reference to the Prime Minister rallying Barbadians to wrap themselves in the flag. She said it was a call that was most appealing.

Senator Thompson said she did not feel it was necessary for her to offer solutions but she would throw out ideas. That is what the Senator said yesterday.

Senator Thompson said that we have to rise to the occasion and offer a high level of governance and solutions unprecedented in the history of Barbados. She said yesterday that the only “B” we should be considering was the “B” in Barbados. The Senator also said she was not going to be speaking in deeply partisan terms. She said she was concerned about where the country was going.

Senator Thompson then proceeded to launch into a performance that would put the lie to all of the rhetoric that she espoused in her opening remarks. I describe the presentation or the offering as a performance because it was filled with histrionics, exaggerations, innuendoes and invectives, elements befitting a poorly written script.

Sir, it took great discipline for me as a Senator in this Chamber to restrain myself. At one point it was incredulous. I could not believe that one individual could be so expert in the practice of speaking with great authority without facts and of making statements, which were often misleading in this Chamber, without pause except when interrupted by points of order.

Sir, I was embarrassed to witness Senator Thompson, a member of this Chamber, as she admitted, for over two years but a participant in politics for some 30 years, being interrupted time and time again on points of order that challenged her lack of factual material. One example was the Senator’s continued reference to the International Monetary Fund interventions in Barbados. Up to now the Senator has not brought any factual information to substantiate the statement, and the good people of Barbados are still waiting. Sir, I do believe you are still waiting.

Sir, listening to Senator Thompson yesterday was painful, to say the least. The pistons are not firing, she said. How do these Estimates fire the economy? These are the

Senator’s words: The problem is not debt, the delay is the problem.

Sir, the Senator who was not speaking in deeply partisan terms and who is concerned about the country’s direction, forgot that quickly on the heels of the start of the economic recession, this country put the microscope on our main foreign exchange earner, tourism, and began pumping money into that sector to keep hotels open and to save jobs. This Government did that. The non-deeply partisan Senator forgot that.

The Senator said the only “B”, and I am going to remind the Chamber all the time of this, we should be thinking of is Barbados, but forgot that there are 2.4 million persons out of work in the United Kingdom, our main visitor market, and that there are 14 million people not working in the United States of America. The Government and the people of Barbados did not put them out of work. Tourism spend is down because people are not working. We do not manufacture money. We cannot print money of foreign exchange, that is elementary logic.

Sir, contrary to what Opposition Senator Thompson attempted to make this Chamber believe, the Government did not sit back and wait to see what would happen. We acted and acted swiftly.

Senator Thompson told the people of Barbados they are to be concerned about the quality of the national decision making. Sir, there is an idea on That Side that the Democratic Labour Party does not have anybody who went to school. The members of the Barbados Labour Party are the only educated leaders of this country but I would wish Senator Thompson to remember, and not think in deeply partisan terms, that all of us on This Side in the Upper and Lower House are just as qualified and even better qualified than the majority of them. They were not born to lead. These are the same so-called decision-makers that Barbadians have to question.

This Government, who read the international economic indicators in Canada early o’clock before their economy started to have the upswing that it has now, in November 2008, at the height of what was a general global economic downturn launched WestJet operating four flights a week and eventually moving to five flights a week later. This move netted us 6 400 more Canadian tourists to Barbados, Canadians whose dollar is strong. Again, the Senator leaves the Chamber.

The poor decision-makers that Senator Thompson spoke about yesterday are the same ones who initiated the JetBlue service out of New York and Philadelphia. Even though increased unemployment continues to plague the United States of America market, we were proactive. We knew we were going to lose seat capacity from Air Jamaica

because it would have ceased its service in April and the decision-makers acted. Barbados saw positive growth out of the United States of America's market during the last quarter of 2009.

The decision-makers that Barbadians should fear - Sir, I am sorry that the Senator is not in her seat - are the Cabinet Members who sat with Senator Thompson and who took over \$215 million from the taxpayers to buy a collection of hotels called the GEMS property, that if we are to sell it today we could not get back half of that money. Sir, I sometimes wonder if Senator Thompson knows what we could do now with that \$215 million. We could do so much in this country with that money.

The decision-makers that the non-deeply partisan Senator Thompson should be telling Barbadians to fear are the colleagues whom Senator Ince spoke about earlier, who pumped US\$15 million into a Carnival Cruise ship which sailed back and forth empty with not a soul in it. They are the decision-makers that we should fear.

Sir, as the morning wore on, Senator Thompson seemed to develop a more reckless disregard for the facts. Her performance became more animated for sure, louder and more vibrant, much like the vendors on a Saturday trying to get you to buy their wares. The only thing is that nobody was buying yesterday.

Mr. President, the Senator said that this country is not walking Barbadians through the crisis.

Senate A28A Sequence 8

11.20 a.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, the Honourable Senator trumpeted that Cabinet meets half-day and that the Senate and House meet infrequently. Sir, all I could call those statements would be blatant and gratuitous misrepresentations. Sir, I do not understand the basis of the attack.

Mr. President, the Prime Minister of this country, the Honourable David Thompson, meets Barbadians every quarter, sometimes more frequently via live Press Conferences where he explains the state of the nation to the people of Barbados. Our Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has had live interaction with the media and, by extension, the people of Barbados more often than the former Prime Minister Owen Arthur held with the people of Barbados in 14 years.

Mr. President, I would also wish to address allegations about this Honourable Senate. Sir, you may not

be aware but when we became Honourable Senators, we were told of the cost of every Sitting of this Honourable Chamber. It costs \$14 000 for us to come here and have lunch and dinner, \$8 000 VAT inclusive if we do not have dinner. Sir, we made a conscious decision that we would not sit in this Honourable Chamber unless we had a full day's work to do. Sir, whenever we sit, and every Honourable Senator can attest to that, we have a full day's work.

Mr. President, there was also an allegation about the Cabinet meeting half-day and I would wish to address that. Sir, the Cabinet is the highest decision-making body in this country and I will not sit in this Honourable Chamber and have allegations levelled at the work of Government of this country without countering those allegations. Sir, the misrepresentation of the facts in this Honourable Chamber takes for granted that what is said and discussed here is not serious. Sir, when one speaks about the Cabinet, one has to be serious.

Mr. President, I am going to outline this situation to you. Sir, I would want to say that I have never, ever attended a Cabinet meeting that ended at mid-day. It is impossible. I do not know if when Senator Thompson was a Member of a Cabinet that Cabinet at that time did that but not the Cabinet under the stewardship of the Honourable David Thompson. It has never.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, I heard an aside but I would say that it has never occurred under any Democratic Labour Party Cabinet. Some of us in here would have lived through other Cabinets, I did not. I am only in this one and I can tell you what happens now.

Mr. President, we also have Cabinet Subcommittees, to which reference was made yesterday. We have a Cabinet Subcommittee on Social Policies, a SubCommittee on Infrastructure, a SubCommittee on Economic Policy and a Sub-Committee on Governance. We have subcommittees set up to deal with specific issues in this country. All of those subcommittees consider every single Cabinet Paper before it goes to Cabinet. Therefore, that means that along with having Cabinet meetings, we have Cabinet Subcommittees that meet for hours considering the business of this country.

Mr. President, as an aside was mentioned, I can attest to that. I went to my office after Senate last night and the Cabinet Subcommittee on Governance, which examines in detail every piece of legislation in this country with a fine tooth comb, was sitting from 9.00 a.m. yesterday to 7.45 p.m. under the Chairmanship of the Attorney-General.

Mr. President, I would wish this Honourable Chamber and Barbadians to know that the Members of this Government work for every cent they make. Sir, when Senator Thompson speaks, she has to understand that she has a responsibility to tell the truth and to desist from grandstanding and that this is a serious Chamber.

Mr. President, I believe that Senator Thompson is now sorry that she has spoken. When Senator Thompson spoke, it gave Honourable Senators such as I the opportunity to stand up and to let Barbadians know the truth. It gave me the opportunity to share things that we take for granted with Barbadians, things which we really should be putting out into the public domain.

We take these things for granted but then we get an opportunity to speak out when these misrepresentations are made. Mr. President, into the second hour of Senator Thompson's performance, she was at full form, her voice could be heard for miles around. I heard Senator Ince being accused that his voice could be heard for miles around but I am sure that Barbadians far and wide were hearing Senator Thompson as she geared up. Sir, Senator Thompson was on her favourite topic, housing.

Sir, Senator Thompson has the distinction of being the worst Housing Minister Barbados has ever seen, and Barbadians know that. Sir, I was recently overseas with a sitting Member of the Barbados Labour Party and we were chatting. This person said to me: "You know, they always attacking me about not giving your Minister Michael Lashley licks, but I can't give Michael Lashley licks when he is doing more work than Senator Elizabeth Thompson did when she was Minister." Sir, the Member told me that and I do not make misrepresentation in this Honourable Chamber, when I tell you it, it is true, it is fact.

Mr. President, the record of Senator Thompson's Primary Housing programme that every single speaker in the Upper House and Lower House scoffs at is there for all to see. They call the Minister "Bumblebee", "Robin", "Blackbird". Sir, every type of house imaginable, Senator Thompson is the Minister of, yet yesterday Senator Thompson blurted that this Government had only built 200 houses in three years. Senator Thompson proceeded, as is her want, to attack the record of this Administration and the current Minister of Housing and Lands.

When we were six weeks into this new Administration, in our first Appropriation Bill debate, Senator Thompson was attacking our housing record and we had not yet turned any sod. We had not even started to put up a structure. I remember that quite clearly.

Mr. President, I remember Senator Thompson attacking our housing record, but that is understandable because, as I said, I remember an Honourable Member of

Parliament from the Barbados Labour Party telling me why we would get that response from Senator Thompson. When you are an underachiever, you feel threatened and upset when you see people achieving. Sir, I can understand that psychological reaction.

Mr. President, my research shows that between 1994 and 1998 the Barbados Labour Party built 32 houses per year. These are the facts. Between 1998 and 2003, they built 69 houses. Between 2003 and 2006, the former Government built 31 houses. Sir, I will let this Honourable Chamber work out the years that Senator Thompson was Minister of Housing and Lands at the time.

Mr. President, Senator Thompson said that the Government's housing programme did not hire small, black contractors, that all the work was being given to large white companies, a statement that provoked much debate yesterday. Senator Thompson said our programme did not cater to low-income earners. Sir, this was a barrage of wild, reckless statements with no factual basis. Sir, bear with me while I bring you the facts.

Mr. President, on the issue of not providing housing to low-income persons, as Senator Thompson said, at Work Hall, St. Philip keys were handed over in December 2009 to maids, security guards, janitors, clerical workers, police officers, among other persons. At Marchfield, we recently handed over keys to prison officers, security officers, clerical officers, general workers at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and a lady who had applied since 1984.

At the Sayes Court In-filling Programme, keys to rental units were handed over in December 2009 to fishermen, to general workers of both public and private sectors. Units at Country Park Towers are being constructed for low-income earners. Mr. President, it should be noted here that former Prime Minister Owen Arthur wanted to charge an economic rent for Country Park Towers. The Honourable Senator did not remember that, thereby excluding the low-income earner.

11.30 a.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, the units at Tweedside Road are at this moment in the final stage of completion, also for low-income earners.

Sir, rental units are to be built at Four Roads and Haggatt Hall and we have six-storey units to be built at Valerie as a joint venture.

Sir, I would wish to ask Senator Thompson, who was Minister of Housing, how many keys she handed over to Barbadians.

Mr. President, there was much talk about three persons who did not qualify at Marchfield. I have heard that, Sir, and I would like to address that. Those persons did not qualify for mortgages at Marchfield and, Sir, that is nothing to gloat about. What I will say is that they will be accommodated in the Rent-to-Own Programme. Sir, we have programmes for every sector of the Barbadian society.

Mr. President, the Barbados Labour Party continues to talk about the issue of transfer of units. I call it "carping", Sir. I do not know if that is parliamentary language but they "carp" about these things all the time. Sir, the then Minister of Housing, Senator Elizabeth Thompson, launched this programme in 2003.

The then Minister instructed the National Housing Corporation to take deposits from the National Housing Corporation's tenants knowing full well that the National Housing Corporation was not in a position to sell those units. One of the reasons was the multiple extensions which were on the units and inhabitants did not have Town Planning permission to facilitate these extensions.

Another reason is that the National Housing Corporation was unable to get Certificates of Compliance to give title. I would wish to ask Senator Thompson why she would have allowed National Housing Corporation staffers to take deposits for the sale of units without having all of the relevant Town Planning documentation and to query whether prospective purchasers were involved.

Mr. President, most of the survey work of the boundaries of these estates were incomplete. The majority of units were not vested in the National Housing Corporation and I find this hard to understand knowing that the then Minister of Housing was a lawyer. Sir, the current Minister of Housing, who is also a lawyer has already vested the units in the Ivy in the National Housing Corporation.

We have received, as a Government, Town Planning permission for most of the units and Cabinet has agreed to vest Deacons in the National Housing Corporation and this is work that Senator Thompson and former Minister of Housing could have addressed for 14 years.

Mr. President, I would also wish to remind this Chamber of this case in Bonnetts, Britton's Hill, in the housing estate - the Barbados Labour Party programme. Sir, a pensioner living at Bonnetts, Britton's Hill was asked to purchase a unit for BDS\$43 000 and was forced to pay a deposit of \$10 000 and the balance in monthly instalments.

How caring and humane an administration was that? This pensioner never owed rent and lived in the unit for 20 years. They took \$10 000 from that old lady, wiped out her savings, for that unit and then told her that she had to get a mortgage.

Mr. President, under our programme the pensioner would have qualified, having paid rent for over 20 years, and indirectly purchasing the unit by her updated rent.

Mr. President, our housing Minister has said that he has had to complete and activate the process of surveying the boundaries in those housing estates. We had to go to Parliament and vest units in the National Housing Corporation so that these units could be transferred. Sir, as a result, 40 tenants in the Ivy, who qualified under the 20-year programme, have started the process with the National Housing Corporation to receive their conveyances.

Mr. President, we now talk about the Primary Homes Programme. We were told yesterday that a handful of contractors benefited from this under us, but I think the Senator should acknowledge that, in truth and in fact, a handful of contractors under them, benefited from that programme. Senator Thompson should know well, and she is fortunate too because a black Barbadian, who is near and dear to her, would also have benefited from the programme. Sir, I am glad to see that the Senator is back.

Mr. President, the allegation of this Government not hiring small contractors is untrue. Sir, small contractors were hired and are hired at Marchfield, Constant, French Village and Tweedside Road. There is future work for small contractors at Parish Land, St. Philip, and Lancaster, St. James. Sir, tenders will be going out within the next week for infrastructure work and these projects are designed for small contractors and low-income applicants.

Mr. President, the allegation about the 200 houses that we have built. Sir, you can do the maths. We have built 43 houses in Work Hall; in Marchfield, we have built 33 houses; in Greens we have built 51 houses; in French Village, we have built 17 houses; in Four Hill, we have built 44 houses; in Constant, we have built 64 houses, and we have completed the first phase in Coverley. Sir, certainly more than the 200 houses stated with authority by Senator Thompson yesterday.

Mr. President, land has been acquired at \$5 per square foot at Clifton, Woodbourne, Ranchbury, Guinea, Pool and Henley. This is revolutionary for poor people who never before has so much been given in so little time by an administration.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, I rise on a point of order. Again the Honourable Senator is misleading the Senate. Sir, land was sold under a Barbados

Labour Party Administration all over St. Michael, at \$2.50 a square foot. Sir, so \$5 is double that, so it cannot be revolutionary. In addition to that, the Barbados Labour Party's programme was not based exclusively on the construction of houses using National Housing Corporation's staff members, but large numbers of contractors of all hues so that to say that we built 30 over a five-year period or whatever, is entirely false.

There was also a major stimulus package, including the 100 per cent mortgage and other policy initiatives which ensured that people were able to access houses, not only from within the National Housing Corporation, but on the large housing market. Sir, the revolutionary aspect of this is an illusion of the Senator's mind.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, when you are speaking about housing, you have to speak about what the National Housing Corporation is doing and what people who could afford mortgages did. I worked at a lending institution for 10 years during the Barbados Labour Party Government. I know what I am saying and I am speaking about what the National Housing Corporation has done.

Furthermore, Sir, \$2 fourteen years ago and \$5 in 2010 give a vast difference to the figures. These are different times, so I am not operating under any illusion. Sir, we are doing it at \$5 and never before has so much been given to so many people in such a short space of time.

S/A28A/11:40 Sequence 10

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Sir, the Senator levelled accusations about cost overruns under this Government. I take those accusations seriously, because I know on what premise we campaigned.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Sir, I keep hearing the proof as an aside. I mentioned the aside. The Senator would get up on points of order and speak, but again, I do not get facts. I just get, that is not true. I bring facts. I bring facts to substantiate my arguments, facts and figures. I do not get up and say it is not true.

The accusation of cost overruns was a remark dropped about \$750 000 regarding overruns by this Government. It was not dealt with in any detail. To use the Senator's words, it was dealt within a very cursory fashion, glided over.

Sir, \$750 000 was spent on two Pavilions, one at Greens and one somewhere in St. John, if I am not

mistaken. This Government went to Parliament to ask for a Supplementary for those two Pavilions, because during the course of construction, it was decided that instead of building just a Pavilion, this Government would wish to make sure that the districts had what you call Resource Centres. We added a Resource Centre to the scope of works, so that we would not have to go back to the job after the fact, so when we speak about cost overruns, I certainly speak of cost overruns in the context of people not operating efficiently.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Senator is misleading the Senate, in that it had been represented by Members on the Other Side, that wherever there has been a variation in a scope of work which causes additional funds to be allocated to projects, that was identified by Honourable Members on That Side as a cost overrun, and the former Administration was severely chided for it, this Administration has done exactly the same thing now.

A project had an additional scope of works. The scope of works was varied, involving occasioning additional expenditure. That is what we have always argued, that a lot of the examples which this Administration pointed to as cost overruns, and examples of inefficiencies, and poor management were entirely false. Now the Senator has explained exactly a situation which is on all fours, with circumstances which the Barbados Labour Party encountered, for which we were severely and continue to be severely chided.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you may continue.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Senator Thompson again makes statements which require me to bring the facts. You know when we talk about cost overruns, Senator Thompson, we talk in the context of projects like Kensington Lodge. I think that should put the context into focus, and bring cost overruns into focus.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: You do not know. Sir, through you, the Senator would not know. When we speak about cost overruns, we speak about Kensington Lodge. The Senator who was so concerned about Barbados and the poor decision-making, should be concerned that her husband was awarded the contract.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Sir, I saw you reaching for the mike. I want to pull back. A contractor was awarded the contract to remove asbestos roofs from the units at Kensington Lodge, even though the

company used was not a preferred company by the experts in the area of the Ministry.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: I was waiting for a point of order. There were concerns about cost overruns at Kensington Lodge.

Sir, I need to remind the Senator of cost overruns at the baths.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the Senate. It is a tremendous mischief. I will withdraw the word. It has been bandied about that my husband, a contractor, and it was said in here and I did not hear it withdrawn, was awarded a contract at Kensington Lodge. Sir, I should like to put the facts before this Chamber to show the extent to which the public is being misled.

Sir, there was a tender issued in respect of Kensington Lodge. There are only three or four companies in the island that have experience and training in asbestos removal. A person who was known to me, at the time, tendered on the project and was apparently successful. When the matter ...

I did not sit on the Board, Sir. I do not know the details. What I can assure this Honourable Senate and the country is that when the matter came to the Ministry, I wrote on the file to the Permanent Secretary at the time, that the person to whom it is being proposed to award the contract was intimately known to me and that I could take no part in the decision, and that I was returning the file to him unread, and that I would have nothing to do with the matter.

I know none of the details of it from that perspective. Subsequently, I really need to clear this up. I took a proper decision when a person known to me was proposed to be awarded a contract. I had permission from the previous Prime Minister, who took a view that since I knew this person, they should not be prejudiced in the exercise of their profession which they had been pursuing for many years prior to knowing.

In fact, I subsequently married this person, to whom I am still married. After we got married, he never ever bid on any Government work again, so that it should not be said that he was favoured or given any special concessions by a Barbados Labour Party Cabinet.

At all times during the course of the Kensington Lodge Project, there was a Supervisor and Project Manager overseeing the Project on behalf of the National Housing Corporation. When dissatisfaction arose over some

elements of the work that was subcontracted out, the National Housing Corporation took a decision to terminate the contract. The fact alone that was done, shows that there was no particular bias or favouritism, or nepotism or anything else involved. Those are the facts.

Sir, as a single person he had to bid, as a businessman making a living on any contract in Barbados. I do not know if the Honourable Senator's husband is going to stop cultural work because she had some kind of involvement in culture. People must not misrepresent the facts.

My husband has never done any work for the Government of Barbados. Prior to our getting married, he worked extensively and even prior to knowing me, he worked extensively as a contractor and did work in Government. He won this on his merit and when the National Housing Corporation was unhappy, the contract was terminated like anybody else. He received no peculiar considerations.

I only know one way. My parents are in their late 80s and are still working. I have never sought to derive any improper benefit from Government expenditure or anything of the sort. This is being repeated ad nauseam because the Honourable Members on the Other Side feel that there is some substance in which they can mislead. Those are the facts.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Sir, I have here some documents. Before I make these documents of this Chamber, I would just wish to make reference to a statement Senator Thompson made. Again, as I said earlier, I am glad when Senator Thompson makes her statements, because it gives Senators like myself a chance to lay bare the truth. I would wish to assure you and Senator Thompson, through you, that before I became a Parliamentary Secretary or a Senator, when I was still a candidate, our family stopped doing cultural work, as she put it, for the Government, so I would wish to assure the Senator that is not the case. We took the decision.

SA28A 11.50 a.m. Sequence 11

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 12, 11.50 a.m.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Sir, on the other hand, I have two documents here, one on the letterhead of the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, another on the letterhead of the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I do not wish to interrupt you but I take it that you are going to make that a document of the Senate.

SENATOR Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: I certainly will, Sir.

The Memorandum on the National Housing Corporation's Letterhead, is to the General Manager, National Housing Corporation, from the Chief Technical Officer, National Housing Corporation dated November 12, 2003. The subject: Quotations for Changing Asbestos Roofs at Kensington Lodge. Sir, the document says, the following quotations were received:

Contractor No. 1, Hazard Maintenance and Engineering Services. Tender Sum, including VAT, \$582 246.16. Project duration, eight weeks.

Contractor No. 2, Island Caribbean Services. Tender Sum including VAT, \$541 774. Project duration, 10 weeks.

Contractor No. 3, Creative Building Services. Tender Sum including VAT, \$278 658.98. Project duration, 10 weeks.

Contractor No. 4, National Housing Corporation. Tender Sum including VAT, \$435 000.

Remarks: The tender submitted by Hazard Maintenance and Engineering Services and Island Caribbean Services are higher than the National Housing Corporation's by 34 per cent and 24.5 per cent respectively, while Creative Building Services is 36 per cent below the National Housing Corporation's.

It is evident that Creative Building Services' quotation is too low and awarding a contract to this company would be too risky.

Since the other submissions are much higher than ours, I would recommend that the Corporation should examine the possibility of negotiating a price that is more in keeping with the National Housing Corporation's or invite new quotations.

Signed by:

Henderson V. Boyce

Chief Technical Officer

NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION

Mr. President, on January 13, 2004, some two months later, on the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the

Environment letterhead, a letter to the General Manager of the National Housing Corporation goes:

"Dear Sir:

Subject: Award of Contract for changing Asbestos Roofs at Kensington Lodge, Passage Road, St. Michael.

Reference is made to your memorandum dated 22 December 2003 regarding the award of a contract for the changing of asbestos roofs at Kensington Lodge, Passage Road, St. Michael.

I am directed to inform you that the Minister has approved the award of the contract to Creative Building Services in the amount of \$278 658.89 with a contract period of 10 weeks.

Yours faithfully,

B. Weekes (Miss)

for Permanent Secretary"

Sir, I would sit for the Senator to tell me who was the Minister referred to in this correspondence.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, on a point of order. I am saying to this Chamber and to the country as a matter of fact, and the only other person who can confirm what I am saying, Sir, is the Permanent Secretary at the time, Dr. Leonard Nurse.

I wrote on the file and there is nothing there with my signature saying I approved. I wrote on the file, Sir, to the point of even using the word that I am intimately involved with the person to whom...I mean I think that was unprecedented. I do not feel that anybody has ever gone to such lengths to distance themselves from the matter.

It is standard fare when the instruction moves from the Ministry to the agency, where there is a Board involved. The standard fear is for the instruction to say, "the Minister has approved."

I am saying to you, Sir, as a matter of truth and fact that I referred it to the Permanent Secretary and he was the person who would have taken the decision. I reiterate that I took no part in this, but even if it were true, Sir, that I did, the reality is that I got married on January 1, 2005 and subsequent to this, a decision was taken that since we were married, that my husband would not attempt, contract, bid, or tender on any work that has to do with Government.

In respect of this matter, Sir, I acted entirely properly, irrespective of what is written there and I would urge and challenge for the file where I wrote the Minute to

be produced because what is being put here today is only part of what transpired. There is a Ministry file with my signature with the Minute to which I just referred.

Equally, Sir, Permanent Secretary, Dr. Leonard Nurse, could indicate whether or not I am, in fact, telling the truth today, when I say that I issued a Minute saying that I would have nothing to do with the matter. In fact, Sir, if you search the files, you would see that I had nothing to do with it. I also reiterate, the fact that the contract and the work was terminated, shows that no special favours were being extended.

I have not seen these files, Sir, because I did not participate in the decision-making process. I did not know about these things. When the Senator read and said that other people were recommended or that there were recommendations to negotiate elsewhere, I knew nothing about it. When the file came up, and I saw ... we were directed to you that a decision has been made by the NHC to award a contract to X. From the time I saw the name of the company, I issued the Minute on the file.

In fact, Mr. President, there were three or four occasions in which my family, or persons close to me could have benefited from Government contracts or decisions. A matter involving lands in St. Andrew when I again wrote on the file that the person seeking the change of use was a relative of mine and I could not take a decision on it and I never did.

A matter involving the laundry work, I specifically issued a directive that my parents' business was not to be considered.

There was one more thing involving another relative of mine, an uncle and there was a benefit, and again, in every matter where a decision had to be taken, I acted properly on every occasion and did on this occasion as well.

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I rise on a point of order. I am hearing a speech. I thought Senator Thompson rose on a point of order to correct something and she is having a speech. It has happened on several occasions and it is disconcerting, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have no doubt that the concern is reasonable. However, the Chair recognised and accepted that the two Honourable Senators were discussing a matter of vital importance to them personally. Therefore, although the Senator rose on a point of order, I recognised it as a point of privilege and so accepted it.

The two Senators were discussing intimate details about their respective lives. They were discussing their

husbands. As President of the Senate, presiding over the Senate, I felt able to allow them the latitude which it is the discretion the Chair has as President.

You may proceed.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of privilege, Sir, I would like really to thank the Chair for the latitude of the President in his wisdom. It is a fact the Honourable Senator Sandiford-Garner and I used to be very good friends. She was at my wedding.

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 12, 12:12:15

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: I am her son's godmother. I have not been the best godmother she would say. The reality is that if she wants to discuss my husband, what I wish to assure her, the Senate and the country, is that I have never done anything improper and nobody could tell me that she has done anything dishonest because that would not be typical of the person whom I know and I would hold my position.

Unfortunately, if her opinion of me is low I still say that I have a great deal of regard for her husband and assure her that the facts, as I have given them, are the facts.

I am much obliged, Mr. President.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Sir, I note that the Senator has a high regard for my husband and not myself. That is understandable. I have a very vibrant sense of humour.

Sir, I have not finished cost overruns yet. We have to speak also of the project under the Senator's or former Minister's watch at the Coastal Zone Management Unit, which we have handed over to the Police. When we speak in here we really need to understand the background from which we speak.

SENATOR Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Senator is misleading the Senate if implicit in her statement is the matter at the Coastal Zone Management Unit being directly connected to some action on my part as a former Minister because she said that there has to be a cost overrun and it must be drawn to attention.

The matter was first investigated by the Barbados Labour Party Government and the investigations and report were ongoing and I think just about ready when this Administration came to office because allegations of impropriety were drawn to our attention. No Minister can know what every single Head of a Department is doing from day to day. As soon as we knew that there may have

been wrongdoings, the former Prime Minister referred the matter for investigation and the correct approach and decision were taken.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Sandiford-Garner, you may continue.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, I did not even get a chance to finish my statement. I realise the Senator is highly agitated and I could understand that. Methinks that the Senator protests too much.

Sir, I would move on because it is getting close to lunch time for them. Near the end of the performance, I had to think then about... Sir, there is some place in St. Andrew called Haggatts Hill. It links St. Simon's with the Belleplaine area. When I listened to the Senator winding up yesterday, it reminded me of something called a Bedford truck. Do you remember the Bedford trucks, Sir?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Yes, I do.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: We used to have a lot of old Bedford trucks in St. Andrew hauling sand so when they... The performance reminded me of an old Bedford truck coming down Haggatts Hill with a drunken driver with not much control, so it hit any and everybody and everything. That performance reminded me of a Bedford truck coming down Haggatts Hill that licked up everybody. She hit the Ministry of Health at the end, another portfolio that the Senator would have had as a Minister, again with abysmal results.

Sir, the former Minister and current Senator's concern was for the role of the Parliamentary Secretary who she said was foisted, to use her words, on the Ministry. Sir, I do believe that I am well placed to answer some of the questions. First, let me assure the former Minister of Health and current Senator that unlike her, this Government will not be firing managers en masse at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Sir, I do not know if you remember when the former Minister of Health, who is now a Senator, fired three top Managers at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital one time. Do you remember, Sir?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please do not remind me.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Sir, this is the same person who yesterday wanted Barbadians to believe that she was concerned about - and I quote - the quality of the national decision-making. A Minister who fired three senior managers one time is concerned about the quality of national decision-making. Sir, if the situation in

this country's health care sector was not so critical, I would find it laughable, that is the truth.

The Government has been very clear in its mission regarding the health care of its citizens and any efforts made to ensure that we could improve the situation at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital should be applauded and lauded. We are actively engaging our experts in conducting studies of comparative analysis regarding the state of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital whether or not we would look for green fields to build a new purpose-built facility or if we are going to enhance the current one.

Sir, there is a team comprising the Ministry of Health, the Public Investment Unit, the Chief Town Planner and staff of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who have been assigned to work on this project. In two years, we opened a cafeteria that was shut for 15 years, we opened a High Dependency Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and we are currently conducting a \$11 million electrical upgrade, and the boilers are working again.

Sir, as a former Minister of Health as well as a Senator, Senator Thompson would know, and you, Sir, would know, that the boiler crisis was almost a nightmare. We have been working. Again in two years, we completed the Pharmacy upgrade, which would have been spoken about earlier where patients can now sit in comfortable surroundings. You can now sit in a cubicle and speak with your pharmacist in private.

You can also watch a LCD screen with information on health care for diabetics, asthmatics and so on while you wait for service. There is also a number system at the Pharmacy so that you no longer have the chaotic situation that occurred before.

Senator Thompson was asking about the lifts, lifts that were causing problems from the time the Minister was Minister, and we are working on those lifts as well. The performance, as I call it, was irresponsible. It was crass and politically self-serving. It was not merited...

SENATOR Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Under the Rules, you cannot cast aspersions. She said that my behaviour was crass and my performance self-serving. That is not allowed under the Rules. That really is to attribute improper motives, cast aspersions, and I urge the Chair to protect me.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Sir, I will continue. Last year, with \$15 million from the National Insurance Board, which we have accessed as a loan, we expanded the Surgical Intensive Care Unit to a 13-bed unit and we completed the design phase of the electrical upgrade that is now going on. I spoke about the commission of the High Dependency Unit.

Sir, there is much more happening at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as the Chairman said last week. The Minister spoke about those over the weekend as well but I know that the Honourable Senator does not read certain newspapers so she would not have seen that article because it was not in the paper with the red mast head. Sir, something is definitely happening at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Sir, in closing, I would wish to say that the Government remains committed to the principle that health care is a fundamental right of all citizens of Barbados. We recognise that our citizens are the ultimate target of any economic recovery because if your citizens are not well, they cannot be productive.

Senate A28A Sequence 13

12.10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: We have started to chart our course and I can assure you that the Minister of Health and I, with the support of the gifted and committed staff of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, will attempt to get it right. Sir, we know we are on the right track when the Opposition swipes and carps.

Mr. President, Senator Chandler made a statement yesterday which I would wish to quote. Senator Chandler said politicians need to put the interest of the country ahead of votes and she is correct. Sir, budget cuts do not gain votes, they are not popular decisions. Sir, we understand that, but our commitment as a Party, and as a Government, is exemplified and articulated in our willingness to make those tough decisions.

We could borrow our way through and leave debts like the \$700 million prison for our children to pay till they are middle-aged. We could continue to give subsidies and ensure that Barbadians experience an artificially- induced feel-good factor. We could do that very easily, it is not hard to do, but that is not the style of the Democratic Labour Party Government.

When the shoe is tight, it will pinch, that is the real world scenario in which we operate. We are not afraid to make tough decisions when necessary and I will continue to maintain that and as it gets better Barbadians will feel it and know it.

Mr. President, I listened to a presentation yesterday which was devoid of any creativity. It was bellicose in delivery and lacking in any of the ideas that we were told would have been thrown out. It was not supposed to be deeply partisan, but it reeked of partisanship and shallow

political rhetoric. At one point even you, Sir, expressed your disappointment with the level of debate in which we were engaged yesterday. Mr. President, you did so... but I am not surprised.

Mr. PRESIDENT: If you thought yesterday was bad, today was even worse.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: That is unfortunate, but I realised that you tried your best but I am not surprised. Mr. President, Barbadians have long recognised the less than endearing qualities brought to the fore by the Opposition Senator yesterday and on January 15, 2008, they put paid to the aggravation.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: I got more votes than you.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: I got more votes than you and you were in the House for over 20 years.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: More votes than you.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, is the Honourable Senator...

Asides.

SENATOR Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: I am not giving way, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Thompson.

SENATOR Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: Yes, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Thompson, the Honourable Senator is not giving way.

SENATOR Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, I am rising on a point of order.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, I am not giving way.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Thompson, your previous points of order left a lot to be desired and I am therefore very reluctant to recognise you on a point of order.

SENATOR Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Sir, I believe that the Rules require that speakers address the Chair. The Honourable Senator is saying she got more votes than you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: She probably got more votes than I did. I used to run once and I got a lot of votes.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: I am suggesting that you are not a candidate but I know that I was elected three times and that some people missed getting washed in with the flotsam and the jetsam two Januaries ago.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, that was not a point of order. Senator, you may continue.

SENATOR Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Mr. President, I will repeat my statement and say that I am very proud of my performance in 2008. Sir, as a first-timer who would have come from nowhere, I received more votes than the Honourable Senator who is in her seat. Sir, let us not be distracted. I promised to behave like a lady and I am a lady.

Mr. President, we are a proud and resourceful people. We are smart, we are practical, we are resilient and I have full confidence that the people of Barbados will come out of this crisis stronger and more economically productive persons. Sir, they will come out better for it than before we went in. All we have to do is to continue heeding the rallying cry of our Leader and wrap ourselves in the flag. I thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Husbands.

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS: Mr. President, I rise as a husband, as Husbands, as a neophyte and as probably

part of the flotsam and jetsam, although I was not swept in. Sir, I would want to make a few points bearing in mind the hour, bearing in mind lunch.

Sir, as a neophyte, I have not been in this position long enough to deliver such a full speech. I have not even yet been aware of some of the staff with whom I am associated and so I am not in a position to make big pronouncements or to go into detail and depth as other Honourable Senators.

Mr. President, as part of the flotsam and jetsam, the first point I want to make is that as a humble young boy growing up in a place surrounded by other flotsams and jetsams in President Kennedy Drive, Eagle Hall and travelling every Saturday morning on my grandfather's old bicycle up Broad Street - in those days you could have turned right at the Swing Bridge, where traffic flowed in both directions, to go to the Bridge and Harbour Police Station, where my father was the Sargeant-in-Charge, to take swimming lessons from Lorenzo Best.

I could never imagine that so soon after that, I could be here speaking in this Honourable Chamber. Sir, I feel it a deep sense of honour and privilege to have this opportunity to make just a few comments on the matters before us today.

Mr. President, other Honourable Senators have highlighted the extent of the economic crisis facing us and I need not, taking time into consideration, revisit the extent to which we, not only in the Caribbean but in the entire world, are facing very desperate times.

Sir, one thing I must admire about the Honourable Prime Minister is that on every occasion he has had to speak about this crisis he has never shied away from it. He has never hidden from the people of Barbados the seriousness of the problem facing us.

Mr. President, at the same time, I am convinced that the policies that he has followed and the policies that this Honourable Party has implemented, which are sure, slow but solid policies... Sir, there has been much criticism in the media and elsewhere about this wait-and-see business. Sir, the reality facing us is that all the great international economists, not the great local ones, have still yet to decide how this crisis would unfold. There is this debate going on, is it going to be a V-shape recovery or it is going to be a double-dip recovery; if it is V-shaped, what kind of policies that would need to be put in place.

Mr. President, there is not one single economist, accountant or expert in the field of finance, who could bring a set of policies to you or to this Honourable Chamber that they could put on the table and say, with any

degree of certainty, that these are the policies that would lead us out of this crisis.

12.20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS: Mr. President, that is the situation that we face, so there is an element, without shame, while taking decisive actions, of waiting to see how the international economy will recover. Sir, recovery in the international economy is at the heart of this. Yes, there are local things that we can do and we are not phased by that.

There are local things that we can do, there are local things that have to be done, for example, in the tourism industry. Sir, other Honourable Senators have referred to the policies to keep people employed and that is a local initiative. In fact, some of our Caribbean neighbours, who depend even more fully on the tourism industry, for example, in the Bahamas, have not been able to implement similar policies and the tourism industry in the Bahamas, has virtually collapsed. This Government has implemented local policies like the stabilisation efforts to the tourism industry to help us over this crisis, but we are in some difficult times.

Mr. President, it has been mentioned throughout this debate about the IMF and each time the term IMF is used, I take it we are all supposed to run away scared. I want to say that this Barbados has played a tremendous role in reshaping the policies of the International Monetary Fund.

Sir, in the early 1990s when we had that crisis, I was part then of the trade union grouping under the leadership of Leroy Trotman and with the assistance of the Honourable Minister of Education, he was not the Honourable Minister of Education then, he was Ronald Jones, President of the Barbados Union of Teachers and a number of other individuals in the Trade Union Movement and also in the private sector, we met regularly with the International Monetary Fund and one significant change came about for which this country Barbados ought to take credit. Sir, that change was previous to that.

Mr. President, the officials of the International Monetary Fund would descend on a country and hand down the prescriptions. Sir, they were faceless people and it is through that period of the early 1990s that initial change of the International Monetary Fund policy started. It started here in this Barbados where the International Monetary Fund began to take into consideration other social actors other than Governments.

When the claim was made that the IMF was kicked out of Barbados, I know, in the various capacities that I have served, whether it has been with the Trade Union

Movement, the Employers' Confederation or whatever, I met annually for the remaining years of the Democratic Labour Party Administration, and for the 14 years of the Barbados Labour Party, I met annually at the Central Bank of Barbados with IMF teams discussing the future and economic policy of Barbados.

Mr. President, Jamaica, in this time has gone to the IMF. I think St. Vincent and Antigua are approaching, but in the intervening period, the IMF has developed, and particularly as a result of this economic crisis that we now find ourselves in, alternative programmes to the ones that were around 15 years and 20 years ago.

When you say the IMF, and having been a visitor in Jamaica in the days of Michael Manley, I sat on the platform of the Peoples National Party meeting and was involved in the debates and discussions around the IMF in those days, it is amazing to see the discussion taking place in Jamaica today about the same IMF.

Mr. President, we have to recognise and stop this habit of mentioning the word "IMF" without explaining the realities and attempting to frighten people into some response. The IMF is coming, the sky is falling. Sir, those days have vastly changed and this country Barbados contributed immeasurably to the change in IMF Programme.

I am proud to have participated in that along with other people. I do not want to claim that I have played some major role in that but, that is how it is, nevertheless, so we do not have to be scared nor we do not have to run to the hill.

Mr. President, the seriousness surrounding the Barbados deficit. Again, I compliment the Honourable Prime Minister that he has at all times, in my humble opinion, explained the seriousness of this issue. It is undeniable that the current situation cannot be maintained. Therefore, any responsible Administration, any responsible Government will have to take into consideration how best to manage this deficit and what cuts ought to be made.

The real issue is not that there are cuts. Again, in my humble opinion, Mr. President, the real issue is, how do we apply these cuts with justice and fairness and not inflict unnecessary pain and burden on the people. Sir, we talk about these cuts in Barbados as though Barbados is the only place in the world, at present, experiencing cuts to the budget.

Mr. President, I remember a headline a week or two weeks ago in one of the local newspapers in reference to Jamaica that the cuts in Jamaica are JAM\$100 billion but the reality is though that it is about US\$1 billion. Sir, bear

in mind that Jamaica does not experience the quality of life that we do in Barbados.

Mr. President, it is going to be difficult. We have never said that it is not going to be difficult. It is going to be extremely difficult but it is our commitment to make these cuts in a just and fair manner and to ease, as much as possible, the burden off the poor.

Mr. President, the other issue that is connected to the deficit is this issue of subsidies. Sir, for a long time, it is my view, that successive Administrations have ran away from some difficult decisions and the time is now. The Government of Barbados, under the leadership of the Honourable Prime Minister is in the process of making some of the difficult decisions in relation to subsidies that ought to have been made a long time ago because situations in many areas are not sustainable and, unfortunately, some of this has to be done now. Sir, that is a reality.

Mr. President, some of our business people, I do not think quite accurately understand this issue of subsidies.

S/A28A/12:30 Sequence 15

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS: I understand when it is subsidies to the poor, when it is the social welfare programmes, but there are normal businesses in Barbados that claim to be private-sector but they are really State enterprises that without the subsidies some of them will cease to exist. We have at this time to be aiming at efficiency, not only efficiency in the public sector, but it is easy for all of us to talk about how inefficient the public sector is.

There are some inefficiencies in this society, in the private sector, that we have also to deal with. One of the realities is, we cannot run around and we cannot hope to prevent some businesses from going out of business. Businesses will go out of business because they are inefficient and uncompetitive, and others will come into business. That is a reality of life.

Sir, that is not to say we ought to be reckless and take decisions to endanger people's future and their investments, but we have to accept that some of these subsidies, particularly at this time, have to go. There are some subsidies both direct and indirect.

The other speaker on behalf of the Opposition Side referred yesterday to the Technical Assistance Programme. I have had in recent time, in another place, to look at the series of programmes of the various types that Barbados under various Administrations offers to perspective

business people. One of the easy things to identify is duplication.

We have an array of agencies offering assistance of one type or another to business places, in the private sector, mainly, assistance, loans, training, innovating this, creating that, and a lot of this is replicated. There are turf wars over who is doing what and who is doing the next, so when you say that \$2 million has been cut, it is not to say that businesses will not now be getting technical assistance support. That technical assistance support is usually available in several agencies, but these are part of the difficult decisions, I think, we have to make.

Sir, the thing about the difficult decisions, this is an issue when you watch the debate in the United States that is currently going on over reform of the health care. This is at the central theme there. Difficult decisions are to be made. We have to make these decisions in the interest of the country. Yes, politicians always have an eye to the future in terms of Election, but at the same time, I think this country has shown a commitment, however, to put Barbados on the right path to the future. Of course, we would want to be re-elected. In this crisis, that has to come second to correcting many of the challenges that we are currently experiencing.

I want to go quickly. I said that I wanted to make just a few comments, and I want to make them as few as possible.

Asides.

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS: The debate in the country on the youth - I had the privilege and to be invited recently, very recently, to serve as the Chairman of the Board of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. Like all educational institutions in Barbados, there are some serious discipline problems there also. This was surprising to me, not drugs, it is gambling. When I talk to other people in educational institutions, secondary schools, somehow gambling is really the unspoken crime being committed by many of our youth in educational institutions.

When we took over, the staff spoke of all these problems. We took decisive action, updated the code of discipline. If you are caught gambling once, out you go. No excuse, out you go. At the same time, we realised that the Students Support Services were very weak.

We were doing very little, and at the campus the size of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, there was one person responsible for assisting students with problems, so the students came with whatever problems they had. We had very good laws, very good rules and regulations, but we could offer them very little assistance.

I think that today we ought to be building structures to help support our youth. Two of those structures that have been heavily criticised, maligned, and belittled, this issue of the bus fare, and attempting to get our youth - that solution, may be two or four years ago, I might have scoffed at that myself, but the issues facing our youth, as I understand them now, as insignificant as this intervention seems, getting the youth to school and back home in a safe environment, using "safe" in the broadest sense of the word, is one of the critical interventions we need at this time. Sir, the other one is the Summer Camps.

Sir, my position is this. For our youth, come and say to me I am spending \$5 million, \$10 million, \$60 million or \$80 million, I am going to question you on the method. I am going to question you on whether the money is being spent correctly. I am going to be interested in whether there is corruption involved, but there is no amount of money that is too much to spend on the youth of this country.

When you say that you spend \$6 million on Summer Camps, I may ask, should it not be \$10 million? Bearing in my mind I said that I am going to question you on efficiency, on how well you do it, on the systems you have in place for accounting, you cannot escape that. My point is, I think, there is no money, when we are dealing with our youth, whatever it is, we have to find it to protect them from what is going on in this community.

Now, I would say to the parents, the Summer Camps will only represent a stop gap. That is a little assistance for you. You cannot use, and I am speaking directly to parents, the Summer Camp Programme, or the bus fares, or whatever else assistance you are getting, to get away from your responsibility. That is only a supplement.

Sir, during the summer vacation rather than just, to use for want of a better term, dumping your children at the Summer Camp, some people who have the ability ought to be scheduling their vacations to match. You know what some parents do. Some parents take great pride in scheduling their vacations when school is in session.

SA28A 12.40 p.m. Sequence 16

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 17, 12.40 a.m.

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS: This is a message to parents. The Government has identified a problem and has offered a solution. I agree with that solution but it does not move the responsibility from parents to take charge. When I was young, and I hate so much to say this because I hated to hear it when my father said it to me, but I have reached the stage now where I am saying it. I used to be sent during

the summer vacation to spend time with my relatives in St. Lucy. That is the term they used.

I do not know if there are people nowadays who still do these kinds of things for their children. There may be some people and I hope there could be more, but my point, nevertheless, is that as good as these programmes are, there ought to be parental guidance. Parents cannot leave their children up to the State to raise.

I wanted to say some things about the university but I think Senator Newton said everything that I could say and certainly said it better than I could ever say it. This idea, whatever you call it, whether you call it a graduate per household, I know that the more university graduates there are in a society, the more developed, the more prosperous, that country is. Call the programme whatever you want to call it. The point is that the societies which are falling apart, if you look at the failed States and look at the numbers of university graduates in those failed States, it probably approaches zero or very close to zero.

If you look at the Scandinavian countries and the numbers of university graduates, this is a very crude study, with all due respect to the Leader of Government Business, who has a stellar academic background, admittedly, this is a very crude analysis that I am using.

Asides.

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS: On the face of it, it calls for further investigation and I am confident that further investigation will support the preliminary findings, let us put it that way.

Sir, my point is that prosperous societies have all tertiary level, whether it is university or trade school, graduations are high. Sir, those are some of the preliminary things, but let me end by making reference to my own experience, and my own experience in the last year.

I am making this in the context of subventions I notice in these Estimates, and I know them from previous Estimates. Subventions that go to organisations, some of those organisations are in the social partnership, and these are organisations like the Barbados Workers' Union, the Barbados Employers Confederation, which I know very well.

I want to say that I think it is high time that when the Government of Barbados is giving subventions, to look at some of the labour practices of some of these organisations, which I know come cap-in-hand and, at least, one of them I know, falls into that category that will probably fail to exist without a Government subvention.

Sir, I am not sure of the exact number but Government has set aside in excess of \$1 million in support for some of these organisations and give me a chance. Mr. President, I worked at one of these organisations for 10 years. I had the opportunity to address some people recently about this. I considered that I was at the top opposition of my game, to use American street language. Mr. President, I am saying that the labour practices in some of these organisations, for example, the Barbados Employers' Confederation, which come cap-in-hand for a subvention, ought to be looked at, Sir.

As I said, Sir, I was at the top of my game. I took it and made it into a household name in Barbados. I say that without any apology or regret. Under my leadership, the membership expanded. It was known 10 years ago as the White People's Club. I brought in all diverse people into that organisation, even Government agencies. For the first time in more than 50 years, it had a strategic plan, which was developed under my leadership.

The last accolade I received was the Vice President of the Caribbean Employers' Confederation so I consider myself to be a person of some substance in these affairs. We were providing technical advice to employer organisations in Vietnam and the Bahamas because the International Organisation of Employers said that the model is being developed in Barbados can be replicated throughout the world. The last accolade I had, I was elected to serve on a European Union Committee. I was the Representative of Employers in the Developing Countries.

The purpose of that Committee is to discuss the implementation of the EPA, and a Bajan, me this Bajan from Eagle Hall, an area that the President would know very well, I believe he was born in close proximity of Eagle Hall. I was on one side of Eagle Hall quite a few years apart, let me say.

Then one day, as I sat in my office, an office and a building that I moved in the furniture, I carried in the desk and the chairs and put them where they were supposed to be put. They did not have an elevator. The staff and I lifted them because we could not afford to pay movers. I lifted them an evening. Do you know how we moved? You know how people move on evenings at 6.00 p.m. when it is getting dark because you do not want anybody to see your furniture, we had to move like that. The few pieces of furniture and cabinets were not in good condition, but I go on.

Then one day, three people turned up and I with my status was out in the street in less than 10 minutes. I was fired in less than 10 minutes. Sir, to this day they have not paid me the common decency of an explanation.

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 17, 12:50:08

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR H. A. HUSBANDS: Mr. President, I have had the privilege and honour of seeing one of the three standing outside my ancestral home in a little white shirt, chest puffed up, saying he is a candidate for the Barbados Labour Party and begging for a vote. I saw the little short fellow with a double-barrel name in a white shirt with puffed up chest in my wife's ancestral village outside her home, saying, please, I want a vote. Barbadians are so decent, they all tell him, "Yes, Sonny". I have had that privilege but that is really not the story that I want to tell.

Mr. President, there is however goodness in this country. I was driving the big fancy vehicle and I had to hand in the keys and get a lift home. Now, he is outside my ancestral house asking my family to vote for him.

The evening I got fired, so many people were at my house, you would have thought that they had a party or a wake. People stood by me. I saw David Ellis from Starcom Network one day and he invited me to be a moderator. My friend Geraldine Edwards at the Barbados Business Authority called the next day and asked me if I wanted to write an article, and I wrote. John Inniss, a white man, the name of the company escapes me now and it should not, at a wholly-owned Barbadian company called me and made sure I had work. There were also other people.

Mr. President, I started a little business. One of the things I know and one of the things I will have to work on, although it does not fall under my area, is the difficulties in starting up a little business. I made a living. There is a message in that when we talk about unemployment. Mr. President, what I did not tell you was that one day I was on the Board of the National Insurance Scheme, with the Honourable Senator Jepter Ince as Chairman, deciding who could or could not get benefits, and the next day I was in the unemployment line.

Mr. President, we talk about civil servants and the quality of service. Those at the National Insurance Board treated me with the greatest respect. They work well. Foolish me, I thought that this was only because it was me and they had recognised me, but the days that I sat there, every single person who came through that door, barefooted or in collar and tie, were all treated with respect. The receptionist, regrettably I cannot remember her name, who was sitting right there treated every single person with respect. I thought I was being given special treatment but that was the treatment that was given to every Barbadian who walked through that door.

Mr. President, we talk about unemployment. Looking around the room there are some people who are unemployed but voluntarily. In this crisis that we face, we honestly do not know how it is going to shake out

eventually, but we have done some things and put some things in place and we expect the best possible results.

Mr. President, I say to every working person in Barbados not to be afraid of new challenges, but to be prepared. This Government has shown that it is not afraid of new challenges. Mr. President, the lesson that I bring to this is that responsibility for that preparation ultimately rests with you.

Mr. President, while I was in that privileged position, I was deeply involved in all of the communications work of the organisation. I designed, named and wrote all of the company information, public relations, all of the interviews and all of the press releases. I wrote like a media person. I know how to write a press release and to get it into the newspaper.

Nobody said you have to do that and so on, and this one, or you are the Executive Director so you cannot do that. I could have said that this is not in my job description. I could have used all of those excuses.

The day I was put into the street, I had skills that I had developed for free on the side at the job. If I did not use that approach while I was there, and this is what I am recommending to all those in the hearing of my voice...

We recognise that unemployment is high. Unemployment is the same in Barbados as it is in the United States of America. That is the world feature, but we are taking measures to correct that. In the meantime, as we would say in Barbados, follow my foolish advice and sit down a day and list the things you used to do in the job that you held and you would be amazed to find out skills that you did not even realise you had that you can now sell. That has been my existence.

Mr. President, I am obliged to you. Thank you very much.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting do now suspend until 2.00 p.m. today.

The question that this Sitting do now suspend until 2.00 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

Senate A28A Sequence 18

1.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

Honourable Senators, when the Senate was in session prior to the recess, during the course of the debate there was a matter on which I had ruled. I have subsequently researched the matter and I am satisfied that the ruling was not exactly as it should have been.

There was a comment made in the course of the exchange which I believe ought not to have been made and ought not to be on record. I have subsequently ordered that those words be struck from the record.

The Clerk is in possession of the ruling and I just want to let the Honourable Senate know that I had made such a ruling. Thank you very much.

Senator Cave, I believe you have the Floor.

SENATOR R.G. CAVE: Mr. President, in reading, not only the Estimates, but also a document marked: "Medium-term Fiscal Strategy," which is already a document of this Honourable Senate, I noted there was a section where it says: "A fully developed and people-centred society through new development pathways."

Sir, that was the thrust that this document is taking us. Mr. President, my effort in making a contribution to the Estimates is to see if we could help find new pathways for Barbados, to bring us out of this difficult position in which we are now.

Sir, before I get there, I would begin by saying that congratulations are in order for the timely and well-presented Estimates. This is a document that is not altogether easy to follow, but nevertheless, it is a good record and the people who have put them together need to be congratulated.

Sir, Senator Chandler made the point that some areas could be improved so that we could follow it more clearly in the future, but nevertheless, I am very proud of those people who have put it together.

Mr. President, this I cannot say in general for the accounts of Government as a whole and indeed for our state-owned agencies, but I think we are making rapid improvement. I do not know what it was like before, but clearly, I can see that we are catching up in our accounting because ever month we produce two sections, two months' word. As I said, I do not know what it was like before, but I do know that the accounts for one of the State-owned agencies, Hotels and Resorts Limited, (HRL), are due for, I think, as long ago as 2005.

2.10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR R. G. CAVE: Sir, in the private sector, if you are running a public company, the accounts for that public company must be completed in three months. If you cannot complete in three months, you have to have permission from the Securities Commission and give them good reasons why you cannot complete.

I consider that Government is a greater public company than public companies because the whole citizenry owns these companies and we should not be any different than public companies, so our accounts in Government should be brought up-to-date.

Mr. President, I must say that as I watch that things are improving and every month I see two months' accounts come here, so there has been a great improvement. Mr. President, we cannot make sensible decisions on accounts which are four years old. We cannot even make sensible decisions in this fast moving world with accounts that are one year old. Certainly, that particular agency, Hotel and Resorts Limited, is one which is leaking and is causing great concern to all concerned in this country.

Mr. President, I must admit that Government must have a very difficult time to manage the economy in these times. I give those who are responsible full credit for the work they are doing. I think that it is a difficult time. The reason is that our United Kingdom partners, who represent 40 per cent of our largest industry, tourism, has gone through mighty financial difficulties.

The people there have lost great amounts of their wealth and, as a result, their visits with Barbados have been depleted and hence, hotels, shops and restaurants in the tourism world have come under immense pressure. I believe that many hotels are on the verge of bankruptcy, certainly, many restaurants have closed and so have shops.

Those people who are dependant on the British market are going through difficult times and this also applies to the United States of America, where that market, which is our second largest market for tourism, is equally in big trouble. Hence, from a country's point-of-view, where tourism is our largest foreign exchange earner, I think that the Government is going to have a difficult time to manage its accounts.

Mr. President, equally, the international business sector has been damaged by the global economic crisis and people have lost more than half of their wealth. Those international business companies here who manage the wealth of people overseas, have gone through themselves some very difficult times. Mind you, the turn is coming, but taxation is going to be reduced, so we have to be very cautious in how we proceed.

Mr. President, in looking at the Estimates it does not take a genius to realise the difficulty that we are in. The front page of the Estimates reveals revenue just short of \$2.5 billion and estimated expenditure of \$4 billion. When converted to international financial institution basis, the fiscal deficit is in and around \$600 million.

What concerns me is that revenue is expected to be down, but expenditure is still on the increase. I have heard criticisms made of the Government for reducing expenditure. Sir, I am only a simple businessman and I know in the world of business that when your business is in trouble, if you do not manage it properly, you are going to be a loser, and if your revenue is down, you are going to have to cut your expenses to make it right. Mr. President, I recognise that Government is slightly different, but we are going through a difficult time and I would like to see even more careful management. The \$600 million is still quite a bit amount but, anyhow, this is fully understood.

Mr. President, I was pleased to note that in the Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy and I quote:

"Ministries will be required to re-prioritise their programmes to reduce cost. In addition, focus will be given to personal emoluments. This now stands at 36.2 per cent of revenue and 31.1 per cent of expenditure, and transfers and subsidies. Levels of public sector employment would be carefully managed to contain cost and State-owned agencies will be restructured to be more efficient and rely less on Government subvention."

Mr. President, I am pleased to see that in the document, and I hope that we are careful because we have a very lovely country and I would not like to see us going in the way that we have been before. Mr. President, our largest expenditure is personnel emoluments, which is greater than 35 per cent of revenue. Sir, this is not a popular subject but it is one that the Prime Minister, again, brought up in the House of Assembly, that is, he addressed the issue of public sector reform.

Mr. President, public sector reform, if not necessarily one of cutting the numbers of people but refashioning and refocusing of the public sector and the times we are going through, we need to be taking a serious note on this.

Sir, successive Governments never like to touch this subject because, clearly, it is an issue of votes and nobody wants to touch it, but it is an area that is very important and, Sir, our industries are changing and we need to be changing with what is the future.

Mr. President, many of our Public Service Ministries are not really working with the new world of where Barbados is today, so it is an area that we should address.

My concern is that in the Budget, we have a cut in the public sector reform department.

I do not know how we are really going to engage public sector reform with a cut in the Estimates. I am hoping that what the Prime Minister says that he is really going to take it on and get it done.

Mr. President, we have a very unique form of Social Partnership which evolved out of the early 1990s, which has served Barbados admirably since then. More particularly, it has really shone in the crisis that we are now in. The unions have done a grand job of addressing the fact that employment should maintain and I think the private sector has supported that through the Social Partnership in trying to hold up employment.

When we consider that, in a country like ours, unemployment is only 10 per cent, compared to the United States of America which is almost the same, I consider that the unions, the Social Partnership and Government, have done a marvellous job and, as a result, Barbados is not feeling the crisis as we might have.

Mr. President, our two largest foreign exchange earning industries in Barbados are tourism and the offshore industry. I believe that we should be packaging ourselves to become the leading offshore financial service centre in the Caribbean and we should be looking to the Civil Service to partner with that private sector. Sir, Barbados has a splendid quality educated Civil Service, but we need to change or we need to be focussed as partners to the private sector.

S/A28A/2:20 Sequence 20

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR R. G. CAVE: I previously made an address in the Chamber late last year, decrying the Government of many years ago, in the late 1990s, for putting the wrong legislation in place. That was in respect of Mutual Funds. We were advised at the time not to put the legislation in place, and we did.

The result was, in the 10 years hence, Barbados built an industry of 20 Mutual Funds. At the same time Cayman Islands put the right legislation in place, and they built 10 000 companies, so it is important that what we do, we get it right if we wish to flourish.

Sir, in the recent National Consultation, public and private sector, I took note of the Central Bank, who gave us a slide explaining to us the number of registered offshore businesses in Barbados, and in the rest of the Caribbean. In Barbados we, at the turn of the century, and that was the slide they showed, that Barbados had 3 400 offshore

international business companies. I thought that there were quite a few, but at the same time the Cayman Islands had 50 000. The British Virgin Islands had 314 000 and the Bahamas one million.

This slide gave me a lot of hope for Barbados, because I know all of those countries. I know the Cayman Islands, the British Virgin Islands and the Bahamas. What they have to offer is not what we have to offer. We have a better climate. We have a much more enjoyable environment. We have people coming out of the university, 1 000 graduates every year, so we have a work-force that could feed that international business.

Sir, we have the kind of people who love visitors. The new opportunity in the case of the offshore world is wealth management and we have previously - most of our offshore industry is built around the Canadian system and we have done that very well. We are probably the leading international financial sector for Canadian-based corporations, but there is a new world out there.

The international financial crisis that is taking place has caused a huge change in how Governments are run. Governments, particularly in the United Kingdom, are looking to tax the wealthy more. The result is, hundreds of thousands of people in the United Kingdom and in Europe are looking for new places. They are looking for new places to manage their wealth and they are often now looking for new places for themselves to settle. I am not saying that hundreds of thousands of people will turn up in Barbados. We have a great opportunity, but we have to act on it soon.

Sir, the opportunity, it seems strange that I will be harping on this, but the tourism currently is the largest leading foreign exchange earner in Barbados, and the international financial sector, the second, with the opportunity of bringing people and people's wealth into this country will guarantee us a huge inflow. It will have side effects that will be good in this country. It can pull pensions that are sitting out there into our land.

The British system, as much as 82 per cent of their wealth is taxed when they die, so anybody who is getting close to that time, and if they know that time is coming, they are looking at what they want to pass on. Barbados is in a great position to take the opportunity to do this.

It seems all very "scary fairy" and I know to the average person on the street, the international business sector only means you see a few people walking around and maybe going on the golf course and playing, but for those islands which have done it and done it well, there is a huge opportunity, and it is a huge opportunity for this country and it could transform us and dig us out of the hole that we are in.

Sir, after I read the slides of the Central Bank, I glanced back at what they started in the 1950s where the presentation of the Central Bank was made. That took me back to when I was a youngster, going to school for the first time, and I researched what was the position in Barbados in 1951. In 1951 sugar was 50 per cent of our GDP, tourism probably was about 5 per cent and the international business never heard of it.

I am not taking anything from tourism. In those days my father happened to be a pioneer in the tourism world and, of course, every day I went home I heard him ranting and raving because a lot of white wealthy people in the sugar industry would not come and help the tourist industry. Some did help, but their focus was on sugar.

Here was a young industry. We did not even yet have a Tourist Board. I think the Tourist Board came on in 1958, but here was a young industry that had great opportunity for Barbados. I used to hear it as a youngster, so I learnt it. I tried to learn about Barbados and I was learning about this problem at the same time.

Sir, history has told us where it is, because today tourism and the international financial sector is about 75 per cent of our foreign exchange earnings, and sugar is about 1.3 per cent of our foreign exchange earnings. I am not taking anything from sugar because I think that sugar has stood us well, and has carried Barbados for many years, and it is important that we keep the sugar cane industry because you can say it is a nice environment for the tourists and international offshore sector industries, that I consider it to be like the environment levy that we pay.

The real wealth of Barbados is now in tourism and the real wealth of Barbados, in my view, will be in the offshore sector. This is where we can create tremendous employment for our young people. This is a place that we can go and do great things.

I say all of that because there are also some issues we have, that is, our immigration policies at the minute. We have a big nice Green Paper and we have a very nice new Minister, who is to take responsibility for immigration. Our immigration position is one which does not help us, Sir. It is not working in focus with what Barbados' next stage of development can be. That does not mean that immigration has not served us beautifully, it has.

SA28A 14.30 p.m. Sequence 21

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 22, 2.30 p.m.

SENATOR R. G. CAVE: Our Immigration has served Barbados magnificently and for those people who

go on cruise ships and welcome our visitors, you could get better faces. For those at the airport when you come in, they are beautiful.

The part I am talking about is if one wanted to get permanent residency in Barbados, you would have to jump over these chandeliers. It is virtually impossible and you have a citizenry from possible opportunities in the international financial sector and if somebody came and asked me what is the chance of getting a residency in Barbados I would have to tell them, very difficult.

In fact, in the international financial services sector, since my last address in the Senate, people have had me working on different Committees, so I have heard things that I have not heard before and people have told me that those people who are selling our industry, the people who come in here, working in the companies, going out, getting the Canadians in, doing the business, bringing in the people, and their children some of them are born here. I asked them how many residencies they have received and they said that they do not know of one, despite the applications that have been put in.

Sir, can you imagine that somebody who has their children here, they are selling the industry for Barbados, might have lived here 10 or 15 years and when they address the fact that they would like residency, far less, I am not talking citizenship yet, it is blockaded.

I do not know why we have done it this way, but that is a fact as I know it, and they cannot say anything because they know that they are expatriates and the result is, if they speak badly about Barbados, all of a sudden their permit will be withdrawn or whatever they are here on, they might lose it, so they are nervous to speak.

Sir, we should not have nice quality people who are going out to sell our country for 10/15 years and not be giving them the opportunity to sell. Do not mind I am speaking about expatriates but I see this as a huge opportunity for Barbados.

Just like my Dad saw tourism back in the 1950s, I feel that we are in the process now of a little lift off and if we play it right, we will do well and we will make it but there are areas and I am not being critical of the Immigration Officers on this, but somehow it is an area that we at the higher level need to address. I speak across the room and say that I look forward to meeting with you and chatting further but I do believe it is a real opportunity this country has and many of these people who might come and settle in Barbados.

I heard of one fellow who was around here just now and he has in a residency permit. I do not know how long he has been around Barbados but I have heard the kind of

money he has, and he is the kind of fellow that if his money is good money, and I am saying that we will have our process to do in checking people's accounts and making sure they are good, but when people, the quanta that I understand are around, these fellows have sufficient that they can go to any jurisdiction.

They only have to choose their jurisdiction. Sir, over the weekend the fellow said to me, Geoffrey if you do not find a way for this fellow, he has been two years waiting, patience is running out, he will go to Monaco.

These are areas that we seriously need to address. I have taken all of my time to talk about the international offshore sector because I believe it is an area that we have great opportunity, therefore, if we address it and address it right, I do believe that Barbados has a great chance.

Sir, going back in time, I remember when, I think it might have been around the 1960s, but Barbados. Immigration was run by the police. The Immigration came out of the police so when you arrived at the Airport, a nice policeman met you, well dressed and it was a nice security feeling because for people who arrive as visitors they say, "Hey boy, this island is secure", but we changed it from the police and a new-fashion Immigration started and it served Barbados magnificently well. We now need to go to another level.

We need a lift, not for the whole Immigration. We need a section of Immigration dealing with this new world that we see. It might not take many people, but when these folks arrive, they need to be in the right place and they need to be talked to and they will say, "Wow, this place looks nice to be. We have nice golf courses. We have nice restaurants. The environment is good. The weather is good, the only thing we have a few hurricanes but we have not had one for 50 years." We need to find ways to bring this level of people to Barbados and we will have a 365-day tourist.

We do not need many of these folks. There might be 500 over a year or two, maybe a few years but they will make a difference to this country in terms of what businesses they bring, the wealth they will bring, the management of that wealth and what they do in their spending, in terms of investment, will make a different world for Barbados. I believe, Mr. President, if we take action in that area, that we will be able to achieve what has been put down in the Medium Term Fiscal Strategy and reach a surplus by 2014 or 2015.

Mr. President, in a recent world economic forum, Barbados ranked 30th out of 133 countries in competitiveness, but in attitude of population to foreign visitors, we ranked 1st, to affinity to tourism we ranked 2nd, and to Government prioritisation of travel and tourism

we ranked 2nd. Sir, we have community, we have everything going for us here. We have a lovely environment and we have what people want. All I say to you, Sir, is that if we play our cards right, we will have a great move forward.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Gilkes.

SENATOR P. W. B. GILKES: Mr. President, I stand to lend my support to this debate of the Estimates of Expenditure 2010 to 2011 and in so doing to lend my full support to the Prime Minister, the Members of Parliament and the Cabinet of Barbados, and also to the Independent Members of the Senate for the maturity and levelheadedness exhibited in our recent deliberations, and to the Prime Minister for steering the ship out of troubled waters and navigating into safer waters. I am indeed happy to know that we have rational level-headed and mature and wise people running the affairs of this country.

Sir, before I move to tourism, Senator Cave mentioned the issue of immigration matters and the offshore business sector. I would just briefly like to mention that Invest Barbados has recently been playing a major part in improving the relationship with the offshore sector and the Immigration Department. To that end, the Department of Immigration has set up an officer that functions, I think, three days a week at Invest Barbados for the sole purpose of processing these types of clientele.

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 22, 14:40:20

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR P. W. B. GILKES: I am sure that with the Senator's involvement, we would make even better progress.

In tourism, the slogan "Come, Live, Life", replaces "Tourism is our Business, Let's Play our Part". Whatever the catch phrase may be, I would just like to say to everyone who may be listening, including the Members of the Opposition, that while they take the opportunity to kick tourism, that tourism is still the main revenue earner of Barbados and employs the largest number of people in this society, so it may be time for us to be taking a more cooperative role and not be as antagonistic as I heard they were over the last week or so.

Sir, rather than being divisive and damaging, it may be time to hold hands with the Minister of Tourism and those who are involved in the guidance of the industry, including the Barbados Tourism Authority, and work together to support this area.

The Barbados Tourism Authority continues to put a lot of effort into the marketing of Barbados. This may be the time for our hoteliers to become a little more active and take some of the responsibility for marketing their properties and marketing Barbados. It is all too long that the Barbados Tourism Authority has spent fortunes in marketing while the hoteliers have been slow to come on stream and be part of that programme. The time is now for them to play a more active role.

Our tourism arrivals have traditionally come from places such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Canada. What would you expect to be happening to our tourism arrival figures if the countries from which our arrivals are being drawn are suffering the effects of the recessionary period?

It is unlikely that these same people are going to spend money on holidays to far off destinations and exotic locations and not be able to put food on their table in their homeland. We are suffering because of the impact the recession is having in our source market destinations. How can tourism be expected to grow to the heady heights of the good years, it cannot happen.

Mr. President, let me remind all that 2008 was a record year in terms of revenue earned by Barbados from tourism receipts. This comes a year after the much touted Cricket World Cup year which, for all intents and purposes, was supposed to be the mother of all tourism years. It turned out to be an absolute disaster in terms of our tourism efforts. Ships capable of carrying 1 500 passengers sailed out of the Bridgetown Port some evenings carrying only seven paying guests.

The Carnival Destiny, which was rented to the taxpayers of Barbados for the pricy sum of \$19 million, ended up doing rides to nowhere at buy one get one free fares, meanwhile the taxpayers were about to face the stark reality that they were forced into debt to a foreign-owned company by poor decisions made by the former Minister of Tourism to the tune of \$19 million that they and their children will be forced to pay for, for many years to come. Fortunately, the wise people of this island have since taken stock and have retired the former Minister to his plantation home in St. Andrew.

In the Other Place, the question was asked about the subsidy to JetBlue. The status is that JetBlue has delivered nearly 17 000 visitors to our island who spend money in the hotels, bars, restaurants, night life and attractions. Of those 17 000 people, 75 per cent of them stayed in hotels in the island. The basis for the subsidy is identical to that of American Airlines. The former Minister would know what that arrangement would have been. We paid JetBlue \$1.6 million to get nearly 17 000 people in this island in support of Barbadian hotels. This is very much different from the

\$1.3 million that was spent by the former Government, the former Minister of Tourism, in an ill-advised arrangement that brought him a mere 357 persons on one Air India flight during the Cricket World Cup. They were then forced to refund all the passengers for the return section because of poor planning as no alternative crew was brought in on the aircraft and the other aircraft went back empty.

Tourism arrivals are up out of the United States of America market by 28 per cent and Canada by 18 per cent through February. Never under a Barbados Labour Party Administration has tourism arrivals from these destinations shown such sustained growth as they are showing now. This is no accident. It is a well-planned and executed strategy that has come together to deliver these results.

Air lift continues to grow, thanks to an active and keen Minister of Tourism. There are new carriers serving Barbados year round. Carriers such as JetBlue and WestJet have begun daily services year round. The new and yet to start GOL Services from Brazil to Barbados will start, I think, on June 26 this year.

Mr. President, we are not stopping there. We are also seeing some growth out of the European market. We have already started discussions with a carrier out of Europe for a direct service from Germany to Barbados. I heard about cuts in the budget and things like that being branded around. The tourism budget was buoyed by a series of supplemental votes toward the end of last year. The budget allocation for this year is on track with the requirements of the Department. The fact that greater efficiency is expected in managing these budgets going forward is very much part of the programme of this Government. Why then would we continue to allocate funding that is not necessary year in and year out? This has not been the case in the past.

This Government is intent on tightening up wastage and will make every effort to make sure that the budgets are run much tighter. Long gone are the days of wastage and cost overruns. No longer do taxpayers have to endure mismanagement of public funds as was so common in times of the Barbados Labour Party Government.

No more will we see wastage and unexplained expenses in projects such as the 3S Road Works; VECO Prisons; Hardwood Housing; Kent Lands; Holders Land; Coastal Zone Management Unit; and Searles and Groves; money for work permits; asbestos roofs; and golden showers; and missing houses at the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission.

Mr. President, I was sidetracked there a little bit on that because it was on the mind. Going back to tourism, festivals and events are avenues of growth that the Barbados Tourism Authority sees as very important to the future development of tourism. The Barbados Tourism

Authority is very busy putting together a series of new projects and programmes to help drive arrivals to the island.

Senate A28A Sequence 23

2.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR the Hon. P. W. B. GILKES: Mr. President, to this end, it is launching some new and tourism-arrival focus events. A new event that is coming up in September this year will be the Bobby Jones Gospel Festival and a new Food and Spirits Festival. This would bring the best of Barbadian entertainment, along with international artistes, as well as the best of Barbadian food and Barbadian spirits.

These are all projects and programmes aimed at attracting arrival numbers. We have been putting on festivals here that have only had the impact of attracting locals. These projects are now ones that will definitely be attractive to foreigners. We therefore expect to see an improvement in the numbers, as a result of putting on these broad programmes.

Mr. President, with regard to sports tourism, one being polo, the massive returns yielded from Sunnybell Polo, our positive exposure for this relatively small input of \$1 000 000 or fantastic coverage valued at almost US\$40 million is a win-win situation. Barbados was shown in a most positive light on networks around the world, coupled with the fund-raising event at Farley Hill that was so well-coordinated by our fellow Honourable Senator, Senator Irene Sandiford-Garner. This event linked well with polo and led to excellent exposure all around the world.

County cricket is another initiative of the Barbados Tourism Authority and the Minister of Tourism. The Barbados Tourism Authority recently hosted four County cricket teams to our shores.

This programme was a massive success, with many teams already committed to returning next year. The value of having four teams growing to eight teams for next year is not to be underestimated. With proper marketing, it could develop into a very viable market for sports tourism. We saw that with these four teams on the ground in Barbados. They brought with them in excess of 250 persons for their preseason training camp.

There are a number of events that are near to hand, one being the Cricket World Cup Twenty20, the finals in Barbados on May 16. This is a world-class event that will see the island being filled with tourist arrivals. Sir, reports indicate that this will be a fully subscribed event.

Next month we will have the Fireball Barbados World Tournament, from April 24 to May 7. This is an event that will be used as a showcase to launch Barbados as a location that should be used for more of these water-based events. We did not have to build a stadium, nor did we have to create a venue. When we build stadiums in these parts they cost a lot of money, they usually get very expensive. We do not have to build any of those things. We have them at our doorsteps and they are here for us to use. Mr. President, we have it all at our fingertips and we should make the most of it.

Mr. President, hosting this event will give Barbados great status in the world of sailing events and give us entrants into classes of sailing in which we normally would not have had a door opened. To this end, we have the President of another class visiting Barbados during the FireBall World Tournament, to view the operation of this event. If, at the end of that event, he is happy with the way it was managed by the Barbadians, others would be held here.

As I said, the Fireball World Tournament runs between April 24 and May 7. We have 80 boats confirmed, with sailors from around the world: Australia, South Africa, Switzerland, France, Ireland, England, the Shetland Islands, et cetera. That represents between 350 to 400 arrivals for a two-week period. What is probably one of the nicest aspects of hosting this event is that these visitors opt to stay in a wide range of accommodations, from guest houses to four-star hotels, thereby giving smaller hotels a greater opportunity to earn revenue. It is not all about the four-star and five-star hotels. They will be using accommodation across the board.

The Fireball programme has been wonderfully supported by our Minister of Tourism and the Barbados Tourism Authority and through the Corporation, we have been able to secure the services of the Secretary, who is very keen to help us in future projects for bringing other classes of events to Barbados.

Mr. President, there is another aspect of tourism that has been working wonderfully well, that is, the Prime Minister has consented to doing his returning visitors' evenings at Ilaro Court. Sir, having recently attended one, it was a massive success. When you meet and chat with some of these visitors, you would quickly grasp just what it means to them to be entertained by the Prime Minister in his official residence. It is a wonderful programme and we ought to congratulate the Prime Minister and the Minister of Tourism for that very positive initiative. We have a Minister who understands tourism, not one who took instructions.

Mr. President, I had a first-hand peek at tourism arrivals in December and at the peak of the winter season I

would have to compliment Senator Arnie Walters and the Minister of Tourism, Richard Sealy, for making a trip to the Airport to observe the flow and traffic going through the Airport at the height of the season. I must tell you, it is not their job to be there but I saw them.

Sir, at the peak of the evening, with the Immigration room filled with persons, everyone was processed in less than 40 minutes. Sir, it is very often that credit is not given to those people to whom credit should be given but I would like to use this opportunity to say congratulation to the Customs and Immigration Officers for a job very well-done during a very busy time.

Mr. President, a few weeks ago, I made a point of attending Port St. Charles to welcome the six rowers who made Barbados their landfall, after rowing 5 000 kilometres from Morocco to Barbados. The story written and submitted to the daily newspapers clearly indicate that we wanted to make a point of pointing out that the heartfelt thanks of the rowers, the Government, the people and staff of Port St. Charles: the Customs, Immigration Officers, Port Health workers and the staff of the restaurant of Port St. Charles because they were serving dinner at 11:00 p.m. to these six rowers. The Customs Department, Port Health and Immigration Officers stayed on well past their cut-off time at 10.00 p.m., but for reasons never known to the Press that was never made public.

Mr. President, I thought I would take this opportunity to thank everyone there for a job that was very well-done, that made a tremendous impact on the psyche of those people. They having spent 58 days on water, to have arrived and then have to spend another night sitting in a row boat would not have been the most welcoming experience to Barbados. Sir, to this end, I got an email earlier today expressing thanks and gratitude to the people of Barbados for the kindness that was extended to them.

Mr. President, while here yesterday I listened to Senator Thompson making a series of rash statements. Sir, I am sure that had Senator Thompson prepared herself for the debate of the Estimates, or had she given some thought to what she wanted to say, she may not have said what she said yesterday.

3.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR P. W. B. GILKES: . . .

Sir, it drove me to ask a few questions. Those questions are:

What was the record of the Barbados Labour Party in building houses?

Sir, amazingly, the information I received was startling. It is reported to me that the best effort the Barbados Labour Party did was constructed a mere 61 houses. There is one contractor who is using his own money to provide homes to create housing solutions for the Government and people of Barbados and by year end, he would have provided close to 400 houses. Sir, this is his work alone. This is not the effort of the Minister of Housing.

This is one provider of houses, who is using his own money to do such. He is not asking for one red cent of taxpayers' money to do it. He is hiring small plumbers, electrical workers, tilers, carpenters and masons. Then these folks come here with half-truths misrepresenting the facts. Sir, if you remember the best housing product that they have is 61 houses, but we are putting together 400 homes under one contractor, which is his own financing programme.

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. President, I rise on a point of order. Again the Honourable Senator is misleading the Senate. The structure of his comment and the language he is using almost suggests that we should be grateful for being done some favour. The nature of an investment is that a contractor, builder or investor puts in money, builds houses and sells them to a market to profit.

Sir, that is all the person is doing. His market might be National Housing Corporation applicants or it might be people in the wider marketplace. Sir, he is using his money, building and selling at a profit. Sir, that is normal conduct and it is nothing out of the extraordinary. This is being build up as something which we should be extraordinarily grateful for, that somebody is making an investment with their own money.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You may continue, Senator.

SENATOR P.W.B. GILKES: Sir, not to belabour the point but the truth is that for a Government that has done so poorly at housing, it is not really something to make a big boast of.

Sir, I would like to close just by reminding them that the effort is the one that the public sees. It is not what I could have done or what I may have done or what I should have done, the result is what people see and that is what counts.

Mr. President, I am obliged to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Durant, you have the Floor.

SENATOR the Rev. Dr. D. L. DURANT: Mr. President, the distinct honour is mine and the privilege,

indeed, is very humbling for me to stand in this Honourable Chamber, the third oldest Parliament in this Western Hemisphere, with all its grandeur and beauty and history, to support the Estimates for 2010 - 2011, laid in the Honourable House by the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. Let me say that I honour and have great respect for all the Senators in this Honourable Chamber and that I am happy to be here in your company.

Mr. President, let me begin by giving God thanks for his goodness, his mercy and his abundant blessing that he has showered upon us as a dear island, an island that he has shielded from the ravages of many hurricanes since Janet, September 22, 1955. Sir, many systems have passed this way and if we were hit, Barbados would be much further back than we are today and for this we have to give God thanks.

I want to also thank the citizens and residents of this blessed nation, who have demonstrated maturity, wisdom, inner strength and understanding in the face of a severe global economic recession, the worse in 75 years.

Mr. President, most Barbadians today would not have experienced such a worldwide crisis of the scope and magnitude of the one we are presently faced with. Therefore, we must, like Jehoshaphat, the Bible says:

“Lord, we have not been this way before but Lord our eyes are on you.”

Mr. President, the word of God also continues to say:

“Unless the Lord builds a house, the builders labour in vain.

Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman watches but in vain.”

Mr. President, in other words, it is our trusting in God and his faithfulness that would bring us through this very difficult period. Sir, it also calls for shrewd, prudent, and strong leadership to be able to navigate such a small economy as ours through these turbulent waters. I have the confidence that the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, along with the members of his Cabinet and economic advisors, are able to do just that.

Mr. President, as I went through these Estimates, I recognise they were put together within the context of an island with hardly any natural resources. There is not much oil, although I believe some more is out there, and sugar prices keep declining on the European market, so we must continue to push agriculture, as mentioned by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture. There is no bauxite and there is no manganese or other natural minerals.

Sir, I believe they were also put together within the context of a global economic recession, the worse in years, as I have just said but, Mr. President, I do believe they were put together with the knowledge and the understanding of our greatest resource, our people.

Mr. President, historically, Barbadians have gone through many turbulent waters but have always demonstrated tenacity, strength of character, resilience and, in the face of adversity, always come out successfully. Our people seem to be endowed with that inner sagacity and an acumen necessary to catapult us to the next level. The good Book truly says: “The just shall live by faith.”

Mr. President, I must applaud the commitment and the patriotism showed by our employers in the private sector in keeping their workers employed rather than laying them off because this has gone a far way in cushioning the impact of this economic crisis on our island.

Mr. President, in the international arena, Barbados is viewed as one of the highest ranking small island developing States. This is as a result of being blessed with strong, stable, leadership over the years. Sir, this did not happen by indecisiveness, lack of vision, fear or a culture of complacency but because our greatest resource, our people, continue to demonstrate a spirit of excellence, prudence, pride and industry, creativity and a strong managerial and administrative skill.

S/A28/15:10 Sequence 25

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR the Rev. Dr. D. L. DURANT: This acumen serves well in pushing us up the ladder of achieving such an esteem status, or international status, that is, our vision must be to become globally competitive and prosperous as a nation.

I was in St. Lucia, just a few days ago, and as soon as I got into the Airport taxi, the driver asked me how is the economy in Barbados. I told him that we have past the worse and we are on our way back up now. He said, “Do you know the entire Caribbean always looks to Barbados for that kind of guidance, and we all wonder how you all make out?” I told him, “We are thankful for good leadership, over the years.”

I believe he said that in the context of what St. Lucia is experiencing as well as other OECS countries. I just want to read an article - St. Lucia as well as St. Vincent, as all other Caribbean islands are experiencing the same kind of problem.

Mr. President, the story is the same all around the Caribbean, but when you look at the overall performances,

Barbados has done extremely well, and may be better than most, if not all, so we must give God thanks and also commend the Honourable Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance for a job well done.

Sir, when we are faced with certain economic challenges, they ultimately necessitate the way we do things. We have been doing things one way all the time. When the crunch begins to pressure us, we change. The way that leads is to that culture of change, nevertheless a nation must be characterised by certain qualities such as creativity, innovation, risk taking, vision and perseverance. Sir, those qualities do not come unless we step out of the boat. We cannot keep doing the same things over and over.

What is comforting and very encouraging is the knowledge that Barbadians are much wiser today and they do understand the economic environment in which we live, and the limitations with which we have to operate. A lot of praise must be given, because in the face of recession, our unemployment level fell below the double digit figure, to 9.7 per cent, and that is noteworthy, because in a crisis like this, you would think that the percentage would keep climbing.

I want to pay a little attention to Head 38, Ministry of Housing and Lands. Sir, \$44 988 423 has been allocated to this Ministry. Now the mission of this Ministry is to provide quality and affordable housing, land and office accommodation solutions for its clients.

One of the objectives is to improve the quality and standard of living of Barbadians, through providing improved housing, which is a very worthwhile and good thing to be doing as a nation, especially to those in the lower income bracket, also to ensure that persons are housed in a safe and well-secured environment.

I want to commend the Minister of Housing and Lands for the many housing solutions already completed. I am told that 252 houses have been completed, and that is in the midst of a recession, in a short period of time. I think that is very commendable.

I was in Marchfield, St. Philip, witnessing the handing over of keys to the new homeowners, 32 in number. If you could have seen the joy on the faces of those people as they received their keys and were able to go into their own homes. Any Government that is vigorously pursuing a housing programme to house its lower income citizens must be commended for such a decision.

Tourism, Head 55, \$99 083 034 was allocated to this particular Ministry. As we heard earlier, it is the largest foreign exchange earner in our small economy. Now tourism is very important to us, so we must continue to be

creative and innovative to keep this product fresh and very appealing, so that Barbados can remain a desired destination, or a first choice destination.

Some of the objectives of this Ministry revealed that it is this Government's intention to foster the development of the full potential of the tourism sector, in order to provide maximum employment opportunities for persons engaged in the industry. I have said before, it is an employment generating engine, as well as to facilitate, monitor and encourage the enhancement and sustainable development of the Barbados tourist product.

Sir, thirdly, this is one that I want to give a little more attention to, to facilitate the development of new attractions, including special events throughout the year which would assist with the elevation of seasonality in the tourism industry.

Sir, I believe we need to continue pursuing the development of new attractions for our tourist product. It was said and it is already clearly known, that tourism declined by 8.7 per cent with an estimated loss of \$170 million, and we would not want this repeated. We know that Government is making every effort to see this change, and these figures climb back up again.

I know that many airlifts are being pursued, as was just told by the Honourable Senator Gilkes, but what about other attractions that we can create in Barbados which will cause tourists to keep coming here as a desired destination?

I looked at the Concorde that we have here at the Grantley Adams International Airport, and I am saying we have a very good product there, but I believe that could be expanded. I believe that we can have other vehicles or other retired aircraft, and maybe we can make a war and aviation museum, create another attraction, so that people would have another place of interest to go to when they are here. I am sure that with careful planning, and we have land available, maybe in St. Philip, where I live, and I am saying where I live in St. Philip, we can have other attractions developed to attract more tourists to our island.

Also, GospelFest, we know that it is supported and we will encourage the continued support of GospelFest. It brings many tourists here. I believe there are other Gospel Tourism Programmes that can be hosted here as well. Once advertised well in advance and given some time on TV and other Christian Channels in North America and Europe, and even throughout the Caribbean, that can attract a number of Christians to our shores. It would serve them in three ways.

SA28A 15.20 p.m. Sequence 26

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 27, 3.20 p.m.

SENATOR the Rev. Dr. D. L. DURANT: They will be hosted by the particular event when they get to visit our historical buildings, especially our Anglican Churches that have a lot of history to them. Thirdly, they would have a lovely vacation in our paradise island.

I believe we can begin to think outside of the box and look at ways and means of creating other attractions within Barbados. I do not only want to put this in the context of satisfying the tourists, but also maybe for families here as well.

Sir, Coney Islands come here over and over, stay for six weeks to two months, and they rake in a lot of foreign exchange out of this country because they are well-attended night after night, especially on weekends. We can invest in a Coney Island that is permanent here in Barbados, which can become an attraction where our families can go on weekends, carry our children and grandchildren because we in Barbados need more places to go.

I am saying that because I remember a few years ago, a friend of mine came with me from Trinidad. We were travelling together and he came to Barbados to spend a few days. One of the things he told me when he landed here, "Man, your island is boring." I was very offended. I said, "Look, my navel string is buried here. Do not tell me something like that." I spoke to him. Then when he left, I began to think about it and, I am saying maybe there are things we can do to make our island a lot more attractive.

We have a number of things already that are very good. Harrison's Cave, is a beauty, one of the world's wonders but I think there are more things that we can just think, plan and strategise about places for our families to go. Maybe, that is why many of our young people are going to these striptease clubs and various places that we would not want them to go because there are no other alternatives. Then we see the deviant behaviour coming out of them.

For Education, Head 54, Mr. President, in 1961 free education was introduced into this island. It has proven to be a tremendous blessing, not only to this nation, Barbados, but to many other nations, especially in the area of our human resource strength and capability. Many other countries around the world have benefited. Barbadians hold high positions in many institutions and their work ethic is par excellence.

The objective of this Ministry reveals that it is the Government's intention to continue to provide a sound basic education for every citizen, to equip them to recognise and realise their potential for development, as

well as the provision of special educational facilities for the disadvantaged.

It is so important that the disadvantaged are not left out of our development process and our education because we want to enable them to live a full life and an active life to the maximum because they are precious people in our society. The provision is made for the disadvantaged as well to enjoy such a life and such a free education.

The Pilot Project under the Ministry of Education for the introduction of Spanish in primary schools is what caught my attention and, I think, must be applauded. Asides.

SENATOR the Rev. Dr. D. L. DURANT: This Caribbean Region of approximately 35 million people is made up of four major languages, Spanish, French, English and Dutch. When we were younger, I would have thought that English made up most of the Caribbean but I have realised that 59 per cent speak Spanish, within the Caribbean, French 21 per cent, English 17 per cent and Dutch a mere 3 per cent.

Sir, to begin introducing Spanish at the primary school level, I think is a very good idea. When our primary school children reach secondary school, they already have a basic understanding of that foreign language. I think our island needs to become more linguistic and major more on foreign languages.

I am so blessed when I visit places like Curaçao and Aruba that young children know four languages. They speak Papiamentu, Dutch, Spanish and English very fluently. They look at me and they look at us from Barbados and we say, we know our mother's language very well, English, because we were not so inhabited by the French influence, the Dutch influence and the Spanish influence. We were basically English.

Mr. President, I want to look briefly at Head 67, the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, Urban and Rural Development and \$74 432 792 has been allocated for this particular Ministry. This Ministry's primary focus is to provide assistance to the vulnerable groups in the society and the empowerment also of individuals and groups. The objectives are to assist poor children, the disabled and the elderly. I really think it is important that we pay attention to the children of our society and I applaud the efforts of the Ministry of Social Care in this aspect.

When I look at the statistics in the area of child abuse in this island of ours, it is a bit startling. In 2008 - 2009, it says 467 cases of physical abuse were reported. These are only the reported cases. Sexual abuse 162 reported cases, neglect 583 reported cases, emotional abuse

62 reported cases, and abandonment three reported cases. This is a total of 1 068 cases.

Mr. President, this is 1 068 too many. We need to give more attention to our children. We need to give more care to the children of our society and when you look at that figure, you can say that about two children a day are being abused in Barbados. Sir, we cannot, as a small society, continue to condone such attitudes and such behaviour.

Asides.

SENATOR the Rev. Dr. D. L. DURANT: It is my belief that if a mother knows her child is being abused and continues to turn a blind eye to it and it is found out, I believe she should be charged. We cannot afford to just think of security and leave them to such paedophiles and such molestation. I think we have to put our children first because they are the leaders of tomorrow.

The Welfare Department will continue to provide monetary assistance and assistance in kind, paying house rents and land rents, giving out food vouchers and the payment of utility bills. Sir, even spectacles are being offered free to our school children.

I remember when my son was not seeing too well on the board, I carried him and had his eyes checked and because of the school programme under the Ministry of Education I was able to get the spectacles free. This is still happening and we really thank God for the kind of programme under the Ministry of Education, as well as in the Ministry of Health to facilitate this level of care.

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 27, 15:30:14

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR the Rev. Dr. D. L. DURANT: Mr. President, another objective under this Ministry of Social Care is to supply a full range of social services across all communities and to assist existing welfare recipients to re-enter the workforce by providing the necessary skills, training, job placement and counselling services.

I think this is a very well-orchestrated, well-planned and coordinated social service to our people and must be commended, so that is money being well-spent. It is also to provide service for the elderly and to encourage their involvement and integration into all activities of the society.

I should just look briefly as well at the National Assistance Board under the subprogramme 428. The National Assistance Board is aimed at maintaining the dignity of elderly persons in Barbados through the

provision of a range of social support and recreational services, which are accessible and acceptable, while enhancing their quality of life within the community, making them feel worthwhile, making them feel like somebody and making them feel loved.

Many of our elderly people have a sense of rejection and a sense of abandonment. They feel unwanted. Records would show that many are abandoned at the hospital at times, or carried there because they are sick and they are never returned for or even looked upon again.

Asides.

SENATOR the Rev. Dr. D. L. DURANT: They do not abandon the pensioners because they receive their pension cheques and change them and then that money is not spent on the elderly individual. This practice in Barbados must come to an end. I know the Government is very concerned about this and is seeking to put legislation in place to halt this kind of activity.

The elderly of our society have served our nation well. They have given of their skills and their talents. They worked, they paid their contributions to this island and they deserve better treatment than what many of them are experiencing in our small island.

Some of the programmes that are provided under the National Assistance Board are the Home Help Programme, which is the main programme, and the recreational facilities where the elderly are taken out at times and carried on recreational trips and bus rides and given food and music so that they can enjoy themselves rather than just sitting in the confines of their house or accommodation, wherever they are. Residential care and bereavement support services are given, as well as servicing of the Vulnerable Persons Committee.

I must applaud the efforts and the work of the many home care workers who go out there day after day serving the elderly of our society. As I said before, the major area is the Home Help Service. In the year 2009, 1 065 persons were served. From my record, it seems that it is going to be even higher this year. These elderly people are cared for in all of the 11 parishes. Our home care workers are travelling back and forth around our island on a daily basis taking care of quite a number of elderly people under that programme.

The Senior Citizens' Games is one of their recreational activities and many senior citizens look forward to those games. You will find them exercising, running and preparing themselves for the senior citizens games. They cannot do a Usain Bolt but in their own way they can get to the finishing line. They are happy. They are

contented. They have a sense of worth. They feel accepted by our society.

There are testimonies. I have, even in my situation in Britton's Hill, gone out to homes where I have seen elderly folks that have been abandoned by their families. What we as a Church decided to do is to adopt those individuals because we cannot leave everything on the Government.

One man had a wheelchair but no ramp. He had a wheelchair just to wheel around in the house. When we visited him and saw his condition, our masons and artisans in the Church decided to make a ramp on that house and one Saturday morning they got out there and did a lovely ramp for him and then he was able to come out and enjoy some sunshine.

The Church, I believe, needs to cooperate and join with the Government in seeking to help alleviate the problems we are facing within our society. Mr. President, I give my full support, therefore, to these allocations of funds.

Finally, Mr. President, I am pleading with my fellow Barbadians to let us slow down, to take stock of our lives and reflect on the rich history and legacy left us by our foreparents. They built a society grounded in godly principles and values: good morals, upholding righteous standards, very mannerly and having a fear of God and a love for their fellow man. We need to get back to embracing these values as a Barbadian society.

Mr. President, there was a time in Barbados where on Sundays you would not see certain things happening like fetes, the "wuk-up" culture and these big bacchanals and so forth that are now taking place now on Sundays.

Mr. President, I ran about Rudder Pasture in Dayrells Road in my young days, but on Sundays, it was Church. My grandmother would call, and it was time for Church. If you were playing cricket or whatever, you had to drop the bat or the ball because it was time to get to Church. Today, you are not seeing that, Mr. President. Parents are not going to Church and they are not sending their children either and it is really eroding the fabric of our society in a very serious way.

As a matter of fact, the only loud music you would have had heard on Sunday mornings was gospel. If you go to sleep a Saturday night a little "boozy" and you got up Sunday morning and did not know what day it was, the person down the road would be playing Jim Reeves, "My God is Real" on a big stereo set and you would know that it is Sunday morning. That was a sign that it was Sunday because they were playing gospel music throughout our villages. You are not hearing that now. As a matter of fact, everything has changed.

Mr. President, we need to arrest this kind of expectation. This spirit of salacity and impudicity must be arrested at this time before it gets too late. The period of Lent has been aggressively assaulted by the culture of exhibitionism, that is what I call it. We seemed to have become the dumping ground of the Caribbean and whatever is refused in other islands is accepted here. This practice must stop.

Mr. President, I do not want to go to the planned concert, I think that was talked about already by my colleagues, but I am not for that either. I think that we need to present proper role models for our children. We have good people here in our island, good artistes, that can really do a better job or a good job of being role models to our young people.

Mr. President, every mature Barbadian must take responsibility in seeking to rebuild the social and spiritual fabric of our society at this time. Barbados must remain a desired place to live, to work, to raise our families, to build our homes, to do business and to enjoy a good life in the fear of God. Together, we can make it happen. Better days are ahead, I believe. The worse has passed and I believe that the best is yet to come. I want to urge all of us as Barbadians to look up because better days are ahead of us.

I thank you, Mr. President. God bless Barbados. Thank you very much.

Senate A28A Sequence 28

3.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Worrell.

SENATOR A.R. WORRELL: Mr. President, it is indeed an honour for me to make my contribution in this Honourable Chamber on the Estimates debate, 2010-2011. I would first like to join with Honourable Senators on This Side to support the Estimates which were first laid in Another Place and were strongly supported.

These Estimates were also presented in this Honourable Chamber by the Honourable Leader of Government Business, who has done a fantastic job in terms of outlining what the whole body of the Estimates are about, and what is, indeed, the vision and plan for this Government in taking this country forward.

Mr. President, I would first like to speak briefly on the following areas in my presentation on these Estimates. First of all, I would like to bring in the world's context into the stage of development of this Appropriation Bill and also the process with which the Ministries adopted in terms

of working out the Budget for their various Heads for 2010 and 2011.

This debate is significant and the message which is delivered in this Honourable Chamber by Senator McClean, which was supported by Honourable Senators on This Side and also Senators such as Senators Frances Chandler, Velma Newton and Ronald Cave. Sir, those Honourable Senators who spoke on the Estimates gave very strong contributions and recognised that the Estimates were delivered in a time when the world is facing an economic recession. Therefore, we first need to pay some importance to that.

Mr. President, this message also needs to be internalised by all Barbadians. Sir, because this Estimates debate did not follow in the traditional manner of previous debates, where you would spend a lot of time discussing figures, talking about Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fiscal deficit and so forth, does not mean that it carries any less value than any other Estimates debates.

Sir, a very important and significant concept was highlighted in this debate, which is that Barbados is far more than just an economy therefore we also need to spend some time in highlighting the society in which we are living. Sir, if our society flourishes and our people do not develop at the same rate, if they do not have the opportunity to participate in the growth in the same way that the economy is growing, we would have serious problems.

Mr. President, Barbados is not fortunate like other territories to have natural resources such as oil, gold or other minerals. Our greatest resource is our people and that is why bringing into the context the whole idea of the value of Barbados being more than just an economy, we need to take into consideration our society. This is a message in which all Barbadians need to play their part in recognising how this Estimates benefit them.

Mr. President, we have recognised that the world is in a recession. We have recognised that the economy is important. Sir, the ground work for all of the figures and information contained within the document that was laid before this Honourable House has been taken care of. You can read it for yourself. It is there for you to analyse and go through.

Sir, all Ministries have taken into consideration what their expenditures would be approximately and have also allocated what their approximate revenues would be. You have matched it. You would recognise that there would be a deficit but what is more important is that we want to focus on what would be done within the various Ministries to help the development of Barbados.

Mr. President, this debate was made richer and more meaningful by moving beyond the figures and focussing on the desired effect which would be felt by the society in general. At the end of the day, the overall effect of any tinkering with the economy would have an impact on the people who make up this society. Therefore, we need to focus on what are the needs of the persons within our society.

The economy in Barbados is not built up on natural resources. It is largely dependent on services which we can offer and, therefore, the skills, attitude and level of productivity of our people are very important. Sir, it is important that we embrace the concept that Barbados is far more than an economy, it is a society.

Mr. President, it is imperative that this concept be talked about and shared throughout the length and breadth of Barbados. Many Barbadians will share some kind of affinity to this concept as it relates to the fabric on which this country is built. Mr. President, by that I mean, in looking back at Barbados over the years, persons who are probably from 25 and up will remember the days when there was this very strong community spirit within Barbados, one which we could remember in terms of having social groups within your community, where you had a community youth group, where you spent time with and interacted with members from your community.

Sir, you learnt from them. You also spent time with these persons who more or less became your role models. You would try to emulate those persons, you developed your values basically from interacting with persons within your community. Sir, that is what the whole concept of Barbados is about. It is about more than an economy.

Mr. President, we want to get people to reflect on those days when things were going well in Barbados. Sir, one of the principal reasons they were going so well was because we in Barbados acted as a community. We acted as a larger family. We were more or less our brother's keeper. In our neighbourhoods we looked after each other. If, for instance, you came home from school and there was no one at your house, there was your neighbour's house at whom you could have spent the time.

You could also be assured that there would be a mature adult there who would make sure that you stick to the straight and narrow path. These are things that are necessary in Barbados today. These are things that we would like to see coming back into our Barbados today so that we could tackle some of the many social issues which are beginning to raise their heads within our community.

Some of these social issues we recognise in that many people talk about the youth in Barbados and how they are getting out of hand. This talk is to such an extent

that the majority of debates on call-in programmes and other fora in Barbados throughout this week was focussed on another topic, importing someone else to come and speak to young people in Barbados about the whole concept of peace. It was said that these people would be better role models than anybody else here in Barbados. This is not necessarily true because we have adequate role models in Barbados.

3.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR. A.R. WORRELL: We also need to be able to address the issues that are facing our young people and one of these issues is the fact that, to some extent, within some areas, parenting skills are lacking. These parenting skills may be lacking because young parents have to go off to work and so forth.

Sir, they are doing it on their own and they do not have the support of the extended family, as would have happened in the past, to give them that guidance as well. Often times many children are left to parent themselves or to set their own direction and guidance.

Mr. President, I am not necessarily saying that we should take Barbados back to where it was before, but bringing back some of those concepts which helped supported us in the past, which helped a lot of us developed into the men and women that we are today. Sir, we would also like to give our young people the opportunity to have that exposure and that experience in their developmental process.

Mr. President, I go back to another point in the whole economic recession that this world is experiencing. Sir, all of Barbados recognise that the world is experiencing one of the most severe financial crises since the Great Depression with the exception of maybe, a minute, few persons in Barbados.

I would not bother to paint a picture to represent who that minute few persons are, but the majority of people in Barbados recognise that the world is going through a very severe financial crisis. This financial crisis is not only impacting on the economy of Barbados, but has also impacted on the economies of our neighbouring territories, such as Jamaica, St. Lucia and all the other Caribbean territories and also of our major tourism and international business markets, such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada and other European territories as well. Therefore, Mr. President, we must face reality.

We cannot proceed with business as usual when the world economy is experiencing uncertainty. We must be

prudent in our financial decisions and it is within this context that the Estimates were developed.

Mr. President, my next step is to take a look at the process adopted at the ministerial level in the development of these Estimates for 2010-2011. Sir, throughout this debate, persons from This Side and those persons, such as Senator Chandler and Senator Newton, spoke about the cuts being made in the various Ministries.

Sir, these are justified cuts and it is obvious that if you are earning less, you cannot expect to spend more and anyone who manages a budget knows this. This was also mentioned too, to some extent by Senator Cave as well. Sir, if you are earning less, you cannot expect to spend the same way as before. Mr. President, any housewife or anyone who has had the opportunity to manage a budget would know this.

I would like to support the making of these cuts with some empirical data, Mr. President, if you would permit me to justify the making of these cuts. Sir, I would like to speak briefly from recent research, which was published in the Harvard Business Review. This research was done looking at companies which operated in three global recessions, the 1980 crisis, which occurred from 1980-1982, the 1990 slowdown, which was from 1990-1991 and the 2000 bust, which was from 2000-2002.

Mr. President, the premise behind this research was to show what factors companies employed during the period of recession that caused them to experience growth coming out of the recession. Sir, from doing the analysis in these three periods of time, using different companies, it will show that if companies employ two major steps, they stood a better chance of coming out of the recession showing growth.

Mr. President, this is from the Harvard Business Review, March 2010. It says that companies that mastered the delicate balance between cutting cost to service today and investing to grow tomorrow do well in the recession.

Mr. President, this is one of the factors which is being highlighted in the preparation of our Estimates. We are looking to cut but we are not cutting the cost willy-nilly. We are not just slashing 10 per cent from here, or slashing 5 per cent from there without seeing what impact it would have. You are not just going through the cane ground with a cutlass and cutting down everything. You are making sensible cuts because you want to improve efficiency.

Mr. President, the second point is this. Companies which reduce costs selectively by focussing more on operational efficiency stand a better chance of growing

after a recession. Again, this is a strong point in the way how our Estimates were developed.

Now, I know you would say that this is based on companies and that what happens in a company cannot necessarily be transposed directly into Government but, at the end of the day, the theories are the same. You follow the same theories. It is just that you take different steps or approaches in implementing them.

This is what brings credit or empirical data to show that these cuts which are being made are not being made willy-nilly. They are being made to improve efficiency within the Government and we can all tell that it is important that within our Ministries that we try to improve efficiency.

Mr. President, we can look around at various Government Ministries and we can cite cases where you can improve on what is delivered by making certain cuts to improve efficiency. Sir, this would help to make our systems better, our administration better and it would also help to promote the productivity of our workforce as well.

Mr. President, in this mechanism, we would want for our workforce to be looking at utilising the technology which is made available to them, especially in situations where you are purchasing and in procurement. Sir, you do not just want to continue to purchase from the vendor you are accustomed to, just because for the last 40-odd years you bought salt from that particular person. Sir, you should not do it, if you could find someone else that you could get a better price and if you could bargain to get a better price.

Sir, these are the things that we are looking at in terms of improving efficiency. We are looking at obtaining better prices for the services which the Government has to offer to its people.

Mr. President, that would sort of highlight the ministerial process in terms of developing these Estimates and in terms of going through every single Line Item within the Ministry. I am sure this was done along with the assistance of Senator Boyce, as well as other persons from the Ministry of Finance in terms of making sure that the right decisions were made because we want to make sure that, at the end of the day, we can still deliver on the services that are promised to Barbadians.

Mr. President, I would like to spend some time to look at how this Appropriation Bill fits into the developmental strategy of Barbados.

S/A28A/16:00 Sequence 30

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR A.R. WORRELL: We are not just cutting for now, just because we do not have the wherewithal to meet all of our expenses. We are not just cutting for now. This Administration has developed a strategy in place to carry this country forward. This is one of the first stages in that strategy, this Appropriation Bill.

Sir, the strategy to which I refer is the medium-term strategy, and this strategy comes with a fiscal component which I am sure other persons in here are more competent to speak on that side of it. There is also a developmental component, which deals with the society, the people, the various Ministries and so forth.

I would like to highlight at this stage that these Estimates did not take place in a vacuum. It is based on a long-term vision, which this Administration has for the country. If this vision is followed through, we will see after the strategy goes from 2010 -2014, and it is projected that after 2014 we would begin to see a surplus in our balance of payments. I am certain that there are other persons in this Honourable Senate who will be more competently able to deal with that surplus, and how that would come about.

This is an important fact that we must highlight and must go home to all Barbadians, so that they can take ownership and recognising that these Estimates are actually built to help them and to benefit them, that they also have a role to play, as well, in making sure that at the end of the day, that the vision which is in view for Barbados comes to reality.

It is not just a job to be done by the Government, mentioned by Senator Durant, who said that the Church must play a part as well, but all Barbadians must play a part to make sure that we come out of the recession period roaring, and that this economy experiences growth during this recession, because a recession does not last forever. There are brighter days ahead. There is light at the end of the tunnel which we are all beginning to see. I wish that they would see it more clearly that they would speak to it as well, so that the level of confidence in this society and economy would begin to pick up.

In order for all of these things to come through, we must, as Barbadians, hold on to it and we must believe in it, because an economy grows from the level of confidence.

I am satisfied to say that the majority of the business sector has held strain with the Government in terms of maintaining employment levels within Barbados. This is something that we must thump. In Barbados, even throughout a recession, we have a better unemployment of less than 10 per cent. If you look at other markets, such as the Bahamas, when the recession first started they sent home lots of persons from their tourism industry. This did not happen here in Barbados.

The Government came to the assistance of the business community. It maintained counsel with the business community, to find out exactly what they needed to make it through. The business community held strain with the Government by suspending their inventory so that they could maintain their employment levels as well.

We need to continue by giving support to the Government, buying into the vision so that our economy will come out roaring. It is not just about an administration. It is about this country. It is about our people, and as it was said by the Prime Minister, we all need to wrap ourselves within the flag and move forward, because the recession will not last forever. There will be an end and we will come out of it booming.

Sir, this vision, I can tell you is a realistic vision. Barbados has always been known, even though it is small, it goes far beyond the expectation of many people. We have achieved tremendous things in our day. Barbados has been known to have exceeded beyond the expectation of many nations, despite our size.

Again, I point out that Barbados is indeed a great society. This is why people flock here and would like to make Barbados their home, so again, it is important to be far more than an economy.

We have made a lot of achievements in our time. We have things such as free education up to tertiary level. When I say free education, it comes at a cost which was highlighted by Senator Newton, yesterday. This education comes at a cost and we all need to recognise the cost associated with this education. Once you have the opportunity, make the most of it, so that you can help to develop the country as well.

We also have a free health care system, from the cradle to the grave. This is something. If you have been following the world scene, they are now trying to implement it in other places, which should have probably had it a long time ago. This is a privilege. This is a luxury which we have here in Barbados, because of the vision of our fore fathers and persons who have helped to develop this country.

Sir, things such as the National Insurance Scheme, some of our Caribbean neighbours do not have National Insurance. If you become sick and you are away from work, you do not know where your next pay cheque is going to come from, but here in Barbados we have that. This is something that every single person in Barbados should recognise and be proud of. It just shows that as long as we dream or imagine in Barbados, it is possible. As long as we remain committed to it and set our sights on it, it would be possible and we would obtain it. That just goes to show that whatever is written in that document, the

Medium Term Strategy, can be achieved, so we just have to set our eyes on the target and keep pressing towards that goal.

Sir, I would just like to highlight how Barbadians stand to benefit, from the proper implementation and execution of the Medium Term Development Strategy. As I said, it is divided into two parts. There is the fiscal part. I am not going to spend any time on that, because we want to talk things the average Barbadian could understand, could intake and how they can benefit.

One of the things in that document, on Page 27, I believe it is a document of the Senate, so I can refer to it by page number. Page 27 refers to small business development. I would just like to mention a few things out of that. One of the areas which we will focus on will be small business development, because we want Barbadians to recognise their true potential. They all can be entrepreneurs. They all can develop their own business. We want to create the structure in Barbados where Barbadians will not have the fear of stepping out on their own. We have invested so much to educate them, to make them great thinkers. We want to see them use that knowledge and education to be innovative, to be creative, to be small businessmen because it has been shown that small businesses help to develop the economy. If we have a number of small businesses springing up within Barbados, this will do well to boost the economy of Barbados.

As stated in the document, new enterprises provide a source of competition and new ideas that lead to greater efficiency, enhanced productivity and economic performance. These are some of the things that we will be looking to obtain within the Barbadian society as we go through and we implement the plans and policy in the Medium Term Development Strategy.

Sir, as we continue, we also recognise that it is going to be necessary to promote the entrepreneurial culture in Barbados. If you do a survey of young people in Barbados, you will find that many of them do not know what is necessary to set up a business in Barbados. These are things that we have to start educating our young people about, from early.

Sir, even when you talk to older people, they have a fear that when you set up a business it would not go well. It is going to fold quickly.

SA28A 16.10 p.m. Sequence 31

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 32, 4.10 p.m.

SENATOR A. R. WORRELL: Sir, we also have to look at ways to eliminate the stigma towards business failure within Barbados as well. When we begin the process of educating persons in Barbados making them more aware of the steps and channels, the channels that we need to take in order to establish a business with Barbados and within the world, we will be surprised at how many persons would take that bold step after leaving university. They have studied, they have done research and they have brilliant ideas. They would want to set up a business, either providing some sort of service, or producing some sort of product that they could sell here in Barbados.

Mr. President, I must add that we also have to look beyond the shores of Barbados and not just produce things for here in Barbados, but we also have to think bigger and look to produce things that can be exported and then use the residual sales here in Barbados. Sir, we need to start looking at things on a bigger scale, so that we will develop the whole business sector here in Barbados, the whole manufacturing sector in Barbados and the whole concept of innovation and entrepreneurship in Barbados as well.

When I talk about innovation, Mr. President, I would like to spend a little time talking about culture. This is something that is of importance to many young people which, I believe, is spoken to within these documents because we have a lot of talented young people in Barbados who need opportunities to develop their skills, whether it is in music, dance, poetry, art, in any area, Mr. President, we need the opportunity for these young people to develop these skills. We have a lot of young people in Barbados who write poetry, and this poetry stays within scrap books but they do not make the step to go and publish those books.

Mr. President, look at the author of Harry Potter. She made billions of dollars from that series of books. This is nothing unique to someone coming from the United Kingdom, where she is from, and that is also something which could be done by any young person in Barbados. You just need to have the idea. You just need to transpose it onto paper. You just need to find the right publisher to push it for you.

Sir, I am certain that we have persons here in Barbados who can develop that. Persons who spend a lot of time writing poetry, the next step to that is to transform some of those poems into songs, which would be far better lyrics than Vybz Kartel or Movado could ever bring. They would be wholesome lyrics that you would not have to beat, beat, beat when they are being played on the radio.

Asides.

SENATOR A. R. WORRELL: Mr. President, looking back to development of businesses, we also need to

look to promote greater access to finance so that small businesses could be developed and thrive within Barbados, so all of these things are outlined in this strategy. We are going to look at ways to improve the productivity and we are going to develop the environment for business and the promotion of entrepreneurship.

Barbadians stand to benefit a lot and that is only a small part of what is contained in this document. This is a tremendous vision for Barbados. This is a document which I can only say was developed by persons who have a love for this country and they are well in tune with the people of this country and want to see Barbados reach its full potential.

Sir, within this document is contained many different areas that any Barbadian, regardless of which walk of life you are from, regardless of your age, you can find something in this document which would benefit you.

Mr. President, the remainder of my time, I would like to take a look at a few components under the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sport. Senator Husbands spoke well earlier about the summer camps which come under the portfolio of the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports, so I think that he did an excellent job in establishing why it is necessary to have those summer camps, so that we could provide young people in Barbados with an opportunity to receive training and adequate supervision and also to develop life skills during the summer holidays. I do not necessarily need to spend any more time on that.

The Ministry of Youth, Family and Sport, Mr. President, has a very strong mandate in this society and its work is very relevant to what is going on within this society. A lot has started to come out of that Ministry. Indeed, the Ministry of Family is new. It was only set up after we came into office two years ago and we are trying to build the foundation.

The entire Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports has been working on projects over the years, which are designed to assist in the development of our society, development of our young people and development of our families. We recognise that the family in Barbados is under a tremendous challenge and we need to put some assistance there. We also need to do some research as well to get to the root of the problems that our society is facing and some of these initiatives would come out of the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports.

One point, Mr. President, is the recent behaviour being exhibited by our young people. Now, it has been getting a lot of attention. It is not to say that in Barbados we have a grave situation where all of our young people are getting out of hand, because this is more or less the case with a minority of persons, because we still have a number

of young people in Barbados who are doing well, who are excelling and who are making some decisions and contributions which you would not even believe.

Asides.

SENATOR A.R. WORRELL: I can speak of this from experience, given a recent forum which I had where I invited a number of different young people from various walks of Barbados to come and share their views. There were two purposes to the forum. One was out of the realisation of this Administration that we need to engage our young people.

Sir, we need to get them more involved in the political process. We need to let them realise that politics is not about the tricks and the gimmicks but politics is about building a society, so we need to engage them to have their input about what is going on within our society so that we can hear their views, what they would like to see done, or how they would approach the situation

Sir, if we in here make changes that do not take into consideration how they feel about the situation and about their views and we try to enforce it on them, we would always experience some sort of resistance. It is important to engage the youth of Barbados and to create opportunities where they can express themselves and they can give their input about what is going on and how they feel about the situation.

Sir, over the weekend as I said, I had an opportunity to speak with a number of young people and they shared information about themselves, and their personal life and this information was very touching. It was very overwhelming and it was also eye opening as well. I am pleased, Mr. President, at the confidence and the level of maturity that they exhibited because they recognise that they have an opportunity to make a difference and a change.

Some of these young people spoke about the difficulties they experience within the school setting and people within their home and family setting. This shows that there is relevance to the work which the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports will be conducting within Barbados and we need to do more to engage these young people. I am glad to say that included in the Estimates for that Ministry, there is a plan to develop a youth policy in Barbados.

A Committee has already been established and this Committee has been formed by persons from various sectors who can give their input about what is necessary in order to take the young people of Barbados forward, how we need to deal with our young people in Barbados what policies we need to set in place, how we are going to mould

them to make sure that they develop to reach their full potential.

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 32, 16:20:14

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR A.R. WORRELL: Mr. President, I am glad to say that the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports has already started the task of getting work done on that youth policy. It is the vision of the Ministry that once they have a document in place they would put it out to the public so that the public can have an opportunity to comment on it and make any necessary changes because the forum of persons who have created it would not necessarily speak to everything.

There are also plans for a national youth forum to give young people the opportunity to talk about the things that impact on them and the changes they would like to see. This youth forum would not be in one central location. It would go across the length and breadth of Barbados to speak to all young people within Barbados.

The Ministry has also been doing some good work in terms of its Youth Mainstreaming Programme, which has, to some extent, replaced what we came and found called "Project OASIS". The purpose of the Youth Mainstreaming Programme is not just to give a person a fish but to teach them how to fish so that they can take care of themselves. You would teach them life skills so that they can find jobs.

Within the budget for the Ministry, funds have been allocated so that persons can go to the necessary institutions, such as the Barbados Community College, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, to learn a skill so that they can start their own business. Persons could go and do courses in Cosmetology, driving a bobcat or in many different areas because we recognise that there is a lack of skilled labourers within Barbados because persons are not being channelled in that direction.

Mr. President, when you are doing construction in Barbados, you should not have to call on persons from outside. There are a lot of young people in Barbados who can be electricians, plumbers and masons. We just need to get them into the environment where they can pick up the necessary trade and the skill that go along with it so that when they do a job they would make sure that they do the job in a particular manner.

This is where institutions such as the TVET Council would come into play as well too in terms of developing the competency skills for those different areas, so that when you hire a painter and the person finished painting your house, you would not have to call them back and tell them to tidy up the area. They came and found it one way

so when they leave, they should make sure that they leave it clean. Those are programmes which are being undertaken through the Youth Mainstreaming Programme.

The Youth Mainstreaming Programme was not chopped out of the budget of the Ministry, it is still there so that young people in Barbados can access the funding that is necessary to make sure that they receive the training they need.

The Ministry will be looking at the Barbados Youth Service to bring it back to its original stage where you can go and receive training and life skills to develop yourself. A number of outstanding persons came through the Barbados Youth Service. The whole vision in the Ministry is to bring back that community element to the Barbados Youth Service where persons who are in that programme can mix with persons in the community who may be involved in different areas such as drama and art and also in different industries so that they can develop those skills, so that they can be mentored and then be able to go out into the workforce and be productive with confidence.

Mr. President, self-esteem is also very important. When you are interacting with persons in the community and you are being given positive reinforcements, it helps to develop your self-esteem, which is also important in helping those individuals to reach their full potential. We want to raise the level of the Barbados Youth Service by bringing it into the community so that persons can definitely benefit from the activities.

A key element of the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports is parenting skills. We recognise that some of the challenges, which we may face with persons in our society is because there is a lack of proper parenting skills, and the Ministry has undertaken a programme to provide training for parents.

In this present financial year, they started a training programme for trainers who would actually go out into communities and interact with the Parent-Teachers Associations and draw persons in who would need the necessary parenting skills. In this coming financial year, this programme would be rolled out so that these trainers would go out into the communities and mix with the PTAs and the schools to give assistance to parents who may need to benefit from some of their workshops and their interventions to develop the necessary parenting skills to help them to deal with their children and to properly develop the children within our society.

Mr. President, I would like to wrap up in terms of my contribution to this Appropriation Bill by highlighting to Barbados that a lot of thought went into the preparation of these Estimates. These Estimates were not done in a vacuum. They were done with a vision to see Barbados'

economy grow and the people of Barbados develop over the next few years.

At this time the economy may be facing some financial difficulties. The world economy is in a financial crisis, so we would expect that there would be a deficit but there are plans to take us out of a deficit to bring us to a position where we would have a surplus. Mr. President, we do not just want to have a surplus in the economy, we also want to have a people in Barbados who are also striving, who are productive and who are benefitting from any gains which are obtained within our society.

Mr. President, I support this Bill and hope that all Barbadians would support it as well. I hope that they would see the light and the vision; build their confidence; look at ways that they could develop themselves; look at ways so that they can make themselves more productive; improve efficiency within their homes and businesses; and move with this Administration and let us take Barbados forward so that we would come out of this period roaring and booming.

I thank you, Mr. President.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting do now suspend until 4.50 p.m. today.

The question that this Sitting be suspended until 4.50 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

Senate A28A Sequence 33

4.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed. Senator Hunte.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Mr. President, I rise to participate in this debate on the Appropriation Bill, 2010-2011. Sir, I feel honoured and privileged to be a participant in this debate, but I wish first to extend my commendation to the Social Partnership: business community, unions and Government, for recognising that Barbados belongs to us all. The request by Government, since employers do not make such requests, and the unions is that people should be kept employed.

Mr. President, as a democratic socialist, I did not think that I would find myself at this stage of my life praising the business community but I do so because I think the business community has finally found, within its breast, the milk of human kindness. I say that from a background of being involved and observing the political goings-on in this country for more than 45 years.

Sir, when certain social policies were put into practice by the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow during the 1960s and early 1970s, there was an amalgamation of the business communities in Barbados and believe it or not, we had a together country because of our history, but we had a very divided society between business and Government.

5.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: Sir, this became a reality in 1966 when Barbados attained its Independence and a number of persons left Barbados. We must not be afraid to mention colour because nobody is responsible for what colour they are. Sir, a number of white persons had left Barbados and travelled to New Zealand, Australia and England. I heard one white man in Bay Street say that they could not live under the dictatorial policies of Errol Walton Barrow, a man who was mild in every sense of the word.

Mr. President, in the Chamber is Senator Cave and I am glad I can say that in his presence because I mean it from the bottom of my heart.

Mr. President, I wish to commend the Prime Minister of Barbados for his bold initiatives and for going where a lot of Prime Ministers before him, whether they were three, four, five or six, did not go before, even though when this country was facing tremendous difficulties there were times when - Senator Cave and Senator Husbands alluded to it this morning - the necessary action for this country was not taken and had this been done, I think the attitudes of people would have been different.

Asides.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: I do not have any seat up for grabs but even if I did, I probably would say the same things I am saying now. Sir, we have to look past the votes. We have to be patriotic no matter who is the Party that becomes the Government, but when action needs to be taken, you have to take it and it is by delaying and delaying and playing to the gallery - the gallery being the country - that we find ourselves in this situation, not necessarily in terms of how the economy is, because we do not have any control over those things, but in this situation that we either

have to apologise to people or we are afraid of what they say.

Mr. President, I am very happy today that I can congratulate the current Prime Minister of Barbados for taking the stance which he has taken and that is all in the interest of this country. Sir, I feel extremely proud about that.

Mr. President, this Appropriation Bill was prepared against a background of which almost everybody in here in familiar, whether they have spoken to it or not and I know they have spoken, those who have spoken so far. It was spoken against a background of what is taking place in the world. We did not bring it upon ourselves and, Sir, I find it difficult to accept that a Government two years and a half in power, in office...

Asides.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: Sir, I am trying not to say power, because power belongs to God. Mr. President, I know that you rule in this Chamber but all powers lie in the breast, wherever that breast is in the Almighty. Sir, because of this, these Estimates were prepared against a background of drought conditions, not only in Barbados but around the world, changing weather patterns, tremours and earthquakes.

Mr. President, only this weekend, the reality came to us of the cabin crew strike by British Airways. Sir, even though the planes were still flying, it has badly affected us. I heard a lot about the future. Sir, I am not clairvoyant, so I am not prepared to speak about the future but I know if I have to become the first male who looked back, since Lot's wife was the female, and turn into a pillar of salt, well, Sir, I would have to, because I have to look back.

Mr. President, I have to look back because when we look at our country as it has developed over the years, how do you do a comparative analysis. You can only do a comparative analysis by comparing what has gone before and what is happening now. You cannot even think about tomorrow.

Asides.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: Yes, we can think about tomorrow but we do not know what it holds. Sir, that is why it is sad, even though it is politics, that people get up and speak, especially when they were persons who formed part of a former Administration, and they should know better.

Of course, it does not suit an Opposition for a Government to be in power all the time or else they will close up shop and go home. Sir, the name of the game is

getting into office but, at the same time, one has to be reasonable in thought and good in judgment. Sir, that is what we have to be.

Mr. President, I think the time has come even though we have our own affiliation but, for me, I pass that stage... I have been in this Democratic Labour Party now for 40 years and I have nowhere else to go not in terms of joining an organisation, but it does not necessarily mean that I will not speak frankly, if I have to speak frankly because the days of towing the line and so on, as far as I am concerned, is gone.

Mr. President, I wish to say, how can an Opposition that only two-and-a-half years left the Government wish to take absolutely no responsibility for what is facing this present Government. Their slogan, Sir, is "Do not look back, move on and do not blame us". Sir, that is their slogan, but not with me.

Mr. President, after all I look over there before I came here and saw that Barbados celebrated about 10 years ago its 350th Anniversary, as far as Parliament is concerned. Sir, we did not wake up one morning at 350. It had to start at one. Sir, you see you have to look back. Sir, history is a part of our existence and nobody can tell me not to look back.

Mr. President, if you get on a plane and go to New York now, do you think the plane was made the morning you got on it. It had to be made some time before, so that is history in itself, Sir. We live history and history is part of our existence. Sir, this foolishness about not looking back and all this sort of thing, I am sorry because I am looking back now.

Mr. President, let us look at tourism. Tourism is the life blood of this country and let us look at how it started. I heard Senator Cave this morning make a passing reference to when tourism really started to, not necessarily come into existence because once people visit, whether you had promoted it or not, they are visitors.

Sir, the Senator is right. The Tourism Board started in 1958 and when the Tourism Board started in 1958, in the three years between 1958 and 1961, the visitor arrival in this country was 37 000. That is what we had in 1961, by the time the Democratic Labour Party came into office.

S/A28/17:10

Sequence 35

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: Sir, by 1966, the budget was \$750 000, an increase of 50 per cent. Visitor arrivals

by that time was 100 per cent; cruise passengers in 1961 was 27 000; by 1966, it was 60 000, 120 per cent increase. I know the Opposition like these percentages. Sir, accommodation for visitors was 1995, and by 1966 accommodation for visitors was 4 000. The value of the industry in 1961 was \$15.9 million; by 1966, it was 28 000.

Sir, because of that surge in the tourism industry, after the vision - Senator Cave spoke about it this morning, about 1951, he does remember. He gave a background of his father in the sugar industry. King Sugar was really King, but the vision of the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow recognised that we could not stay on this one-foot economy, this one-foot crop so to speak.

Since we do not have the natural resources like other countries, we had to move forward, and tourism was about the easiest. I suspect, they thought it was the easiest that you could promote. Senator Cave reminded us this morning about all the things this country is blessed with. Sir, because of that surge, training people to take up positions in the industry, was encouraged. Of course, you had the Hotel Training School, which was opened. Sir, Barbados started to see an increase and improvement in this economy.

I remembered when the Hilton was built, it hurt me to see what was going up. I also sat on the beach, since I do a lot of exercising, I also saw when it imploded, because I had the memories, still have them, of when that Hilton Hotel was built. Sir, to develop the industry in a few years, a couple of buildings were constructed which we call hotels, were valued only \$5 million. Can you imagine that? Up to 1966, that you could still construct a couple of buildings around the place for just about \$5 million? Today it cannot even build the foundation.

Sir, what happened then, the vision of this Democratic Labour Party under the Right Excellent Errol Barrow and his team, because I do not always believe that no one man is an island, Barbados became solid with a new industry in our economy. Sir, history has a way of repeating itself. That is why they say the more things change, the more they remain the same.

Sir, the Canadian was always faithful to Barbados. I tried to find out, since all of my associates would have gone to the great beyond, I pondered it really because I did not ask anybody what made us the Canadian market and the Canadians so close to us. I can only come to one conclusion.

It was the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow and his association with a man called "Pierre Trudeau", because they both served in the Army. That is the only conclusion I could come to. I have no written information on it. The point must be, because there is nobody else I

could ask. All the players of the game would have gone to the great beyond.

Even today, going through all of this turmoil, economically-wise, the Canadian market has served us well. It has increased, when others have decreased.

Sir, the Canadian summer season, I need to give the facts on it. Bed nights increased from 7 800 in 1963 to 27 800 in 1965. Would you like percentages? Between the Canadian market and the US market, both had increases of 34.8 per cent and 30 per cent respectively in 1965, over 1964.

We recognised at that time, I do not think I was too much a part of it, but I was around, after seeing the development and progress of the tourism industry in this country, the next step was Independence for Barbados. In truth and in fact, when I hear all this thing about internal self Government and all of those things, we were still a colony, and for us to have reached new arrangements with any new airline coming into Barbados, the British Government would have to agree, because we were a colony. Sir, the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow moved for Independence, making it possible for Barbados to negotiate with whatever country and whatever airline it wished, for new routes into this country. Sir, the Independence, which cannot be turned back, was opposed by the Barbados Labour Party.

I ran as a little boy round this country with my father and others, because I could not vote in 1966. I said that in this Chamber already. I would have missed it by about two years at the time. There was a splinter group, at the time. It was called a Pressure Group, the under- privileged and so on, with people who are still alive today, and you had that other group led by some of them still living. I would not call their names. You were not alerted, but you know them, led by a group of young lawyers at the time - some of them have since passed through this Chamber, opposing Independence. Their slogan was "Independence Yes, but within a West Indies Federation."

Sir, we had to go it alone. I was at the airport when the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow came back here in a little pond fly. He tricked everybody. People were looking for a big plane, Sir, Barrow drove up a little plane on the tarmac. I was there with my aunt, the late Lolita McBree, teacher and former School Attendant Officer. She had to park the car maybe somewhere down in St. Michael and walked up to the Airport, a massive group. These are memories I cannot get rid of. That is why I have to look back because I know what Barbados was before. Nobody can come and tell me differently now.

Sir, the Party and the Administration that developed this country is the Democratic Labour Party. I will not

stand anywhere as long as I am alive and allow anybody, any fly by night person, anywhere, to try to destroy the image of this Party, not as long as I am alive, because I lived it. I saw it. If I have to look back, I will look back, because looking back is what you know. Looking forward, you can only hope.

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: I speak about history, because I understand it and I lived it. Who want to deny their history, that is their business.

Sir, Barbados became an Independent country. As a result, airlines flew into this country. We tried to negotiate with new countries for airlines, but the countries did not have the airlines then. There were large countries, but still not developed.

SA28A 17.20 p.m. Sequence 36

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 37, 5.20 p.m.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: You had Air Canada that remained faithful. I went to Canada a lot of times. I cannot remember how many times because my parents lived in Canada and my mother never came back. I had to go to Canada to see my mother because I am the last of the group. She has been dead 40 years now so I understand and know Canada, but that is not my feeling for Canada. My feeling for Canada is for how they have been able to keep us going. I do not know why.

Sir, the Central Bank of Barbados reported that, given these conditions we are going through, our value plummeted by 8.7 per cent in 2009. Do you know that the tourism product, even though there has been a decline, it still remained an integral part of our Gross Domestic Product? It is 15 per cent and has not changed over the last year, even though you have had decreases, and that is why I am saying that even in the light of a decrease, the tourism market has been able to hold its own.

I heard other reports coming out lambasting the Minister as though the Minister has some little special island somewhere that he can tell the people to come into Barbados now. It does not work that way. I am going to regurgitate what others have said about people losing jobs. Where do you think the people are that come to Barbados? They do not come out of the moon.

Only just now I saw a report where 35 States in the United States of America have had more than 15 per cent unemployment. In this little Barbados we do not even have that, based on the statistics. Do not deny the statistics

because the statistics are prepared by the same people that were preparing them for most of the time for the Barbados Labour Party.

Asides.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: If they tell us 9.9 per cent or if they tell us 9.4 per cent I am going with that because when they were saying the same thing for the Barbados Labour Party it was, oh this and oh that. Well, they do not have to say “Oh this” and “Oh that” now. Say the same thing.

Sir, WestJet and Air Canada, WestJet being the more recent, they have been able to fulfill and keep this market going, because the newer airline came. I do not have to repeat the figure because Senator Gilkes this morning said it all.

Cruise passengers, Sir, continue to grow. Last year, 635 212 cruise ship passengers came into Barbados. Do you know why I am mentioning figures? I am mentioning figures because look at where we came from 27 000 visitors up to 1961, when they started keeping records and look at where we are today? Look at our cruise ship passengers today, after having 27 000, today we are talking about more than a half million in a recession, and you are telling me that we should not be proud? Sir, we should be extremely proud, I am.

Sir, now you have a lot of half-baked economists and others running around the place - not in here, Sir, outside - trying to confuse the issue in Barbados. They would have gotten away with that one time.

Asides.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: Sir, I like to read and that is why I know I can do well, and I remember when you only had the “Advocate” and then you got the “Sunday Guardian” coming in on Sundays. Do you remember that, Sir? Oh you are too young. However, you had only the “Sunday Guardian” coming into Barbados at the time and you had the “Barbados Advocate”. No CNN, no television, nothing at all we had.

In fact, talking about television, it was the Democratic Labour Party that brought television and radio to Barbados in 1962/63. Just over a year of being in power, the Democratic Labour Party, if you want to call it the Party of miracles, it really is, Sir. Sometimes it slips out because when you get so mixed up with some of the people who are grabbing for power, you tend to repeat what they say.

All of these things I have said it in here already and I have not heard anybody challenge me here. They did not

even challenge me elsewhere. I remember talking to an individual who would always only pat me on the back and say, “Oh Regi...”

Sir, there is no other country the size of Barbados that has what we do not have, that has even seen so much progress and development in its first five years in office.

Asides.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: If they had riches, they certainly did not know they had them. If they did not develop them, that is a matter for them, but a country that has absolutely nothing, when it comes to natural resources.

Senator Cave is a man who is older than I am, so he can tell me later on if I am wrong in what I am saying, but the point is, Sir, we have done well and even though we are miserable sometimes, with our own selves as a country and as a population, we have to be grateful. I am extremely grateful to live and see the progress that this country has made and what we were able to achieve, as a country and, of course, it brought the people along and developed the people.

Sir, if I should look in the area of Education, I know that there is some concern about what is happening at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus (the Hill). Sir, that was another institution that came out of the productive capacity of this Democratic Labour Party.

Asides.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: I am not going to stay here and pretend that I am some academic, that I can accuse or criticise what is coming out or what is going on at the Hill, that is for the academics to do. I am an observer and I am saying that our institution does mean a lot and has done a lot for this country.

Asides.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: I did not go to them but two of my children did and I feel proud about that. Two of my children were able to pass through that institution, long after Senator McClean had retired from there, so they would not have gotten any of her tutoring, but the point is, I feel proud about that and it is my wish to see that my last daughter, whom I raised singlehandedly as a single parent from 17 months, and is now 14-years old and at Combermere School...

Asides.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: Sir, she is one of six, and I had to take care of her. She is now a student at Combermere School. I think that my good friend...

Asides.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: My daughter who is 14 years old, is a student at Combermere School and I hope to live to see her get somewhere on the Hill.

Asides.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: Senator Holder was a student there, the President was a student there, Senator Husbands was a student there and I have that affinity for Combermere, even though I did not go there and I will tell you how I developed that affinity.

Estimates - Senate A28A, Sequence 37, 17:30:08

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Many people do not know that the Combermere School used to be where the Transport Board is now. I used to go across there and play cricket. I am a fan and supporter of the Empire Cricket Club. All the Combermerians used to come down to the Empire Club. Sir, I have that affinity with the Combermere School even though I have never been a student there, so I am proud of all Combermerians. That is why I know that Senator Holder would see the light in this debate.

Sir, as a non-student of Combermere School, I am a supporter and admirer... because of my affinity with that school.

Sir, now that I am on Education, I wish to look at what is happening to many of our young people. I am indeed sad as a father, and as a law-abiding citizen, at what is happening to or causing our students to behave the way they are behaving. I am not proud of that at all, Sir. I know that people would say that a few bad apples would spoil the bunch.

Mr. President, when I hear people who are trying to score political points... We listen to the people. Do they think that we live on the moon? Sir, we hear the people every day. What I am hearing from the people, unless they have a political axe to grind, is not what some of them are hearing.

People clearly understand what is happening in our country in terms of the economy, but we still remain so far disciplined as a people, therefore, we must not allow, it is going to happen, partisan politics to affect our young people. I hear some of the statements they make too.

Mr. President, the young people over the last 35 or so years since 1961 have met things so well. Of course, they would not be young now. They have come along and taken almost everything for granted.

Now that we have faced a good year, it is a pity that you are not over here with us. One day you would see the light.

Sir, they come along and take the television, the radio and these things for granted. Sir, this is really now battling times and some of them are experiencing it really for the first time. This is their experience and they will find somebody to blame. That is why when the Prime Minister spoke about Barbados being more than an economy, that it is a society, that is exactly the foundation on which the Democratic Labour Party all down through the years had been on, a social party.

There are so many things that one could look at. When you talk about free bus fares, I personally object to anybody - they got the right to say it or not to say it - who could feel that the subsidising of bus fares and the establishment of summer camps, which is a mere \$6 million out of a \$2 billion economy, is a waste of money for young people.

Mr. President, you heard Senator Husbands talking. You would have to look at your young people. They are confused now about certain things. Some of them are looking and grasping and trying to get to where they think they can find love and comfort.

Mr. President, I speak on this with authority as a single parent. The 14 years I had to spend raising my daughter without a mother, I had to give up a lot of things. Of course, I stopped drinking, apart from a little wine, about 11 years ago, and I stopped smoking in May 1981, 29 years ago.

Sir, after I leave work I go home. I have nowhere else to go unless I really have to. I have to spend time with my daughter who is 14 years old because if I do not, somebody else will and it certainly would not be the convenient and comfortable thing, that is why we have to pay attention to our children.

You have 35 year-olds with 15 and 20 year old children. They are going out to the dubs and different fetes and the children are going out too. They are going and the children are going too. Grandmothers and all are doing their own thing. Where is the extended family? All of us in this age group would have had some of that discipline. Unfortunately, young people now do not have that. I think that is exactly where the breakdown of the society is coming.

Even though these are changing times, Sir, again, I have to praise the Prime Minister of Barbados for taking the bold initiative and saying that he will speak tomorrow with the Minister of Education and Human Resource Development and others to put a stop or to show some

interest... You have to show leadership in a country. I am extremely pleased, not from any partisan point of view, with the leadership the Honourable Prime Minister David Thompson has shown in the last two and a half years, more so recently.

Mr. President, today's youth are the builders of tomorrow. We cannot ignore them. If you are not a parent, you have to be a guardian, an aunt, an uncle or somebody, therefore you have to take some sort of responsibility in this society.

Mr. President, I sometimes feel, especially now that you have reached this stage in your life, that a lot of what we say at this political level is doing more harm than good in this country. Sir, I listened to the debate on the Estimates and so far - somebody might surprise me before it is over - and I have not heard anything coming out of the Opposition on what is taking place in our society as far as our young people are concerned, and that disappoints me. If I could not listen, I read the newspapers.

Sir, you cannot be any spokesman when it comes to national matters. Nobody can pigeonhole you when it comes to national matters. You have the right to speak on any matter in any country. You are no Shadow Minister of this or any Shadow Minister of that. Barbados is beyond a shadow.

Sir, despite all of the pontificating by the Leader of the Opposition, I have not heard one word about what is taking place in this society with our young people because the eyes are on the next Election. They say do not talk about them, they would not get any votes the next time. Sir, that is our difficulty in this country. We are looking at what the next Election would bring forth.

Sir, people vote you in today and they vote you out tomorrow. It happens all the time. It is nothing new. It might take about 15 or 20 years the next time around for the Opposition, but the point is that it would probably happen one of these days, you never know.

Mr. President, the month after the 1976 Election, the Barbados Labour Party had their Convention. The Election was held in September, 1976, and the Barbados Labour Party used to keep their Conference in October. They still do. Sir, at that Convention, "Tom" Adams, after the usual little speech, said I want you all to remember that today's big majorities could well be tomorrow's loss deposits.

Senate A28A Sequence 38

5.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Sir, that was a true statement. Mr. President, we are aware of those things, but the people are not ready to turn back the clock.

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Yes, but I have an opinion.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Mr. President, I am serious about that, when you reach a certain stage in life you have to be more national. You have to be patriotic. This is not a time to be playing to a gallery. This is time for us to be serious about what is taking place in this country.

Sir, I understand these things, I have listened to all kinds of debates in the House of Assembly since 1965. Sir, I can call his name now because he is dead but, personally, I feel that one of the best debaters this Parliament has ever seen was a man called Burton Hinds.

Mr. President, Sir Burton Hinds used to cry, though some of the things he said were not necessarily true, but he used to cry. He was a good debater and I liked him. He was very appealing and used to gesticulate the same kind of way.

Mr. President, the point I am saying is that you admire those things at that time. Of course, I was not a supporter of his Party but you look down through the years. This table which we are at is where the elected Members of Parliament used to sit. The Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow sat there, while the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams sat there, until it was changed.

Mr. President, those were what we would then call the two "gorilla-phants" of Barbados politics. Sir, the point I am trying to make is that even though everybody had his own line, his own demarcation, there was still patriotism because it was something they all recognised was important. Sir, we do not have that nowadays. I have seen a whole change in the atmosphere which is expected because things change, although the more they change the more they remain the same.

Mr. President, I want to look at another area of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission. Sir, I have looked through some of the areas of which this Ministry has set its goals. If this Government could achieve those goals on behalf of the people of Barbados within the next five years...

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Mr. President, I want to be fair in this regard. The Barbados Labour Party initiated a number of ideas that I see espoused by the Social Ministry. My difficulty is why were they not able to implement some of these programmes. It is just like the Hotel Training School that I referred to earlier during my contribution on tourism. The Hotel Training School that was established around 1966/1967 was talked about by the Barbados Labour Party long before the Democratic Labour Party came into power.

Sir, my difficulty is, when you look back into the records and get a refresher of these things, why have they never implemented these programmes? This tells me that the Barbados Labour Party is not a party that gets too wrapped up in social programmes. That is why nowadays we have come to the stage of Barbados only thinking in terms of economic terms.

Mr. President, I know that yesterday my friend, Senator Thompson, said that we should move forward and that we should not look back. Sir, I do not know if Senator Thompson has a different interpretation of looking back than I do, but yesterday Senator Thompson referred to \$2.5 billion in reserves that the Barbados Labour Party left. Sir, that is looking back, but in today's setting, with all of our areas that will uphold the economy, those areas are in a decline. That is a fact, that cannot be hidden; that could only be hidden if the rest of the world were doing well and we were lagging behind. Sir, how successful we are here depends on what happens here.

Mr. President, in 1988, I went to North Korea, the isolated country in the world, where I spent 12 days. Sir, I saw an agricultural industry where we were taken to different orchards and other places and shown the production of that industry. Sir, in looking at those people, we have to realise that they are a different makeup of people.

Sir, some years ago, when it was mooted that Barbadians should go and develop land in Guyana, I remember the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow saying that Barbadians were never famous pioneers. His counterpart at the time, the late Forbes Burnham, had said that Guyana is the breadbasket of the Caribbean and that Barbadians should come to Guyana.

The Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow said no, that Barbadians were never famous pioneers. Sir, if you do not have a people that grew up in that culture, they cannot just start producing things overnight. Therefore, even though we are asking our young people to be creative and innovative, it needs a certain culture to be able to do that.

Mr. President, what I did agree with Senator Husbands about is that if we produce an academic base, as

we have done in this country, if I were to agree with Senator Cave that with all the business sectors if we could develop that academic base, that is where we could throw our young people because they would be able to use their academic training. Barbados cannot become an oil industry overnight with bauxite and such things. It probably might happen, who knows. Sir, the point is that we are not that, neither are we looking forward to that, but we can develop other areas.

Mr. President, I think so far that sector has done well because we have escaped the scandals that have gone around the world as far as the offshore business sector is concerned. We have developed and developed well. Sir, I am proud of my country and I am not going to allow anybody to tear it down for partisan politics. I will not.

Sir, when I cannot talk, I will write. If I cannot use one ability, I will use the other but I will have a voice in this society that I will go along and see the development. I will not allow anybody, for partisan reasons, to get away with it, not if I can say something.

Mr. President, Senator Thompson said that we should not look back but what about these small debts that have been left for this Government to pay? I agree, I am one to admit and I have always said it in whatever forum, that Government is a continuum process.

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Mr. President, that is why it is so because when one Government leaves, the things that Government leaves are not just wiped away. They have to be done. Sir, regardless of whether that is so and will always be so, we have to admit that this is a circumstance that has never before faced this country, not even when the Barbados Labour Party left in 1961.

Sir, people have now developed this idea about Barbados only being an economy. That is why we get on the way we do when social programmes are introduced. Mr. President, if you go back to the debates of 1955 and 1956, you would see a number of programmes for which the late Sir Frank Walcott, the late G.E.D. Brankier and others were calling. Were they implemented by the Barbados Labour Party, the Democratic Labour Party probably would not have won the Government in 1961, but the Barbados Labour Party never introduced them, instead they said they cannot do it.

Asides.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: I am a researcher. You could go back to the debates of 1955 and 1956.

5.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 23, 2010

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: Sir, because they are very humane, in some cases they allowed things to run haywire before they responded, but this Democratic Labour Party of which I am a member, and I feel extremely proud...

Asides.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: Sir, Senator McClean is one of the products of the Democratic Labour Party. You could not have gone school before 1961. You are too young and Sir, Senator McClean's father was a very good friend of mine.

Asides.

SENATOR R.A. HUNTE: She did not know that, but he was very proud of his children, as I am of mine.

Mr. President, as I am now into the final round, there is a lot more I have to say, but I wish to say that I am extremely proud of the direction in which the Prime Minister has decided to be open to this country and, as he said, he knows where he is going. Sir, somebody says he does not know where he is going but, Sir, that is sad because if people can depend on a politician only to tell them where they should go, that is a matter entirely for them.

Mr. President, I know that all of us have to put our hands to the plough because it is not a one-man show. Sir, all of us have to put our hands to the plough and recognise that this country belongs to us.

Mr. President, I am, indeed, grateful to you, Sir. I thank you.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until tomorrow, Wednesday, March 24, 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

S/A28/17:58 Sequence 40

CONTENTS

RESUMPTION

Senator J. Ince, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; Senator Miss H. E. Thompson, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15; Senator Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16.

NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION

SENATOR Miss H. E. THOMPSON.....16

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, 17; Senator Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner, 17, 18, 19, 20; Senator H. A. Husbands, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.

RESUMPTION

Senator R. G. Cave, 25, 26, 27, 28; Senator P. W. B. Gilkes, 29, 31, 32; Senator Miss H. E. Thompson, 32; Senator the Rev. Dr. D. L. Durant, 32, 33, 35, 36; Senator A.R. Worrell, 37, 39, 40, 42, 43.

RESUMPTION

Senator R.A. Hunte, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

CAVE, Senator R. G.

DURANT, Senator the Rev. Dr. D. L.

GILKES, Senator P. W. B.

HUNTE, Senator R.A.

HUSBANDS, Senator H. A.

INCE, Senator J.

McCLEAN, Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O.

SANDIFORD-GARNER, Senator Mrs. V. I.

THOMPSON, Senator Miss H. E.

WORRELL, Senator A.R.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

Q2. Opening. The source has no PRESENT list and no record of prayers; it opens with the heading ‘RESUMPTION’ and Senator J. Ince taking the Floor in a debate on the Appropriation Bill already in progress (Senator Gilkes refers to Senator Thompson’s speech ‘yesterday’). Printed as in the source.

Q3. Senator Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner, Kensington Lodge documents. The Creative Building Services tender is given as ‘\$278 658.98’ in the National Housing Corporation memorandum and as ‘\$278 658.89’ in the Ministry’s letter approving the award. A heading ‘NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION’ (apparently a letterhead) appears between the two documents. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Take-slip about 1.00 p.m.. The slip number ‘Senate A28A Sequence 18’ is set as an ordinary paragraph rather than as a take-slip. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Senator P. W. B. Gilkes, take-slip about 3.00 p.m.. After the take-slip, Senator Gilkes’ speech heading carries only ‘. . .’ before his speech continues. One of his headings reads ‘SENATOR the Hon. P. W. B. GILKES’. Printed as in the source.

Q6. End of sitting. The record ends with the Sitting suspended until Wednesday, 24th March, 2010 at 10.00 a.m., not adjourned; the debate on the Appropriation Bill was still in progress. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate sat on Tuesday, 23rd March, 2010, with Mr. President in the Chair, to continue the debate on the Appropriation Bill, 2010-2011 and the Estimates of Expenditure 2010-2011. The day was given over entirely to that debate.

Senator J. Ince supported the Estimates, arguing that the Opposition had left non-performing assets such as the Greenland facility at a cost of \$80 million, which Senator Miss H. E. Thompson said on a point of order had cost \$25

million; he also spoke of the Turf Club as employing almost 3 000 persons and of a US\$15 million obligation in the Ministry of Transport and Works. The debate was marked by frequent points of order from Senator Thompson, and by an exchange in which she sought the protection of the Chair from shouting. Senator Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner spoke on housing, including units at Tweedside Road, and laid as documents a 2003 National Housing Corporation memorandum and a 2004 Ministry letter approving the award of a contract to remove asbestos roofs at Kensington Lodge to Creative Building Services; Senator Thompson replied that she had taken no part in the decision, which had been taken by the Permanent Secretary, Dr. Leonard Nurse. Senator Sandiford-Garner went on to say that \$15 million borrowed from the National Insurance Board had expanded the Surgical Intensive Care Unit to 13 beds, and the exchanges ended with the President declining to treat Senator Thompson’s further interventions as points of order.

Senator H. A. Husbands spoke as a new Senator on waiting for the international economy to recover, subsidies to private businesses and the youth. On the resumption after lunch, the President told the Senate that he had reconsidered an earlier ruling and ordered certain words struck from the record. Senator R. G. Cave, referring to the Medium-term Fiscal Strategy, argued that Government accounts should be brought up to date as public companies must within three months, and spoke on Immigration.

Senator P. W. B. Gilkes spoke on tourism, including a new Bobby Jones Gospel Festival and a Food and Spirits Festival in September, the Prime Minister’s returning visitors’ evenings at Ilaro Court and the welcome given to rowers who had spent 58 days at sea; he said the Barbados Labour Party’s best effort had been 61 houses, while one contractor would provide close to 400, which drew a point of order from Senator Thompson. Senator the Rev. Dr. D. L. Durant gave thanks that the island had been spared hurricanes since Janet in 1955 and spoke on the Ministry of Social Care and the abuse of pensioners and children. Senator A. R. Worrell spoke on young people, small business finance, the stigma of business failure and the youth policy being prepared by the Ministry of Youth, Family and Sports.

After a further suspension, Senator R. A. Hunte commended the Social Partnership and reviewed the growth of tourism and education since the 1960s, including his own links with Combermere School. On the motion of Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, the Sitting was suspended until Wednesday, 24th March, 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

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