
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2013 – 2018

THE SENATE

Monday, March 21, 2016

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, the March 21, 2016 at 11.00 o'clock a.m.

PRESENT

Her Honour Senator Miss Kerryann F. Ifill, B.Sc. (Hons.), M.B.A. (President)

His Honour Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) Dunelm (Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, B.Sc. (Hons.), M.A., M.B.A. (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo, M.B., B.S. (Minister of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development)

Senator the Hon. D. W. Boyce, B.Sc. (Econ.), M.B.A. (Fin.), CMA, F.C.A. (Minister in the office of the Prime Minister)

Senator the Hon. P. M. T. Todd, B.Sc. (Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister)

Senator H. A. Husbands, M.L.I.R., B.Sc. (Public Administration) (Hons.), Ed. Cert. (U.W.I.) (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation)

Senator J. Ince, J.P., B.B.A., M.B.A., DIP (Mgmt.) (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Senator Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner, CIM, Dip. Mng., M.B.A. (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and International Transport)

Senator R. A. Hunte, J.P.

Senator Rev. Dr. D. L. Durant, D.D. (Hon.)

Senator A. R. Worrell, B.A. (Hons.)

Senator Dr. J. X. Walcott, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S. (Edin.), J.P.

Senator W. A. Abrahams, LL.B. (Hons.)

Senator Prof. Emeritus Sir Henry Fraser, K.A., G.C.M., B.Sc., MBBS, Ph.D., FACP, FRCP

Senator Dr. Sir Trevor Carmichael, K.A., L.V.O., Q.C., B.Sc. (Econ.), M.A., Ph.D.

Senator A. A. Adams, J.P., B.A., Ed. Cert., M.Sc. Ed.

Senator J. A. Watson

Senator Carol Lady Haynes, M.B., B.S.

Senator Miss V. A. G. De Peiza, B.Sc. (Hons.), LL.M. (Merit),

Senator Sir Roy Trotman, K.A., M.A. D.D. (Hons.)

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

MADAM PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY Her HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Madam PRESIDENT: I am in receipt of the Minutes for Wednesday 8th March. I believe there is one amendment concerning the date of adjournment. If there are no other alterations, corrections or amendments, then let these Minutes stand confirmed, as amended. As we prepare to debate the matter before us today I wish to call Honourable Members' attention to the several amendments to the Appropriations Bill, 2016 and we therefore will debate with these amendments in focus.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE SENATE AND MOVED BY A MINISTER

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: I beg to move that Standing Order 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of this Sitting.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR the Hon. Miss M. O. P. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I beg to move that the following Bill be read a first time:

1. The Appropriations Bill, 2016.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER No. 5

SECOND READING OF THE APPROPRIATION BILL,
2016.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator McClean, you have the Floor. Senator the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I rise to lead off the debate on the Appropriation Bill, 2016, and as specified the Bill would provide for the grant of a sum out of the Consolidated Fund and the appropriation of the same, for the service of Barbados for the year ending 31st March, 2017.

Madam President, as we all know, in this distinguished Chamber we do not debate and rule on Money Bills, therefore the debate of the Appropriations Bill constitutes a set of Second Reading speeches.

Madam President, we are here today to debate the Appropriation Bill, 2016, and we are looking specifically to making provision for the running of this Government for a sum of money not exceeding \$1 866 602 785. I will state up front, Madam President, if my math is correct, this is the ninth such debate in which I have had the significant honour of leading. You would recall, Madam President, that we were thrown in at the deep end, so to speak, as we commenced our business as the new Government in 2008 and in this Senate Chamber we debated the 2008 Appropriation Bill on assuming office in January of that year.

Madam President, at that time on the first occasion of such a debate we completed such a process that would have started prior to our assumption of office. We also began at that time the process of managing the national economy and addressing the needs of this society at what was to become a sustained period of economic and financial turmoil. Madam President, as such, we were tasked with the navigation of very turbulent waters. Today I am proud to say that we have managed well, and I challenge anybody to demonstrate otherwise.

Why do I say this, Madam President? We have done well and for several reasons, (1) we have been able over that period, from 2008 until now, to support our major productive sectors. We can recall, Madam President, the

several debates but I will use for illustrative purposes the many incentives given to the tourism sector and because we were able to facilitate the sustaining of that sector to allow it to maintain jobs through a number of incentives, et cetera, we were able to impact on the job situation. Madam President, we were also able to move from sustaining to charting a path for growth. I am sure we will hear, in a very ample way, about the successes.

Madam President, very quickly let me say that I would want to acknowledge the hard work done, not only by the Minister of Tourism but by his very able Parliamentary Secretary, Senator Sandiford-Garner. The information is there, the results are there. If we look at the relative performance of that sector, we have seen growth in the region and we have seen growth hemispherically, but that growth has perhaps as an average been less than Barbados'. We can look to see what has happened. I fortunately can recall the numbers, the performance of the cruise sector, because I spent almost 15 years, as you might have heard me say in previous years, in that sector, Madam President. I have seen the challenges, I have seen how we, and when I say "we", I mean a previous Democratic Labour Party Government, would have undertaken the task of revitalising that sector with the creation of the Bridgetown Cruise Terminal. This became in many instances and over many years one of the best terminals, as identified not by a Government or the people of Barbados but by other players in the industry, particularly the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association. A lot more can be said about that.

We have seen the performance, so as I said we have provided support to our major productive sectors. In relation to established business, we have put in place not only incentives but also the necessary regulatory framework as we would have seen in the case of the international business sector, and made efforts to ensure that we address the challenges which we anticipated, while at the same time exploring new products and services, and new markets for negotiating and signing double-taxation agreements, et cetera.

Madam President, of very critical importance within the context of the responsibilities of Government, I would say, we have been successful to date because we have been able to maintain an acceptable social safety net. Again, we will hear of the performance in relation to our protection of the interests of workers and where workers found themselves temporarily employed or unemployed. We can recall the adjustment of unemployment benefits with a significant extension for a substantial period of time. Of course, we have seen the maintenance of welfare and social care support at a time when resources, as generated by taxes paid to Government, would have been challenged.

A third area or demonstration of our success to date and our accomplishments, Madam President, as I said, was the containment of unemployment specifically. It is worthy to note, Madam President, and I come back to this because we cannot disagree. I challenge anybody to disagree that this period of economic recession was the worst seen in this generation, and certainly for the last 70-80 years. It is therefore worthy to note that in the face of the worst economic crisis, our highest levels of unemployment were only slightly higher. I think they would have gone up to just over 12 per cent at one point in time, but if you do your research, and the information is there, you would see that between the period 2001-2003 the figures would have gone to approximately 11 per cent in a situation where the challenges faced could not compare to what we have been dealing with.

Of particular interest and importance to me, because I have been charged with some responsibility in this respect, is that Barbados has been able to maintain a positive image regionally and internationally. We have seen our small country, with our very limited resources in our various missions, champion the cause of climate change; we have played from the point of negotiation to the point of the signing of the last agreement in Paris, at COP 21, where -- I must put this on the record -- the Prime Minister of Barbados, the Right Honourable Freundel Stuart, was one of a small number of world leaders. He represented one of two developing countries, and specifically Small Island Developing States that sat in that negotiating room to come to the final agreement. I can tell you that the feedback was that, notwithstanding all the resources which the great United States had, he was able to get some agreements which confounded some of those persons, because we had worked very hard as a country and as a region to demonstrate the critical importance of a climate agreement that took into consideration the special needs of Small Island Developing States.

Madam President, we have also been very involved in the World Trade Organisation where, if we look at the responsibilities of the Ministry of Industry, International Business, Small Business Development and Commerce, the work that they do and the support that they give to small businesses, to established businesses, to domestic and international businesses which fall under the jurisdiction or purview of that Ministry, they could not necessarily do all that they had to do unless we were able to participate in a series of negotiations, which have been extremely difficult. Again, we have been able to push the world and the developed partners and large trading countries like the United States, the European Union, China, Japan and others to appreciate that in the same way that we talk about Small Island Developing States, that we recognise that there are small, vulnerable economies which need to be able to trade to participate in that global trading arrangement and in those international trade activities

which we are seeking to liberalise and to globalise. However, we recognise that there are special needs because of our own special circumstances; and that continues to be a battle which is fought to ensure that, whether it is focused and owned at the indigenous level, our international sector is able to compete fairly in the international arena.

Madam President, I do not plan to go through the entire mix of examples, but I would want to add a fifth example of what I consider to be the areas in which we have been working hard and realising success. This Government, between 2008 and now as we debate the Appropriation Bill, 2016, has been able to engage in initiatives that are intended to strengthen our administrative structures. We have heard of reforms in many areas. Certainly one of the areas that has been identified internally and externally as problematic is the drag that our statutory corporations have been having on the national purse in many instances. A lot of these agencies provide public goods but at the same time, while there is no profit element, there has to be significant cost containment, and that is an issue which has to be addressed. It is an ongoing issue in which rationalisation of some of those agencies has been undertaken or is being contemplated. We have also created other institutions which are intended to be more focused on delivering in their several areas in which they have to. We have also worked hard to facilitate investment in our people; what I would term people development and human resource development. By this, I mean that we have been working to support the development of our people and, more specifically, to develop their professional capabilities through a framework for helping individuals and employees develop their personal and organisational skills, knowledge and abilities.

Madam President, a lot of that is targeted, of course, to persons employed both in the private and public sectors but there is, of course, a major initiative looking at the public sector. We have also been working hard to support opportunities for entrepreneurship and small business ownership, and I would flag as a success something which began before this administration came to office, but certainly its predecessor would have been started prior to the previous Government coming into office. I am talking about the celebration of 20 years' success of the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme, and I single that out, Madam President, because sometimes you have to acknowledge your own contribution. I do this, not because I am usually one to focus on what I have done but I think that because it has been a very important area for me and an area in which I would have invested many years. Madam President, an area in which I would have invested many year, I can say comfortably three decades or more in fostering a spirit of entrepreneurship, I was very pleased to have been invited as one of the persons who was there at the beginning and who was there before the beginning of the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme who would have been there

when our late Prime Minister, the Honourable David Thompson as then Minister of Community Development would have launched the Youth in Business programme which was the predecessor to YES. I have mentioned that because in all that was happening, many young people over the last eight years and certainly in the last financial year would have been given significant support by the Ministry of Youth Culture and Sports. Madam President, I have explained to you my dilemma this morning, so you understand why I might have a little challenge sometimes remembering everything that I have to but what I am suggesting is that there has been ample evidence as to why I can stand here comfortably as we look at the Estimates and make the point that we have worked hard and we have been able to demonstrate success in substantial areas. Let me say very quickly, Madam President, that success has come at a time where if we look at the allocations from the Consolidated Fund to the various Ministries, my Ministry included, we have seen over time reduction but that had to happen because as I started out, Madam President, we were facing a situation of constrained circumstances. Our revenue bases were falling partly because of the global situation where our major foreign exchange earner tourism would have seen declines because of what was happening in the global, where were when they were increases, people were still cautious about how much they spent but more importantly, whether it is the international business sector where when threatened, we gave up about \$200 million in tax revenue by reducing tax rates and we also would have given up substantially when we look at the incentives given to tourism, so we were doing a number of things which sought to streamline operations of Government while at the same time providing support and, all in all, I can conclude, Madam President, that from between the first time I stood here at that time you would have been Deputy President and would have had a chance to participate in that original debate of this Honourable Chamber, between then and now, there is ample evidence that this administration has been committed to ensuring that this country survived, but not only survive the crises but that we able and continuing to put it on a path of renewed growth and development. Madam President, I think I would want to have put that up front in terms of partly contextualizing my contribution to this Appropriation Bill.

Madam President, a second perspective so to speak from which I would want to contextualize my contribution this morning is from the portfolio that I hold within the Cabinet of Barbados. I have served over the period November 2008 to now as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and as such I feel it necessary and partly because of what I do on a day to day basis, it become perhaps almost second nature that in a debate like this my perspective is shaped by the mandate and the activities of that Ministry. In essence, I will draw heavily on the relationship between what goes on in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade as it works in what I

would call a support capacity, working with the other Ministries and working on the various sectors which are a critical part of this economy and society.

Madam President, in essence, what I am really saying is that I will discuss the Appropriation Bill on several aspects of it largely from a Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade lens. In essence, what we can look is how does foreign policy which is how we engage and ensure that we maintain positive image and so on internationally, how does that relate to domestic policy. Of course, in turn, we can look at the relationship between the foreign policy and the allocations to Ministries and programme and so on. Madam, in doing that, I think it is important that I establish that Ministries when we look at allocations are not working as silos. The domestic policies are shaped which draw on the vision for this country and which draw on the goals of this country are in turn fleshed out domestically but they are not fleshed out domestically in a vacuum. If we talk about tourism, tourism policy, tourism products and services, then incentives to tourism has to reflect the realities of the international arena. Therefore, for example, while we recognise the importance of community tourism and environmental tourism and cultural tourism, the reality is those are areas that are attracting major attention in international markets at the level of our source market and at the level of our competitors. If we talk about issues relating to labour, we as a member of the international family, within the United Nations structure, we observe, we are party, we negotiate the various treaties and conventions which inform labour practice, which inform the whole issue of how we operate as a country, how we engage as employers. Sir, when we look at the fact that we were trailblazers in terms of carving out our social partnership, that is a model that we have given to the world and it is something that has been maintained throughout the challenges of this recent situation that we have been looking at, and certainly in the last financial year and will be as we move forward.

Madam President, I can go on to talk about health. Madam, within the family of the United Nations again, when we look at the policies of the Ministry of Health, when we look at the programmes to be finance, there is an increasing focus on prevention, so when we look at the budgets and we hear the programme rolled out by the Ministry of Health and we talk about prevention, there is a particular reason for that. We have taken again to the world through the CARICOM umbrella, the issue of chronic non-communicable diseases. We have put that on the world's agenda and it is now taking a significant place. We recall what the world had to do in relation to things like HIV and aids and we are saying that as a country which has to rely heavily on its human resources, we cannot only focus on putting strategies to develop them intellectually or technically but we also have to recognise that the quality of life, the condition to which an individual goes to work, his

or her physical or mental condition, et cetera will impact on productivity and, therefore, the point I am making is that we see how these linkages and intersections are taking place.

Madam President, in essence, when we look at these, I am happy to say that even with limited resources both financial, as we will see in the allocations to my Ministry, we have been able to expand our network of missions and we have been doing that very successfully in terms of being able to negotiate new opportunities.

Madam President, education. When we look at that, I would want to recognise that as the Minister of Education has continue to demonstrate success after success and if I want to illustrate that, the issue of tapping into philanthropic opportunities is one that this Minister of Education has done in a way that I did not see anybody do before 2008 to 2016. Specifically, I can use, as an illustration, the Maria Holder Foundation which by the end of the next year or so would have provided about six nursery schools for Barbados. That has allowed us to take forward a commitment to provide education from nursery up to tertiary and so one of the things that we have worked on in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade with the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation and working with the Ministry of Health has been on trying to rationalise the whole approach to philanthropic giving.

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH), for example, Madam President, through efforts of the ministry working with the Ministry of Health and the Hospital and Barbadians in the diaspora and friends of Barbados we have been able to agree to certain protocols which have enhance the ability and improve the ease with which people can give to this country. Again, I am using some of those examples to show that when we look at the figure because we do not dissect the figures in the way that they may do in the Other Place, but what we need to understand would be what are the issues, objectives, goals, et cetera, that inform those numbers. Beyond looking at numbers allocated to a ministry we also need to recognise, Madam President, that there is some very solid underpinning of those things, something which guides and so on and I would want perhaps to say something about that as well.

Madam President, it is important to recognise that in the business of determining what goes into Estimates I mentioned the relationship with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and its colleagues because as I said, I am speaking from the perspective of that minister but the work of my ministry and our ministries have to be informed by something before that and I would want to highlight that a critical element that has been driving us is a vision of a green economy which is underpinned by, what I would call, four pillars. We have heard those over and over

again and we want to make sure that we have a society that is socially balance, one that is economically viable, one that is characterised by good governance and, of course, in doing those we are able to ensure that we have policies that are consistent from a macro perspective, policies that are internally consistent within and across ministries and in doing that, if we are able to realise within the context of a commitment to being environmentally sound that we can achieve that green economy.

When we are talking about sustaining or striving for a green economy we are talking about developing a country and a society which is driven by certain fundamental principles of environmental sustainability as indicated by a number of things. Proper management of our resources. Proper attention to the protection of the environment, ensuring that we have consumption patterns and behaviours that are sustainable and that we also use production patterns that are sustainable. Those are the kinds of things that would inform our social policies, our labour policies, our industrial practices and it would take some time but I can tell you, Madam President, that the evidence is there, notwithstanding reductions - and I stress that - but there has been a reduction in the allocation. You can only give what you have and more importantly we have demonstrated that in giving what we have, we have also been very prudent.

I will give another example of prudence, Madam President, because I think in understanding these numbers we have to look at this. The Ministry of Transport and Works (MTW) and the Barbados Transport Board, in particular, I have heard people say but since the Government came into power in 2008 they have not bought a new bus but to me that is only half of the story. We did not buy because we were resource constrained and we also felt that there was the need, before we ran off and bought new buses, to make sure we could repair many of those that sat around and I can tell you that if you look at the information generated by the Barbados Transport Board or if you have heard the minister responsible for Transport in the past, speak to this, and you look at the numbers on the road from time-to-time, we have done very well in the face of the odds, the odds being, of course, the state of the buses inherited and the demand for the services, the offering to school children of a very critical service, et cetera. Madam President, those are illustrative of how, not only have we worked across ministries to achieve but how we would have worked utilising the resources that we have.

Madam President, I think that perhaps, would serve a good set of illustrations but as we do business in Barbados, as we run the country as a Government and as the private sector seeks to continue to face the challenges of maintain competitiveness, et cetera, we can ask ourselves where are we. I think we can look at that in terms of how Barbados as a country, a society and an economy is perceived. I think there are several sources we can go to internally and

externally because I like to make linkages between early points and points to be made. Madam President, the point I am making, if I could recap, is that we have demonstrated competence, we have demonstrated success in the face of tremendous challenge and we have done so using an approach or a set of approaches that recognise the importance of working as a team of ministerial colleagues and a team of ministries seeking to achieve a set of very specific goals informed by a vision as articulated in our 2008 Manifesto and most recently in our 2013 Manifesto, as articulated and as it continues to be articulated by the Right Honourable Prime Minister in the 2013 Manifesto. It is very clear what is the vision and what are the fundamental pillars that inform that vision, but having done all of those things, as I would say to some of my students sometimes in talking to me or doing presentations if I can cast my mind back to several years ago when I was teaching, having done that so what? The “so what” is that we can look to others to help us to get a proper perspective of where we are, having used the resources and I would want to site a couple domestic and international perspectives and I believe we could hear more as to when this was instituted is the financial stability report. That is a report that was put together in the face of the economic and financial challenges we facing globally and internally and this was intended to ensure that there was a constant monitoring of what was happening.

This, of course, speaks a lot to the financial sector therefore, if we were to peruse, Madam President, the Financial Stability Report 2015 and I would quote briefly from that report, and this is in relation to financial service, which stated: “The performance of the local banking sector improved over the 12 months to September 2015. Right off of bad loans fell sharply from their peak in 2013 and the nonperforming loan overhang displayed significant signs of recovery for commercial banks, in particular.” The report also went on to say that there was also a substantial recovery in profitability due not only to improvements in the quality of the credit portfolio but also to a wider gap between interests paid out to the depositors and interests received on loans so that is one description of the commercial banking sector. Madam President, I believe is a barometer of what is happening at the domestic household level as well as the commercial or business sector level. It went on to say that commercial banks dominance in the market was reflected in their owning more than half of the total assets in the financial system, some 60 per cent. It said that they also facilitated the majority of savings and transactions services.

Of course, Madam President, the Report does not only look at the commercial banking sector, but before I speak to some of the other sectors, what concerns me and one of the things that I certainly have been pushing given my long association as a volunteer in the credit union movement and continued commitment to seeing indigenous

opportunities arise, is that we have to reflect on how, certainly at the level of domestic savers, we are making the most of the moneys that we park in commercial banks and other financial institutions.

I believe, Madam President, that even in the face of all that I said about the support to entrepreneurship, a capacity of the Government to finance business start up and so on is limited because if we look at the private sector it is times larger than the Government in terms of GDP and these kinds of things. In other words, let me put it simply, Madam President, there is more money available to the private sector than it is available to Government. I have been championing, and we will hear more about that, that we have to think of creating an institution that would at least do something in relation to venture capital mobilisation to support entrepreneurship. I believe I have spoken to that on more than one occasion.

The commercial banks, of course, is one element of the financial sector, so if we look at assessing where we are from the perspective of the Financial Stability Report we would also see that the insurance sector which is the second largest player in the financial services sector and has, according to the Report, assets of about \$3.02 billion and that constitutes, according to the Report, 34 per cent of GDP at the end of 2014 when information was available as compared to during the same period. If we look at commercial banks, the commercial banks would have had substantially more than that because they are 34 per cent and the commercial banks were 60 per cent. If I were Senator Boyce I would quickly on my feet give you the number but I will try in case I give you it wrong, Madam President.

In essence what we are seeing is that we also have a commercial sector where not only commercial banks but life insurance companies are doing well. What I want to say well in relation to insurance companies not only life insurance companies... Of course, life insurance companies account for just over three quarters of the industry's total assets, so that is about - okay, let me stop trying to do maths on my feet. They also contribute significantly.

I want very quickly to say, Madam President, that we also came into office at a time where alongside of the global financial and economic crisis, we also had in the Caribbean the major failure of one of the region's perhaps largest if not the largest financial conglomerate. I can tell you again that coming out of that this Administration was able to put in place regulatory arrangements to improve the monitoring and regulations of financial institutions in the form of the Financial Services Commission. Prior to that there were not as stringent regulations of all the entities. I can say that while credit unions have always been monitored and regulated well that has been enhanced and the evidence is there that where necessary the Financial

Services Commission would have rapped on their knuckles any credit unions that were stepping out of line or were creating problems. I say because I want to contrast it with something that happened when I mentioned insurance.

I recall, Madam President, that as a volunteer in my credit union, the Registrar of Cooperatives warning credit unions not to invest in a certain instrument offered by a certain insurance company. The Registrar having warned would have flagged that warning with the Supervisor of Insurance who I believe should have flagged it with the Minister of Finance at the time. What we have now, because there was not any action taken and we see the consequence, is a regulatory arrangement which from all evidence is working well and I think that is absolutely critical.

I would want of course, Madam President, before I move off the whole question of financial stability to say something about that element of the financial services sector which is very near dear to me, and that is the credit union movement. I would want to flag that in the reporting period, the Financial Stability Report for 2015, credit unions recorded an increase in both their members, shares, deposits and lending portfolios of \$120 million in the case of shares, \$93 million in the case of deposits and \$15 million in the case of loans. This is from the report. We see the credit union with that kind of increase having at the reporting period total assets of \$1.9 billion.

In terms of the credit unions they are relatively small in terms of asset base when compared to commercial banks but they continue to offer to the average Barbadians the one indigenous solution to financing. I have spent some time talking about that, Madam President, because as I said it is important to understand that as we have done what we had to do as a Government we have done so with some impact and some effect and therefore it is reflected in objective analyses such as that done for the Financial Stability Report or in the perspective of others.

I would want, Madam President, to quickly mention one other institution of course, and that has to do with what is an annual exercise, and that is, the International Monetary Fund Executive Board Reviews through what is called the Article IV Consultation. The Article IV Consultation is one of the requirements under the International Monetary Fund operates in which there is consultation with Members States. Under Article IV of the International Monetary Fund Articles of Agreement the International Monetary Fund holds bilateral discussions with members usually every year.

Sometimes we used to hear people say well we see the International Monetary Fund persons around Barbados but they have to be because we are part of the game so to speak, those are the rules of the game. You come and you

review economies with countries on an annual basis. When they come, Madam President, they collect economic and financial information and they discuss with the officials of the country various economic developments and policies.

Madam President, that is important because the impression given is that when we have teams representing the International Monetary Fund in Barbados, it is that they somehow come to dictate what goes into these Estimates and that is not the case. They come and they consult as they do with other Member States. The International Monetary Fund have admitted that they have changed. In many respects they may have positions that are consistent with ours, but I am making the point that they come and they do an assessment. When they turn up it is not to bring or impose any measures or whatever. They come to consult as part of their membership arrangement with Member States. Of course, they come to some conclusions as well about the situation facing the country.

This is what they had to say in relation to the economy. They suggested that real GDP growth remained weak in 2014. It said that they were weighed down by fiscal drag and stagnant tourism inflows and they suggested that unemployment averaged approximately 12 per cent at the end of 2014.

It went on to say, however, that tourism arrivals jumped over the winter season and real GDP is projected to expand by 1 percent in 2015 as a stronger growth in key markets underpins arrivals. Lower oil prices and new tourism investment will provide a boost to demand though ongoing fiscal adjustments will dampen the growth of the up side. Inflation is forecasted to fall by 0.9 percent per year and reflecting lower energy and commodity prices. It also spoke of improved balance of payments.

Overall the position is...this is under the section Executive Board Assessment. It went to suggest that the executive directors welcomed the improvement in macro-economic conditions, and the authority's commitment to tackle urgently needed reforms. Directors cautioned however that the country faces daunting challenges including external risk, high fiscal deficit and debt levels and competitive challenges.

What I want to say having cited the assessment of the International Monetary Fund, we will hear, I am sure, Madam President, and we would have heard in many debates, how Government has worked to address the external risk. External risk, of course, being changes in the economic situation in any of our source markets. We have done that by looking to diversify, whether it is to diversify in terms of the international business markets from whom we draw business, or whether it is to diversify markets from whom tourists arrive.

The issue of the high fiscal deficit is being addressed from the perspective of CARICOM, for example. I am sure we will hear much of that from my colleague Senator Boyce who speaks on those kinds of matters. That is being addressed.

It is important to recognise, yes, we have seen increases in our fiscal deficit. What we have to understand, Madam President, and I am sure the International Monetary Fund in their consultation would have seen that those increases have been incurred to ensure that we are able to stabilise the economy, but also we are also looking to put resources into productive sectors. Tourism, again, is a classic example of what we are talking about.

Of course at the level of competitive challenges, the Minister responsible for Industry, Commerce, International Business, Minister Inniss is working within his ministry and across the private sector, for example the Barbados Coalition of Service Industries, with resources from the BDF, the development funds which we get through the economic partnership agreement with the European Union, to put strategies and programmes in place to address those things. It is recognised that the assessment is one we have to take seriously and we have in fact been taking onboard. I think, Madam President, those are some of the critical issues that we are looking at.

What I find particularly interesting, before I move off the discussion of the International Monetary Fund, in terms of understanding where we are and understanding how we are perceived, I came across an interesting article entitled the Caribbean and the International Monetary Fund Building a partnership for the future. Reporting on an address by Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, who would have been at Mona, in June 2014, again, identifying where we were and where we are, a short extract from her presentation also helps us to understand the challenges we are looking to address through these Estimates, whether there are resources put into health, resources put into the Ministry of the Environment and Drainage, resources put into tourism, agriculture, et cetera. This is 2014, the middle of the year when she was speaking. This is what she had to say: "The Caribbean was vulnerable going into the global financial crisis and was hit with its full force. Six years on output has still not returned to pre-crisis levels and public debt is still at record high, almost 100 per cent of GDP in tourism dependent countries and 140 per cent of GDP here in Jamaica. A big issue is high energy cost."

Of course we have seen some relief of that.

She went on to say:

"Electricity costs three times as much in Jamaica as in the United States. It costs even more in Barbados."

Again, our Minister of Energy is dealing with that issue, so conserving and renewing energy alongside efforts to bring more competition and dynamism to the energy sector would be important. I will conclude with the last part of her statement. She said:

"I have talked so far about boosting competitiveness, but competitiveness that ignores climate change is hollow competitiveness. As climate change continues its relentless march, the Caribbean is on the frontline, a region of low-lying islands surrounded by increasingly angry seas." Why focus on those bits of her speech, Madam President? 1) There is a recognition that we have to tackle energy costs, and we are doing that. If we, and I am sure, Madam President, my distinguished colleague on the other side cannot disagree with this. If we look at the resources allocated to the Ministry responsible of energy, if we look at the work undertaken at the Barbados Water Authority to reduce the electricity bill, the electricity bill of the Barbados Water Authority is a major expense for that institution, we will recognize that we are not only talking about renewable energy and energy efficiency, we are talking about this in practical ways in which Government is also taking the lead in demonstrating the need for shifting. We talk about competitiveness. We have to address the issue of climate change. That, as I said, we have done that in terms of lobbying. We are now moving, Madam President, to the next stage where the Ministry of the Environment and other ministries in Government are preparing or have submitted proposals to the Green Climate Fund for financing to the Global Environment Fund and other funds, where we are looking bilaterally or multilaterally to get the support in our efforts to address climate change in a way that recognises the problems as articulated by the Managing Director. Madam President, we have been talking about what needs to be done and we really have not only been talking. I would want, Madam President, then to suggest that the evidence is there that we have committed ourselves to a path of restructuring this economy, committed ourselves to a path of utilising the resources available to this country in a way that allows us to ensure that when we come to the taxpayers of Barbados with a set of demands, whether it is in terms of taxation, or when we come to our taxpayers with a set of expenditures, we are doing so in a way that is focused, that is structured, that is intended to achieve substantial benefits in the short medium and long-term. Madam President, I want to perhaps say a little bit more from the perspective of my Ministry, as I said, because I think I have often heard people suggest, I guess they do not listen, but I suggest that they do not hear enough of what happens in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. In a second reading speech about the Appropriation Bill, I think this is an excellent time, Madam President, to say something about that. I, having sought to give a broad overview as Leader of Government Business on the many issues that inform the Estimates, I can perhaps share something on how the

Ministry has been working to support domestic policies and programmes, while representing Barbados' interest abroad. You can look at the Ministry, and as I said you can look at the allocations over the years. We have been doing more and more with less. We have been able, Madam President, since 2010 to expand our Mission, as you would have heard before, we would have done so like opening a Mission in China. If I can say something about that, our diplomatic relationship which has preceded by several years, our opening of a resident Mission has in fact, because of that improved significantly by our presence there, but also by the work of the Chinese Mission here in Barbados, and also the position taken by the leaders of that country to better engage the region.

When we look at that, I would suggest it is important to recognise the nexus between domestic policy and programming and Barbados' activities at the bilateral that is country to country level, an example which I gave just now, China. Madam President, we know in the recent past we would have seen the signing of significant agreements with the representatives of the Government of China in the form of grant funding, or in the form of concessionary loans. Tourism is a major beneficiary.

In terms of sports, they have been major beneficiaries. So that relationship continues, of course.

It is also important to recognise that through our Mission we have facilitated many delegations of private sector persons, or joint delegations of public and private sector persons. So that is an example of our bilateral relationship.

I will give you one closer to home to demonstrate how we have been working. Recently, Madam President, we would have signed and seen arrived flights from Columbia, signed air services, agreements, et cetera, and seeing flights arrive from Columbia. That happened through negotiations at the bilateral level between Foreign Ministers. That is where it started. The introductions are made and then the people in tourism took over and completed that process. That opportunity has started to demonstrate the capacity of such a window for expansion.

Moving from tourism and air transport into education, Madam President, to show how we represent our interest or how we are able to see the fruits that are produced by those efforts, the new Principal of the University of the West Indies, I did not get permission to call her name, but since I am not saying anything bad about her I think I can be forgiven, Professor Eudine Barriteau, is somebody of whom I am very proud as a former colleague of mine on Campus and a good friend. One of the very first things she did when she made initial courtesy calls to Members of Cabinet, starting with the Right Honourable Prime Minister, was to indicate her commitment to

internationalising education at the university. One of the things we have been able to collaborate on is the teaching of English as a second language. Right now we have two cohorts of students, one from Ecuador, the second from Panama. The Panamanian group came out of discussions, again, the bilateral level and we are able to see a growing interest because of the success of those programmes.

The point I am making, Madam President, through discussions with the counterpart, and I acknowledge her contribution to that, the Foreign Minister of Columbia, we were able to negotiate and get agreement to get flights to come here via Columbia. They are now facilitating flights out of other South and Central American countries. The success of that would be fed by the use of that by students coming from a mix of countries. We had Ecuador and Panama. Prior to negotiations there was an ongoing relationship with the University of the West Indies and the management of one of the large oil companies in Venezuela. What we are seeing is, we are able to use our various resources to collaborate in order to create new business opportunities whether it is at the level of the private sector, the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus or the Barbados Community College with whom we have been having discussions as well.

Madam President, I think it is important to look at the resources we have and also look at the size of our mission. We have of necessity, given our recourses, very small missions, whether it is in Cuba. Talking about Cuba, Madam President, I also want to flag that very soon the Minister of Industry will be traveling to Havana at the invitation, not only of the officials in Havana but at the invitation of a private sector company. I did not get permission to call the name of the company, but it is a company that makes biscuits. They have actually gone into Cuba and I believe they have already signed or will be officially signing deals. They have been working in Panama to break into that market. Those were facilitated, in the case of Panama, through trade missions, what we call political and trade missions organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. As I said, I cannot speak to numbers and so on, but I can speak to what we do with the resources we get, and how we collaborate with the Government through its various ministries and agencies, with the Private Sector and indeed civil society.

I think, Madam President that is important.

I also want, perhaps, as we talk about this, and I say this because I remember, Madam President, that it would have been the climate meetings in Samoa where there was a hue and cry about the money spent for the delegation headed by the Right Honourable Prime Minister and accompanied by the Minister of the Environment. I can say coming out of that we have seen resources realised by the Ministry of the Environment. Again, all the preliminary

negotiations leading up to that and supporting the Prime Minister and the Minister would have been, again, my ministry, because people look and say officers are traveling. I tell people they do not go traveling, they go to work, because to talk about travel suggests perhaps they are wasting time, but at the end of the day when we look at the allocation for travel, as we would call it, that is utilized in very important ways in which we start to see, have seen, and we will continue to see a number of benefits.

I will use another example, Madam President, in terms of how the work of the Ministry is important. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade will from time to time participate in meetings of the Commonwealth. Only late last year there would have been a meeting of the Commonwealth in Malta. Some people would have asked why do you go to Malta, but I want to signal, Madam President, that coming out of those discussions we were able to ... in fact the Commonwealth can be described as a champion for the cause of small states. In fact a lot of the work agenda of the Commonwealth, the technical assistance provided and so on, would have come out of discussions as to what are the issues and so on. I can tell you that as of this moment, we are in the process of negotiating technical assistance for a number of agencies. I would want to look at some of the issues we would have touched on. In looking at these it helps us to understand how we can help contribute to the work of several of our ministries and Government agencies.

As I said, we would have attended the Heads of Government Meeting in Malta which started November 27, 2015. It is a meeting that happens every two years. The leaders met again, the Prime Minister was signaled out as one of those voices for Small Island Developing States, and included in that there were a number of issues. We looked at the whole question of sustainable development, debt management, education, environment, health, multilateral trade issues, and small states and youth affairs. Madam President, as I said, those topics which are typical of these meetings help the Commonwealth as an umbrella body supporting its Member States to shape policies and programme and respond to and advise Member Countries.

Madam President, the point I am making is that we are able very quickly to identify how we can solicit support, who we can contribution to solutions when some of these things do happen, so it is not a case of people just going off on a frolic and that is important.

Madam President, I will use another illustration of how we work, this is from the perspective of the other side of my Ministry, because when we talk about support we also talk about support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. The World Trade Organisation I touched on that earlier. We participated in that because at the end of the day our trading activities accompanying

downtown or in Christ Church, on the west coast or whatever, looking to engage in trade does not do so in a vacuum as I said before, they are participating as part of a system of international trade, the rules for which are determined by the World Trade Organisation. Therefore the work of the Ministry of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development would be supported by the efforts of the Division of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, because we have to ensure that we are able to influence negotiations which serve to craft or enforce our international trade policies.

Madam President, in fact, this would bring into sharp focus the role of the Geneva Mission, for example, because that is where the World Trade Organisation is headquartered. Madam President, I cite that because as recently as late November/December the World Trade Organisation would have had its Ministerial and it was critical from the perspective that many of the developed countries were trying to move away from focusing on what we call the development agenda. In other words, they were saying we need to get past this notion of supporting developing countries and look to other kinds of more recent developments.

Madam President, our argument was that while a lot of things have evolved, a lot of things have not change and we therefore needed to pay significant attention to maintaining the concerns that we have had. Madam President, I sought to illustrate that and I am conscious of the time and so I will continue on that view.

Madam President, I think that when we look at the issue of the Geneva Mission and the World Trade Organisation it is necessary for us to properly understand that at the end of the day, if we do not have some influence on the work of that institution we will find ourselves perhaps being significant disadvantaged when it comes to being able to trade fairly and so on.

Madam President, one of the important concerns, as I said Geneva plays a significant role in relation to that, is to ensure that any agreements reached in Geneva or anywhere that the World Trade Organisation meets in relation to trade liberalisation would be done in a way that does not disadvantage Barbados, whether we are talking about agricultural trade, non-agricultural trade or trade in goods and services.

Madam President, we have done this very ably because in the last couple of years, again though we are small, we have a limited staff, the then Ambassador would have taken on a major role by chairing some important committees. We talk about Small Island Developing States, we talked about climate change but when we talk about trade, we use something which is similar, in that we talk about small, vulnerable economies.

Madam President, what we have there is a situation where we have taken the lead in sharing those negotiations and through the capacity of the then Ambassador and the support staff in the Mission in Geneva, we were able to negotiate to ensure that our interests were not taken off the agenda, that the agenda of the World Trade Organisation was not modified in a way that disadvantages us.

Madam President, I can tell you because I would have been our Ministerial representative at the most recent meeting in Nairobi, in November that were it not for our efforts, our being Barbados and the supporting countries of CARICOM and also when we went beyond the Small Island Developing States, we also chaired the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries Groups, as well as what you would call the G-19 which is a larger group of developing countries, that we would have found ourselves perhaps not being able to keep on the table the issue of development.

Madam President, for us that is important. When I say the issue of development, we are talking about ensuring that at the end of day what we are able to do is to say to the world, to our international counterparts, that is the other developed countries, that while liberalisation and free trade are important we are not equal partners. We are small, we are vulnerable, we have limited resources, et cetera and so while we talk about liberalisation we are not necessary doing so in a way that it is possible to operate on what I would call an equal footing and therefore some concessions have to be made.

Madam President, I could also talk about what we would call multilateral kinds of discussions but I could also say something, Madam President, in terms of our responsibilities within the context of CARICOM, near to home. Madam President, CARICOM is a regional project which has been working hard to integrate the region and we often hear detractors suggesting that as we engage we are perhaps losing steam of CARICOM has lost its significance to Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

Unfortunately, persons who are detractors do not necessarily recognise the full range of engagements, of collaborations, of cooperation that happened and in fact, I would argue that in the absence of CARICOM and the work that it does, whether at the level of Foreign Ministers looking to organise our foreign policies in the way that there is... not only collaboration but a common foreign policy as far as possible, we really could not engage the world in the same way that we have done so.

Madam President, of course I could site the recent meetings of CARICOM and the Dominican Republic under the nomenclature of CARIFORUM where having signed an Economic Partnership Agreement, Madam President, we have been looking to see how we could improve that to

the extent that we are able to take advantage of the benefits at the level of financial support to Government but most importantly, benefits in relation to support for the private sector and the seizing of opportunities.

Madam President, of course, that agreement has two sides to it, obligations to liberalise our markets and so on and opportunities. Madam President, rather obligations on the one hand and opportunities on the other to access business in the various markets.

Madam President, I want to flag something in relation to that and I believe that my views will be shared by the Minister with responsibility for International Business and Commerce, from the perspective of accessing international markets by local companies. A lot of energy and time has been put into informing the business community in Barbados about what opportunities exist. Very early publications were put out showing them how to access the various markets, whether it is tourism, cultural services, export of goods, et cetera. Workshops have been mounted and so on, but I want, Madam President, to express what I consider to be my personal concern about the lack of initiative and the fear of pursuing foreign markets. I will give you some practical examples. I started out talking about Europe, but I will use another example as well in terms of some other jurisdictions. We have been showing companies how to do this, but they just do not seem willing to want to take that step. I have a suggestion. I say this not because I feel this is what happens, but because I know that in many instances we have a situation where we have brought established companies together and have sought to show them the opportunities, but in some instances, if I could paraphrase it, Madam President, the suggestion is "we really do not need to go there. We are doing all right".

Madam President, I will give an example: At our Mission in China where we have a very small staff, our Ambassador has been working very hard to facilitate the entry of products into that market. I would have personally invited a number of companies in relation to one of our flagship exports, rum, about two years ago when I had those discussions. Madam President, at the time the suggestion was that we were taking a beating in the North American market, more particularly the United States where the opportunities are affected by certain actions on the part of trade officials in the United States and the support given through a cover-over arrangement where monies collected in the form of taxes or duties are given to some United States jurisdictions, and it makes our product less competitive. My argument was while you were battling your established marketplace, so to speak, it made sense to explore new markets. Our Government, through working with the Barbados Investment Development Corporation (BIDC), the Ministry and our missions, sought to do that. The reaction that I got, however, was surprising, to say the

least. There was not a question of how best do we explore this market, but rather I heard from some people, “This is how we do it and it is probably not suited to that, or is not as attractive because this is what is required”. My argument was, “Look at new methods of access in the market, work in novel ways”. However, that is the general feeling I get; that people are not ready and willing to pursue new opportunities.

Madam President, I want to use another example, because this is something that is to happen, and this is not about export now but it is to reduce imports. This relates to opportunities in what I would call agri-business, and more particularly horticulture. In 2017 it is my understanding that a minimum of 30 countries will be coming to Barbados to do a flower show. There is an association and Barbadians travel around the world to participate in these events. They do their designs, they are judged and so on. The persons planning this have approached many of our flower producers to say, “Here is an opportunity a year ahead to produce some of our exotic plants, foliage, et cetera”. I am not a flower arranger. I can only appreciate it when somebody does an arrangement, so you can send one to me, Madam President. I said to the person that was an excellent opportunity because persons coming would not want to travel with flowers, since the logistics of that would be difficult. For you then to go ahead and suggest to distributors, wholesalers and retailers that they should import is going to be a drain on any of the foreign exchange that you make from the event, so I asked “Why do you not approach”, as some of them told me they did. However, the reaction that I have heard, and I do not think the people I speak to would misrepresent or misunderstand, is that, “we are doing all right”. You know what, Madam President? I said to the organisers that I have a commitment to entrepreneurship and I see an entrepreneurial opportunity. I have approached an international organisation asking for funding to assist a group which I believe can pull together and create an appropriate non-governmental organisation to not only teach the participants how to do tissue culture -- and I am not a scientist by any stretch of the imagination and never really did sciences in my school career -- which is a process by which they can successfully produce flowers.

I had the opportunity in 2010, having gone to the United Kingdom on Government business, to attend the Chelsea Flower Show, and on that occasion Barbados was again successful and at the time I asked the organisers when they planned to commercialise all their efforts. They had these exotic blooms, very hardy flowers which could withstand travel, et cetera. I also had the opportunity, Madam President, to speak to the Honorary Consul of Barbados in Suriname on this matter. Not only is he a scientist but he is also very much involved in the same kind of activity and could tell me the level of business that they engage in with the Netherlands, for example, in terms of

exporting, using the technique of tissue culture. What I am saying, Madam President, is that I am hoping that persons who have been exposed to opportunities created under the Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union would look to take advantage of the opportunities, rather than allow us as small countries to find ourselves only having to meet obligations.

When you look at the size of our economy in comparison to those economies, the opportunities clearly are substantial. The challenge, of course, is that it will require perhaps doing business differently. It can require perhaps looking for smart partnerships within and outside of the region; and provisions are made for those things. We need to look to do some of these things because at the end of the day - with all the money that the Government spends, whether it is in the Ministry of Education allocations to the University of the West Indies, Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic or Barbados Community College for their programmes in agriculture and science and so on - we have to see how we can convert that knowledge into business opportunities. If not, we are going to have some problems.

Madam President, I also believe that in many respects when we look at these situations, there is significant scope for encouraging the development of what I would call a new business class; and that is drawing on the young people in whom we have invested heavily, and drawing on their knowledge of technology, not only in terms of developing products and services but in terms of communicating with their colleagues and searching for opportunities. I think that is important.

Madam President, I have been talking quite a bit about my Ministry but I think it is important to speak to something which I felt I should speak to closer to the end of my presentation, and that has to do with what this year means to Barbados and what it means to these Estimates. Madam President, as we know in 1966, the country became Independence after what was seen as perhaps some resistance on some parts and criticism on some parts. I would have been around but some of us might have been. Madam President, since then in the same way that this administration since 2008 to now has been able to accomplish much, this country has been able in the 50 years of Independence to achieve very much.

Madam President, when we look around this table, Madam President, particularly some elements of this side including yourself, Madam President, we can see that the children of Independence have benefitted significantly from that. We have benefitted as we saw a country of 166 square miles take on the responsibilities of nationhood and take on the responsibility for running its affairs whether it is social policy, its economic policy and it has done so within the context of good governance, commitment to law

and order and generally, a commitment to democracy recognizing, as anyone would, that in the case of child having its 13th birthday, that is when you are going into your teen. We recognise perhaps a 16th birthday or an 18th birthday. We certainly recognise the 21st birthday and the 25th birthday and when that person become 40 years old. Madam, some persons here are yet to reach there and some of us cannot remember but we recognise important landmarks and important periods in our history.

Madam President, I would therefore want to recognise that as we have prepared to finance the business of Government for the next financial year, there is going to be in those Estimates an allocation for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Independence.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister has made it very clear the importance of this also the important opportunity that it affords Barbados to engage in some introspection and serious reflection as to what has brought us here and where we have to go. Of course, in the process acknowledging those things that are very positive and that we should keep those things that have crept into our very existence that we need to discard and again look forward to see those things that we have to assume as we look to build on the successes of the last 50 years. It has been my honour to have been asked along with my colleague, Senator Byer-Suckoo to chair and serve as Deputy Chair in the case of Senator Byer-Suckoo, a Coordinating Committee. I believe and I am sure this will be endorse that we have been able to mobilise committed Barbadians across a range of sectors both public and private, civil society, young and old in a way that allows us to get a proper appreciation of what this celebration should mean to Barbados and Barbadians and how we should celebrate it. Again, we have had detractors and I think I have heard the Prime Minister use the statement on more than one occasion, so I think I can repeat it. I acknowledge him so it is no plagiarism. I have heard him say from the early days when people were talking about this event and whether they felt the Government should spend money and so. He said that some people know the cost of everything but they do not know the value of anything.

Madam President, for us, the value of being able to chronicle the contributions of Barbadians, to reflect on those things that have made us successful and to document them for future generations to celebrate across the length and breadth of this country and beyond what we have achieved is not only a set of actions to acknowledge what we have achieved but also to allow us to determine where we have departed from the best way, so to speak, to determine how best we can go forward in a way that would those who would be here to reflect in 50 years' time, and even before that, I guess in 25 years and in that way I probably have a chance of being here, to reflect on what we have been able to accomplish.

Madam President, I think that for a small country like Barbados to be able to proclaim to the world that we have consistently maintained high standards of governance across successive Governments, to have been able to maintain high standards of education for all. I tell people that were it not the system we have, I would probably not be here. I do not have to look far away. I can look into my own family to see what was the different impact of having to pay fees and not being able to pay them and, therefore, having to suspend the education of my first brother as opposed to persons like myself going right through the system. Madam, there were 10 of us, so I can see the benefits and I continue to see the benefits. I look around our school systems and I see persons who come from disadvantaged backgrounds being able to change their circumstances. What I see but I do not like however is a situation where because we have become successful, many of us have become very selfish forgetting that we have to be our brothers and sisters' keepers that we have to pay attention to those who need our assistance. We have become selfish in that we do not appreciate the needs of others and, in essence, we have to revisit that, as a small community and a small nation, we have to build.

Madam President, we have been seeking to address the whole issue of the loss of the sense of community and it is hoped that through this process people will not only look to the activities organized by Government but look to see how within their communities enjoy the benefits of what they have shared as neighbours, as friends, as school mates et cetera to celebrate. There are not too many countries in which, notwithstanding all the challenges we have faced, we have had a health services that continues to provide the kind of care that many cannot get in one of the most developed countries of the world, the United States of America. Madam President, for many Americans, if they do not have health care will now get health care. Of course, President Obama has sought recently to address that but some people had abolish it as soon as they get a chance, if ever they get a chance.

Madam President, we have had free secondary education, free primary education and now we are looking to do universal nursery at a time when the same President Obama is seeking to provide free education at the Community College level and we have gone beyond that to provide persons until now where they have been asked to pay less than a quarter of the full cost, free university education sometimes for multiple degrees at the undergraduate and graduate level.

Madam President, the point I am making is that as we talk about an allocation in the Office of the Prime Minister because the Secretariat for the 50th anniversary celebration operates under the auspices of the Office of the Prime Minister and those resources are there not only to party, because if we want to party we could ask what would

be the cost of some laser lights some years ago when we were celebrating the success of one of our athletes and I am sure that was several years ago. I am sure if I go we can find the amount and look at that but I am not about making those comparison. Madam, ignoring comparisons, we recognise that this a single period, it is a single event and it is intended to assist us as Barbadians to appreciate what it means to be Barbadians and appreciate what we have given to the world.

Madam President, on that note I want to say something about that. This year, as part of our 50th anniversary celebration, if I can go back to responsibilities of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, we will have our fourth Barbados National Consultation

or Diaspora Conference. That conference was conceptualised by the late Prime Minister, David Thompson and he in proposing that, and as I would have said in this Chamber previously, as a child of the diaspora himself, having been born in the United Kingdom (UK) recognised that there is a significant constituency, if I can use that word, of Barbadians abroad who, like us at home or perhaps even more so because having left Barbados have experience what it means to be a Barbadian and the pride of being a Barbadian when they see what goes on in the wider world, that there is need to engage Barbadians overseas and we are doing so for the fourth time. That conference comes, Madam President, right after Kadooment Day from 3rd to 5th August and we start the process by celebrating to God and I would want say that this year, and it was not a bias because I am an Anglican because somebody said that you had a service in an Anglican Church last year, but I have decided that we will have the service at the Cathedral Church because it is a historic building, it is part of Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison, it is a building which has made a significant contribution to this country, its heritage and its history and we should go there to celebrate as part of this 50th. I will make a plug now, you take large collections for its restoration and rehabilitation but I wanted to say that because again, as we celebrate the 375th anniversary of this Parliament, Madam President, there are certain institutions and physical structures which are critical landmarks of this country and we need to recognise those.

What I also want to say as I talk about going forward and a new Barbados, it is hoped that on that occasion Barbadians at home and abroad would have the chance to sit down and network from a perspective of using science, technology, engineering, mathematics as a major driver of innovation business and other so we will have something which allows us to bring together many Barbados.

This year I can tell you that there are going to be activities targetting young people in particular because there is a group of young Barbadians and descendants of

Barbadians across the diaspora, they call themselves the young professionals. They came as an official body two years ago and pledged that they will be here again. Of course, beyond that conference we will have, and I can tell you that our diaspora have already organised chartered flights and whatever else to come home in November and one of the things, if we want to look at dollars and cents, Madam President, is that Barbadians will come home and spend foreign exchange too but I do not think that is the biggest concern. What they are coming home to do is to continue to connect or to reconnect with their roots and heritage and I believe that any self respecting Barbadians would recognise and appreciate the importance of celebrations in a way that allows us to do more than we can quantify in dollars and cents and that is important but, of course, the opportunities are there. would also want and I think I need to make a plug for other activities. I know that one of the most active diaspora groups that we have been engaging because I know that they have invited the Prime Minister, for example, to events and those cost, in the case of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, would be in the funds allocated for travel, have invited us to celebrate in their celebrations. I can tell you that the Barbados Association of Tampa Bay has a number of key events, there is a gala in June, there is one in October or November and they have taken, even before we had details of the diaspora conference out there, they took the time to come to Barbados to book a venue to have the closing gala for the diaspora conference. The reason they have done that is because on occasion where they have a major event they look to cater to at least 600 Bajans and friends of Barbados. Madam President, we also will have this year, as part of our 50th anniversary celebrations which is a little unusual but it fits nicely into the 50th because on alternate years we have the diaspora conference and the other year we have what we call "Barbados comes To". This year, because last September when we would normally have it, we wanted to go to Atlanta by the organisers in Atlanta headed by our two longstanding Honorary Counsels there Dr. Edward Layne and new council, Mr. David Cutting, a retired banker who has lived outside of Barbados for a long time, a lot of times in countries like Africa, Asia, et cetera, they identified May as a good time for a conference and I can tell you that conference is much more than Barbadians from across the United States getting together. They are engaging research institutions, Dr. Layne, as a medical doctor, and anybody knows was, anybody who knows Atlanta and its economy would know the emphasis on research and the range of educational institutions in business and other kinds of discipline, they are engaging those institutions to look at Barbados and to discuss and come up with a number of initiative in which we can engage. We have also, through the hard work of our Honorary Counsels and the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTI) before and now the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. (BTMI) and they have been able to attract to Barbados a new set of flights, Delta and we will hear

about that. In fact, those two gentlemen were hoping to come home anytime now but they could not get on to the flight at the time they were looking to come, it was full. They have really put together a very exciting package and also in terms of attracting some very high net worth persons to come and learn about Barbados investment opportunities, et cetera. If we start, Madam President, to look at expenditures on our 50th we have to start to look at the short-, medium- and long-term benefits that will be derived from doing those things, for example, in the area of the private sector and our various sectors so I just needed to flag those things because I think those things are very important. Madam President, I believe that as we look at the opportunities that we have had before us to demonstrate to Barbadians that we have their best interest at heart and that we have been able, in spite of the many challenges to address the needs of this country and to do so with what I would call three levels of concern or three levels of strategy, over the period and certainly in the last financial year we would have seen the culmination of some efforts. We have sought in the first instance to stabilise the situation to support in difficult times, our productive sectors and to rationalise Government's operations and in essence to do that as a means of what I would call, security and strengthening the foundation on which we would look to build and expand. Madam President, I believe that again as I said and I would begin my wrap up now, the Estimates to which the Appropriation Bill refers, are a collection of allocations across ministries intended to demonstrate that notwithstanding the financial limitations that the Government has had and continue to have, we have worked assiduously to reduce wastage, to foster a level of efficiency and effectiveness in a situation where we could not afford to waste. Oftentimes when there is a lot there is a lot of wastage. Let us hope that as we go forward our public officials and citizens would appreciate that we cannot waste, whether we are talking about water were we have worked hard to address the longstanding problems of lost water due to damaged mains and poor mains. We have heard and we know that we have had mains which are perhaps a century, twice as long as we have been independent. We were lucky to have waterborne water all those years and we have a process of lanes, mains, and replacing those things.

Whether it is about looking to ensure that our educational system makes the best use of the resources taking advantage of any philanthropic support which has been long available but for which we did not seem to be able to find the right mechanisms to efficiently and effectively make use of that. We are doing so against the background of pulling together the work of all our agencies bearing in mind that we need to minimise the level of poor utilisation of resources - I was going to say wastage again, and that is what I am talking about.

Overall, Madam President, I think what we have is a situation where this Government, certainly in the last financial year and certainly over the life of its previous and current term, that is 2008 until now, we have operated under a clear vision in which we are looking through a process of transformation driven in large measure by an appreciation of the need to pursue a green economy, which would be enhanced via strategies of utilising renewable energy and fostering energy efficiency and certainly built on, as I said, the four pillars which seek to ensure that we have a country where we focus on economic viability, social balance, a country, society and an economy which focus on environmental soundness and ultimately shaped by an approach which recognises the critical importance of good governance.

We have been able, through our productive sectors of the economy, through our maintenance of social policies... We have gone beyond show and gimmicks really to focus on managing in order to ensure that our performance in our productive sectors and our social sectors reflects the type of programmes that we have had to put in place and reflects the appreciation of a clear set of plans to save this economy from the difficulties that we had.

We have heard it over and over again that no Minister of Finance, no Cabinet and by extension no Prime Minister has had to lead a Cabinet where this country would have been facing the kind of challenges that we have had. People would say what they have said. We have lost jobs but we had to, given all that was happening. That has happened around the world. What we are seeing now are opportunities to create new jobs. One of the things that we would need to do is to encourage particularly our younger people to explore the many possibilities that they are out there to ensure that we are able at the end of the day to take advantage of opportunities which are either supported by Government or which, of necessity, should be supported, in many instances, by the private sector to create new mechanisms to foster entrepreneurship and business development.

I believe, Madam President, that in the process of doing that, our productive sectors can grow. There are opportunities in agriculture, agribusiness, the cultural industries and in what I would call the manufacturing sector related to some or those things. There is significant service sector because any productive sector will need a parallel set of services delivered.

I believe, Madam President, that as we look to these Estimates to the almost \$2 billion to which we spoke, which is captured in these figure where we are looking at an estimated current revenue of \$2.7 billion, for example, that we have an opportunity to address issues such as our fiscal deficit if we work hard to be more productive and to

be more innovative. I believe by delivering on that economic agenda and on our social agenda that what we are seeking to do is to build and strengthen a foundation on which we have existed, Madam President, for the last 50 years.

I think that what we are able to do as a Government, as a people and as a society we are able hopefully through this process and all that is financed by the figures to which we refer that we will be able to strengthen the social fabric of this country in a way that allows us to offer to the coming generations and certainly to our young people who, in the next 50 years, will be celebrating our centennial... We are on our golden jubilee now, and maybe I will be around, who knows, Madam President...

Asides.

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: We are putting Barbados in a good place.

as

I end again by saying, Madam President, that our foundation is building a just society and we are doing that on the basis of a set of performances and programmes based on plans targetting our productive and social sectors which, at the end of the day, would allow us to achieve that vision that we seek. We would have, in essence, pursue this in many ways, if we are to reflect on the policies. We are in the process of transforming this economy to one that is even more capable of a level of self dependence that is important to any independent country.

I anticipate, Madam President, that we will have due attention paid to the critical work of our several functional ministries. It has been, for me, the opportunity to present what I would call a macro or global picture of what constitutes the issues that must inform an Appropriation's Bill. That Bill is a mechanism by which we make available critical resources but without which we cannot function but which, by themselves, cannot do what has to be done. What has to be done is work by a set of persons starting, of course, with the political directorate in the context of the system that we are discussing here, setting the tone and tenor supported by a professional class of public officers who recognise that they are working for the people of Barbados, and by extension working for themselves, and not working for a political Administration.

We are talking about a private sector that recognises its role and purpose in contributing to the economic and other development of this country in a way that says to them you need to seize the opportunities that are available because you have a moral and economic responsibility to the persons with whom you do business and who make it

possible for you to exist. We have to create opportunities for others and by that way expand our country.

Overall, Madam President, I think that this Administration, through what is presented in this Appropriation's Bill, has continued on a critical path of ensuring that not only are we able to withstand the sharp currents and rough seas that we have experienced but that we are able to balance, maintaining our foothold so to speak, but also moving along a trajectory that would allow us to grow this economy but to grow it in a way that we focus on things more than matters economic that would focus on developing citizens that are well-rounded, grounded in good values and committed to this country in a way that sees the country being equally important.

Madam President, with those words, I now beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

SUSPENSION

Senator the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended for Lunch, until 2.00 p.m.

The question was put to the Honourable the Senate and was resolved in the affirmative, without division and Madam President suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

MADAM PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed. Senator Walcott, you have the Floor.

Senator JEROME X. WALCOTT: Thank you very much, Madam President. Again this year I must state that it is an honour for me to speak in this debate which I consider to be the most important matter which is dealt with in this Honourable Chamber annually. This morning I had the pleasure of listening for almost two hours to the presentation of the Leader of Government Business in this Honourable Chamber. I started to make notes in terms of salient points, but after an hour or so, I recognised that there was nothing that I could really think of recording. Madam President, I believe that some Members would agree with me that it was a laboured, rambling, monotonous, vacuous, repetitive and unconvincing presentation. Madam President, I believe that she really let herself down today. After almost two hours, I felt deceived, disappointed. There was nothing that inspired me that the Government had the tools with which to carry this country forward, and there was certainly nothing to show me that they were effectively dealing with the critical issues that face this country. In effect, the stark reality is that after 30

months of austerity, nothing has fundamentally changed in this country as far as the economic conditions are concerned. After the trilogy of failures -- the Medium Term Fiscal Strategy, the Revised Medium Term Fiscal Strategy and the more recent Medium Term Growth and Development Strategy -- the majority of the targets have failed miserably, and I will speak a bit to this later on.

Madam President, nothing at the end of the day has really changed fundamentally for those thousands of Barbadians who are struggling daily as they try to meet their basic needs, be it to pay their mortgages, to pay their rent, struggling to feed their families, struggling to pay tuition fees for their children at the UWI (University of the West Indies), indeed struggling in some cases to get a bath. There is most definitely a feeling of betrayal from a Government that promised so much. However, what I can say is that in Barbados what we do have among the people is the feeling of a people with a sense of being betrayed, deceived and disillusioned as we face the threshold of our 50th Anniversary of Independence.

Madam President, I go to the Estimates, and as I said, they are very important and we all understand, and it is stated in the document that the Estimates set out the details of the operating capital and spending requirements of Ministries for the coming fiscal year beginning April 2016. In these Estimates, there are some reviews. Table 2 presents the Revised Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2015-2016, and it shows that the actual current revenue of April to January 2016 is about \$1.8 billion. It is projected overall that the Government would have a revenue of \$2.668 billion this year. I believe it is much more than was anticipated in last year's Estimates. However, I am raising a question. We note in the Estimates that on Page 1 it states that the current revenue has decreased by 2.5 per cent for the same period the preceding year. However, in this year it is anticipated that in February and March 2016, revenue will be \$802 million. I think if that occurred, it is indeed commendable on the part of the Government. Total current expenditure, the revised estimate is \$3.986 billion, and a projected current account balance in all of \$1.5 billion, and this is all highlighted nicely and of course it is stated that the overall fiscal balance as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will be -6.3 per cent. I believe in last year's exercise it was anticipated that this figure would be much lower. So much for that.

For 2016-2017 it is now anticipated that the current revenue will be \$2.7 million on the accrual basis, and I should state that it is stated in these documents at the beginning that they are using the accrual basis since 2007. The expenditure for 2016-2017 is projected to be approximately \$4.3 billion, an increase of 1.6 per cent over the figure for the preceding year. On the accrual basis, the net operating balance would be negative \$465.4 million or

five per cent of GDP. Madam President, this is still higher than was anticipated previously, and I will come to that. I see for this year that there will be a gap of \$1.68 billion, and it is anticipated that this will be made up primarily through domestic financing of about \$1.4 billion with \$600 million in debentures, \$300 million in terms of Treasury notes, and \$305.9 million in terms of Treasury bills.

That encapsulates the proposals outlined here, but for my benefit and certainly for my elucidation, I would appreciate if in any of the presentations any of the Honourable Senators on the other side could explain for me, in terms of the current Estimates of Revenue on Page 7, the Investment Income where there is a figure of \$95 million. I do not know if this is for Barbados National Terminal Company Limited (BNTCL). I do not know if the sale has been completed. I do not know if that is the agreed value but certainly, I would like some sort of edification on that small matter.

As I have said before, Estimates are estimates. They estimate what the Government expects to bring in as revenue and their expenditure. However, I believe that they should be realistic and achievable at the end of the day, and there is no sense in having ambitious revenue projections and unrealistic expenditure cuts in these documents so as to make it look good to improve your fiscal balance in a theoretical perspective. Examples of this abound. For example, in these Estimates in this document it speaks of an allocation of \$21.8 million for the Barbados Transport Board for the next financial year. We know that this is impossible. \$20 million was allocated in the last financial year, and in Supplementary Estimate No. 9 in the other place it was recently voted \$21.3 million as a supplementary for the Transport Board. You already know, therefore, that when you say it is \$21.8 million allocated, that is far short of what you will require. The NHC (National Housing Corporation) has a provision for \$5.3 million. The National Housing Corporation has been asking, according to its brief and its programme budget document, for a minimum of \$10 million. You know \$5.3 million is not going to be enough. Sanitation Service Authority has been allocated \$50.6 million. It is going to require at least \$70 million. In terms of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH), they have been all over Barbados speaking about financing healthcare and have been stating that it requires at least \$185 million a year at the hospital. Not my words. That is the information provided by Government, by the Ministry of Health. Last year, it was allocated \$155 million, this year \$146 million.

We know this is not enough. This is deliberate where you are underestimating the actual expenditure and in the end it looks in terms of the overall fiscal balance makes it looks more manageable.

Madam President, what I was saying earlier is that in spite of the increase taxes, in spite of the various documents and various plans, the Medium Term Fiscal Strategy et cetera, we are still failing to achieve those targets, those important targets which the country should be aiming for. We are still short of achieving what we anticipate in terms of our fiscal deficit. If I look at the Barbados Growth and Development Strategy for 2013 to 2020 and I look on page 32, in terms of what was expected in 2015/2016, it was anticipated that the gap would be -2%. In this document, the gap is -6.3 per cent. It is anticipated, according to this document that it would be -1.5% but in the Estimates presented here, it is saying that it will be -5%. Madam, all I am saying is that we are taking these documents, we are doing these strategies and clearly, the Government is not adhering to the policies and programmes which they have developed in terms of dealing with issues that confront this country.

Madam President, there was the 18-month plan and in spite of that and the sacrifices which have been made by Barbadians, we are still falling short and in the words of the Minister of Finance, it is not anywhere clearer than his words, where in his last Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals for 2015, he stated that beset with challenges and mindful of the potential they had to undermine the stabilizing influence of the exchange anchor in the Barbadian economy, the primary objectives of the 19-month adjustment programme were to (1) restore and stabilize the foreign exchange reserves so as to be able to protect our fixed exchange rate. He went on to say as regard the foreign exchange reserves that at the end of March 2015, reserves were 1.35 billion or 16 weeks of import of goods and services. He boasted that this was improvement from 2013. However, what we do have now, according to the Report of the Central Bank of Barbados at the end of December 2015, that these international reserves which the Minister of Finance would be boasting about was \$1.5 billion and falling to \$927 million by the end of December 2015 and described as the worse situation since the end of November 2013.

Madam President, when you inaccurate information as the basis to start your calculation, then this will happen. I am sure that many members of this Honourable House would recall that at the beginning of 2012 and January 2013, it was asserted by a number of persons across Barbados, by member of Government, the governor of the Central Bank of Barbados of the stabilisation of the Barbados' economy and how the foreign reserves were being maintained and you would have started the recovery but when you start with inadequate information or deliberate lies, these things happen because having noted that, it is strange that the cdb1 in a Country Strategy Paper for Barbados 2015/2018, could report and I quote:

"By the end of 2012, the economy had taken a turn for the worse, growth stalled, unemployment leaked further, the fiscal deficit and debt as ratios of GDP rose significantly and the international reserves tumbled."

Madam President, I repeat, it is this is at the time when we were being told in Barbados that everything had stabilised, that the economy...

Madam President, it is extracted, I repeat, from the Country Strategy Paper -- the Caribbean Development Bank - Barbados 2015/2018. I am certain that whoever wrote it is more eminently qualified than myself and some other Honourable Senators on the other side should speak about these matters. Madam, that is what I will say about that.

Madam President, over and over this Government has been told that it has been indulging in bad policy decisions, has been focusing on increased taxation and reducing expenditure. They have been told repeatedly, even as recently by the former Prime Minister, who offered free advice to them in terms of adapting their strategies and their policies.

Madam President, the reality is that there is a gap of \$1.86 billion that has to be dealt with in the coming financial year 2016/2017. Madam President, I note that according to Table 8 on page 8 that in terms of financing this deficit, the Government is anticipating to raise \$191 million approximately in terms of IADB, the Caribbean Development Bank, the People's Republic of China, the Latin American Development Bank and other project funding but the vast majority will be made up of domestic financing, debentures, Treasury Notes and Treasury Bill. Madam, I am just curious in terms of where this will lead us. It is good that we have signed on the Latin American Development Fund last year and certainly that is assisting in terms of providing international funding but the Central Bank of Barbados has been repeatedly indulging in the printing of money in spite of the cautions of numerous economists here, former Prime Minister there and certainly in terms of reassurances to the IMF but unfortunately, when I read from the most recent Report of Central Bank of Barbados, it states at page 3:

During the first three quarters of the fiscal year, commercial banks provided \$140 million in financing directly while the Central Bank of Barbados recycled to Government \$238 million of additional commercial bank reserves on deposits at the bank. In addition, the Central Bank of Barbados contributed \$166 million of its own resources to the funding of the Government. Madam, enough said. Madam President, in terms of these debentures, it is my certain knowledge that there are persons who are concerned about the unnecessary strain these debentures are having on the National Insurance

Scheme Fund in spite of the caution of the 14th Actuarial Review of the National Insurance Scheme on page 8 in which there is a table, the asset mix compared with the investment policy guideline and this Actuarial Report was December 2011 and at that time the percentage, in terms of its investment portfolio, being held in the Benches for the Government of Barbados for the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) was 43.8 per cent. The maximum target which had been suggested was 25 per cent so it was well in excess of what is recommended in terms of actuarial work and I know the Honourable Leader of the Government Business would know a lot about this because she boasts of her dear sister who is an outstanding actuary in North America ...

Asides.

Senator Dr. J. X. WALCOTT: I do not know but the last time I check, Madam President, Canada was a part of North America but I am not a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

Asides.

Senator Dr. J. X. WALCOTT: Madam President, it is a pity that sometimes these things do not rub off on siblings.

Asides.

Senator Dr. J. X. WALCOTT: Back to the National Insurance Fund. Apparently, the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) is constantly rolling over several maturing Government securities and sometimes even purchasing additional securities to assist central Government in liquidity management.

Indeed, some payments from Central Government for rents and for properties have recently in the form of Treasury Notes and Debentures and even NIS contributions and non-contributory pensions from Government Department have also been in the same form and they are concerns that this may indeed affect the liquidity of NIS. As I speak to you, debentures, according to the last Central Bank Report being held by the NIS stands at \$3.016 billion. The commercial banks are not really interested in the long term paper but are being encourage to reduce their interest rates so that persons would invest in Treasury Bills and Debentures in terms of the controls over the commercial banks in this country.

We are also concerned in terms of the National Debt and the goodly Senator, my sometimes friend on the Other Side, likes to speak in terms of the debt and how much debt was acquired. What I can say is that according to the Central Bank of Barbados figures, and that is what I use, the gross Government debt in 2008 was \$4.8 billion and

included in that was the PPP for justice improvement, the Coast Guard and the ABC Highway so these charges had been brought to book. By 2009, that had risen to \$5.8 billion, by 2012 to \$7.2 billion, by 2015 to \$9.2 billion an increase of about \$5 billion in that period of time. I am not certain what there is to show for that but what I can say is that over a period the gross Government debt is as a percentage of the GDP has moved from 52.7 per cent in 2008 to the astounding figure of 106.8 per cent in 2015. That is in terms of the debt situation facing us in this country.

Madam President, all is not lost. In the same Barbados Growth and Development Strategy document from a Government that made a lot of sound and dance in criticism about PPPs and how the previous Government was indulging in these PPPs, it is being recommended by the same Government itself that they should increase the use of public-private sector partnerships, the PPPs, in financing capital projects which are primarily economic in nature. This would assist by reducing the use of traditional sources of finance. Very interesting, Madam President, from a Government and a party that had nothing good to say about PPPs. It was an anathema now they are blessing and endorsing the use of PPPs as a way of saving Barbados. I am no doubt the leader about bringing things to book but I am just wondering when the Barbados Water Authority (BWA) building and other like that will be brought to book. We wait for that in this Honourable Chamber.

Madam President, at the end of the day, with all that I have said, there is still the deplorable situation where a number of persons, ordinary Barbadians still cannot get their tax returns leading to more suffering, small businesses are complaining almost daily in the terms of the inability to have VAT refunds. I know the Government and the Minister of Finance has said recently that they are making progress in this regard but seriously I think that more has to be done. This is the thought of a very hard, economic situation in which our country find itself as we celebrate 50 years of independence and Madam President, what concerns me is a dichotomy between celebrating 50 years of independence and the nascent reality of what we are really celebrating as a nation. Fifty years is an age that should be celebrated. The 50th anniversary is a milestone that should be celebrated. I am not going to argue this evening in terms of if \$7 million is enough or too much, I am not going to get into that, but what I am concerned about is the apparent politicisation and partisanship in terms of the planning and the execution of events related to the celebration of this 50th anniversary of independence. It should be a national effort. I think we need to put historical aspects behind us. This is 50 years post independence, the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) formed the Government for 26 years and whether they like it or not the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) formed the Government for 24 of

those 50 years and was involved to a large measure in the post independent development of this country and I do not believe that in terms of planning this that the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) should not have been invited to have a representative or someone as part of your planning committee but that is a matter for those who are involved.

Asides.

Senator Dr. J. X. WALCOTT: I note that there is a Chairman who is more often out than in the island and I note that there are concerns that meetings are hardly being held but that not my concern, that is the concern, Madam President, for them in terms of if the person who is chairing cannot even stage a good birthday party, not my concern, that is a matter for them. Madam President, I can see a calendar highlighting our leaders as though they were only four leaders in the entire 50 years of the independence of Barbados. To find out what is going to happen I have to go on a website of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) to see what is happening ...

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: On a point of order, Madam President, the Honourable Senator is misleading the Chamber. I want, for the record, to correct because in speaking of a national celebrations he is also incorporating the celebrations of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) as Chairperson of the coordinating committee which has a wide membership, the two things are different and I really would not want to have to be getting up to do this because that certainly gives him an opportunity to catch his breath and have a thought as to what to say for two hours but that is misleading and I hope he would not continue.

Senator Dr. J. X. WALCOTT: Madam President, and I maintain that the politicalisation and the exclusion of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) from being part of the planning, I have to take with a bit of timidity, but what is the reality. We have heard the Honourable Member speak for less than two hours and she spoke about all of these things. What is the reality is that we have heard the Honourable Senator speak for less than two hours and she spoke and spoke about all of these things. What are we celebrating? What is the reality? There are weekly pictures of abject poverty and suffering. Daily scores of persons lined in Heroes Square to get a free meal and a myriad of unrelenting social issues to address. In healthcare, we have issues in terms of persons having access in persons being able to be seen and treated efficiently at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Madam President, in terms of education persons cannot find the means within themselves to enter the University of the West Indies where we have had the Principal speaking about the fall off in enrollment of over 30 per cent. There are issues of mountains of garbage as we

celebrate 50 years of independence where we cannot even seem to get the Sanitation Services Authority working properly. There is the matter of housing throughout the length and breadth of Barbados. Those of you who are interested, persons are seeking housing. Adequate housing is often paraded across the newspapers.

There are issues with public transportation. The commuters wait for hours some days complaining they cannot get to work and children cannot get to school because of the inadequate public transportation. There are issues with the state of our roads and the lack of water, something as essential and basic as water, and yes celebrate the 50 years of independence. There is the abandonment of the elderly at our institutions, the crime the block culture and indeed the lack of transparency and good governance. Let us celebrate. This is it.

Madam President, while some of them giggled, the UNDP Human Development Report which Barbados boasted seven years ago in terms of how it batted that we were between 32 to 38 places. The UNDP Report for 2014 show that Barbados is now 57th out of 187 countries. In other words or quality of living had deteriorated in that period of time. It is not me, it is the UNDP Human Development Report, and Barbados regrettably was no longer in the very high human development category. Celebrate by all means but be mindful of our true state and let us endeavour to do much better as we go on.

Madam President, it is in this frame of mind that I review the meat of these Estimates, and I will start with the National Insurance Scheme. Madam President, this is an entity that should be celebrated in our 50th Anniversary. It is being utilised as an ATM machine by Government. The Fourteen Actuarial Review has revealed this. Madam President, the Fund is sound. My role here is not to create panic among citizens but the funds in that National Insurance Scheme have always been by Barbadians thought to be sacred and they are always concerned when they hear about the use of these funds for various Government projects. They are always concerned rather or not they pensions would be available to them especially when several of them are using their savings to pay for some of their children to go to the University of the West Indies or indeed to make ends meet from month to month where they now have to use their saving monthly so naturally they are concerned in terms of having their pensions available when they become due.

Madam President, it caught my attention when I was reading recently about the sale of the Almond Beach property in terms of the financial procedure. It is my understanding the National Insurance Board loaned the Government of Barbados, the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. not directly, \$55 million for the purchase of this property two years ago with the understanding that

the Government was going to sell the hotel and would reimburse the National Insurance Fund the \$55 million by January 31, 2016. My understanding, Madam President, is that it was understood by the National Insurance Board that in the interim the hotel was sold and the National Insurance Board sought to recover its funds. Four days before the funds were to be made available, it is my understanding, the National Insurance Board received correspondence from the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. requesting that there be a roll over of this \$55 million. Rather than be paying it in January when it fell due, it should be rolled over and repaid some time in June 2017. In other words, Madam President, I entered into an agreement with Senator Wilfred Abrahams, he lends me some money to buy a car, I told him I want to buy this car and when I sell it I want to make something out of it I would repay him. I sold the car, Senator Abrahams knows that I have sold the car and when I am supposed to repay him I then asked him if he could give me a break for 18 months. Madam President, this is National Insurance Board funds, this is no friendship society, this is the people's funds and they should be dealt with properly.

Madam President, I am coming to the \$12 million for the poor. Madam President, the issues that we spoke about in terms of the IT and in terms of some unfortunate pensioners not being able to have access to their pensions, they still continue. People with pensions, unemployment benefits, you name it, almost every day on the radio station someone calls in in terms of an inability to get their benefits, and I am saying that this should not be happening. This is an institution that we should be proud of, one that we should really be celebrating in this 50th Anniversary of Independence.

Madam President, at the core of it seemingly seems to be the leader who and when I say the leader, the buck stops in this jurisdiction with the Minister who seems unable to resolve any matter. She was the Ambassador for the Employment Rights Act and she remained unmoved and seemingly unperturbed as thousands of persons were sent home in breach of the provisions of the same Act, and almost two years later this famous tribunal is yet to give a decision on the plight of these poor unfortunate souls.

Madam President, we have the industrial problems at the Grantley Adams International Airport, we have the issues with the Customs and Barbados Revenue Authority and we have the issues with Barbados Water Authority and I can say that the only redeeming factor is her consistent ineffectiveness.

Madam President, I will move on to health. There are some general issues in terms of health in this country and some that they have created. In terms of the programme Budget document, I am pleased to see the progress in terms of the new state-of-the-art reference lab

built in conjunction with the United States PEPFAR Funds and this would certainly be of use not only to Barbadians but in terms of persons throughout the Eastern Caribbean state-of-the-art reference lab not only for HIV/AIDS but in terms of other viral illnesses, H1N1 et cetera, and this should be commended.

Madam President, having said that, I am concerned that in terms of the state of affairs at the Ambulance Service especially when I see that in this year's Estimates there is no provision in terms of any additional funds being allocated. We have started a decentralisation of that service where we have stationed ambulances in Arch Hall to service the northern part of the country and to reduce the response time. Apparently that is no longer occurring. All of the ambulances have been brought to a central location and now we are hearing talk about concerns about where they are now, and I am just wondering and I am just wondering that listening to what I am hearing perhaps the Government might look at the ambulance service carefully because there might just be something else, another storm might just be brewing in a department of Government which is so vital to us in terms of preservation of life.

The Medical Aid Scheme there has been a reduction in terms of the allocation over the years to this scheme and I am concerned because this provides funding for persons who required procedures investigations that are not available at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and provides for these people who do not have insurance of whatever, to provide for them to do this. Madam President, I get bit concerned when I see it is being gradually reduced and I wonder how they would manage in terms of persons who need procedures and investigations.

Madam President, the Alternative Care of the Elderly programme has been reduced by half-million dollars. This is a very important programme in terms of housing the elderly who might have been ill, who were in the hospital, were discharged or had been abandoned in the hospital in terms of if they were fit and elderly they could be accommodated in some of these private nursing care facilities and there was an arrangement whereby Government would provide in terms of funding for these people to be accommodated. It certainly took the strain off the hospital in terms of bed space and indeed a strain off the District Hospitals which were often overcrowded.

Madam President, I would have figured in this year of all years where we celebrate the 50th Year of Independence, these are the builders of our nation and none of these elderly people...I would have thought that a special effort would have been made by the Chairman of the Committee to ensure that in terms of care and support for elderly persons in Barbados that perhaps the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs would have been encouraged to provide something to sort of improve, even

if sacrifices are made in other departments, to improve the setting for elderly persons in terms of the general geriatric system and certainly in terms of the Alternative Care for the Elderly programme but this has not happen.

Madam President, the Barbados Drug Service. We still have the in terms of the Barbados Drug Service. The Government made a reform in 2010-2011 in terms of the copayment system but there is still issues to be addressed with the introduction of the payments, thousands of persons were unable to pay the fee to the private pharmacy and this load then had to be taken on by the public pharmacies. It has resulted oftentimes in there being shortages of drugs, in the various categories of drugs in these public pharmacies and sometimes patients have to go without medication, sometimes for two or three weeks because the pharmacy does not have the medication, sometimes they are given a week's supply, told to come back and there is result of poor compliance.

In addition some of these elderly people become frustrated going to and from the polyclinic pharmacies and they cannot afford it and some of them I believe Professor Senator Fraser can attest to this, go without the medication. Madam President, I believe that it is by no small coincidence that in 2010 there 224 strokes reported in this country; in 2011 there were 246 strokes, and in 2012 there were 348 strokes. Madam President, remember that I said the changeover occurred in 2010/2011; persons are having difficulties, they are still having difficulties, especially elderly persons in terms of obtaining their medication.

Madam President, I am not trying to be an alarmist but it is a strange coincidence that from the onset to date we see an increasing number of strokes occurring in our society. In addition, not only were there changes in a number of copayments but a number of drugs were taken off the Formulary, some drugs that persons had been using to control for their various ailments: hypertension, diabetes, et cetera, for several years and these were removed, so that not only did you have a problem with compliance but in some cases you had cases where doctors were retitrate and finding a balance of some new drug to control these illnesses.

Madam President, I said at the time that it might be a saving in one area but that in terms of the secularly and complications of chronic diseases it will manifest in the health service in general in terms of hospitalisation and persons having to be hospitalized with the various ailments that could have been controlled initially.

Madam President, we are concerned again that in spite of all the drought about the vector-borne illnesses that have been occurring. The garbage has been mounting and with the mounting garbage there are rats all over this country.

Asides.

Senator Dr. J.X. WALCOTT: I am coming to the mosquitoes, there are some in here too, Madam President.

Asides.

Senator Dr. J.X. WALCOTT: Not rats, mosquitoes, and with that you will get an upsurge of leptospirosis. They have spoken about mosquitoes and everyone in Barbados knows about dengue, chikungunya, Zika but I am concerned in terms of Zika, not only in terms of the health of Barbadians, and I am certain that the Government should be very concerned because they have been speaking and shouting from the rooftops about the changes, about how well they have done in tourism but I do know that in terms of bookings that some of the hoteliers are concerned in terms of Zika and I do believe and taking everything into consideration and recognising the importance of tourism and maintaining our arrivals that some attempts could have been paid in terms of the allocation in terms of vector control and environmental health within the Ministry of Health.

Madam President, certainly in a situation where you have this concern it should be reflected in these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure in terms of a Government that is caring, one who is prepared to do the necessary and to divert funds where they are really needed at a time like this.

Madam President, that brings me to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I have said before that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital needs about \$185 million. Last year it was allocated \$155 million, roughly. This year it is being allocated \$146 million. Madam President, if I may quote from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Business Plan for the financial period April 2016- March 2019, at page 7. I am speaking about the challenges which that institution faces.

Asides.

Senator Dr. J.X. WALCOTT: Madam President, not me, this is the Queen Elizabeth Hospital document. Madam President, it lists as follows:

- (a) inadequate working conditions;
- (b) challenges to sustain certain levels of clinical and diagnostic services;
- (c) gross inadequacy of financial resources;
- (d) quality care being compromised by shortage of resources;
- (e) sporadic measurement of health outcome.

Madam President, then I turn the page and quote: “The existing package of services currently available at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is underfunded and in light of increases in relative costs and the demand for resources, there is a widening gap between demand and the supply of resources.” Madam President, there is then a table in which they speak about the financial gap that they have had to deal with every year. Madam President, I go back to 2007, the gap was \$16.3 million. In other words, in our time, in the time of a Barbados Labour Party it was underfunded, it was, but after the election and during the campaign we were promised that adequate funding would be made available to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Madam President, in 2008, a good year, the gap was \$11.5 million; in 2009, the gap was \$7.6 million; in 2010 when we had all the VAT money and all of that, the gap became \$23.6 million, the gap between what was provided and what was actually needed; in 2011, the gap was \$28.4 million; in 2012, the gap was \$33.8 million; in 2014, the gap was \$29.2 million, hence the hospital is saying that they need about \$185 million, but they are being allocated \$146 million. Madam President, clearly this is unacceptable, this is our health service.

I take the point and I have always said, in another place, at another time and wearing a different hat, that we needed to address the issue of financing of healthcare. I was accused then by an Opposition of wanting to introduce privatised healthcare, but I have lived to see in eight years the pendulum come full cycle. It has to be addressed, and the Government is doing the right thing. You are having consultation in terms of the need to address healthcare financing in this country. It is the sensible thing to do, and it is something that has to be done, so I look forward to the outcome of that.

While that continues and while you are having these consultations, the hospital still has to be maintained, and however grand your plans might be in terms of finding the necessary funding, at the end the day resources need to be found to address the constant and recurrent shortages that occur. The issue of persons who require chemotherapeutic medications are unable to get it; those are cancer supplies, basic supplies that members of staff complain about almost on a daily basis.

In relation to the Accident & Emergency Department, we were promised in a document called ‘Pathways to Progress’ that the Democratic Labour Party would be moving swiftly, and I quote from Page 11 of that said document: “The Democratic Labour Party would be moving swiftly to effect change, including reduced waiting times at the A&E Department of the QEH and construction of a new accident and emergency wing, providing more beds and equipment.” As I speak to you eight years later, the waiting time that the Government said in 2010 had been reduced to four hours is now up, in their own document, to

eight and 12 hours before being seen by a doctor in some cases. This is still an issue. The overcrowding, the shortage in spite of all of the vain promises that these things were going to be resolved and resolved urgently.

The Cardiac Unit, now open almost two years, is not fully functional as yet and still needs parts and equipment. The Lions Eye Care Centre, which a previous Minister of Health in the other place said would be offering, would offering, services to the Eastern Caribbean, today is still not being utilised, not even for Barbadians. Persons for eye surgery are still being required to buy and to provide intraocular lenses and those for orthopaedic surgery are required to pay for prostheses for knee and hip replacements. All of these things are still being done. In terms of autoclaves for sterilisation of equipment, as I speak to you, three out of eight are not working. Then there were the famous three-wheel ambulances. I wonder what has become of them, Madam President. We spoke about them a couple years ago; the three-wheel ambulances that the Honourable Leader of Government Business accepted so graciously in one of her vaunts about the Gulf State. We wonder what has happened to them, but I must, like her, commend those philanthropic persons and organisations which have been contributing to the QEH. These include the European Union, the Sandy Lane Trust, Rihanna, the Maria Holder Trust and others. This should be commended and encouraged; encouraged even though there are concerns in terms of buying certain pieces of equipment that might be obsolete with some of these funds that have been donated. That is a matter for another place.

We still have the issues of klebsiella pneumonia and hospital-acquired infections still wreaking havoc in various wards in the hospital. These matters need to be addressed aggressively. It is not mere talk and public relations which oftentimes the chief executive officer seems more concerned with. We need to really address these matters. These are persons who are dying who really ought not to be dying. These are things that need to be addressed.

Madam President, there is another very interesting statistic in terms of our health system in this our 50th year of Independence. There is the matter of the apparent decreased birthrate in Barbados, and I really believe the time has come, and I believe the figures are available for those who want to see if in fact there is a concomitant increase in the numbers of terminations of pregnancies in Barbados. It is certainly a very interesting area to look at, because in harsh economic times, certainly from an economic point of view, persons might have to make a harsh decision on whether to give birth or not. As I said, the statistics are there, Madam President. Those who want to look at them can look at them.

This brings me to the St. John Polyclinic. It was finally completed but I am wondering if perhaps one of the

Honourable Members could tell me, based on what I have heard listening to debates in the other Chamber, if in fact it is complete. I believe I heard the Honourable Member in the other Chamber asking questions in terms of the actual completion and things that needed to be addressed. Certainly, that is not a matter for me but my only question would be what the actual cost was. I believe it was expected to cost \$15 million but I am being told it cost almost \$30 million at the end. I am saying celebrate, but bear in mind these conditions in terms of our healthcare.

I spoke earlier and mentioned briefly the mountains of garbage and the recurrent, apparent shortage of trucks and difficulties with garbage collecting. I believe the Honourable Senator a couple of weeks ago, Senator Ince, made much ado about who had bought trucks and when they bought trucks. The issue is that trucks are needed now, and certainly in terms of these Estimates I do not see, perhaps an Honourable Member could show me, where provision is being made for any additional trucks. What I do know is that last week there were only about five or six trucks to service the entire country, and this is certainly unacceptable as we prepare and focus on celebrating our 50th year of Independence.

Indeed, Madam President, an area that persons do not often speak about but which I think needs attention is the state of the cemeteries in Barbados. This comes under Sanitation Service Authority and I think in terms of the provisions being made for them, it is ridiculous. How we look after the final resting place of a loved one says something about a society. If you visit a number of countries, you notice some cemeteries are points of attraction. Even within the Eastern Caribbean there are some fantastic cemeteries, and I believe that certainly some attention should have been given to the beautification of our cemeteries in this 50th year of Independence. I am not talking about the brutalisation of the wall of the Westbury Cemetery in blue and red and looking vulgar at the time of an election. I am speaking about a genuine beautification of cemeteries. Some attention should have been paid to that in this year's Estimates; again, as we celebrate our 50th anniversary.

In terms of the disposal of solid waste, it is still a problem. Clearly, the Government does not seem to know what it is doing. You have the contract signed in 2009 with Sustainable Barbados Recycling Centre (SBRC) as part of a process that had been started to look at the recycling and re-use of solid waste in terms of gathering the economic value from it. It was to have various components. There is the separation component. Recyclers were supposed to be accommodated in proximity to SBRC. I do not know what has happened to that, because there were persons, not only the famous B's Bottlers, but others who dealt in recycling of newspapers, telephone directories, building and material debris, and these were all to be accommodated in proximity

to SBRC. There was supposed to be a composting facility. I believe it is described in the document, in the agreement which has been signed by the Government, to deal with the organic materials. There was also the expectation that it would be a biomass that could be used in terms of replenishing the soil, but more importantly, since the Government is concerned about energy generation, it could have been used as a fuel. What has happened to all of this?

I believe that SBRC are being paid as per the contract, which speaks to the composting but certainly the Government does not seem to be in a position to enforce all of the aspects of the contract and then we are faced with the whole issue of ... and the plasma gasification plant. I believe this Honourable Chamber needs to hear about this process, this plasma gasification plant, there is enough talk around the country about it and I believe it is time that we in this Honourable Chamber hear about it and be in a position to discuss. We might not agree on everything but certainly we can have an input into this project. Sir, I agree that there is a need to look at renewable energy and I am sure that my colleague will speak in more detail about this in terms of looking at renewable energy and solar panels et cetera but there are some issues. We are speaking about Cahill. We are speaking about a sugar factory, we are speaking about a solar farm and it seems as though the Government or whoever seems to be going in every directions where there is supposed to be a project in terms of energy generation. I know that there is a national energy policy but certainly I do not believe that it speaks to going here, going there and going everywhere. It has clear guidelines in terms of what is required for Barbados at this point in time and for a Government that is committed to a green economy, I believe it needs pay more attention to the entire process in terms of going forward. I would really want to know in terms of the Government what are their real plans in terms of solid waste management in this country and in terms of renewal energy. It is unclear.

Madam President, I come to agriculture and before I go further, I am told that tomorrow is World Water Day and that this year's theme is how access to clean water can change lives, jobs and entire societies. Madam, this is very interesting. The theme for tomorrow, World Water Day, how access to clean water can change lives, jobs and entire societies and I wonder when anyone looks at the front page of today's newspaper, we wonder how relevant the theme of World Water Day tomorrow is for these hundreds and thousands of Barbados who are faced with this matter of not having basic access to running water in their homes at this point in time as we celebrate 50 years of Independence.

Madam President, it is important but before I get there, I am a bit concerned in terms of the Ministry of Agriculture because for no apparent reason, the provision this year has been slashed by about \$67 million. It is \$67 million roughly less than last year and in that is

Subprogramme 160, which speaks of measures to stimulate increase crop production and there has been decrease from \$51.3 million to \$32 million this year, a decrease of \$19 million and this is measures to increase crop production. I think all of us would believe that at this point in time, this is something that should be encourage, that if you are cutting, certainly this is not an area that we should be cutting unless, of course, you want to continue the decimation of agriculture that has occurred seemingly between 2008 and 2015 and the same goes in terms of your expected sugar production.

Madam President, I am more interesting also in terms of Barbados Water Authority and the ongoing at that institution and what has really been happening. Madam, a couple of years ago, I do not remember the year, there was an audit and there was the issue of \$900 000. I am wondering if there is an update in terms of that \$900 000. Was the equipment ever received? Did the Barbados Water Authority ever recovered the funds that had been paid? Did they try to recover the funds? Also, then, there is the matter of award of contracts. After all, Madam President, this is a Government that boasted that it would bring transparency and good governance to managing the affairs of this country, so we want to hear more about the contract for the Barbados Water Authority programme and if in truth and in fact that it was supposed to cost \$37 million but in actual effect the cost would now be more like \$65 million. These are the issues that we need to know about. Is it true, for example, that the person or the entity that was involved in the construction has the contract for the maintenance of the grounds at \$250 000 a year. Is it true that the same entity has the contract for changing the metres at a cost of \$25 million. What is happening in terms of the reverse osmosis plant that was planned for the Belle? The last time we heard it was going to be about US\$40 million and there was supposed to be an operating contract. What has happened to the tendering process in terms of this reverse osmosis process because we want to hear the transparency even if we do not see it and see the good governance even if it is not visible to the naked eye. We want to hear about the management contract for the West Coast Sewerage Project, how it was awarded and who it was awarded to and to do what, seeing as how there are no funds available for that project.

Madam President, we want to know if the water tanks being provided, although some of them are empty across the country, if there is a relationship between the person who built the headquarters and the supply of these water tanks. These are the things that we need to know. We hear talk about the desalination plants and the fact that there will two desalination plants. We would like to know if it has been established and the names of the entities that would be awarded the contract of these desalination plants.

Madam President, in all of this, we have the plight of these thousands of Barbadians across Barbados who are having problems with having access to water and then there is industrial action and there is talk by the Minister in the other place about plans to make the Barbados Water Authority bankrupt at the same time that almost a hundred persons have been taken on to the payroll of the Barbados Water Authority this year. I do not know if any Honourable Members in this Chamber has benefitted. I know some of them have constituents or desire to have constituents but I am not sure if they have been offered any of these hundred jobs that were made available. I somewhat suspect they are available to those who reside in the eastern part of the country.

Madam President, these are some of the issues you would need to know. How you can have a member of the Board also providing consultancies for the same Board and we speak about transparency and good governance and, at the end of the day, we celebrate 50th anniversary celebrations and these are the matters we are dealing with in something as basis and as vital as water and the provision of water. (8:10)

Sequence 20 THIS IS TO BE COMPLETED BY VELDA

Monday, March 21, 2016

Senate C 25A Sequence 21

Senator Dr. J. X. WALCOTT: ... by we are yet to see it and we believe it is vitally important in terms of our agriculture sector.

Madam President, I go now to tourism and I must commend the Ministry of Tourism in terms of the work they have done, in terms of the marketing of Barbados and in terms of the arrivals. I have criticised them in the past in this Chamber and today I commend them. I commend them in terms of the good work that they have done in terms of increasing the arrivals. I however noted that in spite of the record numbers the earnings are some \$428 million less than in 2007 but one step at a time. We got the arrivals and we will get back to where we were in terms of earnings in 2007 and they are to be commended. Of course, there is still the issues regarding some of the taxi drivers who are lamenting the fact that in terms of the home porting, they do not benefit as some of them think that they should. There are the storm clouds that I warned about and I am certain that the officials like the Minister of Tourism would be seeking to apply pressure on the Ministry of Health in terms of the matter of the Zika virus and the concerns that travel agents and indeed, hoteliers are expressing in terms of the fear that all of the good work that has been done by the Ministry of Tourism might be damaged and destroyed.

This brings me to the matter of Sandals. Certainly, I am not privileged to speak about the details of the Memorandum of Understanding in terms of what was granted to Sandals and what was not. What I would say is that we still are concern in terms of the number of work permits that were given, and that out of a staff of 600 that 150 work permits could have been awarded and we wonder if this is all management staff. I am glad that the Honourable Member has just reentered the Chamber because I was just about to speak briefly on the matter of hotels like Sam Lord's Castle, the matter of Chinese, the involvement of Chinese labourers and the work permits for these Chinese because I do remember, Madam President, that a couple years ago perhaps in 2006/2007, the exact year eludes me, when a certain Honourable Member of this Chamber hosted a call in programme on a radio station. That individual chastised the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) Government in terms of plans to utilise Chinese labour in the construction of a hotel at the upper end of Spring Garden Highway. That individual was not interested in politics or political parties but was concerned about the number of Chinese that would be coming here, how they would be living, their environmental living conditions, how it would reflect on this society and, Madam President, it is fascinating that as we speak, there is this matter of Sam Lord's Castle and the rebuilding and the Chinese are going to provide the funding and the Chinese are going to provide a lot of labour, but there is not even a squeak from that Honourable Member, whoever he or she might be. There was this sound and fury, and anger about the thought of Chinese coming to work here to build a hotel. How times change and people too? Madam President, I am moving on.

As I said, the individual was not interested in politics or political parties and would not have been caught dead near a political party. Perhaps that is why a number of her colleagues have great difficulty with her, Madam President, in the Cabinet.

Asides.

Madam President, the Honourable Member knows that I know a lot of her friends who sit in the Cabinet.

Sam Lord's is so attractive but why does the Government have to put its funds in this? Tourism is doing well in Barbados, arrivals are up, the Sam Lord's Castle property is a very attractive property. Why would the Government have to shift the funds that should have been paid to the National Insurance Fund into this Sam Lord's Castle project? Where is the hotel investment? I believe, it is going to be a Wyndham hotel. How was this arrived at?

Madam President, vacated the Chair and Mr. Deputy President assumed the Chair.

Senator Dr. J. X. WALCOTT: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. I was not sure from whom I should take instructions.

We hear about Hyatt and Bridgetown is to be transformed. There is to be a 12-storey "spanxious", new Hyatt Hotel, but, Mr. Deputy President, and I know you would be interested too, I am just concerned of what will be the role of the BTII in terms of this project? We have heard its role in terms of the Almond Beach, we have heard of its role in terms of Sam Lord's and I am just curious as to what would be the role of the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTI). I am wondering and concerned if at the end of the day this institution, the BTI, would it be necessary for there to be some sort of forensic audit into the financial activities of this entity eventually. I am just curious but I wait and wonder to see the role of the BTI in this project. We have not heard anything further in terms of the Pierhead Project. I believe there are now two legal matters, perhaps I would be enlightened by some Honourable Member on the Other Side.

The fate of the cruise pier terminal. We were told that there was a sugar point, I believe, or sugar something, \$12 million was spent by the Barbados Port Authority Inc. in terms of consultants, designs and drawings, and what has become of this project? I heard or read in the newspaper some time back that it has come to an end in terms of the actually process and in terms of going forward and the funding for the project. I am just wondering what would be the status of this \$12 million that was utilised doing the studies and the drawings. At least, if we had the foresight to implode the Hilton Hotel and rebuild it, recognising that it was a baby of 1966.

Mr. Deputy President, that brings me to education and I think listening to the Honourable Member this morning, it is clear, I believe, that there is no divide. We are in agreement in terms of the vital and important roll that education has played in this country in terms of the post independent development. I think it is vitally important and it was future seeking in terms of those forefathers who saw the need to do it and the importance of developing human capital to develop a society. This needs to be continued certainly in this scientific era in terms of technology, research and development. Of course, Barbadians are world renowned. We play leading rolls all over the country and all over the world in scientific activities and other various activities.

Certainly, I am concerned that recognising the importance of science, technology and research, that in this financial year, the vote for the National Council for Science and Technology would be reduced by over \$100 000 and it is significant given the total amount that is normally allocated to that Department. I almost must, in spite of the talk, reiterate the importance of the University of the West

Indies (UWI), Cave Hil Campus to Barbados' development and to Barbados' economy. I have been told that it is over \$200 million in economic activity which is brought to this country because of the University of the West Indies (UWI) and \$80 million in foreign exchange, I believe, yet the Government owes a substantial amount to the University of the West Indies (UWI). I have been informed that the total amounts owing to the University of the West Indies, the three campuses, is over \$330 million and of that Barbados owes about \$280 million. I think that is unacceptable. It puts undue strain on the University of the West Indies and I hope that the Government is working assiduously in terms of trying to provide some funding to try to reduce the amount that is owing if we are to still focus recognising that the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow was one of the persons who pushed for the expansion of the University of the West Indies and indeed the Cave Hill Campus as we are made aware of in the Democratic Labour Party calendar of achievements for the 50th year of independence.

Mr. Deputy President, it is the hypocrisy that gets me when persons who have benefitted, who have spent seven eight years trying to get a degree, some of them happen to be forming the Government at this point in time, I am not pointing fingers at any Honourable Senators here at this point in time, and to come in here and having benefitted - and persons who spent years in academia, theirs is questionable in terms of productive academia in terms of the output in terms of papers whatever - to speak as though persons can afford it when it is less than 25 per cent of the cost, when these individuals and their relatives benefitted some for more than 8 years to get a degree and now that they have reached the pinnacle they feel it is okay for whoever wants to come after to pay. It is wrong. It is absolutely wrong. It is hypocrisy and whether we choose to believe it or not the policy is wrong and it has resulted in a plummeting of the numbers of Barbados enrolled in the University of the West Indies and those who are able to attend the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Deputy President, there are thousands who cannot afford it. There are parents whose dream was for their children to be able to attend the University of the West Indies. They have achieved, they have gone to school and they have qualified and now that dream has been taken away from them and I am saying in this the 50th year of independence, the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow must be turning in his watery grave at the unforgivable carnage which is being wrecked on the tertiary education of Barbadians by this present Democratic Labour Party regime. Mr. Deputy President, they have the temerity to commemorate him, to do a launch on Heroes Day and to do six days of him and one of the things he stood for they have thrown it out as though it was no importance, but let us celebrate.

Meanwhile schools throughout the island are plagued with environmental problems. Almost every day we see in the newspapers and we hear of schools being closed and children being sent home, if it is not environmental problems, if it is not dust, if it is not odours and if it is cow itch and sometimes it is not even water. Indeed there are stories of primary school students being asked to bring to school toilet paper after 50 years of independence, let us celebrate, that is what we are celebrating.

In terms of school meals the issues abound about the quality of meals that are being served and the obesity in our schools. Why almost every day bread?

Asides.

Senator Dr. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Deputy President I do not deal with menus, I am speaking about the quality of the food which is served. If the Honourable Senator has an issue with it then he should deal with that, he should go and inspect the menus. If he is into coming and preparing food, Mr. Deputy President, he should do that.

There is a reduction in the allocation at the Barbados Community College of \$600 000. Mr. Deputy President I am very pleased that children are eating schools meal but I know when they go home they get better. I do not know that for the other 80 per cent.

Mr. Deputy President, all I would simply saying in the end in this matter of education is that we have to recognise that as it was then 50 years ago, it is now in terms of the continued development and the importance of developing our social capital and I am pleading with the Honourable Senators if there is one thing they can do in terms of the 50th year of independence in terms of the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow legacy would be to kindly look at the entire review of their approach to education in Barbados, that is all I have to say on that this evening.

Mr. Deputy President, I spoke about the Transport Board when I started in terms of the allocation in this year's Estimates, that it was fictitious to allocate \$21 million when there is an operating cost which is much more than this, a basic operating cost. We have the issue of shortages of buses. I spoke earlier in terms of persons waiting for hours for buses in the various locations. You have passengers complaining about buses in which when it rains, fortunately at this time it is a drought, the buses are leaking.

I heard the Honourable Senators this morning speaking glowingly about how the Government had not looked at buying buses but had looked at restoring and refurbishing. Some of those buses now, Mr. Deputy

President, were purchased in 1997. It shows the quality of the buses that were bought. Some of them are still rolling. Some of them are still being utilised. Mr. Deputy President, we hear talk of new buses but we see no allocation and no way of financing these new buses, so I am just wondering what is going to be the plan for this. I know my good friend Senator Ince likes to talk about under line and over line accounts, and I wonder how this would be provided, if this would be supplied and financing. We are just curios because we know that at the end of the day these matters need to be brought to book. After all that is what they have been telling us so I am just I am curios.

Mr. Deputy President, I want to hear next about UCAL, United Commercial Autoworks Limited. I do not plan to speak about UCAL, Mr. Deputy President. There are individuals in here who perhaps know much more than I do in terms of intricacies of UCAL. What I can say about UCAL is that it was good intention. At that time it was seen as being revolutionary in terms of taking the workers and establishing them in their own workshop empowering them with the understanding that over time this would become perhaps, it has not happened, the main workshop not only for buses but in terms of heavy vehicles for the entire country. This mushrooming effect has not taken place for whatever reason, but I do believe that at this point in time UCAL is suffering because of its relationship with the Barbados Transport Board, so that when I could hear that the Transport Board owes UCAL \$22 million and I can listen Friday night to the Other Place and hear that there is a supplementary and \$3 million is being voted for UCAL out of \$22 million... UCAL is made up of 120 persons, am I correct Senator Trotman? - and how are they managing. They are being garnished by National Insurance Board and they are being garnished by Barbados Revenue Authority. How are they maintaining schedules? Then at the end of the day the work that should be given to UCAL to do... UCAL never provided, parts the Transport Board provided parts. When you brought buses that was part of the agreement. I believe at one time when buses were bought you bought spares parts in them at the same time to save on the shipping cost and the Transport Board would provide the relevant parts as needed. Now I hear talk in the Other Place that UCAL does not have parts, UCAL is not a parts department, the Transport Board maintains that but then I am hearing of work that should be going to UCAL is being transferred to TransTech, where coincidentally the Minister drives BMW which is registered to TransTech but I guess these things happen but certainly in terms of transparency, accountability and good governance it looks wrong but perhaps it might look wrong to us but not to others.

Mr. Deputy President, so that when I hear of work that should be going to UCAL that is being diverted and then of three Trinidadian engineers being imported into Barbados to work on these same buses, what is the special experience that they are bringing. I do not know that the

buses in Trinidad are of the same make and brand as they are here. I believe that when you have issues you go through the purchaser and you got genuine engineers who had worked with those buses to come and assist and show the staff at UCAL how things should be done differently or whatever.

Mr. Deputy President, this is a new culture and so I am really concerned that UCAL which was a good venture, which was well intentioned, which should have been copied in other aspects of Barbadian society is now lying almost on its death bed. I do not want to say so because like another Honourable Senator in this Chamber, I am a shareholder in UCAL and it was really well---intentioned to see it moving and improving and this is not happening. I believe that perhaps some other wise Member on the other side...

Asides.

Senator Dr. J.X. WALCOTT: Madam Deputy Speaker, I knew that would cause talk but Mr. Deputy President, I know that you would be very interested in this, that there was a Concessionaire Committee established in 2009 under the then Minister of Transport and Works to look at a number of entities in Britain, north America, Canada in terms of concessionaires. They were supposed to be looking at the privatisation of the Transport Board. Madam Deputy Speaker, I smiled because I remember in the last election there was this famous advertisement in terms of bus fares and its privatisation. I know that you would not believe that there was a committee established in 2009 to look at the said privatisation of the Transport Board. I believe it would be very interesting to hear the perspective of the other side on this matter.

Mr. Deputy President, you must ask them for some notes on it.

Mr. Deputy President, we then have the fate of the Fairchild Street Bus Terminal. It is always in the newspaper, it is rodent-infested. Where is the provision in terms of the improvements to this facility, as we celebrate our 50th Anniversary? I think we should beautify this terminal, there should be something to stand out to show this is 50 years of transport in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy President, I come to the National Housing programme and I do not really have much to say about the National Housing Corporation. I remember in 2008 the Government of Barbados came where they held Housing Every Last Person. All I can say today eight years later is that the National Housing Corporation needs help because to be allocated \$5 million in this financial year when in the budget document of the National Housing Corporation, which all the Honourable Members have because I got mine from one of them, they requested a

basic subvention of \$10.3 million. They are allocated \$5.3 million. We know that every month they receive about \$2 million from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs to help them with salaries, et cetera but to come and say that you have allocated \$5.3 million clearly the National Housing Corporation needs help. That is all can say about that.

Mr. Deputy President, meanwhile we have the Grotto high-rise low-income housing which costs the Government about \$25 million, \$530 000 per square foot, unoccupied, bush now growing around, one or two 'parros' have occupied some of the lower units, no decisions being made, no one can say, meanwhile there are thousands of Barbadians who are looking for housing after being put out, sheltering under newspapers and houses in dilapidated conditions and you have these outstanding edifices/monument to low income housing in Barbados, with not one of them being occupied, and not a word from the Minister of anyone else in terms of what is the plan for them. Will they rent them, Mr. Deputy President? Are they going to sell them to low income earners? It is interesting.

Mr. Deputy President, I believe the National Housing Corporation was supposed to be one of the flag ships of the Democratic Labour Party. I believe these days the least they say about it the better and I think they understand why, not to speak about the plethora of colourful match-boxed houses throughout the country that are still unoccupied. Sir, I am not even going to Coverley this evening but that is the matter of the National Housing Corporation and that is the management of housing, and that is something that we should celebrate in our 50th Year of Independence.

Mr. Deputy President, I have spoken repeatedly and repeated it because it was disclosed, transparency, accountability and good governance, and that the Government shall not lie, shall not cheat, shall not steal. I do not know if it is spelt with the letter "a" or two "ee's".

Mr. Deputy President, there was supposed to be no layoffs, no privatisation, I wait for the fate of some of the statutory corporations but there are some things that we must speak about. I have briefly mentioned it where you could have Ministers driving vehicles that are registered to and owned by entities that are providing services to the same Ministry. It has happened in terms of the Minister of Transport and Works, it has happened in terms of the Minister of the Environment and Drainage.

Mr. Deputy President, I am not accusing anybody of anything, all I am saying is that in terms of transparency, accountability and good governance it does not work. Sir, seven years later after a judicial report, a matter into dealing with an entity called CLICO International Life Limited, which was scurriedly passed this morning by the

Leader of Government Business, there is a report that there are forensic audited reports showing what was really happening at CLICO International Life Limited, who was benefiting, who was writing false invoices, who was Prime Minister at the time when this was being done and who was involved in it, whose account it went to. It spoke to the transfer of millions of dollars and you have a young man who has been sent home from the National Conservation Commission two years ago and has not received anything, not even a ruling from the famous Tribunal, who is caught with a \$5-bag, is charged and is sent to court, yet Mr. Deputy President, no one has been charged in this matter.

Mr. Deputy President, there is no other country I believe in this region where this could have happened and no one would have been held responsible, yet we talk about transparency, accountability and good governance and a Prime Minister all wrapped up in it, there is a paper trail and signature and we talk about transparency, accountability and good governance.

Mr. Deputy President, let us celebrate, yes he is one of our leaders. Sir, that is what I am talking about, legal fees; Sanitation Service Authority; Cahill, over \$700 000; contract for the Barbados Water Authority, over \$1 million. I am told, I do not know, that the person is a good friend of the Prime Minister. I do not know. Talk about transparency and good governance. Gildan, a contract of over half-million dollar. \$500 000, Mr. Deputy President, and you are a presiding officer. There is some more I can speak about but I am not going to speak to them here now. Mr. Deputy President, this is all about transparency and good governance. Everything was to change. The previous regime was the worst out. It was corruption. Everything was to change. It was supposed to be a new dispensation. Integrity legislation in the first 100 days. Start locking up, Mr. Deputy President, you know the robbers would not be locked up. I cannot say the same for some on the other side. Of course, Mr. Deputy President, this sometimes happens when you have leadership that puts friendship before country, especially on the eve of your 50th anniversary, while the people continue to suffer.

Mr. Deputy President, I am coming to the end. I know Honourable Members would be delighted to hear that, but do you believe, Sir, that with all of these pressing matters in this society to address, that a Government in 2016 could have the temerity to have in these Estimates a fund of \$2.9 million to invest in equipment for the fingerprinting of Barbadians who want to leave or come back to Barbados? Tell me, Mr. Deputy President, is not that folly? Yet it was sanctioned and endorsed by no less a person that the Prime Minister, without discussion or explanation. When this can happen, this is clearly a Government that is out of touch with the economic and social issues facing this country, and now turns to fingerprinting. Out of touch. This could only be a

Government which has manifested some special kind of audacious arrogance and ignorance and incompetence to do something like this, to be so insensitive at this time to do this; in this the 50th year as a nation. Mr. Deputy President, will this fulfill the dream of that student who is hoping to attend the University of the West Indies (UWI) who cannot do so because he or his parents do not have the funds? Will this improve the healthcare situation I spoke about? Will it help with the scourge of the chronic non-communicable diseases, Mr. Deputy President? Will this improve garbage collection? Will it help to reduce the threat of vector-borne illnesses in our country? Will this fingerprinting help provide housing for those who urgently need to be accommodated? Will this fingerprinting get water to those persons who are without it almost on a daily basis? Will this fingerprinting improve public transportation which is in a mess in this country? Mr. Deputy President, will it bring about any improvement in our perilous economic situation? Is this what we are reduced to, Mr. Deputy President, as we celebrate our 50 years of post-Independence development of Barbados? Distractions, denial and deception as it relates to our reality? I am obliged to you.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Carmichael.

Senator Dr. Sir TREVOR A. CARMICHAEL: Mr. Deputy President, I thank you for affording me this opportunity to speak during this debate on the 2016-2017 Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. Sir, with your permission I propose to cast my remarks within a conceptual framework which hopefully will allow for an economical use of time without in any way compromising the discussion which this debate so rightfully deserves. In the latter half of the last century, it was the recognised method of reviewing a country's economic performance by grounding it in the theoretical construct of the Theory of the Firm. Indeed, many of our leading Caribbean economists and thinkers made it the mainstay of their original academic introduction to economics, seeking to understand the rigours of what was intended by the Theory of the Firm. This was spearheaded by none other than a gentleman, Professor C.Y. Thomas, one of those eminent Guyanese who in that era were in my view possibly the leaders in Caribbean economic thought.

Mr. Deputy President, while this approach still has its merits, I suggest with humility that the changed global environment calls for a more integrated and complex analytical set of tools if we are to help in evolving policy outcomes for our several economic and social challenges. I therefore propose to discuss these Estimates in a modest but hopefully analytical construct; a construct which is based on a few policy principles which merit our attention for analysis this afternoon. In exploring these various Heads of Expenditure, I therefore attempt to make it rather

simple by looking essentially at developmental progression and environmental awareness.

Mr. Deputy President, when I consider the first area of developmental progression I, as before in this Chamber, return to a review of our international business; an area with which I continue to grapple and an area which still holds in my view great promise to us as a nation and a sovereign jurisdiction. I say that, Sir, because of certain natural features which this country enjoys and also because of the governmental efforts which have been employed since the 1965 passage of the International Business Companies Act, supplemented by the significant support of the private sector professionals as well as businesspersons. Sir, what are some of these natural advantages? I think the first is a proven infrastructure in so many ways, starting no doubt with our "A" Class airport, even though it does have some occasional challenges, as we have experienced. However, I think the Honourable Senator Esther Byer-Suckoo was able to bring some calm on troubled waters. I think that is the expression that is used in the circumstances. We also have a wide range of hotel plant, and I will come back to that speaking in another context; a wide range of restaurants of varying cuisine; a highly skilled and trainable and available workforce; professional accountants and lawyers capable of First World service delivery; and telecommunications which are general reliable, and if not always economical can sometimes be made so by virtue of the new and available technologies which persons are using to connect with each other across the waters.

These natural advantages have been supplemented by a very vibrant legislative and treaty negotiating infrastructure where we have had treaty negotiating initiatives which have ultimately brought Government into regular contact with the private sector in terms of working together. Sir, in many cases, these initiatives have also resulted in very close hand in hand working of the two parties. The results so far have been flattering and confirm the need for this sector to be, in my view, fairly funded but as have said I am not going into the details of the Estimates.

Mr. Deputy President, the sector needs to be fairly funded because efficiencies beget efficiencies, if I may wax a little bit. I know it is a different language with different terms but I think the term beget is used in that kind of way and I thought you would not mind me say it, thank you. Sir, only last week, at a very informative session put on by the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados industry professionals were able to deduce an even clearer picture of what really is the contribution of international business to this economy as a whole. I was very impressive, Mr. Deputy President, with one of the bank's economist, Mr. Darren Downes, who illuminated this important area and he presented an analysis, which if I may summarise looked

at four basic areas, the GDP of the international business sector, employment within the international business sector and the corporate taxes and fees paid by the international business sector. What the evidence clearly shows that the contribution to the domestic economy of this sector over the past six years has been steady. I say that because as we all heard and I think Senator Boyce a couple of months ago, gave a very eloquent elucidation on the evolution of the financial aspects of the sector and what Mr. Downes did was to compliment what Senator Boyce said, and it was a pity that that could not come together to even take the discussion to an even higher level. What this showed was that despite the challenges since the recession and the crisis of 2008, when many of the major companies operating here suffered severe losses, and despite the challenges of the new legislation in Canada, a new set of legislation which is not favourable to international banks, despite all this, Barbados has managed to overcome these problems, if you will, and its insurance companies and its international business companies continue to thrive. If you look at the figures, you would see that the sector has contributed \$670 million in direct expenditures. It has employed over 4 000 persons and we must never forget that it pays 60 per cent of this country's corporate taxes. It is for this reason that we have to keep putting our heads together, both the Government and the private sector to ensure that the gap of the declining corporate taxes is plugged.

Mr. Deputy President, I suggest that it does not have to be plugged in a uni-linear way, it can be plugged by ensuring that we bring to the fore very speedily new product offerings, as amended products, which generate taxes albeit not always corporate taxes but all of those other goods and services taxes which go with an active and innovative financial services sector in a jurisdiction of the kind which Barbados strives to build and grow.

Mr. Deputy President, it is for this reason that efforts such as the proposed international arbitration centre -- I am not going to talk about it again, I know you have heard enough from me about it but I suggest that it is for this reason that efforts such as that centre must proceed as hastily as possible because in any operation of this kind, there is going to be a gestation period before the entry of international arbitration here in Barbados and I suggest that the shorter that period is the sooner we will be able to benefit the rewards. Sir, not only the goods and services taxes in total terms, to which I just alluded but also the multiplier effect which goes with local employment on a case by case basis as well as the myriad of other indirect benefits which come to any jurisdiction which is the (6:40) of an international tribunal and any jurisdiction also which is attractive and which the infrastructural advantage to which I made mention earlier in my contribution.

Mr. Deputy President, in speaking of new products, let me take you, Sir, to a new product which I know will

excite you to hear about it because it is a product which will put Barbados even further on the map. The good news is that it is a product which was launched only last week. I am speaking, Sir, of the international securities market. Sir, as have said, it was launched right here in Barbados. Sir, the international securities market is part of the Barbados Stock Exchange. What this new market will do is that it will be a vehicle for the listing and trading of securities of issuers who may or may not be incorporated in Barbados. They may otherwise have been listed or traded in other exchanges around the world such as for example, the second tier markets of the United States of America or of the United Kingdom.

Sir, let me say this is not exactly a new concept because the benchmark exchanges in places such as Bermuda, Cayman Islands and Channel Islands are presently in the marketplace undertaking this type of business and we have captured the understanding, we have done the research and we are now out there. Sir, I suggest that this has been the missing pillar in our international business and international services structure. We have to give credit to Mr. Morgan Yarde, a very talented and intellectually CEO at the BSC. I delight in hearing that applause for Mr. Yarde because he ran with this baton for many years and he ran what I call a very steady 500 metres. He did not flag, he paced himself and he looked to the audience occasionally when necessary and when he need some encouragement and his audience responded but he kept with the baton because he knew the finish line was there.

Madam President, indeed, last year it was a pleasure to be able at that launch and to be part of that new development. I was happy to be a part of it all along the way, to be quite honest, because again I was very fortunate that in 1989 - and that would have been before, well I would not I would not say before Marlon was born but that was before he was sort of in the fray - the exchange was very kind to me and to our firm in allowing a special provision within the exchange whereby provision was made for a seat to be held for companies trading in "exempt securities". We had petitioned the exchange for that on that occasion way back then because there were two important stockbroking entities of Canadian origin which were trading on the Hong Kong Exchange and needed, as international business companies here, to be listed here. With Mr. Granville Phillips and others in the exchange that provision was made and for many, many years that provision was held by just two companies. I think most people would have looked at it and wondered what is this. This is all pretty strange, but there was a reason for it. Let me say that was, in a sense, the precursor to what has now taken place, but let me say further that this new development had great possibilities. It is all encompassing, its all pervasive and it will raise the possibility of attracting new types of international businesses to Barbados. It will

go further and encourage the use of our double taxation treaties and it will also allow new types of businesses to be undertaken as in the case of listing sponsors.

What will be the core products, Mr. Deputy President? We will have equities, bonds, and other fixed interests securities and we will also have mutual funds. All of these will be present and as I said, the advantage will be many because what this ISM does it gives to a client that it gives the opportunity to use all of the existing vehicles that we have within our international business platform, if you will, so the fact that these opportunities may be used *ipso facto* means that at least four advantages come immediately. Firstly, no capital gains tax, secondly, an exemption from withholding tax on dividends, interests, management fees, royalties and other incomes paid to non-residents, thirdly, exemption from taxes on transfers of securities and assets to non-residents, and fourthly, the one that applies across the board to all of the companies in this arena, a freedom from exchange controls. What this has done is, in a sense, to marry our international business structure framework with our stock exchange, if you will. It is an effective way of marrying the two and indeed it is a beautiful marriage but it is a marriage which is going to be actively marketed. Some marriages have to be marketed, Sir, and this marriage is one that will be marketed. It will be marketed very heavily and I am sure the charge will be led by Invest Barbados and *ipso facto* by Senator Darcy Boyce who heads these missions and knows how to deal with these matters because he is able to blend a technical knowledge with his savoury fair which he is able to carry off. Let me say that this will be a beautiful merger, as I said, of minds between the Barbados Stock Exchange (BSE) and the overall sector and all I can say is that the marriage has begun and now we will market it heavily and hopefully we will attract a lot of business to Barbados as a result.

Mr. Deputy President, I now move to environmental awareness which, of itself, is an important and integral part of the developmental consciousness to which I earlier made reference. I do not wish to speak at length on this subject as I have made some, what I can only term as related and random contributions whenever possible and appropriate in this Chamber. I continue to recognise, Sir, our early efforts as a nation when we pioneered the solar water heating industry here in Barbados and globally and we have said enough about that but what I will say again, Sir, is that I applaud the use and vigorous adoption from around 2012 of photovoltaics for power generation by domestic households and businesses.

Mr. Deputy President vacated the Chair and Madam President resumed the Chair.

MADAM PRESIDENT: You may continue, Senator Sir Trevor.

Senator Dr. T. A. CARMICHAEL: Thank you, Madam President, and welcome back.

As you were entering, Madam President, I was applauding the use and vigorous adoption in Barbados from around 2012 of photovoltaics for power generation by businesses and domestic households and I was suggesting that this was the logical progression from the vast strides that we made in the early adoption of solar water heating. We did not follow on maybe as quickly as we should have but the bottom line is that we have taken the plunge and we are now moving steadily ahead. As a matter of fact, Madam President, the number of suppliers in the market continues to grow and what is heartening is the proven fact that the banks have now recognised the potential scope of the market. Even more heartening is that the Government is providing tax incentives in support.

One of the obvious ones that we see around us is that everyday if we look carefully we see that there is another new smart car on the market. The smart cars are beginning to catch on, if you will, to use that term and that is a very good thing to happen, but, Madam President, if we think about it, it is now universally accepted and as far as Barbados is concerned our sunrises, our sun days and our reliable wind energy is poised to and capable of producing all of the electricity needs of our households, farms and companies and we can do that using solar and wind. We can do that and it has now been proven, there is no question about it and we can do it by feeding into the central grid in addition to meeting individual needs, that is a proven fact.

What is even more heartening is that in the last year, the great strides which were presented to us and which we made in the ongoing use of solar panels for power generation by homes and businesses, there was a growth of 48 per cent during last year. The total generating capacity is now 9.4 megawatts and as we speak the Barbados Light & Power Company Limited (BL&P) is constructing a 10 megawatts solar farm which will do three things. It will add significantly to the overall objective of a cleaner environment and it will and is creating new employment opportunities. I am aware of this because I have been also aware of the very highly skilled technical people who have been brought in from various parts of the world to train local persons in not only just in the setting up of the enterprise but the ongoing management and maintenance. These are people, and Senator Boyce whose ministry is responsible for immigration would be aware of this, who have come in on a short term basis but really to provide a true case of a transfer of technology. Thirdly, it would bring us close to the ultimate objective, may I say of reaching the promised land, of sustainable development.

Madam President, at the end of the day public awareness would be a major catalyst in the full and fair adoption of renewable energy as a national strategy. In this

regard I suggest we should give full support to organisations such as the Barbados Renewable Energy Association, its President Mr. Aidan Rogers and Mr. Clyde Griffith. I am not sure who is president or who is not but I know there are leaders in that organisation. I know them both and they have been involved in what I would say is unselfish work seeking to promote the best which is in the national interest.

I suggest that in supplementing their efforts and all that has gone before we need to continue to foster that domestic capital investment to which I alluded earlier in renewable energy and we need most of all to educate Barbadians as possible opportunities arise for use of our own capital, some of which is most likely in banks at the moment gaining no interest or very low rates of interest.

Madam President, I suggest that our environmental stewardship must also extend to our coral reefs and the protection of that important ecosystem. In that regard we must give further support to yet another mass base project, a non-profit company recently formed under the guidance of Mrs. Susan Mahone, the Managing Director of Belair Research of McGill University right here in Barbados, and that is the Coral Reef Restoration Alliance and it is called CORAL. Interestingly enough, like the ISM that was formed last week as well, so last week was a great week for Barbados. We might be reading all of the negative things that have been going on but two important things happened last week if you think about it, the launch of the ISM and the launch of CORAL. I will explain what I mean when I say that was so important. Why is the support for CORAL so critical and why is the presence of this new interest group so necessary at this time in our development?

I suggest, Madam President, that even though these reasons may appear obvious they need to be highlighted. Our coastal zone is our most valuable natural asset and our main economic assets, let us not fool ourselves. Coastal tourism is the backbone of our economy accounting directly or indirectly for more than 40 per cent of our GDP. Thirdly our hotels and restaurants sector is directly responsible for 12 per cent of our GDP. Fourthly it is the second largest employer accounting for over 10 per cent of total employment. Furthermore, Madam President, that employment generated by the wholesale retail and trade sector which is our largest employer and which contributes 16 per cent of total employment is heavily dependent on servicing tourist arrivals, so you see the linkage.

I go further over 95 per cent of the industry's physical plant is located at or near the coast and over half of the island's population resides along the coast. It is evident, Madam President, that our beaches and wider coastal zone are inextricably linked to our overall socioeconomic condition, we cannot get away from it, but our coastal zone is under threat. It is under threat because

of the intensified beach and coastal erosion. There are more severe full risks and inundation from our storm surge and we have a declining fish stock and bio-diversity as our coral habitats declined.

This new non-profit enterprise is being funded by local donors, and it has got a lot of local donations, and by international donors. Why are local donors and international donors putting money this non-profit organisation? They are doing so because they recognised that it can serve over 2 125 fisher folks of Barbados, 18 per cent of whom are coastal fishers, because they recognise that it can save the hotels and it can serve the hotels and their profitability, and furthermore they are doing it because they recognise that it can serve Barbados with its more than 1 million tourists some day who are attracted to beach locations.

Madam President, let me move on to something which has an interesting name. I mentioned it once here in this Chamber last year just as an introduction but I can talk a little more about it now because things have happened. It is a thing called slow foods and I am going to talk about slow foods in agriculture and health. Madam President, slow foods as I mentioned on that occasion was founded in 1989 in Italy to counteract fast foods and, believe it or not, fast life. You have to slow things down. In a basketball game we all know, maybe not any more or less so but in the old days one of the beauties of a basketball player was he who could dribble very softly and delicately for a long time and slow the game down, that is not as prevalent now as before but it still has its virtues. Slow foods recognise, that like the basketball game, that sometimes you reach a point that you have to slow it down. That happened in 1989 when it was founded in Italy but today slow foods has 100 000 members and it is in 150 countries. Last year Ian and Julie McNeill introduced slow foods to Barbados with a branch and with an approach to agriculture, food products and also to gastronomy based on the concepts that all slow food organisations follow, good, clean, fair food. Those are the mottoes. What slow foods does as a regular part of its activities is to have farms to table meals. That has become almost the hallmark of the movement where you can identify on your table all of your food having come from an identifiable source that you could touch and feel because you could also touch a can but you would not want to feel a can but you might want to feel one of your sheep and just pat him on the head and give him a nice touch.

I said two great things happened in Barbados last week but I should really say three because slow foods also had a wonderful fund-raising farm to table dinner which would support something that they are doing in the schools in Barbados. Let me say a little about that. What Slow Foods International did was to identify school gardens and working with youth as a key to developing good cleans and fare food systems. I should say that Slow Foods

International has 10 000 gardens in African programmes which are working very effectively and the United States of America School Garden programme is also working effectively.

What Slow Food (Barbados) did was to launch 12 educational gardens in 12 months. I know that they had been in contact with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation, I am sure Senator Husbands knows about it, and the Minister has worked with Slow Food International in terms of developing these 12 school gardens in Barbados.

What this programme is doing is that the Slow Food Group is actually working with the schools during the 12-month period. What they are seeking to do is to create a garden committee, install gardens, train students, train teachers and train the Garden Committee on how to grow food, clean and fair food and integrate it into the overall school curriculum. This collaborative effort with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation is one which has direct linkages with agriculture and health and an indirect connection with so much more with our body politic as a whole. Again, I say another wonderful thing that happened in Barbados last week.

As I come towards the close of my contribution, I want to say a little about the cultural industries. Typically I would be saying a lot more about them but I think it was more important to address some of these other issues. Madam President, while talking about the cultural industries, there was a new film which was completed last week and it will soon come out, it is called "The Caribbean Midsummer's Night Dream". What I think is important about this film, forgetting if the star gets the lady in the end or whatever happens, is that it is a very successful, at least so far, joint venture between an English group and a Barbadian group and a group originally from England but lives in Barbados now, so that it has a nice *mélange* to it, if you will. I hope that it succeeds and I know that it will succeed.

Madam President, I just wanted to mention in passing that we have not forgotten the importance of the co-production treaties of which I spoke in this Honourable Chamber before. I have completed a few drafts which will go to the relevant authorities in the Ministry and they can then work on it and produce whatever they would wish to do, because ultimately any product that comes out has to be a product from the Ministry in Barbados and from the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel. I drafted the foundation legislation, as well as certain shipping legislation but it is just to draft it and send it, it has to be the Ministry's product and it has to have its own integrity and we can only be advisors.

Madam President, I say that we will send some co-production treaty drafts because when something like this arises, when something like this comes into the public domain, people such as the makers I should say of "The Caribbean Midsummer's Night Dream", will be able to access even greater benefits from a treaty of that kind. Madam President, I suggest that one of the things that we should be looking at is a Workshop on the use of the cultural industries legislation because it is an excellent piece of legislation but to be fair, a lot of the potential users might not have really had the benefit of understanding it and seeing the ways in which they can use it, so I am looking at, along with some colleagues, putting together a symposium or a training workshop for this piece of legislation.

Madam President, while we are talking about the cultural industries, I should mention that the Barbados Museum and Historical Society continues with its Wall Garden and which it will definitely open during this 50th Year of Independence. That Wall Garden is being supported by many bequests from donors, including museum members, as well as some major donors, local and again international, so it is that *mélange* again, and all of whom will be recognised in a beautifully scripted wall on the Wall Garden. I should say that is something that is moving ahead very swiftly to be opened.

Madam President, while you were not here at the outset, I made mention of the theory of the firm as one of the pedagogical tools for seeking to understand the economy and how it works. Madam President, I suggest that while this theory still has its merits that we must go beyond that theory and we must also go beyond the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, because if we go beyond that theory we will have to go beyond the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. We have to go beyond then, mere expenditure and income. Where do we go?

Madam President, we must look inward. We look inward and we look to our vast amounts of (a) human capital (b) our vast arrear of philanthropic capital, (c) our vast arrear of volunteer capital. Madam President, these factors are not capable of easy measurement but we have to look at them. We have to look at Slow Foods International, we have to look at the Barbados Museum, we have to look at the work which is being done by the volunteers in the Stock Exchange, in the Museum, as well as in the slow foods and how that is stimulating the economy in a way which is not measurable. We have to look at coral and the coastal conservation and there again the volunteers in that area. We have to look at BREA and what is taking place there.

I suggest Madam President, that these factors are not capable of easy measurement but they remain critical components of this economy's continuous development,

albeit hidden within our Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure. I thank you very much.

SUSPENSION

Senator the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended for 20 minutes, until 4.50 p.m.

The question was put to the Honourable the Senate and was resolved in the affirmative, without division and Madam President suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

MADAM PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed. Senator Ince, you have the Floor.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill that is before this Honourable Chamber. It is Bill that outlines the management of this country's social economic and financial resources for the financial year 2016 ending March 31, 2017. Madam President, within these Estimates it tell us of a Government that have done extremely well. The Government has done extremely well, given the challenges in the local, regional and international economies. I have said it before and I will say it that Barbados and two words that I use and use often, that we in Barbados are not isolated nor are we insulated from global activities, from the speculation within the financial and other services market.

Madam President, there are those who would want us to believe that when the Democratic Labour Party is in office all those who write the Estimates, the public servants and the members of the Democratic Labour Party that we are not on the right road that everybody, the Barbados Labour Party seems to be on the road to Damascus and the Democratic Labour Party is heading toward Macedonia. Madam President, let me state it and state it clearly, that it seems to me that the Barbados Labour Party is offended when we speak to Errol Barrow and when we speak to Independence. They were against Independence from 1966 until now. I am not surprised at the utterances. Sir, every social programme for the benefit of Barbados, the Barbados Labour Party opposes. They oppose Independence, they oppose school meals, they oppose the constituency Council, they oppose the National Insurance Scheme, they opposed the whole idea of maternity benefit and, Madam, they oppose every social programme.

Madam President, I want Barbadians within the hearing of my voice and within the Senate to know that when we got the windfall from the sugar industry, and I can speak to it, because this Democratic Labour Party established the sugar workers provident fund, not the Barbados Labour Party that fell under the National

Insurance Scheme. When we got the windfall from the sugar and Errol Barrow and Sir Frank Walcott and the Chairman of the Sugar Producers Association, Mr. Lewis Greenidge at that time used to come to my parents' house every weekend, he was my father's best friend, so I know what I am talking about. They would have the Saturday meals like cou-cou, 'puddin' and souse', and they little white beverage for the worms. Madam, as a young man I would stand there and listen because, one thing I would say, my father when it came to labour was militant and the boys, and sometimes the girls, had to go to every May Day celebration. It was a family picnic. He said he wanted us to listen to what Frank had to say. Madam President, when I speak about the Barbados Labour Party opposing social programmes, when the country got the windfall from sugar, and Sir Roy Trotman is here and he would have been young in the labour movement and he could correct me if I make any error. Madam, I am here for his correction, when I speak on labour.

Madam President, the Barbados Labour Party made it their business when they put the money into the Sugar Workers Fund, so that the sugar workers today would have two pensions. I heard Louis Greenidge at the time spoke about it at my parents' place, so I am not speaking from hearsay, and I am speaking from what I heard and read within the newspapers. They said that the Barbados Labour Party went to every corner of this country and said to the people in the sugar industry do not put that windfall money into the Sugar Workers Provident Fund that Errol Barrow and Frank Walcott wanted to steal their money. Madam President, the sugar workers of the country at the time refused to put that money into the Sugar Workers Provident Fund. The Guyanese pan boilers put their money into the Fund and the Barbados Labour Party went all over this country and the people took their monies, some of them buy fridges and had no electricity in the house, they purchase cars and had no licence, hoping that the children would drive and that is why I have said I am glad that Sir Roy is in the Senate. He can correct me if I am wrong. The sugar workers at the time, should have put that money into the Sugar Workers Provident Fund, so I am not surprised when Senator Abrahams, Senator Walcott and everybody else criticize the programmes of the Democratic Labour Party because it happened from 1966 and, as is said, 'What is in the old goat is in the kiddee', so Madam President, I am not surprised.

Madam President, what happened is that many of the sugar workers now have to depend on the National Insurance pension, that one pension but many of the pan boilers from Guyana, some went back to Guyana and some stayed in Barbados and benefitted but the Sugar Workers Provident Fund is a small Fund.

Madam President, if we had worked out the value of that monies today, those persons who work at sugar estate,

who are now eligible for retirement based on the value and the appreciation and the investment of the monies within the National Insurance Scheme, some of them would be taking home today, \$1 500 or \$2 500 a month but the Barbados Labour Party said it to them and, Madam, I am not surprised.

Madam President, here we have the 2016/2017 Estimates knowing very well that we face one of the worse recessions ever in the history of world economics and we came to the people of Barbados and said to the people of Barbados that we were going to diversify and restructure the economy. We said to the people of Barbados that we were going to protect the foreign reserve. We said to the people of Barbados that we were going to protect the most vulnerable. Madam President, we have done that and there is more work to be done. Look at what happened in tourism in the energy sector. Look at what happened as far as our education is concerned, so we have before us, as have said, the projections, the Estimates but they are not just Estimates and projections. We are saying to the people of Barbados, "This is how we want to manage the resources". You have given us a vote of confidence, and I am confident, Madam President, I said it over and over again to the discomfort of the Barbados Labour Party and the discomfort of the Senators that sit in this Senate, "do not be in a hurry, an election is going to be called, so forget your election speeches for now". An election is going to be called, and when that election is called, it is not going to be about unemployment. It is not going to be about managing the economy. It is not going to be about resources. It is going to be about who is better able to lead this country, whether the Opposition Leader of the current Prime Minister. I am confident, Madam President, that the people of Barbados are going to come down on the side of the Democratic Labour Party. You are going to be in Opposition for a long time. I am confident about that, because we are doing what we are supposed to do. That is what we are doing.

Madam President, when we look at the Estimates it says here that we have an overall fiscal balance that is a deficit; 17.6 per cent for 2015-2016. Fiscal balance as a percentage of GDP less amortisation, 6.3 per cent. Madam President, we said that we were going to look at the overall debt. If you are in a recession, Madam President, and we were challenged by a decline in revenue, we started off by losing over \$200 million in the international business sector. It was not the fault of the Democratic Labour Party. We had to restructure. If there is a global economy, Madam President, and your revenue falls, expect a deficit. The Barbados Labour Party ran deficits in this country, and I am going to give you some of the deficits. Now they want to pretend that deficits do not exist and that they only happen under the Democratic Labour Party. With the deficit, Madam President, we made projections against a background of what happened in 2015-2016. You make

projections for 2016-2017. That is what we did. These numbers were not pulled out of a hat. These numbers and the Estimates were prepared by the professionals within the Ministry of Finance. These are the same persons who prepared the Estimates for the Barbados Labour Party from 1994 until 2008, and all of a sudden, that is why I said it appears, Madam President, that the same persons are now on the road to Macedonia. However, when the Barbados Labour Party was in office they were on the road to Damascus. That is what they want people to believe.

Madam President, we have what we call the debt and the National Debt to GDP, and I heard the Senator mention about the debt and the debt to GDP and also about the shortages, knowing very well that when Government prepares the Estimates, you have Supplementaries. They were the ones who said that Supplementaries were going to be a thing of the past. Remember that. When they took over office in 1994 they said, "Supplementaries what? That is a thing of the past". However, Madam President, you have a situation that if you do not understand the Estimates, say that and you would be guided.

Here you have a former Minister of Health in Senator Walcott, who was responsible for Sanitation Service Authority at the time. He could say to this Chamber that he does not see a figure for the purchase of vehicles in the Estimates. Can you imagine? The structure of the Estimates has not changed. The Heads are the same, and that is why I could not believe it when Minister, a former Minister responsible for Sanitation Service Authority, says to you that there is nothing in the Estimates for the purchase of vehicles. It tells me that he never understood the Estimates from 2001 when he was Minister, and if he had a problem, he should have said so to the Prime Minister at the time, but maybe he was ashamed because as an outstanding surgeon you cannot let anybody know you do not know basic arithmetic. As an outstanding surgeon, it would look too embarrassing to say to the Minister of Finance, "Sir, I do not understand these simple Estimates. Could you help me please?" Madam President, in the presence of this Senate, I am going to demonstrate. If you do not understand, you will be guided. Madam President, let us go to Page 288 of the Estimates. Sometimes you have to do these things. 288. Madam President, this is Finance Made Simple or Economics 101. Go to Page 288 where it says Barbados Estimates 2016-2017, Particulars of Service, Ministry of Environment and Drainage, and you see subprogramme 0372. Madam President, under the subprogramme you would now turn to Page 299 and at the back of that page which you would call the overleaf, there is something called Explanatory Notes. Go to the Explanatory Notes, Dr. Walcott, Senator Walcott. The explanatory notes under 416, Madam President, says subprogramme 0372 Item 416. It says this provides for capital works and the purchase of vehicles for the Sanitation Service Authority. Turn to Page 288. What

puzzled the goodly Senator was that he was looking for the words “purchase of trucks”. That is what happened to him. This is an individual who sat in a Cabinet from 2001, Madam President, but yet could not read the Estimates? What puzzled him is that when he saw 416, he saw the words “Grants to Public Institutions 416” and it confused him. What it says here is that when you look at 2016-2017 you would see Budget Estimates. The word is “budget” and then you see \$3 million under Grants to Public Institutions, and then you see Forward Estimates 2017-2018, Madam President. Now you hear that you did not see anything, and that is what it is.

Page 109. Madam President, the Senator also said that there was nothing for the Ambulance Service, and that they were under harsh conditions. Madam President, Page 109. Madam President, what does it say there? Subprogramme 0376 Emergency Ambulance Service. Jepter cannot read. I cannot read, Madam President. I may have problems but it says to me Emergency Ambulance Service.

Senator J.X. WALCOTT: Madam President, on a Point of Order. I do believe the Honourable Senator in his glee is unintentionally misleading this Honourable Chamber. When I spoke about the Ambulance Service, I never said that there was nothing there, I was clear. I said that with all of their challenges in terms of the closing of the decentralised Arch Hall Station and the issues we were hearing in the press that I thought there would have been some additional provision for the ambulance service. Of course, the ambulance service is there. Senator J. INCE: Madam President, I say it is finance 101. Can I continue? Thank you very much. Madam President, it says emergency ambulance service, it talks about service, I never spoke about a vehicle, it says the service and it says here, Madam President, that for 2014/2015, we gave the Ambulance Service \$3 337 729. That was reduced when you look at approved Estimates 2015/2016 but the reduction, one must remember that there were moved to a new location and things were being done, so what you would call maybe repairs and everything else, or any other items, may have been included. That is why we call them the Estimates and if you go to the front of the page you would see draft and I think all of us know the meaning of the word draft even if it is by cold air coming through the window, the old people would say, do not catch a draft. I am saying to Senator Walcott, please do not catch a draft.

Asides.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, if he looks at the reduction, the reduction is \$51 358, 1.54 per cent of the overall budget which is less than 2 per cent. Does it mean that the ambulance service is going to stop functioning? Does it mean that we are going to have mass casualties every day of the week? The answer is no. Because you see

a reduction in a service does not mean that something is going to happen out of the sky, no, sometimes you see where there is a little haemorrhage or a little wastage and you can always transfer moneys from one subprogramme to the other subprogramme that needs it but it continues to enhance that department and that subprogramme.

Madam President, we know that we look at the projections of 2016/2017 it speaks to a net operating balance and it is negative, 5.0 per cent of GDP. Is it anything new? The answer is no because if you compare your expenditure with your revenue and all governments do have net operating balances and as I said, do not expect the Opposition to praise us. We have what they want but they do not have anything that we want so do not expect the praises. Let us look at the overall debt, Madam President. The Senator made reference to the Central Bank of Barbados Report of a \$9 billion debt and he made reference to some numbers that suit him.

Madam President, let us go to the Estimates again and we are going to go to the overall debt of the country. Go to page 12, Appendix C and at the bottom a total was given and in that total, Madam President, a couple of the numbers were missing but I am going to give you and this Senate the true position of the overall debt and how we got there. This Democratic Labour Party (DLP) has nothing to hide, this is Government finances and when you are going to read pieces that suit you, then the corrections must be made and it is our job within this Government to make the corrections because, as we said before, they spoke of transparency, accountability and good governance. Good governance includes making reference to numbers that are correct, that is part of good governance.

Madam President, if we look at 31st December, 2015, the total debt is \$12 463 997 062. I am going to repeat it, \$12 463 997 062. How did we get there, Madam President? Because the Opposition would want you to believe that all of this happened between 2008 and 2016 but along with the debt, what the Senator should have read is that between 2000 and 2005 - and I have always said it in this Senate - were the richest years for revenue in this country, it was historic. Madam President, I always say that I am going to take my time and bring it to the Senate. Between 2000 and 2005 the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) collected \$10.89 billion in revenue. I am going to give you the exact number, they collected \$10 896 400 000 in revenue, but how did we get to this \$12 million in debt? Madam President, we were in office 1991 with a debt of \$2 449.9 million. They came to office in October of 1994, the debt was reduced and they received a country \$2 581 300 000 in debt. By 1995, Madam President, debt increased to \$256 800 000 which is 9.95 per cent. It is important.

The Democratic Labour Party (DLP) came to office in 2008 and in 2008/2009, to the two goodly Senators, we

found a national debt of \$600 198 200 000. I am going to repeat it, we found an overall debt of \$600 198 200 000 but what is startling, Madam President, is that they borrowed money and never came to Parliament for the guarantees. They borrowed money under the Special Loans Fund and they talk about fancy foot working, transparency and good governance. Madam President, they borrowed \$1 983 819 589, and we brought it to books. That money was in a desk drawer somewhere. Do you know the reason why we brought it to books? We wanted a clear picture of the debt of Barbados and they were using what you call cash-base accounting where you did not have to make any reference to the moneys you borrowed. You call it below the line accounting so their fancy footwork never came to Parliament to amend the Special Loans Act, never came to Parliament for any guarantees for moneys borrowed and out of that \$1.9 billion, Madam President, this Democratic Labour Party (DLP) sought \$1 073 964 000 that was not borrowed by the Democratic Labour Party but we sought guarantees for, and it pushed the debt to Gross Domestic Product through the roof. When you add that to what we found as an outstanding balance, the total debt of the country then stood at \$8 182 019 589.

Madam President, out of the \$12 463 997 062, to date the Democratic Labour Party - and I am going to break it out, because I am not going to roll over - borrowed \$4 281 977 473. Who was in office then for the other \$8 billion? I challenge them, Madam President, to prove me wrong, and I would apologise in this Senate to the people of Barbados. Out of the \$12.4 billion - you are talking about transparency - they hid from the people of Barbados what you call below the line accounting, no guarantees and you could go to the Special Loans Act. It was this Democratic Labour Party that came to office and amended the Special Loans Act to compensate for the moneys that they borrowed, and that is how Barbadians know that our debt to GDP was over 100 per cent, and they want to run around this country and make this Senate and the people of Barbados believe that it was the Democratic Labour Party.

Madam President, you know they like to go to reports, and it is important that when you are dealing with the Estimates you go to the right reports. Standards & Poor's says that Barbados received a rating of A- on its foreign currency and A-1 on its local currency since 1975 with a stable outlook on its economic performance. On December 17, 1999, Barbados credit rating - I do not know who was in office then - changed from A- to BBB+ on August 5, 2004. In 2004 Standard & Poor's lowered Barbados long-term foreign currency sovereign credit rating from A- to BBB+ and its long term domestic credit rating from A+ to A-. The reasons given - listen to me carefully, with an Oxford grad in the Cabinet, Mona grad in the Cabinet and distinguished economists of the highest order from the top drawers - is increasing debt burden - that is why I made sure I made reference to the debt - and large

current account deficits - I did not do the audit on Barbados and I am confident that no Senator on this side was involved or worked at Standards & Poor's - AC deficit, and moderate declines - you hear what it says, Madam President.

Madam President, our foreign reserves declined, and I am going to give reasons. What you would hear and you would hear from the current Opposition leader and from Members in the Other Place as well as from the two Senators here, Senator Abrahams and Senator Walcott, is that the decline in foreign reserves is a monster all of a sudden, but Standard & Poor's reported back then moderate decline in foreign reserves that resulted in a weakening in the external indicators. Standard & Poor's says it should be noted that all of this took place in good economic times.

Most of you heard the former Minister of Finance now representative of St. Peter say to the people of Barbados that the patient is now in intensive care but the patient would have to be in intensive care if you did not give the patient the right medication when you had the opportunity to do it, so you forced the patient in intensive care and now it is this Democratic Labour Party that is going to resuscitate that patient and make it healthy for the people of Barbados, that is what we are going to do.

Madam President, it did not stop there. I paid attention to good economic times. It says that in good economic times, your foreign reserves was slipping, your debt burden is out of control and do something about it, do not wait until the lion get at the your door.

Madam President, in 2005, we had a downgrade BBB+ but Barbados outlook changed from stable to negative, again Standard & Poor's says, in good economic times. The reasons given: for the period 1999-2000 Barbados debt to GDP stood at 58.2 per cent with a total debt of Barbados \$2.88 billion. By 2000-2001 debt to GDP stood at 63 per cent, an increase of 4.8 per cent and debt outstanding increased by BDS\$3.256 billion. Who was in office then, Madam President?

We are going to sit here and speak to this whole idea about Government and the debt. We said to the people of Barbados that it is our objective to manage a country that is socially balanced, economically viable, environmentally sound and characterised by transparency and good governance. Madam President, we are not going to deviate from that.

The Estimates tells us what the people of Barbados can look forward to. It tells us Government plans for labour and capital. I have said over and over again, Madam President, that you cannot structure Estimates without paying special attention to labour, and that is what these

Estimates are speaking about. Every agency in here represents labour and there must be cordial discussions between labour and capital. I have said that if labour looks at the Estimates and sees Government as a monster you are going to have a breakdown. Labour must not see Government in the Estimates as a monster nor Government must not see labour as an institution with a cutlass sharpened on both sides, that this what it is.

What we achieved is that coming through the challenges of the recession, we are still being challenged, but what we are confident about is that despite all of the challenges our children are going to go to school tomorrow and find school meals. We speak to foreign reserves and we speak to school meals of a high quality.

Madam President, I am confident that the elderly of this country can leave their homes tomorrow and can walk to the bus stop, they can show their card and are able to board a Transport Board bus. They can go to the polyclinic or the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and can get attention, Madam President; they can also get their medication. These are all in these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure.

Madam President, when we speak to the Barbados Water Authority I heard comments about not getting clean water. Madam President, I have said it in here over and over again, we gave them a Barbados Water Authority with no debt. They took the Administration of the Barbados Water Authority 1994, October, the Barbados Water Authority had no debt, no long term or short term debt. The Barbados Water Authority was not cash-strapped. In fact, the Barbados Water Authority paid the bills of central Government. We gave them a Barbados Water Authority worth \$188 million. The pension funds of the workers at the Barbados Water Authority were paid up. Madam President, by 2005, the Barbados Water Authority made a net loss of \$25.9 million. They went ahead and borrowed loans for mains laying programme, capital infrastructure. They borrowed \$17.5 million in one year; \$40.6 million in another year, and then launched bonds worth \$150 million under the Barbados Labour Party in 2005, with a Barbados Labour Party in office.

Madam President, not a pipe, not any infrastructure work was done, they were supposed to build the Headquarters so that all the workers of the Barbados Water Authority could have been centrally located and the systems in place, so as to install the new meter system. Madam President, not one penny was spent, yet their launched \$150 million worth of bonds.

Madam President, what was ridiculous, what was even more startling is the whole idea of the workers' pension fund. Let me give you some information. By 1994, all of the employees of the Barbados Water Authority pension fund were paid up. Madam President, we have a

situation now where the workers of the Barbados Water Authority are exposed because of the pension liability and we are working on it. Some of the workers of the Barbados Water Authority are going home and are depending on a pension from the National Insurance Scheme, when the Barbados Labour Party who collected \$10.8 billion in revenue and when you look at the revenue collected, they could have easily paid into the Pension Fund for the workers of the Barbados Water Authority.

Madam President, they could have made mention of that, but no, instead of doing that, when you look at 2005, the liability, Madam President, of the Pension Fund was \$40.5 million. Madam President, not one penny was paid into the Pension Fund, and if you want this then I can make it a document of this Honourable Senate.

Madam President, now they want to walk around Barbados and respond to these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure about mismanagement of a country and you are going to speak to the National Housing Corporation, you are going to speak to the efforts that we in this Democratic Labour Party Administration put in to turning around the misfortunes of this country?

We came to office and found a Transport Board, Madam President, and Senator Walcott was the Chairman, a Transport Board running on \$10 million in bank overdraft per month, at 8.75 per cent. It is there in the financials. They were running Transport Board on a bank overdraft, which is utterly ridiculous, at \$10 million a month, at 8.75 per cent interest, that is what it is.

Madam President, we then speak to the National Housing Corporation, they say that there is nothing in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure; they ask what is going to happen to the National Housing Corporation. Madam President, what is happening to the National Housing Corporation is that we are turning around the fortunes. Let us look at what we have: Country Park Towers, they sold the land at Kent, and to this day, Madam President, that money has disappeared. We came to office and had to borrow money from FirstCaribbean to finish Country Park Towers. Do not let us talk about the moneys that are allocated in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditures, knowing very well that Government is going to make transfers and Government also has Supplementaries. Madam President, that is how budgets are written, Government does not have money that is simply sitting down in the Treasury. They want people of Barbados to believe that somewhere in the Treasury there are millions of dollars that are sitting down in a box somewhere and all that you have to do is to unlock the box, get a counting machine and ask some of the clerks in the Treasury to reckon \$50 million and send it to a "Ducey A".

Madam President, that is how they want it because Madam President, maybe it was so in their time it was so with all the revenue that they collected, so it appeared to them that the Treasury had money in the box because of the revenue that they collected and they squandered. Madam President, I ask the people of Barbados to look around this country and ask themselves the question, tell me what do they see for \$10.8 billion in revenue from the Barbados Labour Party.

MADAM PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member has 15 minutes left in which to conclude.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, we go to Housing. Let us go to the 2004-2005 Annual Report, page 13. I like to give them the pages and the years because we are speaking to transparency, accountability and good governance. Madam President, housing development brands, \$30 million at 7.5 per cent; \$20 million; \$50 million in housing development bonds; the first tranche at 7.5 per cent; the second tranche at 7.75 per cent. Tell me what you see for \$50 million worth of bonds. We came to office and found 26 000 applications in the National Housing Corporation, not 2 600. Madam President, not only that, after they borrowed the bonds and could not finish one housing project in Barbados, tell me a housing project that was completed under the Barbados Labour Party, without disruption and missing moneys.

Madam President, we are then going to go to the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission. I am not in any hurry. They carried thousands of Barbadians down to Queen's Park and told them about bumblebee, butterfly houses and Barbados green monkey, Madam President. Madam President, along with the bonds, they borrowed long term debt and I am going to go through Madam President. Madam President, could you imagine that they went to the Barbados National Bank for a loan of \$9 million for housing.

When that \$9 million was spent, Madam President, they went back for \$13 million. When they finished with the \$13 million, they went to a consortium of lenders. Madam, listen to this; this is the Government. I do not know if they were seeing different, but yet they went to the consortium of lenders and borrowed \$35 million. You talk about money? You talk about spending? \$35 million for housing. He likes to speak about the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) Board. NIS Board \$20 million. Show us where the houses are for \$20 million out of the NIS Board? Housing Credit Fund. Then they went to FirstCaribbean. He speaks to rollover debt. Do you know they went to FirstCaribbean and rolled over \$15 million in debt, Madam President, because they could not produce one project, but \$15 million gone? When FirstCaribbean wanted to call in the loan, they went back and got it rolled over. \$15 million, and the reason why the country is haemorrhaging today is

because they borrowed too much money; what you call unproductive debt, Madam President. The most dangerous form of debt in a debt portfolio, and the Barbados Labour Party saddled Barbadians with unproductive debt. Do you not know they went back the Barbados National Bank (BNB) again?

Madam President, do you know that when the money ran out from FirstCaribbean, they went back at BNB? \$5.5 million. They said they were going to do something called terraced units. Not one. Show me a terraced unit. This Democratic Labour Party Government completed the terraced units in Tweedside Road. We completed those terraced units, built them. They had up the sign. They could not finish Country Park Towers. \$5 million. Madam President, do you not know that when that money ran out, they went back to BNB again? Are you talking about fancy footwork in accounting? Do you know what they called it? A commercial loan. \$2.4 million. When that commercial loan finished, Madam President, could you imagine they went back to BNB? Back to BNB again. This time they said they were going to build something called Warrens Towers. \$3 million. Do you think it was finished there? Madam President, it was not finished. More money was borrowed. They went back and negotiated a further \$13 million term loan for a total of \$22 million. Madam President, you talk about fancy footwork accounting, and they could stand up in this country and want to talk to Barbadians about running this country and about the Democratic Labour Party? No, Madam President. Cannot happen.

Once they had squandered the monies from National Housing Corporation, Madam President, we gave them a Sanitation Service Authority. When they took over Sanitation Service Authority from the Democratic Labour Party, we gave them a fleet of 50 trucks working and operating, Madam President. I am going to repeat it: They had 50 trucks. It is there written in the Board minutes in the Board papers and I mention it here in this Senate. I have produced the evidence. Within a 14-year period we came back to office. They purchased seven trucks under senator Walcott; not another truck.

Senator J.X. WALCOTT: Madam President, on a Point of Order. The Honourable Senator is misleading this Honourable Chamber. When I was Minister responsible for Sanitation Service Authority, the records will show that Sanitation Service Authority purchased 39 compactor trucks. I believe they are still in operation today. The Honourable Member, in a previous debate in this Honourable Chamber, made much of the fact that we had purchased 50 trucks in 1995, and then I had purchased some more. He needs to make up in his mind, when he is pulling these figures, what is really the correct figure. To stand up and say that I purchased only seven or nine trucks,

it is totally incorrect and it is misleading this Honourable Chamber.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, I stated that when they took over the administration of Sanitation Service Authority, they had 50 trucks, five zero, and I made it available to this Senate in the report, and seven trucks were purchased. If we gave them 50 trucks and they purchased 39, Sanitation Service Authority would have had 89 trucks. What happened to them? They disappeared? We came to office and found that if 15 trucks were working, that was a lot, so what happened then? Tell me. If you purchased 39 trucks, bring the evidence. I saw seven. Bring the evidence. Seven trucks, Madam President. They purchased 39 trucks? When all the reports showed that everything was going wrong at Sanitation Service Authority under their leadership? They purchased 39 trucks to give you a total of 89, so all the other trucks disappeared.

Madam President, we decided in this Democratic Labour Party that we were going to restructure the Sanitation Service Authority. Madam President, we are going to bring a new Solid Waste Management Act. It is in the works. It is being prepared, Madam President, and that new Solid Waste Management Act is going to address solid waste management in Barbados. Things that they refused to do we are going to do on this side, Madam President. It is going to regulate the collection, transportation and disposal of solid waste. That Act is going to look at enforcement, licensing of waste haulers, which means that you just cannot jump in a truck and become a waste hauler overnight. Those were the things that were supposed to be done under the Barbados Labour Party. We are going to do them, and we are pursuing those avenues. You are going to have licensing of solid waste management facilities and licensing of recycling of waste facilities, Madam President. We are going to set out what the process should be under that Act. We are going to look at how best to manage solid waste and generate energy; how best we are going to do it. This was supposed to be done, and now you are hearing all of these cries in the wilderness. You are hearing, "Oh, we cannot collect garbage".

Madam President, we put a routing system in place in 1994. Do you not know that when we came to office in 2008 they had never changed the model for the collection and disposal of garbage? The same old system was there from 1994 until 2008. The same system. It is not going to happen overnight but the fact is that the changes are being made. You cannot diversify and restructure an economy without discomfort, Madam President. I liken it to refurbishing your house, and as I said before, if you are going to carry out capital repairs to your house, you are going to have some dust, you will have to move around the furniture, you yourself may have to move out from home and rent some place for a couple months. You may even disagree with your neighbour because when your

neighbour wants to relax, the carpenters are working on a Sunday evening. That is what we said, but when everything is finished and everybody come to dinner, the house is clean and all the dust gone, you begin to see the results. Madam, that is what Barbadians are going to see in the process of restructuring and diversifying this economy. Madam, that is why they have been patient with us, the Democratic Labour Party.

MADAM PRESIDENT: You have two more minutes.

Senator J. INCE: Madam, when you look at the whole idea of what these Estimates are about, it is about the care and understanding for a country that we love. It is about a people that we love, it is about the children, the parents and the elderly that we care about. Madam, I hear the whispers of CLICO and the whispers of the Barbados Water Authority but I mentioned here in this Senate, as I wrap-up, that we had a situation where under the Ministry of the Leader of the Opposition, the Gildan Building at Newton, it was the highest mobilization fee ever paid in the history of Barbados. The contractor received all the money up front \$28 million and went to Trinidad and supposedly died. Madam, it is written there. I asked for that death certificate and no one can produce it up to today. I called friends of mine in Trinidad and ask them if they could please the death certificate for me. The contractor of the Gildan Building at Newton. They allowed Narsham to leave this country and went to Trinidad and started another insurance company and there were Ministers within the Barbados Labour Party who are directors of Narsham and they allowed Narsham to leave this country that has destroyed the lives of Barbadians and they did not get a cent in compensation. Madam, but here this Democratic Labour Party has put things in place, and I am saying to the policyholders of CLICO, that we are going to bring closure to this event. Ask the Barbados Labour Party why they did not bring closure to Narsham but allowed Narsham to leave this country after wrecking the lives of Barbadians and not one penny in compensation.

Madam President, if you love your country as the Democratic Labour Party does, we are going to make decisions that sometimes are tough decision but I must say to you that we have done it for the good of the people and for the future of Barbadians. I am saying to Barbadians and to this Senate, all those in the hearing of my voice, to keep confidence and continue to support this Democratic Labour Party.

Madam President, with those words, I am obliged.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Hunte, you have the Floor.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Madam President, thank you very much. I totally was impressed with my colleague presentation. I think he covered all the areas now, past and possibly the future in his presentation just now.

Madam President, I rise to support the most important Bill that comes to this Chamber every year. It is important from the point of view that if the monies are not made available then our country runs into serious difficulties because it would have to come to a halt.

Madam President, in this document here, there is a provision of some \$5 million for our 50th anniversary celebration. Unfortunately, 50 years after November 30, 1966, that anti-Independence feelings, which I thought by now had reached maturity in the sense that it would go from anti to pro because of the importance of Independence to any country but it still lingers. This is very very unfortunate. Madam President, I decided to do a comparative analysis of Independence and what it means to a country and I chose the United States of America because it was part of the British Empire and whilst we did not have a physical war with Britain, the United States of America did and, Madam President, in 1776, the founder father of the United States of America, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, James Monroe -- of course, he did not sign the declaration and, Alexander Hamilton and George Washington. Madam, those persons sat down as part of a Committee to draft the Declaration of Independence for the United States of America and they had some stumbling blocks and so on but, nevertheless, it was achieved. There were not many political parties then, in fact, there was only one called the Federalist Party and that Party. The leader of that Party was one of the founder members was Hamilton along with 13 States of the United States of America they declared they were now an Independence court. Madam, as have said, they had to fight because it was not granted by Britain because Britain was still in control in New York as one of the States.

Madam President, if I should fast forward, 240 years almost on the 4th July, this year, the people of the United States of America still cherish and embrace and celebrate their Independence. In fact, John Adams wrote his wife Abigail and outlined to her what should be part of the Independence celebration of the United States of America, barbecues, speeches, all kinds of things to be celebrated and he predicted, although he was two days off, that on July 2nd, you would see that day of great celebration in the United States of America. He was off by two days. It turned out to be July 4th. Madam, 240 years after that, today, the day of Independence in the United States of America is still a grand occasion and they have had depression. They had one in 1874, and they still celebrated their Independence. They had one in 1927 and they still celebrated their Independence because it is a sovereign event. It is an important event and they still do the same

thing. Madam, one of the busiest days in the United States of America is that Independence and if it falls on a weekend that is even much more important and busier for them. We are about to reach that landmark in Barbados, 50 years and to hear the attitude of some of the offsprings of persons who opposed independence in 1965/1966 towards independence. A landmark of 50 years of anything is important. Courts (Barbados) Limited just celebrated 50 years because before Courts (Barbados) Limited came into Barbados people were sleeping on grass beds with old cloth for pillows and Courts (Barbados) Limited came into Barbados and opened up the market that ordinary people could go and credit from them. It is an important landmark, but \$5 million to \$7 million is too much.

I read some speeches made at some political meeting about you could take that and fix a road and you could have taken that and give it to poor people. That is the kind of attitude that we have coming from people that want to lead this country. Rather than instilling into our young people and educating the importance of a national day as it is referred to in the United States of America, we tend to confuse their heads. To show the division and the attitude to independence since 1966, some people do not even want to stand and respect the National Anthem because they see it as a Democratic Labour Party and Errol Barrow thing rather than a national achievement. I will tell you that it burns and hurts me because I thought that 50 years hence we would have been much more understanding of what it has taken place.

Madam President, it is only \$5 million to \$7 million. The Right Honourable Prime Minister keep repeatedly saying it is not about dancing up and enjoying and so on, it is about reflection and they put into the minds of people the unimportance of that national day, a national achievement of 50 years. I do not expect to see 50 more years in my life. It is a landmark and people who want to run this country want to water it down with that kind of mind-set and behaviour.

In 1966, you had the Barbados Labour Party against independence saying that they would prefer independence within a Federation, one that had just failed at the time, in 1958 to 1962. The Barbados National Party, the party of Ernest Dieghton Mottley, then you had a group called the "Unfortunates" led by a man called "Racketeer" Clarke which was paid for by Members in the Barbados Labour Party.

Asides.

Senator R. A. HUNTE: Then you had Mr. Eric Sealy, "Curly Hair George" and a man called "Selassie" - I never knew his correct name - they were running all about in a Volkswagen pickup marked the Mottley Team keeping a lot of noise. They have all gone to the great beyond now,

but “Curly Hair George” was born somewhere in St. Lucia or somewhere like that. “Curly Hair George” was a man that used to operate a stall whenever there was Coney Island in the country and he used to say: “money down, hands up toss the dirty mouse.” A mouse that used to come out of a box and whatever hole it goes in ... You throw a ball now, but he had a mouse then. “Money down, hands up, money down, hands up.” Those were the kinds of people who opposed independence, a man with a mouse, a racketeer and a fly.

Asides.

Senator R. A. HUNTE: Those were the people that I saw running around in this country opposing independence and I feel very strongly about that occasion. I was there 50 years ago almost. I was one of the crowd that went with my aunt to meet Errol Barrow then, the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow now, when he came back from the talks in London. There was a massive crowd with cars parked all over below the Airport going into Oistins. My aunt’s little Morris 1000 that I was driving,... She and I were there and when everybody was looking up looking for this big aeroplane that would bring back, Mr. Barrow, he draw up in the terminal piloting a little pond fly, a great occasion. Then, of course, a big independence meeting in Independence Square where the late Forbes Burnham was guest speaker.

All of this was a grand occasion and our achievement for independence in this country. To see that 50 years almost you have the offsprings of people treating it as though it is some fair in the park or something like that. It is disgraceful and people who are less than even unpatriotic. I cannot believe. I feel very disturbed about it. It is only \$7 million, and we waste all kinds of money in this country.

Madam President, we had an entity about this country called GEMS of Barbados and over \$280 million was wasted on that and today not one person have faced the law courts about that. I remember the late Bernard St. John, when he was Minister responsible, threatened a then employee - who has since run into serious, serious trouble in this country - saying that he is an executive renter. Mr. Bernard St. John said I went around the law courts for nearly 50 years, if you want to put me in court put me in court, fired him. That is why I keep saying in here, when you are dishonest and you want to get people’s money the dishonest way you would pay for it and he walking Barbados now with people bailing out of the place, broke as a church mouse.

Madam President, I have to look at another expenditure. We are talking about wasting money in this country with just \$7 million to celebrate a 50th Anniversary and we are putting all sorts of negativism to

that. Listen to this, the Auditor General’s Report of 2011, Chapter 3, page 63, the Oistins Fish Market.

“The renovation to the roof of the Oistins Fish Market was originally contracted to cost \$883 888.16 VAT inclusive. This project attracted cost overruns of nearly 100 per cent bringing the total cost of construction to \$1 687 112.44. There was no evidence that the variations originated with or were approved by the Ministry.”

This is the ministry’s comment to the Auditor General. Obviously, you have to give an explanation and this is what comes from the ministry. According to the project director, the ministry has been unable to source any additional information to pursue this matter any further.

You are telling me that nobody can give account for that or that nobody was asked to face the consequences. These are people that work in the public service. Your people that working in the public service who should be sworn to secrecy are leaking documents to embarrass the Government, and that is why I attack them all of the time, not all of them. There are some good, hardworking, honest and sincere civil servants that deserve their salary but there are others that deserve prison. I am serious about that because when they do these things they are only hurting the country and still drawing a salary when the month comes.

We are talking about wasting money. You just heard a report on the Barbados Water Authority and you have heard the report of the National Housing Corporation. All of those are records, but it is too much, it is wastage to spend \$7 million on a national event that you only get once in a lifetime, for some of us. Maybe my granddaughter, the last one at one year old, might be able to see the 100th, I do not know. That is what burns me up and these things are attracting headlines in a newspaper.

Since 1961, the Democratic Labour Party advocated and wrote in their 1961 Manifesto independence now for this country. On the last page of the 1961 Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party under the heading constitutional I will read the few lines for you in this Chamber. The work of the destiny is the work of independence. Towards this goal the country must press on. As the island has never been a grant A territory, there is no reason why within or without a federation Barbados should not attain the full statute of independence now within the British Commonwealth. The parties are revokably committed to foster, develop and sustain the principles of parliamentary democracy. The system has not changed. We stand therefore on the side of western democracy as being more consistent with our aims and aspirations. Our geographic and economic position makes us the natural allied of the democratic countries in the western hemisphere, and we look forward to taking our place one day amongst the Organization of American States with all the consequential

benefits that would enure our people. That was the pledge, that was the proposal in the written document of the Democratic Labour Party 1961 Manifesto. It is right here, and a document of course in this House. They asked what we have to celebrate, how could we feel happy about 50 years of independence and all kinds of issues. I know I do not live in utopia and there would always be issues. There is no country on the face of the earth right now that do not have serious challenges. We can wrap up the Middle East in one. We can wrap up China in one. China is now experiencing tremendous difficulties in its economy. The Asian countries that were doing so well just up to two three four years ago, are now struggling not only with war and different kinds of things but the economy itself because obviously it must affect the economy. There is no country on the face of the earth that can say it is doing 100 per cent, not even 90 per cent, not a single one for those I have looked at I looked at them in blocks. The Soviet Union, well it is not even the Soviet Union now, it is Russia because all of those other union states have become independent, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine. All of those states that made up the Soviet Union have gained their independence. There is no country on the face of the earth no matter how much national resources it possessed can say... If it does not have problems one way, it has problems the other.

Everything is wrong with Barbados, a small 166 square miles country that has done extremely well. There is more good and more achievement of a positive nature in that 50 years than there are negatives. I am proud to be a Barbadian. When you hear some of these people you cannot believe that they are living in the same country. They have to bat on the same wicket, limited resources. When they are talking about foreign exchange, how much foreign exchange have we ever, ever been able to accumulate over the years, and where did it come from. It all came from borrowings. We have never been able to produce anything to have any great amount of foreign exchange to cover all the things that we do and need in Barbados.

The Barbados Labour Party whose Members are now criticising us came into office in 1976 and mashed up almost every industry that they came and found. We were having a good export market to Britain. We were exporting cucumbers, breadfruit and all of these things to Britain. They licked up that. We were beginning to develop a serious and important shrimp industry, they mashed up that and sell all the boats. Mr. Byer sent George Ferguson to bring down a boat that was given to this country almost for nothing. Adams sold that.

Madam President, the Barbados Labour Party has not change and my attitude of them has not changed either. In 1976 at a thanksgiving meeting at the National Stadium when the Barbados Labour Party won the Government

these were the words of Tom Adams, in five years time the name Errol Barrow would not be on the lips of the people of this country, so he set about with his cohorts to destroy everything that was in the name of Errol Barrow. That was in the kind of people that run this country and want to run it again. I have no love for them as a political party. I am not talking about individuals. I got one or two friends in the Barbados Labour Party too. I said so once and Senator Abrahams asked me how come you got people that you went school with. We did not live like savages, that is true. One guy even said to me that this is a false economy. Another Barbados Labour Party friend of mine, I saw her one Saturday morning right in front of Norman Centre, then another Barbados Labour Party friend of hers came down and they were talking, because she was working with Barack then. He said, "Man, you see that thing in Eagle Hall, the BLP people did that you know, that person should be locked up." Ma'am, he is a Barbados Labour Party person. Madam President, you could have spent so much money on a fish market, or a market rather, that the people were selling outside the market, rather than inside of it? It looked a bird's nest or some alien's space ship. All of that is waste money that took place in this country and not a single person has faced the law courts, because they were friends of the Barbados Labour Party hierarchy.

Madam President, do you think that somebody could come feeling that they could condemn the Democratic Labour Party? No, not in front of me at all. Madam President, I can read out the achievements of the Democratic Labour Party between 1961 and 1975. I have already said between 1961 and 1966 that there is no political party or Government in the western hemisphere with limited or with natural resources that have implemented or have achieved as much as the Democratic Labour Party for Barbados during that five-year term. Madam President, nobody can challenge it.

Madam President, what have we done, what can we talk about in 50 years? Ma'am, let me make a comment on the issue of free secondary education, because they feel that they can throw that in our faces. Madam President, when the Democratic Labour Party came to office in 1961, I have said it already and will say it again, people were about here walking about with "Surpax" on their feet, canvass shoes, patches on their backsides, people were struggling, pensions were \$215, the Democratic Labour Party came and carried it to \$280. My sister and I used to collect our grandmother's so I should know.

Madam President, people needed to be lift out of poverty. Those who had finished school and were old, well, there was not a lot that could have been done for them, other than making the necessary provision for them as far as health and other things are concerned, but the young people, if some of them were as bright as a ten cent piece, they could not get into certain schools in Barbados and

secondly, their parents could not afford to pay for their education. Madam President, my brother was one of those persons who had to stop school at Combermere because as I have already said in here my mother was a very poor seamstress, a dress was \$0.80 or \$1.50, and my aunt was a school teacher, she did not have any children but she looked after my brothers and my sister.

Madam President, after all of that people have started to find their footing in this country, some became doctors, some lawyers, some professional people, they all did well. Could you expect that with all the increases in expenditure and everything else, where it goes to upkeep the country, where some of them now can pay, but they do not want to pay. Madam President, it was never meant to be forever.

Madam President, I read from a document in here where the Government then on their 30th Anniversary party said that they were looking around for some persons or institution that could help to finance education, because it was becoming a very expensive exercise.

Asides.

Senator R. A. HUNTE: It is not a matter of being jealous, I feel good when people have and when people achieve. I feel good when people go to whatever university and get a good education, because nobody who has a modicum of commonsense can be against that because it helps the country, or so I thought. It is good when people can achieve good academic qualifications, especially in a small country like Barbados, but some of us are so self-centred that they feel that how they grandmothers and mothers suffered and could not have done certain things that they are now in a position to do it and to pay for it, but do you know that some of them still want it for free.

Madam President, we are not talking about education now, we are talking about other things. They do not want to pay taxes, they do not want to pay for this, they do not want to pay for the next thing, but they can fly to Miami and other places and bring in these numbers of barrels. They do not even want to pay at the Port for them but they want to bring them in for free. They must get everything for free. Madam President, that is why when I hear comments falling from people's lips, people who should know better, trying to mamaguy and confuse people heads about making them believe that everything should be free, for example, there should be no potholes in the roads.

Madam President, I have never known Barbados when it did not have poor people, there have always been poor people in this country, some of whom made themselves poor because of their extravagance, while some were genuinely born poor.

Asides.

Senator R. A. HUNTE: Madam President, I want to read the achievements of the Democratic Labour Party between 1961 and 1975, all of this, of course, would be in our Independence period:

1. A dramatic development of the tourism industry, with visitors increasing from 37 000 in 1961 to 221 000 in 1975, and a corresponding move in revenue from

\$15.9 million to \$163.1 million.

Madam President, that is the progress that we made. I will continue to quote:

2. In 1961, 1 000 persons were directly employed in the industry, and 2 000 indirectly employed. The corresponding figures for 1975 are 4 500 people and 9 000 people respectively.

Madam President, I have said it here already, I do not have to repeat it again, but I was one of those persons working in the hotel industry. I got my first car by saving my money in a jacket pocket and was able to buy a little Anglia Ford. I could not afford to buy a new 4-wheel drive like some of you in here but the point is that I had a car nevertheless and it used to work very well too, so that I am one who have benefitted from the growth of tourism in this country.

Madam President, I go on:

3. Provision of School Meals for over 25 000 primary school children.

Madam President, I want to give credit to some of these people. For education, as far as the Democratic Labour Party was concerned, a man called T. T. Lewis who in the legislature said to a then Member of the Democratic Labour Party when these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure were being debated that it really does not make sense collecting this \$8 per term, because the books that were being purchased had cost a lot more. He said to let the people come to school for free. Madam President, T. T. Lewis proposed that and the Democratic Labour Party put it into their Manifesto and he lost his seat in 1956. He represented the City of Bridgetown, he went to St. Lucia, a dog bit him and he died. School Meals: The person who brought that to the attention of, and as a proposal to, the Democratic Labour Party was a man called J.E.T. Brancker. These are people that were not friend-like Ministers, but Brancker said, "The people in St. Lucy who I represent really suffer in the dry times". Those were Brancker's words, and he added, "If we could give them school meals, if the parents could get a school meal to feed them when the days come, that would be the lifting of a great burden". There is no one person. The Leader, the

Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, will get the credit but all the ideas and initiatives were not his.

This Manifesto was compiled by a man called Wynter Crawford. He wrote it, and it is unfortunate that he has gone down in history as being averse to Independence when he wrote in the document, "Independence Now". He allowed Erskine Ward to confuse his head, and he in turn nearly confused Reynold Weekes' head, and we would have probably lost that vote in Parliament. That is the history of Barbados. Those are the people. Erskine Ward was a very brilliant man who studied at Oxford and so on. Barrow even called him a genius, but it only shows that you could be genius and still get your head confused. Both of them resigned: Erskine Ward from the Senate which was, of course, the Legislature then; and Wynter Crawford, being Deputy Premier, resigned from the Democratic Labour Party. Those are some of the facts behind what took place in this country.

Madam President, I want to quicken up with some of the achievements that we gained, because this is for people who say we have nothing to celebrate. Would anybody who really went to school and have commonsense ever make that comment about the Democratic Labour Party, no matter how biased you are? They are ignorant, that is what they are. Construction of the East Coast Road, which the Barbados Labour Party said would cause the whole of St. Andrew to wash away. The Treasury Building out here, I saw when that was being built. The National Stadium, which they allowed to fall to pieces and would not spend a cent on it, has been there since 1970. The National Insurance building over there. The Hilton Hotel, which I saw going up and saw when the Barbados Labour Party dug it down as well. Construction of the following schools: Ellerslie, Springer Memorial, St. Lucy, St. George, the Garrison, Charles F. Broome, St. Bartholomew's and Vauxhall. Loans for small businesses and other enterprises by the establishment of the Barbados Development Bank, which the Barbados Labour Party got into office and dissolved.

I will say something here. The amount of Barbados Labour Party people who owed the Barbados Development Bank maybe is one of the reasons why the former Prime Minister Owen Arthur decided to move and close it; because they built hotels out of it. A guy who borrowed money and had a farm, all of the ducks flew away and all kinds of things happened. He said he was a farmer. You could not find a duck. That Barbados Development Bank was really a blessing to small businesspeople. It was established in 1969 and had an office up here in the Treasury Building. Restructuring of the Barbados Savings Bank, establishment of the Central Bank, introduction of the following major pieces of legislation: the Trade Union Act was amended in 1965 when members of the trade union could not hold a placard anywhere in Barbados under

the Barbados Labour Party. The trade union had started since 1939-1940, and all of those years under the Barbados Labour Party they could not protest in front of anybody's place. Nowadays, when the Democratic Labour Party is in power, they walk up and down, they sing songs in the burning sun, everything, and we made it possible for them. For me, (Sir) Frank Walcott died a hero because with Frank Walcott's vote the Independence Resolution -- Americans call it the Declaration -- won in the Parliament under his vote. For me, he has gone down as a real National Hero.

National Insurance and Social Security were established in 1967. I was working in a hotel when I paid my first contribution, because I went into insurance in 1968. I remember there were people in the insurance sector -- and I worked with British American Insurance Company -- who said, "Man, this will stop the people from buying insurance". A lot of them have gone and National Insurance is still here with a finance portfolio of some \$4 billion. This foolishness which people want to talk. I am not an economist. I just understand what took place in this country. Insurance funds all over the world must be invested, although that did not apply to the Barbados Water Authority. You do not have money lying down there doing nothing. I can call a private entity in Barbados that borrowed \$15 million from the National Insurance and repaid every cent with interest. They put some in a golf course but it does not matter whether it is a golf course or not. It established a businessman in building in this country, and I think I went close to telling you who the person is. He borrowed \$15 million from the National Insurance and repaid every cent. That is what that money is there for. Why should the Government borrow money from commercial banks at a high interest rate when they can pay the same rate or less to the National Insurance? What foolishness I hear in this country? "Man, they borrowing out all the National Insurance money". What do they spend it on? They spend it on the people in the country.

The Sugar Workers' Provident Fund: You heard my colleague make mention of that. He did not mention the year that that windfall issue took place. It was 1963. You all have a lot to answer for. Not you, Madam President, but people who represent the Barbados Labour Party. They said that "Walcott will steal your money. Give it to them". Then you heard they went and bought fridges and all kinds of things. They did not have any gas for the stoves nor any current for the fridges. After all of these years, we still have people in Barbados with this kind of thinking that people can come and "mama guy" them and fool them and confuse their head, because they hear somebody on a platform making them believe that everything they get will be free. "The roads will be paved with gold. Give us the Government."

Sugar Workers' Minimum Wage and Guaranteed Employment Act: You had people working in the sugar

industry. When the crop was not in, they got two days a week. I was an insurance agent back in 1968 all through St. John and I can tell you what those people went through. \$12 and \$13 a week and all kinds of things, and paying their insurance out of that, but of course they would be able to get their food, yams and potatoes and various kinds of things. Country people live differently to town people. That is a fact. They will always eat. That is a fact of life and we have to face that, but they still had other bills to pay.

MADAM PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member has 15 more minutes.

SENATOR R. A. HUNTE: Thank you very much, Madam President, I can read out all of this then.

Madam President, the Tenancies Control and Development Act. Legal Aid that is getting some challenges now was established by this Democratic Labour Party. The New Education Act in 1975 and there was the increase in old age pension was \$15 in 1961 to \$13 a week in 1976 and was to be further increased by \$16 a week but, of course, we lost the Government. Madam, I must say that the Barbados Labour Party implemented that under Tom Adams because it was already there written in stone, and they followed that pursuit and increased it to \$16. Madam, like the same VAT that they got so much money out, all of that was worked out by the Democratic Labour Party when they lost the Government in 1994.

Madam President, do they think that the Barbados Labour Party came into office and all of a sudden started doing these things. I have always said that Government is a continuum so I am not going to contradict myself. It is unfortunate when we lost the Government in 1994 because three per cent growth was in this economy after all that Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford did, and was abused, I have never seen one man abused so badly yet, a Barbados scholar, a man with a degree in modern languages. Madam, do you think he went to China to talk English? Madam, that is a man that was abused, left, right and center, up and down in this country. Madam, that is why I speak the way I do because if you can treat people like that, what would they do to me, that is why I choose my friends. There is one thing nobody can say about our Reggie Hunte, I do not 'cowtow' to nobody. I do not care what you have or what you look like. I learn from all of that and the society has not changed.

Madam President, I want to put a point here to show how this society still remains the same way it was 40 years ago. The Springer Memorial School, girls have been winning for the last 10 or 15 years, and those girls came second but, Madam, do you know they taunt them at the stadium. I listen to a reporter from CBC and she said they got vex with her and said she is reporter and she should not talk this way. Madam, after all, she is a human being.

Madam, one Springer girl hit her foot on something and a person who qualified for an international meet but that is the attitude that we have in this country. Madam President, it has not changed, so let me continue.

Madam President, additional service to the aged, free bus transportation, relief from land tax, assistance with our repairs, free medical attention in public institutions, payment by cheque, creation of additional 5 764 jobs in the public service since 1961 when the amount being employed was 9 480, increase in Government revenue from \$26 million in 1961 to \$203 million in 1976. Madam, I want to stop here and say something about this \$26 million.

Madam President, this Democratic Labour Party started off in the Government in 1961 in a deficit. How did they come about with that? The budget was \$26 million but the expenditure was \$27 million, an additional million dollars had to be found to pay for the increases in public servants salaries because that was agreed to in October of 1961 and, of course the Democratic Labour Party won the Government on December 4, 1961. Madam, that was a commitment. Madam, a deficit is nothing new to the Democratic Labour Party administration but we get out it. The early surpluses that they had in Barbados were in the early 60s. I remember Errol Barrow said we would use it to build roads but you cannot do that now because everything in the country has increased.

Madam President, you heard my colleagues spoke when this Democratic Labour Party came into office, that one of the early things they had to deal with was \$200 million drop from the international business sector and even had to relax certain taxes and so on to keep the building going. Madam, \$200 million and still expect this country to do the same things in the same way as it was being done before. These are unreasonable people and they fool the people as though they have some special wicked to bat on if they come to office. Madam, it is the same wicket.

Madam President, increase in employment through industry from \$416 in 1961 to \$7 000 in 1966. Introduction of radio and television services. We used to have to listen to St. Lucia and Trinidad if you want to hear a station other than Rediffusion in the corner of the House. The number of TV sets up to 1975 was 3 500 but people have all kinds of things now as far as electronic gadgets are concerned.

Madam President, increases in electricity services to home from \$16 243 in 1961 to \$53 058 in 1976. Increase in water services from \$17 831 in 1961 to \$51 271 in 1976. Increase in private motor cars from \$8 592 in 1967 to \$28 338 in 1976, increase in motor cycle from \$853 in 1961 to \$2 103 in 1976. Madam, do you see the progress that we had under the Democratic Labour Party. This is progress yet they say it is a Party that did nothing and they ask what we

got to brag about for 50 years but look at them. Not you, Madam President.

Madam President, establishment of the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. Madam, I want to say something about the Barbados Community College. Madam, this anti-Democratic Labour Party feelings comes from people around the public sector, some of them are retired and dead now but a lot of them still remain and I am not afraid to say that.

Madam, when the Community College was built, they had all kinds of things to say about the Barbados Community College. The teachers went on strike in 1969 because they said that people at the Barbados Community College would get more money than them because of this and because of all sorts of things. In 1969, a by-election was also taking place in the City when the late Louis Lynch passed away and you should see them in Bridgetown, not demonstrating but in their box listening to meetings and the anti thing. Madam, all of that took place despite whatever progress and progressive methods and exercises that were implemented by the Democratic Labour Party, it has always attracted this anti feeling.

Madam President, provision of text books for secondary school children at a nominal fee of \$5. Madam, do you they would even want to tell people they should get them free.

Madam President, assistance to agriculture, subsidised fertilisers, aid for irrigation, pass development and spring equipment and chemicals, price control on various items including food, in order to reduce cost of living. Madam, that cause us to lose the Government in 1976 because Branford Taitt had to deal with the merchants, a lot of them out there in Roebuck Street and they spend their monies and do all kinds of things to get rid of the Democratic Labour Party in 1976. We only loss the Government by 412 votes despite the seat ratio but that is the system we have in Barbados. Some people were so confused they did not come out and vote.

New multipurpose clinics at Warrens, the first one was up there. Mr. Sandiford, of course, at the time, was the Minister of Health being transferred from the Ministry of Education and he improved health services. The lowering of the voting age to 18, the reduction of the rate of Income Tax, the separation of earned income for husbands and wives for Income Tax purposes and increase in rate of personal allowances and the final achievement, of course, in that period, was independence.

Madam President, those are some of the achievements of Democratic Labour Party (DLP), a party that is not supposed to have done anything, a party that is

not supposed to celebrate 50 years of independence but had to fight tooth and nail with some of the merchants in Bridgetown along with the scattered groups that I mentioned their titles and so on earlier in my speech. Imagine who were fighting against independence, "Curly Hair George", "Selassie" and "Eric Fly". What I would say about "Selassie" he was a man who used to dress very well. He said that he was a manager for Jackie Opel but I do not know, so he said, but when Jackie Opel was in the country he would be riding him around on the bicycle proudly.

Asides.

Senator R. A. HUNTE: Riding a bicycle. It was unfortunate the way he died but ...

Asides.

Senator R. A. HUNTE: I will tell you about that when I come off.

Madam President, those are some of the achievements of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) that actually transformed this country from a village to a country. I have not spoken about the many organisations that because of becoming independent we were able to join like the United Nations (UN), the Organisation of American States (OAS), the World Health Organisation (WHO), Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). All of these are organisations that we were able to join on becoming independent. Montserrat, the Cayman Islands and Bermuda cannot do it because they are still under a British rule, never mind they may have internal self government as we were granted in 1961, but the point is that when we unhinged ourselves from the British we were able to join all of those organisations which, of course, have helped to improve the standard of living of our people.

I want to make one final statement here, Madam President, despite all I said about our limited and national resources, it is because that Barbados reputation of repaying its debt and its loans is what has kept us in good stead. I must say the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) have kept to that tradition in this country and you could not say that a leave out then because they continued, they had no other choice, to pay our debts no matter what the circumstances were, anybody who is a Barbadian could feel proud and I feel very proud tonight, Madam President, to be a citizen and to have been born in this country, Barbados. As long as I am alive and I am not suffering with any particular ailment, here, there or anywhere, I will continue to defend this country and defend the Democratic Labour Party (DLP).

I thank you, Madam President.

SUSPENSION

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO:
Madam President, that brings us to the end of a long day's
business today. I beg to move that this Senate be suspended
until 10.00 a.m. tomorrow Tuesday, March 22, 2016.

*The question that the Sitting be now suspended until
10.00 a.m. tomorrow, Tuesday, March 22, 2016 was put
and resolved in the affirmative without division and
MADAM PRESIDENT suspended the Senate accordingly.*

CONTENTS

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR
SITTINGS OF THE SENATE AND MOVED BY
A MINISTER

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN.....1

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN.....2

1. The Appropriations Bill, 2016.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

SECOND READING OF THE APPROPRIATION BILL,
2016.**Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN.....16**

RESUMPTION

Senator Dr. J. X. Walcott, 16, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28;
 Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, 20; Senator
 Dr. Sir Trevor A. Carmichael, 30, 32.

RESUMPTION

Senator J. Ince, 35, 37, 40, 41; Senator Dr. J. X. Walcott,
 37, 40; Senator R. A. Hunte, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BYER-SUCKOO, Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R.
CARMICHAEL, Senator Dr. Sir TREVOR A.
HUNTE, Senator R. A.
INCE, Senator J.
McCLEAN, Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O.
WALCOTT, Senator Dr. J. X.

DISCLAIMER. This transcript was prepared with the assistance of artificial intelligence tools and is provided for reference only. It has not been reviewed, verified or approved by the Hansard Department of the Parliament of Barbados and does not constitute an official parliamentary record. It may contain errors or omissions, including inaccuracies in wording or speaker identification. For authoritative quotations or confirmation of proceedings, consult the official Hansard record when available.

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 convening sentence reads ‘on Wednesday, the March 21, 2016’; 21st March, 2016 was a Monday, as the heading of the source states. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Order No. 5, opening speech. The whole of the Leader of the Senate’s opening speech (about 14,400 words) runs on from Madam President’s call (‘Senator McClean, you have the Floor. Senator the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I rise ...’) and so stands under Madam President’s label. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 5, second reading. The question is recorded as put and resolved immediately after Senator McClean moved the second reading, before the rest of the debate. Earlier, the first-reading motion addresses ‘Mr. President’, the mover is labelled ‘M. O. P. McCLEAN’, and the Bill is listed as ‘The Appropriations Bill, 2016’. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Senator Dr. J. X. Walcott’s speech, take-slips Senate C 25A, Sequences 20-21. The source has a reporter’s note ‘Sequence 20 THIS IS TO BE COMPLETED BY VELDA’, and the next passage begins ‘... by we are yet to see it’. The take covering this part of the speech appears to be missing. Please confirm.

Q6. Senator Dr. J. X. Walcott’s speech, revenue. The Senator gives current revenue for 2016-2017 as ‘\$2.7 million’; Senator McClean gave it as \$2.7 billion. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Senator J. Ince’s speech, national debt. The Senator twice gives the debt found in 2008 as ‘\$600 198 200 000’, against a total debt of \$12 463 997 062 at 31st December, 2015. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate met on Monday, 21st March, 2016 at 11.00 a.m., with Madam President in the Chair; prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah. The Minutes of

8th March were confirmed with an amendment to the date of adjournment, and Madam President drew attention to amendments to the Appropriation Bill. Standing Order 45(2) was suspended for the sitting, and the Appropriation Bill, 2016 was read a first time.

The Leader of the Senate, Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, led the debate on the second reading of the Appropriation Bill, 2016, which provides for spending not exceeding \$1 866 602 785 for the year ending 31st March, 2017; she said it was the ninth such debate she had led. She argued that since 2008 the Government had supported the productive sectors through a severe recession, citing incentives to tourism and the work of Senator Sandiford-Garner as Parliamentary Secretary, had kept a social safety net and contained unemployment, and had maintained Barbados’ image abroad, notably on climate change. She looked to growth in agriculture, agribusiness, the cultural industries and services, with estimated current revenue of \$2.7 billion, and moved the second reading. The Senate then suspended for lunch until 2.00 p.m.

Senator Dr. J. X. Walcott, for the Opposition, said nothing had fundamentally changed for struggling Barbadians, quoted the Caribbean Development Bank’s Country Strategy Paper, and noted that about \$191 million of financing was to come from multilateral and other lenders while the Central Bank had contributed \$166 million of its own resources. He questioned the National Insurance Scheme’s holdings of Government paper, a Board chairman often abroad, water supply and desalination plans, 150 work permits for Sandals out of a staff of 600, Government funds for Sam Lord’s Castle, the Hyatt project, the cruise pier, UCAL, the Fairchild Street Bus Terminal and conditions at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Senator McClean rose on a point of order over his remarks on the national celebrations. Mr. Deputy President took the Chair during his speech.

Senator Dr. Sir Trevor A. Carmichael spoke on the 2016-2017 Estimates as a matter of developmental progression, calling for the international business sector to be fairly funded, describing a proposed international securities market, and welcoming the adoption of photovoltaics since about 2012; Madam President resumed the Chair during his speech. The Senate was suspended for 20 minutes until 4.50 p.m.

On resumption, Senator J. Ince supported the Bill, contrasting the treatment of sugar workers’ pensions, defending a reduction of \$51 358 in the ambulance service against a point of order from Senator Walcott, and saying that of a total debt of \$12 463 997 062 at 31st December, 2015, the Democratic Labour Party had borrowed \$4 281

977 473; he also criticised past spending at the National Housing Corporation and the state of the Sanitation Service Authority's fleet, drawing a second point of order from Senator Walcott. Senator R. A. Hunte defended the provision of some \$5 million for the 50th anniversary of Independence, recalled the opponents of Independence in

1966, and read a list of the Democratic Labour Party's achievements from 1961 to 1975.

On the motion of Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo, the Senate was suspended until 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, 22nd March, 2016, with the debate continuing.