
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

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THE SENATE

Wednesday, March 23, 2016

(Seq 1) MADAM PRESIDENT: Good morning, the Senate is now in session. Senator Sandiford-Garner, you have the Floor.

Senator V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: Thank you very much, Madam President. As I rise to support these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure in this Chamber today, I would wish to congratulate first of all the Minister of Finance of Barbados probably one of the youngest we have ever had and probably one of the most maligned and pressured Ministers of Finance we have had to date outside of Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford who would have had his time at the wicket when Barbados would have been going through some very torrid times and, therefore, when you read what we have presented for this country, I do believe that eh Minister of Finance and team deserve our heartiest congratulations.

Madam President, as you know, the Ministry that I am placed in at the present is the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport so my focus for the majority of my presentation shall be on the Minister of Tourism and International Transport. I am going to begin with a review of the past year.

Madam President, I speak in the context of a period where the Ministry of Tourism was probably one of the more pressured Ministries for the past four years outside of Ministry of Finance. Madam, every problem that Barbadians would have experienced would have been laid the feet of the Ministry of Finance and by extension the Ministry of Tourism. The Minister of Tourism should also be lauded for his steady application to principles which he held for sticking to the strategy which he would have outlined and for rallying the team that we have to ensure that they were motivated and that we delivered on the projections which we would have set out for the Ministry. Madam President, it is not an easy thing to stay focus being

at the centre of some of the harshest criticism that could be levelled at any Government agency but it speaks to the strength of character of all of us within that Ministry and I am proud to say that in 2016, that we can look back at last year and recognise the best year ever recorded at all levels in tourism in Barbados.

Madam President, global arrivals were up 4.4 per cent and in Barbados in the best producing year in the history of tourism arrivals, we were looking at long-stay arrivals rising by 13.9 per cent, which tells you that we saw 591 892 persons visit these shores and that is up from 519 000 in 2014. Madam, the year 2007, which I hear keep being touted by the other side, that year saw 570 000 persons and it cannot compare.

Madam President, I will get into revenue later on because revenue is very important to all of us in terms of measuring success and I myself would wish to expand on that area when I get to that, so that performance past 2007, which would had up until last year, the highest record of 570 000 and we did that without spending millions on a World Cup because remember, the previous year, 2006 would have been the year of Cricket World Cup where the Government of the day would have sunk millions into marketing and promoting Barbados, including bringing in a cruise ship for the anticipated overflow of visitors, a cruise ship which never saw a passenger get on board to stay and a cruise ship for which we are paying to this day, the interest and the principal on the loan which Barbados would have had to enter into to have that cruise ship here.

Madam President, now how did we do it? Madam, first of all, we know that globally there is increased consumer confidence. The world is creeping out of a recession so therefore there is confidence enough the domestic economy that persons would travel. Madam, there is also overall global interest in our area of the world, in the Caribbean but above all, the growth has to be attributed to the growth strategy which the “Team Barbados” as I call it, employed. We had a strategy and we had a plan, so when

we were being pilloried, we were battenning down and focusing on being prepared for the turnaround, which we knew would happen. We knew it would happen. We were not able to predict when but we were confident that the world economy would turn around and when it did, we had to be ready.

Madam President, this growth strategy focused heavily on increased consumer and trade engagement what we call “Barbados Top of Mind Engagement”, marketing Barbados in traditional and non-traditional markets. We also diversified our source market which meant that we look for airlift in markets which we already had but for destinations in those same markets which we had not been servicing such as Boston and you would have heard of the inaugural of Jet Blue from Boston. We had an inaugural from Bogota, Colombia, via Avianca. We had a new Thomas Cooke out of Glasgow and we simultaneously launched a direct twice weekly Delta service last December from Atlanta and from New York.

Madam President, we also had the first Air Canada daily, a B177 service to Barbados which expanded our winter seat capacity by 39 per cent. We extended the first direct non-stop flight between Sao Paulo, Brazil and the Eastern Caribbean because we included Tobago so that we could make the initiative more economically feasible for all of us. We extended the transfer to Tobago on GOL, so we had regionally capacity, so we enhanced the viability of the operation.

Madam President, we also introduced the Jet Blue Mint Service from New York and Barbados was the first international destination in the English-speaking Caribbean to welcome that Mint service. Madam, that Mint service is on par with the first class service on other airlines. Madam, Barbados was the first market which indicates the confidence which these airlines have in our destination. It was introduced internationally as a winter only operation but it now operates weekly year round, which means it worked.

Madam President, we also introduced a direct non-stop weekly Boston service on Jet Blue as I have mentioned before and we introduced a third weekly service on Thomas Cooke out of Manchester, in the UK and we launch the first direct non-stop service into Colombia into the Eastern Caribbean. Madam, that Avianca flight was the first non-stop service out of the Caribbean into the Colombia and vice versa.

Madam President, overall, the strategy of diversifying our source markets would have reached success and airline capacity into Barbados grew by 55 369 seats or 5.3 per cent in the past year. In addition, we pursued the Sandals project, the all inclusive Sandals Resort was open as well as a new Sugar Bay, all include

resort and they provided 380 extra rooms to our room stock which mean that our inventory was expanded. Madam, as you know, it is important that we have inventory to ensure that our visitors have accommodation. These additions would have contributed greatly to the increase in our long stay arrival. I want to give statistics because a very, very enumerate of numbers, I like to have the numbers because numbers do not like and it is good to give the public and the Honourable Members of the Chamber a numerical breakdown of what is going on so as far as our market performance goes, the United Kingdom (UK) still accounts for the lion share of visitors in Barbados. The long stay visitors contributed 38 per cent of our business and this 14.1 per cent up from 2014. You are therefore looking at \$218 000 person from the UK who came to Barbados last year. That is no mean achievement. The USA was 148 165, you had 94 000 from CARICOM, 74 000 from Canada, 37 000 from the European Union (EU), and 10 000 from Central and South America. Respectively, you had increases of 37 per cent, 25 per cent, 16 per cent, 13 per cent, 6 per cent and 2 per cent in all of those markets.

Why do people come to Barbados is something that we sought to research and 74 per cent which is almost 600 000 people of the persons who came said that their prime motivation for coming here is pleasure, followed by business and third, they were visiting friends and relatives so the majority of those people who fly in here come to this little rock in the Eastern Caribbean to have a good time and I see nothing wrong with that. The majority stayed for 4 to 7 days followed by 8 to 14 days and that in a nutshell is a synopsis of our long stay visitors.

Madam President, now I get to cruise travel and before I start I would like to announce that last week at Sea Trade 2016 (Sea Trade is the largest cruise expo in the world) and we, a team from Barbados Port Inc., attended that expo, as well as a team from Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. (BTMI). The delegation would have received the award on the behalf of Barbados for being the best destination experience of 2015 and we won this award amidst major competing destinations. When we cry down our country, we have to bear in mind that while we may not be perfect, we are still good enough and even better than some for the majority of travellers in this world.

Asides.

Senator Mrs. V. I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: I would not say for one minute that we are perfect. I understand that and I am going to speak to that later as well, the areas where we can improve but the fact is team Barbados caught that award last week in Fort Lauderdale.

We are a country, Sir, of 5.1 per cent increase in cruise arrivals last year and I will break that down as well, 586 000 were persons visiting during a cruise, coming here

as part of a cruise itinerary, 126 151 disembarked to stay over or transfer to another cruise and then they were 8 514 who stayed in Barbados which meant that they booked accommodation here and stayed for some time. Where did they stay? In luxury villages, they did not stay anywhere else, the majority of them, 190 percent stayed actually, stayed in luxury villas which means that the spend from those passengers would have been higher than the average spend of all the visitors combined and they would have spent an average of 7 to 10 days on completion of their cruise.

Now, I get to tourism expenditure and I will deal with cruise first. The first six months of 2015 which are the ones with figures confirmed, a total of US\$471 million was spend which is an increase of 1.3 per cent over the previous year. Cruise expenditure specifically was \$19.7 million which was a slight decline of 0.3 per cent in the first six months.

I want to breakdown the cruise expenditure because that seems to be a topic for discussion in many places and I want to spend a little time on that. Passengers on the cruise ships spent more money than they did the year before, actually 6.4 per cent more on meals, drinks, transport and tours which they bought on board. The tours on board where up 5.2 per cent and transport was up 5.3 per cent but they were declines in duty free purchases in local handicrafts and souvenirs and in what we call other shopping so you are looking at a decline in duty free purchases by 14.7 per cent and souvenirs of 5.3 per cent and other shopping 5.9 per cent. I am reading and share this bearing in mind that we are speaking about persons who are now coming out of a recession in their own countries and the average international traveller is not like a Bajan. They do not save up for months and decide that they are going to travel, when they want to travel, they will travel. I was watching HGTV the other night where this family said that they would rather buy a small house and use their expandable income to travel because the experience and savouring life, the experience of travel and experiencing different destinations, and generally the joie de vivre which they have does not depend on how much is in the pocket really. We like to save up and carry mummy, daddy, grand mummy and grandchildren and then eat out every cent when we get there, come back and pay back the credit union. The international traveller will get on a plane or a cruise ship once the bug hits them so we are looking at that type of traveller who will travel but they are not going to cruise the duty free shops to buy what they can buy at home because essentially that is what they see on Broad Street, what they can buy on the High Street or Main Street and proudly even at a least cost if it is on sale at Macy's. Bearing all of those realities in mind, I am a very practical person, I like figures but I also like to study behaviours, that is my marketing side and when you look at it, the economic downturn hurt those very people. Many of them

lost their 401Ks, many of them lost their jobs and they are now seeing light at the end of the tunnel but they are travelling and the increase numbers show that, but do not expect the same level of spending. I remember in the 1990s and early 2000s, we used to produce a show on the West Coast for the upmarket hotels, and when I say we, I mean my family before my political life, and there were incentive groups that would come to Barbados, 30 and 40 groups from major corporations and spends hundreds of thousands of dollars on dinner shows for their staff. They would even buy fireworks, all of that started to end, the decline of that began in the late 2000s because that type of money was no longer circulating so I am just giving you a snap shot of how the global spending pattern has changed so that money is not being spent anymore. Transportation, as I said, provided the majority of overall cruise spend and land base spending and the data needs to be examined because last week we concluded a contract or an agreement with Carnival and I am going to make the announcement now. We sat with the principals of Carnival and this was at Sea Trade as well and agreed to an arrangement where over the next three years, Carnival Cruise Lines will be sending 1.5 million passengers to Barbados. That is not an easy feat and again I give kudos to the minister and team Barbados for their tenacity in ensuring that when the turnaround came Barbados tourism would be ready.(S3) I really was a signatory because I do not like to take credit away from those persons who are the foot soldiers for this Government, and I will get there when I get to the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. too. I was as a figurehead for my country and I enjoyed being a figurehead for my country particularly in the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport. There is a pride that I take in sitting with those people and listening to their vision and feeling their passion. When I get to the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. issue I will expand on that.

Madam President, the data needs to be examined because we are looking now at increased passenger loads over the next three year from just one line. I have not spoken about MSC, Norwegian or any of the others. I sat strategically at dinner with the Head of Norwegian as well because we do not make sports as Bajans. They have a charity dinner every year at Sea Trade apparently. You buy a seat to sit with whoever you wish to sit with in the industry and Barbados' strategy was to sit with Norwegian and your truly was the emissary for my country.

The fact of the matter is we are going to be looking at more calls from Norwegian as well. There are things that we could speak about in here but I do not have much time and today is one day I did not bring my watch, so I have to be very careful and economical with my time.

We are looking at decrease spend on souvenirs from Barbados and duty-free purchases. We are also looking at a decline in the age group 18-35.

Madam President, you would not know what has just happened here because you do not hear asides but I just experienced some chivalry and I was lent a watch so I am thankful. Anyway, Madam President, I will not be distracted.

We are looking at the 18-35s which is the demographic we see declining a bit. All other demographics are increasing in terms of the ...profile and we are looking at reduce spend. Madam President, this ministry plans to maintain the business that we are in. We have presented plans in other places. We have a strategic plan for Barbados' tourism, cruise tourism as well as our land-based tourism. We link with the travel agents, we are developing a Southern Caribbean Cruise Alliance, and I would wish to give all credit to young Mr. Neville Boxill who is our Deputy Head of the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. That little man has an energy and a persistent out of this world. At Sea Trade he brought together the islands of the Caribbean in our little Barbados corner with his proposal of the Southern Caribbean Cruise Alliance which would see us sharing the business within the industry because we cannot do it alone. It is not feasible for us to do it alone but if we look at having a Southern Caribbean Cruise Alliance and marry it with the airlift which we are increasing every day we can see greater benefit for all of us in the Southern Caribbean. That meeting was attended by Aruba, St. Vincent, Grenada, which is now benefitting from the consultancy services of a former Minister and Parliamentary Secretary of tourism from days gone by, as well as other partners within the industry. That is young man chaired that meeting and my mind harked back to the early days of CARICOM and what probably his elders would have had to endure or undergo to ensure that we presented as one block when we met the rest of the world. I am telling you that Southern Caribbean Cruise Alliance will become a reality because we have decided to go with whomever will go with Barbados, so we are doing all we can to ensure that we preserve this industry.

I am saying, Madam President, that we if we are looking at numbers declining, we have to ask ourselves why because these are figures which are outside of our control. We can bring the people here but we cannot take what little they may have out of their pockets. There has to be some incentive for those persons to spend in Barbados.

I am saying today that the private sector in this country needs to get on board. They need to move out of their comfort zones and enter into the world of 21st Century business. It can no longer be business as usual. We recognise that in 2014 and that is why we divided what was formerly the Barbados Tourism Authority into the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. and the Barbados Tourism Product Authority because we understood there is something called the product Barbados which the

marketing arm has to sell and we employed persons who are well able to chart that mission, but that is what Government does, Government is a facilitator. The numbers are clear regarding spend.

When will the private sector understand that the more the visitor spend the more it benefits the country. Increases passenger spend is a vital economic benefit to this island, and the opportunities are there. The Barbados Tourism Product Authority right now is working with the business persons in Speightstown to try to breathe life into the product called Speightstown. We have had Speightstown Alive and now we are having Speightstown Sizzling so that we can have a northern version to Oistins. We are working on that and there is tangible evidence to that end.

When you look at the landscape, we are talking about 18-35s, do you know that there is no real high-end nightclub in this country for those who come here and would want to party, could you imagine. I grew up in the 70s/80s with night clubs galore in this country. One night club was actually owned by an international celebrity named Noel Charles who would sometimes get on his private jet and carry all the pretty girls to Martinique and Mystique. There was this glamorous corner in Bishop's Court Hill that everybody wanted to be in, and Barbados had people coming to the country to get into Alexandra Nightclub. How is it that we cannot find a Barbadian or who could look to... Yes, we had Club Naniki in the north, I am hearing in an aside from someone from the north, let me not forget the north. Those were the dying days of the nightclub era in this country. The nightclubs would have constant work for some of the top disc jockeys whoever live in Barbados. We had a nightlife. We do not have it now. There is nobody seeking to take advantage of the what we called the stay overs because we were home-porting at a considerable level now or even bringing Pelican Village alive when the nights come. I am going to speak about this every time I stand up and I have to speak about tourism.

The home-porting business is growing exponentially and do you know those people come to Barbados when the nights come you come a Friday night - and I have been down there to see it for myself - the cruise ship passengers and their staff are outside that area where the taximan would normally be on WiFi Whatsapping and face-timing and skyping because there is nothing for them to go and do, absolutely nothing.

The Government cannot or should not be inserting itself into that area of private enterprise. We will help speightstown because the only person in Speightstown who showed, and I am going to be very frank with you, a forward-thinking strategy or any vision was the Fisherman's Pub. d I remember nights when they would

have limbo and music to attract people to their premises or to the establishment, and I laud the owner of Fisherman's Pub for that. We are helping Speightstown but at some point that would end also because it is only so much that a Government can do. You have to invest in your business to gain returns from that very business. It just does not mean buying cheap and selling dear.(S4) If you want to get people to your establishment you have to invest in other commercial activities which will ensure patronage. This country cannot continue to have a city that falls asleep at 8 o'clock, it is high nigh ridiculous, it is ridiculous; it is asleep on Sundays too, if you come through town on a Sunday morning if there is a cruise ship in the Port and you will see tourists sunbathing and walking down the road, because that is all they could really do. They sunbathe on Princess Alice Highway and sunbathe back onto the ship and see if they could spend some money in the duty-free stores which we allow them to open.

Madam President, there is absolutely no excuse for it, the Minister, again another forward-thinking Minister of Commerce, has asked the Barbados Tourism Product Authority to work with the concessionaires in Pelican Village to see what can be done there. But I sound my voice today and say that the Government can do so much and that we will extend a facilitating arm, after we have brought in the half-million tourist, but that assistance will not be ongoing, we have to have a more entrepreneurial spirit emanating from the business people of Barbados.

Madam President, there is a generation of young people coming up now who I feel will show those old heads what business is all about. When we were at C-Trade this Government invited some business people, we called them partners, and the Barbados Tourism Authority emailed certain entertainers and providers to come up and sell their ware at C-Trade. Do you know that a young man, whose hair is prettier than mine, which tells me that he is a quarter my age, was at the booth selling his band and his services for the cruise ships so that when they come here, he could perform on board. Madam President, I had to hug him.

Madam President, we had persons from Jolly Rogers selling their product. We had one of the principals of one of the dinner shows up there, a young girl who is probably three-quarters of my age, who was selling their dinner and show. These are little people, they are now born, but they understand where the money is and are going after that money, while we have people in business for 40 or 50 years who are sitting down telling us that they cannot make any money.

Madam President, I hope this is the last time that I have to stand up and make this plea, the opportunities are there, the Government is bringing the people but the private sector needs to devise strategies to have those people

spending some money. I go to tourism destinations that have a lot less than what we have to offer and those people sell a trip where you can see someone mashing cocoa; they sell you the privilege of taking off your stockings and shoes to be able to mash cocoa. Can you imagine, they will sell you grains of sand, and we have craft people, we have artists in this country who have talent that is far above those people, who just would not step out of the box. Please make it the last time Barbados that I have to issue this plea and this call to you.

Madam President, I would like to speak about tourism projects. As this Honourable Chamber knows, the major driver of our tourism projects is the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc., every single major tourism project including the regeneration of Bridgetown would have been driven by the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc., Let me list for you the projects in which that entity has engaged. Madam President, they are engaged in:

1. The Sam Lord Castle Redevelopment Project, a 450-room 5-star hotel which will bring one thousand jobs into this country and US\$70 million into the economy;
2. They facilitated the sale of the land on Bay Street on which we are going to see a Downtown Hyatt Hotel established;
3. They facilitated the expansion of Sandals. They would have negotiated for Sandals Barbados to come here;
4. They would have negotiated the expansion of the 220 suites which Sandals Barbados will be bringing to this country;
5. They are responsible for that beautiful space you see in Bridgetown called the Church Village Green, where so many open air activities are held;
6. They were responsible for the Speightstown Flood Mitigation Project. Those of you who are here from the north will remember what Speightstown used to experience every time you had heavy rain.
7. They are now into Phase 2, the improvement plan for the Salt Pond, that is construction of steel reinforced drainage channels running between the road culverts at Round-the-Town and the Speightstown Bypass Road.

Madam President, a flood in Speightstown caused an election and a by-election and it enabled the Barbados Labour Party to win a sit -- a flood in Speightstown. I am old enough to remember that. I do not know if I was voting yet, but the point is that I was old enough to remember that a flood in Speightstown gave the Barbados Labour Party an election, it cannot happen again. Madam President, the

Barbados Tourism Investment Inc., was also responsible for:

8. The enhancement of the Immigration Department. This was initiated by them but the project was then handed over to the Ministry of Defence and Security.

What that is, is that the budget was moved from the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc., and that the Ministry of Defence and Security is dealing with that, which includes the multi-storeyed car park and so on for the Immigration Department.

9. They are also responsible for the traffic management and streetscape as per our proposed developmental model of Bridgetown, because we have a developmental model of Bridgetown.

This would see a more pedestrianized urban area to facilitate the transit of tourists and locals to different sections of the Town via its main commercial activity artery. 10. They are also looking at the car park facilities in St. Lawrence Gap. Anyone who visits St. Lawrence Gap knows that parking is a nightmare and they are undertaking a traffic management survey to execute this. 11. They are responsible for the implementation of the CC-TV Project between Warrens and the west coast. It is called the Warrens and West Coast Barbados Security Project which is funded by the Caribbean Development Bank. This project proposes to install CC-TVs at the Warrens Town Centre and along Highway 1, from the Lazaretto to Mullins, St. Peter. Madam President, all of us who travel know how important CC-TVs are, especially in these times; they are vital component of our security, not only for visitors but for Barbadian nationals as well. The Barbados Tourism Investment Inc., is now handing that to the Defence and Security, because it is at a stage now where it can join the Immigration Enhancement Project. The Barbados Tourism Investment Inc., has done all of this and are currently facilitating so much more, so that I am forced to stand here today and condemn the attempts by the Opposition to malign the character of persons who work within that institution. Madam President, none of the members of the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc., is a politician, they are private citizens and as a victim of an attack in the House of Assembly in 2001 by the person who was the former Leader of the Barbados Labour Party Opposition, I can empathise with any private citizen. I was not a candidate, I had never spoken on a political platform. My only crime, according to the Opposition, was that I wrote a column where I condemned the nonsense they were doing in this country. Madam President, I had a job. (S5)

I was employed as a marketing officer somewhere else. The column was my recreation, but my recreation offended them and the leader attempted to malign my character and lied about me in the House of Assembly, and

I could not stand and defend myself in the very forum. Every time I see him and he speaks to me, I always say when you apologise to me, you can speak to me, but until then I will be a very good Christian and I will forgive but I am not forgetting. No. When you spend your life building good character, you educate yourself, you live a life free of tarnish, and then these overnight politicians decide that they must take you down to enhance their image or to gain some type of advantage, you have to take a stand. I will never stand or sit in this House and allow any politician, once I have breath, to attack any private citizen, any worthy private citizen who sacrifices their family time and sacrifices proper salaries; because a number of these people are highly qualified and can work elsewhere for a lot more money but they are patriots. They are efficient, they are executing projects below budget sometimes to enhance the image of this country. They do not work for a government. They work for their country. Whichever government is in, they work. Because they are at this point and time ensuring that tourism looks good and Barbados looks good, and they are delivering, there is now this constant innuendo, these snide remarks and this campaign to undermine the efficacy of the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated (BTII). Upstanding citizens; citizens that we all in here can safely vouch for. I am telling you so. If they were not, I would keep my mouth shut. I would. I would not malign them but I would keep my mouth shut. They are doing the work of this country.

It is ugly behaviour, it is vulgar behaviour and I am going to ask that it stop, because the Barbados Labour Party has no moral authority to cast aspersions on anybody's character, especially when it comes to tourism. Do not start what you cannot finish. My only regret is that we locked up nobody, and I would go to my grave saying that the Democratic Labour Party needed to prosecute somebody for the people's money. There is absolutely no basis for the criticism or the innuendos, because do you know what it does? It demotivates people. It also dissuades decent people from serving their country, because when you know that you are proficient, efficient, educated and passionate about your country, you want to serve. You decide, "You see me? I do not want a board. I do not need to sit on a board, neither do I have to work for a statutory corporation, because I do not want my name dragged through the mud". People are desperately and mortally afraid of serving Barbados because of the gutter, porn politics that the Barbados Labour Party practices, so you run the good people. You run the good people.

Aside.

Senator Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: You understand? The problem here is that these people measure you by their own yardstick. That is the problem. They cannot see money spending and nobody stealing, so there has to be "steel in there", because it is not possible for

projects to be executed under budget; it is not possible for projects to be finished on time. There has to be “steel” somewhere, because that is the *modus operandi* (MO) of them. That is their MO. I am saying that it is a dastardly act, and I am warning the Barbados Labour Party to leave BTII alone, because this Senator from St. Andrew will deal with them. You cannot throw stones when you live in glass houses. You open that closet, you would be surprised at the skeletons that would drop out. Do not trouble people. Do not start what you cannot finish. Stop it.

Madam President, I will now move on to Caves of Barbados because Caves of Barbados is part of our purview as well, and I would have spoken at length about Caves of Barbados a year and a half ago or so when we had some work to do there. Again, the Barbados Labour Party tried to politicise it. We were to be sued. They talked about legal fees that the lawyer who had worked for the Caves of Barbados was earning, but they are not going to talk about the legal fees for Four Seasons. I would leave that for the men and women more capable.

Aside.

Senator Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: The Four Seasons legal fees, you understand? All of those aspersions they cast on this Government when we came and found a cave that was upside down. Madam President, today I can announce that the Caves of Barbados saw a four per cent increase in visitor arrivals in 2015. 107 453 people passed through the cave and revenue is up one per cent at \$5.2 million compared to \$5.1 million last year. Madam President, if you knew what we found at Caves of Barbados, you would sing the Hallelujah Chorus. I want to credit the Board of Directors of Caves of Barbados; again patriots, experienced and qualified citizens in human resources and finance. We had a solid team put in place to turn that cave around. We had lightning in 2013 which would have adversely affected the elevators because the elevators were a bugbear for a while, and the generators and other pieces of equipment were damaged. We signed a contract which provided for the repair of two of the three elevators. One is now repaired and the other one is scheduled to be back in operation. We always had one that was always working. If you know of the Caves of Barbados, the elevators are an important component of the tour experience, and you do not like to go there and have to be waiting on one elevator, so we have moved towards getting that done. They are back in working order. Technicians from the company also commenced work on the photovoltaic system, and the transformer arrived on property last November. Workmen began the installation, and when the work is done and we are reconnected to the grid, we will see at least a 20 per cent reduction in the cost of electricity at Caves of Barbados.

As of December, the balance outstanding on the loan to the Caribbean Development Bank is \$39 million. We are saddled with it and we have to pay it. That is the cost that we would have paid for assuming governance of this country, a cross of debt that seems like a bottomless pit, but we cannot be discouraged. We have to work, and work towards reducing it. The roadwork component of the redevelopment of Harrison's Cave is complete, and the final payment was made to Rayside Construction, a small contractor who would have done the roadwork. This year also saw the completion of the 2010-2011 financial audits. Yes, we are five years behind but when we came to office, we were almost 15 years behind in financial audits of the Cave. I know there had to be a reason for that, but we cleaned up that so we are now on track to be finishing our 2012-2015 financial audits, and the board of directors and the new management of Caves of Barbados must be complimented for their steadfastness in working towards some measure of balance in that tourist attraction.

Madam President, in the year ahead we know that we have to continue with our efforts to initiate the new routes which we have, and to continue diversifying our current ones. I would wish to announce also that Jet Blue will be inaugurating a direct flight from Barbados to Fort Lauderdale on April 21. Fort Lauderdale, Florida, will now have a direct flight daily between Barbados and Fort Lauderdale. I was at ITB (international travel show) Germany the week before and I was at Sea Trade with the other half of our team, and we will now begin a new weekly Munich-Barbados service effective November 2016 because we recognise that Germany is our fastest growing European market. They spend the money. Yes, the United Kingdom market is our largest but Germany is growing at a very rapid rate and we have to provide the airlift for the demand from Germany. To sit and watch our patriots -- I call them patriots -- in Europe. On one of the days we were at ITB, we took a day in a room at the hotel where we stayed and grilled every single representative who represents Barbados in Europe. (S6) Everyone had to come to a table where they sat down with a power point display with which they showed us how they were spending Barbados' money, what they intended to achieve from the spend and basically validate why we should keep them as Reps.

MADAM PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member has 12 more minutes.

Senator Mrs. V.I. SANDIFORD-GARNER: You are kidding me, Madam President. I was so generous in tending to give another speaker my time this week.

Anyway, Madam President, cruise projection - we indicate a 6.3 percent growth in passengers for this year. Already three-quarters of a million persons are booked for Barbados in 2017; 757 429 people are already booked for

this year, which is a 6.3 percent rise, and for 2017 the current load levels stand 437 000 passengers, and that is for 2017. So we are easily looking at 800 000 cruise ship passengers in 2018. The Private Sector needs to get onboard and see how they can garner some of this spend.

A niche hardly considered prior to 2008 is our yachting industry and we have ensured that the yachting industry received the support of the Government, and they have allowed us to develop awareness of Barbados in places such as Portugal and the Canary Islands where you would never have thought we would have a marketing effort, but because of alliances between our Cruise Specialist, Peter Gilkes, and those principals, we are developing recognition in those areas, and having some of the most wealthy yacht owners naming their yachts after Barbados. So you have a Miss Barbados. She used to be Concise 8 and Concise 9, and he changed the name of his yacht to Miss Barbados. If you see it, pretty, pretty, pretty. Then the other yacht has a style-like trident symbol of the BTMI and Barbados on the head sail. Do you understand? The Barbados Tourism Product Authority (Barbados Tourism Product Authority) will continue with its product audits in accommodation, restaurants and attractions. We do surveys to measure results of events and other initiatives sponsored by the BTPA. We will continue to hold our workshops with our stakeholders because measuring and evaluating is important to us. We also do competitive analysis of the product developments in competing destinations and I would wish to speak about Cuba.

I heard alarms raised in here this week on Cuba, and I would advise Barbadians not to be alarmed. We are two separate products with two separate price levels. I attended a seminar on Cuba. This was hosted by Carnival, MSC, Crewman Tour and I cannot remember the other cruise ship, where the CEOs of all those cruise ships hosted that seminar. Do you know what was said? This destination will continue to be the most favoured destination. Not only that, they described Cuba as the new girl at the fete. She is the new pretty face at the party. The pretty face that would soon wane. Do you know why? Cuba is not ready for tourism. Cuba is open, but tourists like air condition cars. They may look at a few old buildings, but they like to go into restaurants where people are trained to serve them. Cuba has no tourism infrastructure that will be sufficient and appropriate for the type of visitor who comes to Barbados because the markets are different. So the markets we attract are not the markets that will be encouraged to visit Cuba. So it is a pretty face.

All of us would like to visit Cuba, I am sure. I have been there six times. My son's name is Fidel. I was pregnant in Cuba. I know Cuba backwards, you know. Cuba is not ready for tourism, and until that investment takes place and that infrastructural development takes place, I would not worry untoward about Cuba. The

bookings I have just read out tells you that even with the presence of Cuba, there are still booking the Caribbean.

We have an Innovation and Strategy Department, which will be utilising monies approved to continue in assisting in the development of the news area such as culture and heritage tourism. I just want to allay the fears of Senator Fraser that the Ministry of Tourism does not maintain or refurbish those buildings, the Ministry of Culture does, and there is a budget set aside under Head 78, sub-head I think it is 7005 or 5, where they list all of the buildings which they will be refurbishing and the cost of them. I will help you find that section in the document. What we do though is, we give the Ministry of Culture a subvention out of our vote to assist them in their efforts, but we do not actively take part in that type of activity. It is Head 7005, if I am not mistaken.

Madam President, I cannot sit without beating some home drums, and I shall do so now. The Mains Replacement Project of the Barbados Water Authority has to be commended. I remember the days in St. Andrew when we had to go, or some of us had to go to Haggatts' yard for water. Water was always a problem in rural Barbados. Fights used to take place in St. Joseph for water when my parents were children. Yes, we have moved to the place where you would have had people with running water in their homes, but we cannot bully the Government for what only God can provide. So we have to understand that coupled with a drought, coupled with a water scarce country, we also had a situation where mankind in the form of the Barbados Labour Party allowed an infrastructure to rot under their noses.

A \$150 million in Bonds was floated to repair the pipes and none of them were repaired or replaced. St. Andrew suffered. Madam President, I waited. I was waiting for the Honourable Member of Parliament to do something, because after all, I am waited, heard nothing, saw nothing, I watched every parish get a delivery of tanks to the areas, and I waiting for St. Andrews to get theirs. I waited for the Member of Parliament to move and say, not a word, not an action, and people are getting up at fore day morning to catch water. This is not an anecdote. This is a reality. You have to get up at 3 and 4 O'clock to catch water and phone your neighbour to tell your neighbor that the water is on. Then it would come back on later in the day because the demand now is less, but when it comes back on you are at work, so you cannot work. You cannot function when you return home because you did not catch any water. So I am waiting. This is a former Minister of Works representing them.

I learned from the Barbados Water Authority that St. Andrew was one of the parishes hardest hit. The data reveals that 317 burst mains occurred between January 1st and October 27, 2015, 317 burst mains. We are not talking

about the leaks. We are not talking about the low pressure. After it got too much I spoke to the Minister of Agriculture and Water and some of the members of the Boards and requested some tanks, free of encumbrances to be placed in St. Andrew. I can tell you today I received 10, 5 were put in all of the hardest hit areas, and there are servicing the people of St. Andrew today.

All it was, was a letter and a conversation. That is why I will support the Honourable Member for St. James South when he speaks about recalling some of these Members of Parliament, because they receive subventions from the Government of this country, they receive consistency assistance, they receive a healthy salary, they have an office and an Assistant, a good salary, and they do absolutely nothing under the guise that their Government is not in. What is a letter, Madam President? What is so hard in writing a letter and picking up the phone and speaking to somebody on behalf of the people who put you there?

You see this Westminster system, we have to examine it you know. There is going to be time when they will have to examine it, because there are people drawing money on false pretenses and it has to stop. Anyway, I am moving on.

We are moving towards solving that problem. The pumping issue, the Bend Spring will be commissioned but that will not solve the low water pressure, so they would still have need for the tanks until we can have the desal plants and so on working on behalf of those people. The time for the people of St. Andrew waiting in vain will soon come to an end.(S7) We also have to talk about the police station. There has been much chat about a police station, but, Madam President, I will prefer a community centre in St. Andrew before a police station any day, because a community centre will employ the time, the talent and the skills, once we have the skills training appendage attached to the same young people they will seek to malign and accuse of committing crime. St. Andrew has the lowest crime rate in the North, and I think this is something we have to tout from the rooftops. We have the lowest crime rate in the North, and a police station does not denote efficacy. The police are not abandoning the parish, and I want Barbados to understand that. There is going to be an Outpost. There will be a police presence and a building does not denote efficacy. The building had to be vacated at this time because the police themselves said they were working in unsafe conditions. Therefore, the Outpost could not be finished before they are transferred to it. They had to shut the station before the Outpost was done. So the police will be there, but I maintain that they want a Community and Skills Training Centre because that is where the skills and the time of the young people will be employed, and that to me is more of a social intervention that is necessary than having a police presence. I am convinced of that.

There will be police there. There will be police from District F patrolling, but we are working.

I will tell you this now. I am working with private persons to see that we have a centre. The Minister of Community Development and Culture visited the day before I left the country. I mobilised the netball, the football and the Council persons to be there to meet him, and he was appalled at the state of that dump that you called a centre. It needs pushing down. We have been assured that a prefab building will be placed in St. Andrew by year end, and that dump will be pushed down. I keep saying when it is pushed down I hope and pray that I am in Barbados so I could have a drink on the spot. We are in discussions with Private Sector individuals who would wish to assist me or assist St. Andrew in constructing that centre. We had too many promises from the Member of Parliament who sat and watched that parish, especially Belleplaine, run to ruin. So while Rome burned, Nero was fiddling. While the grass was growing, the horses were starving. I use a part of Sir Roy's speech yesterday, "While the MP was playing his harmonica, the passengers in the bus were smelling hell." Relief will come to St. Andrew, because when they speak they speak with one voice, but we all know why they are not heard at the end of every five years.

Anyhow, Madam President, I do thank you for that. White Hill, I spoke about that last time. I moved to ensuring we would have had that matter resolved. I think all of you are aware it has been resolved. Again, letters and phone calls work. I am not saying you do not have to be a Member of Parliament to be effective, because I want to be one, but you would wish that you are given the power and to be enabled to do more for those people who have been neglected for so very long, and that is a fact.

I am proud to be a member of this Government. I will celebrate when the Independence celebrations come because had the Barbados Labour Party been in power they would have celebrated and it would have cost this country twice as much as what this Government is spending, and the world knows that. So the vulgar politics you hear being engaged in about the Independence Celebrations can be done away with. It is crass and unnecessary, because 50 years should be celebrated any part of the globe where you are, and this little rock which exports gross zero, if you look at the scale at which we produce, we have really no export economy, but we survive and survive to the point where people would want to come to have their babies here and educate their children here. We have a lot to be proud of and I am proud to stand today to say Happy Independence Barbados. God Bless Barbados and I thank you, Madam President, for your time.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Watson you have the Floor.

Senator J.A. WATSON: Thank you, Madam President. I rise to make my contribution to this debate. Each year we come here and obviously we come here to debate this very important Bill. It is a very necessary debate, because without the passing of this Bill Government would not be able to function. Therefore, we have to pass this in order for Government to have its Budget from April 1st, 2016 to March 31, 2017.

Madam President, the question really and truly is, we have to ask what is the purpose of us debating this Bill, when in fact all the figures are competently prepared by the members of the staff of Government. They were approved by the various ministries and ultimately approved by Cabinet. So one would wonder why we go through this ritual every year. For me I think it is worthwhile because it gives us all the opportunity to make an input about what we feel Government should be doing, or what we feel they should not be doing. I think it is a good opportunity to offer up ideas that can be beneficial to the Government, or for ideas that may allow the Government to take heed and do something else, but it is a worthwhile exercise, as far as I am concern. I hope Madam President, that sometime during my time in speaking I would be able to offer some ideas about what we ought to do.

Madam President, we are faced with a deficit, as you know, of about \$1.6 billion, and the question always has to be asked whenever you have a deficit, how do you deal with it? The answer is always the same thing. That is, either raise revenue, cut expenditure or a combination of the two. Those questions are recurring questions and recurring answers.

I believe, Madam President, when you are faced with this sort of question to be answered or action to be taken, there are some things you have to decide on. There are some things you have to decide that you must not do, and there are some things that you must do. Madam President, as far as I am concerned, whatever we do in Barbados to handle this deficit, I want to suggest that we must never devalue our dollar. I also believe, Madam President, that we should never default on any of our loans.

I believe we must always have public beaches in Barbados. I believe we should never privatise our water supply service. I believe we should never sell our airport nor seaport. Madam President, I believe we must always provide adequate education and training for our people at an affordable cost. I believe, Madam President that we should provide an adequate health service for our people, especially the elderly and the disabled. We must provide an adequate transportation system for our school children. Madam, with those musts and must-nots as our background I shall try to proceed to mention a few things that I would like to mention.

Madam President, one other thing, I think we must do is to maintain a healthy and safe environment for all our people and visitors alike. Madam, above all, I think we need to inspire Barbadians to reach higher, becoming the best we can. We can do it through talk. I think that sometimes people believe talk is just talk but I think that talk could be very inspiring sometimes. I remember a President say, "Yes, we can", and that had a significant effect on people. I also remember another outstanding citizen saying, "I have a dream", and that made a significant difference.

Madam President, I took a few minutes to check some of the good things that a lot of our international leaders would have said. Martin Luther King said, "We must learn to live together as brothers or die as fools". Mahatma Ghandi said, "Be the change you want to see in the world". Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world". Nelson Mandela again said, "It always seems impossible until it is done".

Madam President, very often, I believe that a lot of us look at the task ahead and realise that we cannot do it but somebody inspires us and we get it done. Winston Churchill said, "We shall defend our island, no matter what the cost may be. If you are going through hell, keep going". Madam President, I think we had some difficulty, we are still going through it and I am sure that sometime soon, we will get right through it but we have to keep going.

Madam President, I think that one of the other ways of inspiring a people is recognizing the success of some of our people, and I want to mention a few like Sir, Garfield Sobers. Madam, as a matter of fact I had a friend who once said we should create a word "Soberise" so that anything that stands for excellence would be "Soberise". Madam, at 21 years old, he broke the world record of 365 runs. He was the first man to hit six sixes. His 254 for a world team against Australia was heralded as the greatest batting that the world has ever seen. Madam, I have watched that tape at least six times. It was the most magnificent piece of cricket anybody could see. Madam, Allan Emtage is not too well known person but he is a person that Barbados probably needs to recognise a little more and maybe in this 50th year, we should find a way of doing it. Madam, Allan Emtage is a brilliant Barbadian man who was the first person to create a search engine. He is a young Barbadian and I wonder how many Barbadians know of him. I believe very few know him. I believe that this year, we should do something for Allan Emtage.

Madam President, Sukie King became the world champion at least 10 times playing drafts, which is a mind game, a game that requires a lot of strategy and a lot of thinking. He beat the world, not once or twice but he beat the world 10 times.

Madam President, Cardinal Warde. I think he got nurtured at Foundation School first but went on to somewhere else. He is a brilliant scientist, who has at least 10 or 12 patents. He is a brilliant mind and I know he is doing some work in Barbados now, so at least some of it being paid back.

Madam President, I have two ladies but I do not know which one to mention first but I will mention Rhianna first. Madam, every time I read another exploit of Rhianna, it baffles the mind how can a young girl rise so rapidly to the level that she is at. If you went on the internet and google Rhianna, it is about 15 or 20 pages of achievements that she has. Madam President, she is remarkable. She is not only music, she is a total entrepreneur now in fashion and in everything.

Madam President, Akila Jones was mentioned by Senator DePeiza yesterday so I will not go into much detail. I think the description given by Senator DePeiza was adequate but that young lady hit a hurdle in her first event of a pentathlon and most people would have just dropped out and called it a day. She not only continued but she used the common sense and strategy of a Bajan but not taking part in the 800 so that she could do better in the event and she whether or not a bronze in that event, coming from nothing. I would like to congratulate Springer Memorial School for winning the girls inter school sports so many times but I would also like to congratulate the Foundation School.

Madam President, if you have a champion of 10 years or 15 years, to dethrone that champion requires a lot of work and while I take nothing away from the Springer School, I must give kudos to the girls from Foundation School and also give kudos to Foundation School because they won the most points overall in the championship.

Madam President, I just mention these things because I think Barbadians are losing pride in our country. I think some people are now beginning to put forward the notion that being nationalistic is a bad thing. I never could believe how being nationalistic could be a bad thing. I believe that we need to have pride and industry in Barbados, Madam President.

Madam President, we are about to celebrate our golden anniversary, 50 years of Independence and I really wish we were in different circumstances because I really do not believe that \$7 million is adequate enough for a country like Barbados to spend on celebration for an entire year of achieving 50 years of Independence but I understand that we have financial constraints and that is why, Madam President, I want to put a call out as Senator Irene Sandiford-Garner did just now, to the private sector. I think the private sector needs to do a lot more for our celebrations. I am always appalled at the idea of

independence in Barbados and only one or two buildings in Bridgetown are lit up. They pay no attention to Independence in Barbados. During Independence you see Christmas decorations and I hope that the buildings all over Barbados, not only in Bridgetown, demonstrate that we are a people who have pride in our country and who believe in our country.

Madam President, as we go through this 50th year of Independence to our anniversary on 30th November, I want us to remember that we are a resilient people, a God-fearing people of faith who built Barbados through the desire of freedom of the Right Excellent Bussa. Madam President, I want to say that again. I want us to remember, Madam President, that we are resilient, God-fearing people of faith who built Barbados through the desire of freedom by the Right Excellent Bussa; by the determination of the Right Excellent Grantley Adams for Adult Suffrage; by the fighting spirit of the Right Excellent Sir Frank Walcott who provided us with better working conditions; by the vision of the Right Excellent Errol Barrow through the provision of free secondary education; by the foresight of Jon Michael Geoffrey Manningham "Tom" Adams through the creation of a major highway and the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act; through the integrity of Sir Harold Bernard St. John; and through the tenacity of Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford who created the Social Partnership, which, Madam President, I believe at this time should be functioning far better than it is presently functioning. I would like to see, Madam President, I am not sure if this is what Sir Roy was referring to yesterday when he talked about his small group of people meeting with the Prime Minister, but I believe that the Social Partnership needs the input of Sir Roy once more and maybe one or two of the other captains of industry. Madam President, we got to where we are through the skills of the Right Honourable Owen Arthur who energised the CARICOM area again and created the Caribbean Court of Justice, and through the attention to community and family by the Mr. David Thompson.

Madam President, all of this led to what Mr. Ralph Gonzales referred to as the idea of Barbados and I just want to read one little paragraph of his dissertation. He said:

"More than any other Caribbean society with the possible exception of Cuba, Barbados has arrived at a place where its uniqueness represents a model of governance, political economy, way of life and social order which invites emulation everywhere in the Caribbean and further afield, albeit with appropriate amendment. Barbados' high quality governance and high level human development have been a marvel to objective observers including reputable international agencies."

That is a non-Barbadian talking about Barbados and we in Barbados do not see Barbados in that light.

Madam President, put it this way. If I have a nice car, a BMW or something - one that I hope I do not know before I die if I would be able to get one, but - if I just reverse it and bounce it against that wall, that does not mean that the BMW is no longer any good, you just fix it, and I think that whatever is wrong in Barbados now we just have to fix and it is not a big thing.

Madam President, where do we go from here? What do we expect from the Right Honourable Freundel Stuart and the Democratic Labour Party's Government? I know what they have said, they have said a Barbados that is socially balanced, economically viable, environmentally sound and characterised by good governance. Noble words, noble aspirations, but only time would tell, Madam President, and I wish you well. I believe that if you are able to achieve all of those things in the way that you want to, Barbados would be a better place, but, Madam President, I want to suggest that Barbados needs more than that. We have had all of the social policies that you could think about that Barbados needs. What we have not done is that we have not enfranchised the majority of Barbadians the way they should be enfranchised. I will never be tired talking about the development of small business to satisfy that goal and one day I look forward to it happening. I could see signs are on the horizon and I expect that it would be more rapidly developed.

Madam President, one of the things I pay a lot of attention to, apart from my regular work, is what tourism does for Barbados. Tourism is still the most important sector in Barbados and until it stops being that - and I hope that one day we would reach the stage where tourism is but one of four cylinders on which Barbados' engine is firing, we cannot continue to depend on a one-cylinder vehicle any longer. The only other industry that comes close to tourism is international business and I have listened and seen that there are clouds on the horizon with the international business sector and I believe that we need to move rapidly to deal with the development of other sectors in the community.

Madam President, the tourism's budget is over \$200 million of which over \$100 million is being used in promotion. I believe, Madam President, that when you have a budget for any sector or any part of any business so large you have to look forward to proper returns from that investment. One hundred million dollars in promotion is a lot of money and despite what Senator Sandiford-Garner may have said today about the private sector responding to the number of visitors being brought to the island, I do not disagree with her at all, I believe that the private sector needs to do a lot more. As a matter of fact, I am always saying that the private sector should be made to do more and one of the things they need to do in the tourism sector is that they need to account more for that \$100 million in promotion. I am made to understand that the international

business sector gets about \$10 or \$15 million a year (\$10) and their returns are substantially higher than that. If we look at the returns of the tourism sector to Barbados, I have a feeling that we would be disappointed, and so, Madam President, I would want to see that we find some way of ensuring that Barbados gets the most in returns from what we are doing for the tourism sector.

In terms of employment, Madam President, I would love to see full employment. I am told that in the middle of the tourists season there are workers in the tourist industry working three and four days from an industry that just had substantial increase in visitor arrivals, and I do not see why people should be working three and four days so I think that is something that we need to look at.

Madam President, I accept that if I own a hotel and I am from North America, I need some of my people in the hotel. I have no difficulty with having expatriates working in a hotel that is owned otherwise, but I have a problem with people working in positions that can be filled by Barbadians. Even where there are no Barbadians capable of filling those positions I think we should use the good old way of having an understudy and a time limit to the period where that person is working, therefore you are transferring technology or knowledge, whatever you want to call it, and you are developing Barbadians, so those are two things I would definitely like to see happen in the tourism industry.

Finally, Madam President, as far as tourism is concerned, one of the pillars on which we defend our dollar, as far as I understand being not a financial or person or an economist, is the level of our foreign reserves. I have a feeling that with these large increases that we have seen in tourism we need to see an improvement in our foreign reserves based on that. I have a feeling that there is too much money being earned through Barbadian workers earning foreign exchange and that foreign exchange is not coming back into Barbados. Madam President, that needs to be dealt with.

I mentioned in here already that there should be a foreign exchange committee that would deal with that. If our dollar so much depends on the level of our foreign reserves, then it means that we should be monitoring our foreign reserves as much as possible. We cannot take chances with that if, and we take chances with that we are actually taking chances with losing the parity on our dollar.

Madam President, there was a notion, I think it was more than a notion, I believe that if it has not yet been done it certainly has been discussed quite a lot, that is, that tourism should be treated as an export industry. Again, I have no problem with that because if you are earning foreign exchange you could make out a case for being an export industry. I know, Madam President, that the export industries that are industries, manufacturing industries,

have to report any order that they send overseas and the bank through which that order went out will report the proceeds returning to Barbados through that sale overseas.

I am suggesting Madam President, that if the tourism sector becomes an export industry as they want to be, and I would have no difficulty with it, that some system of reporting their earning and repatriation of to Barbados of their foreign exchange. I have no problem with that at all. You want to be an export industry, behave like an export industry.

Madam President, Senator Sandiford Garner said some provocative things today which I would try to avoid as much as possible, so I will move on to healthcare. Healthcare is not something that I really would spend a lot of time on. We had two eminent Senators speak on it yesterday and I believe that whatever advice or whatever ideas the Government may want may have come through those excellent presentations yesterday.

I want to suggest, Madam President, that there are a few people in Barbados who are getting free healthcare when they could afford it and I think there should be a system where those who can pay for healthcare pay for healthcare and those who cannot pay for it receive it. I have no difficulty with that. The problems would be, and again the experts in Government could do that, they could figure out how best to be able to identify people who can pay and people who cannot pay. There are simple methods, salaries is one of them. There may be other ways but I believe that if a person wants to access free healthcare they should be made to show why they should be given free healthcare and the other people who can afford it pay. I have no problem with that at all, Madam President.

Madam President, I do not know if how many Members of the Senate have ever visited the district hospitals. I have visited them on a couple of occasions and I think that they need attention. I believe that those people in those hospitals have toiled and built Barbados and I believe that in their latter years they deserve treatment that sends them off well rather than struggling the way they do at the hospital sometimes.

It is amazing when, in another area that I am in, we visit these hospitals and do thing and the joy that you see in those people's faces is unbelievable. Just a Sunday evening, go and carry some sandwiches and sing some songs and talk a little bit because a lot of them like to tell you some old stories, and I believe that there needs to be a continued community effort in the hospitals. I believe that the constituency councils, for instance, can organise some way of being friends of those hospitals and doing things on a continuous basis with them. We have not done it recently. I know why but it is unfortunate that we have not done it recently. Every year or sometimes twice a year we would

take the patients at the St. Philip Hospital out to a picnic and usually it was to Farley Hill. I believe that those people get ready from about 5 o'clock because they know they are going out, it is an outing and it was really something and I believe that they need a lot more of that.

The other thing, Madam President, is that at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital recently there was a feeding programme and when I listened to the promoter of that programme, sometimes you do not know these things until you are told, but when you have a ward of even 10 or 12 people and one nurse at dinner time and 10 people cannot help themselves, somebody is going to starve. I believe that feeding programme where you go in and help those people who cannot feed themselves to feed themselves, because a lot of people get even more sick because of not being able to eat, and I believe that is a good programme that should be expanded(S11) to all of the old people's homes across Barbados. I think it is something that is very much needed.

Madam President, as a matter of fact, I think Senator Fraser said it yesterday, about involving the churches. I think that is an excellent programme for the churches to become involved because it is not the going into the church that matters, it is what you do as a Christian that matters. It is not just the Sunday going to church that makes you any closer to God than I am by not going there on a regular basis.

Madam President, I am concerned only with one area in education. I want to suggest that education is extremely important, it is what builds a country, it is what can change a country. Free secondary education has created a middleclass in Barbados that has never been seen before and I think that we need to pay attention to education policies at this time, we cannot be doing what we were doing before, I think the world has changed, this technology thing is confusing for a lot of us, the things that you can do with technology now, I think that we need to respond to that as best as we can.

Madam President, one simple question is, should children have cellphones in school, or not? I do not know. I would immediately say they should not because I see it as a distraction. Another better educated person about the technology may give me reasons why the cellphone in school is a good tool for learning. I think that kind of understanding we need to get into because education develops skills and knowledge and behaviours to give people the opportunity to earn a living. If you are not at least basically educated you cannot earn a living. This is why yesterday Senator Durant would have mentioned the high level of illiterate people in the prison system, so it is important that we educate our people.

Madam President, it is also important that we train our people because training, really and truly, prepares

people for a specific job and that is what you want. Even people with degrees need to be trained. I think that is another thing I want to encourage. I am not sure if it falls under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation or the Ministry of Labour but too many people go into the university, come out with a degree and expect to start at the top, they do not even know how to say good morning properly.

Madam President, this is something that I have been talking about for I while, and I just happened to see it in today's newspaper. I believe that there must be personal development training from nursery school right through school, right through university, right through. There are too many people who just do not know how to handle themselves.

Madam President, when I am not here, I go to University of the West Indies at least three times a week and I am appalled at the way I see some of those students dressed. As a matter of fact, maybe this is why I am not a lecturer because if I were a lecturer some of them could not come into my room dressed like that, they are really out of place. I have a feeling that there should be a dress code at these tertiary institutions, there must be.

Madam President, as I mentioned, I saw in today's newspaper that one school had what they call a "Dress for Work Day" where you dress as though you were going to work, and that was a course. I think there are too many young people who do not know how to appear at work. I think that the school system needs to do that.

Madam President, I said I was interested in one area of education. Let me say that I heard my friend, Senator Husbands, always say that it is the parent who have to be responsible for the behaviour of children. Recently I heard him saying that there are some parents who are not capable and therefore we have to deal with that, that is an improvement. Madam President, one day soon I hope to hear Senator Husbands say, it is the teachers who have to be responsible for the raising of our children; it is the teachers who have to be responsible for creating young Barbadian citizens.

Madam President, I say that without reservation. The reason I say that is that I know that there are too many parents who do not know how to raise children. I believe that is one of the changes that need to be made in the system, where teachers now have to be trained differently because they have that additional responsibility.

Madam President, I do not believe that to come in and teach a subject, that that is all to it. When I went to school my teachers did not just teach a subject, my friend Sir Roy could probably confirm that, we had people who made sure that as you walked down the road that your

socks were up, that your shirt was pushed in when you are ready to go on the road. When you go on the pasture and your shirt was out, that was not a problem but once you left that gate you must be properly dressed. If your hair needs combing you would have to have it combed too.

Madam President, there is a lot of training that can take place in the school. I repeat it, Madam President, because I believe in repetition. The school system is the only controlled area, other than the prison system. My feelings are that if you do not get it right in the schools, you will end up in the prison and that is what is happening.

Madam President, that brings me to the important position of nursery education. There is no doubt in my mind whatsoever, if you get them right at 0-5 five years, you will have them right for life, no matter what environment they get into. If you train your children right, when they get into bad company they would know when to make the right decision, they know when to leave when it gets out of place. If we train our 0-5-year-olds, when they get into the primary school and that continues into secondary school, then it continues, we will have a few problems. I am pleased Madam President, to hear that our nursery education, if not universal, is almost universal.

Madam President, Senator Husbands could almost tell me if that is so, but I understand that with the completion of the next nursery school, that we will have universal nursery education. That, Madam President, pleases me to the core and I hope that the training of the teachers would go along with that because the building does not mean anything, what is important is the teaching when you get into that.

Madam President, there is one other area of education I want to address. There is this talk all the time about big schools and small schools, or good schools and bad schools. I want to suggest, Madam President, this is not farfetched, I think it is something that can be done if it has never been tried. I have a feeling that we should take about 10 or 15 third form students out of Harrison College and put them into third form at St. George Secondary, and take the same number from St. George Secondary and put them into Harrison College in third form and monitor that and tell me what happens after a year. I have a feeling, Madam President, that the students who were left at St. George Secondary would improve, and the students from St. George Secondary who came to Harrison College would also improve. I am willing to put a bet on that, if the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation is willing to do, I would be happy to see the results of such an effort. (S12) I am willing to put a bet on that. If the Ministry of Education is willing to do it, I would be happy to see the results of such an effort. It is an experiment. Most of the improvements in the world come from experiments, Madam President, so why can we not do

a little experiment with that? I know at Foundation at one stage Captain Barker separated his first forms, exclusively boys and exclusively girls, and he got results. I am not sure what happened to the programme afterwards. Experiments like those guide us into the future. You need to take a chance sometimes. That is how you get to know things.

Madam President, do you know how much time I have?

Asides.

Senator J. WATSON: Madam President, just a little piece on agriculture. I think that Senator Adams may have mentioned that yesterday. Sugar cane production in Barbados is a necessity. I should have mentioned that this morning when I talked about the “musts”. We must not give up our sugar cane industry. As a matter of fact, we need to expand our sugar cane industry. Madam President, I want to see all the fields out of sugar in Barbados back into sugar. If we gave away our sugar and created molasses and sold the rum, I have a feeling that we may pay for the sugar. I do not have the figures. I never worked it out, but I have a feeling that molasses, both in terms of making rum and in selling otherwise, can support the sugar industry, and then all we have to do is to use the sugar, as the old people say, as gravy. Of course, it also keeps the aesthetic of Barbados as it was before. There is a loveliness about driving around Barbados with full grown sugar canes and khus khus hedgerows. That is something we are losing. I saw the effects of the end of sugar cane in Antigua for the first time -- that was many years ago - and it was horrible just to drive around.

Madam President, quickly, that has caused me to remember a couple of bad mistakes we made in Barbados. One bad mistake we made in Barbados was selling our national bank. I would stick to that all my life. I know that was a bad mistake, and now we have to try to get back a bank. The other thing which that led to also is the selling of Barbados Shipping and Trading (BS&T). I think I might have an opportunity to talk about those two things again, because I want to get onto something else that is a little more important. Madam President, those two institutions, Barbados National Bank and BS&T, were built by the labouring of Barbadians in the cane fields of Barbados. All those savings went into the Barbados Savings Bank. All the plantations built up BS&T in Bridgetown, and we gave it away. We cannot do that any longer. We have to understand that Barbados has a worth to Barbados; and let me tell you quickly how it works, Madam President. Foreign business comes to Barbados, sets up in Barbados, we provide the labour that produces the profits, and they take those profits from Barbados and go and develop the country from which they came. Barbados gets no development. All we do is provide the means of providing

that money for development of another country. We have to deal with that.

Madam President, I want to deal with my final topic. Many, many years ago, I believe it probably was the second national consultation which could have been about 2002. About 15 years ago. The hot topic at that consultation was productivity. Today, the topic is still productivity, and still I have not heard of things that were done to improve our productivity. Madam President, I want to suggest that increased productivity is one of the best ways of developing growth in the economy. It is one of the best ways of ensuring growth in an economy, and therefore if we are going to keep talking about growth, we need to stop talking about growth and start talking about productivity, because when we do that, when we get increased productivity, the growth will follow. Madam President, I am proposing, because earlier when I started I said that there are some things, some ideas that we should offer Government, and this idea I am offering. We need to have a national awareness of what productivity improvements mean, and not only what it means in terms of a definition but what it means to the country Barbados. How should we go about it? First of all, we have to accept that productivity improvement is required, and I have a feeling that there is not a Barbadian who would dispute that productivity improvements are desirable in Barbados.

The next thing we have to do, Madam President, is create an awareness of productivity. How do you do that? I remember in my early days we used to go to a lot of courses at BIMAP (Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity) and you would come into contact with other people, and a lot of those people who participated in BIMAP courses would always say, “They sent us here at BIMAP but the top managers do not come. So when we go back with our ideas, they do not understand them or they object to them, so what is the point in coming?” I say the same thing here. There is no sense telling me that you are going to train clerks and all that type of thing to get productivity. We have to start at the top. We have to bring an awareness to the Ministers, to the Permanent Secretaries, the heads of departments, all the chief executive officers across Barbados. There has to be a national productivity awareness programme, where the whole country buys into the idea of productivity improvement, so every person who is expected to be a leader and who is a leader should be part of that programme.

The second thing you do, and I like Sir Trevor Carmichael’s word all the time, we need to select a “czar” who would push this idea of productivity, and he along with his other people would create a productivity improvement programme. Once that is created, then you train people, and the first people you train are the top level people. The first people you train would be the permanent

secretaries, the heads of departments and the chief executive officers. Madam President, do you know that in every business there is a marketing manager, there is an accountant and there is a production manager? We talk about productivity but have you ever heard of a productivity officer in any business in Barbados? I have heard about a human resource manager, but I have never heard about a productivity officer in any company or any business in Barbados. I am sure there are organisations like BIMAP, who could design a job description for a productivity officer but we need to train and employ productivity officers in every department of Government. You have no control the private sector but we could suggest them to that they do likewise because the productivity improvements should really come from the private sector even though Government is expected to have that as well.

Madam President, as I mentioned earlier, the experiment with the school, I think we should have an experiment with this as well. It is simple. We could select three Government departments and put the programme there and try to convince three businesses, through the Chamber of Commerce, to select three businesses and put the programme in and review it after six months or a year and see what happens. We have to keep improving it because we are talking about improvement. Madam, if you do that, you would know whether or not it works and how you could make it work better because productivity improvements will lead to growth in our economy.

Madam President, the \$100 million that we talk about tourism, instead of giving us \$2 billion in returns, we may end up with \$6 billion in returns. Madam, that is the kind of thing that we need to start looking at in Barbados. we have to become more efficient, more effective and we can only do that through training. You have to do that through being trained in the right thing. If you want a mason, you cannot train him in carpentry. If we want productivity improvement and we have to train people in productivity.

Madam President, two things as I wrap up. I have said here on a couple of occasions that I will not about Pelican and last time I spoke I said that it is only a fool who does not change his mind and I still will not talk about Pelican. I I do not want to call Pelican a football but whatever you want to call something that people just talk about, call it that. I am no longer concerned about what decisions are made at Pelican. I think we have given good ideas and we have put forward good positions and they are ignored. Madam, people who do things at Pelican believe that they know what they are doing. We have Pelican Village which tenants supposedly rent space and you have a promotion for Pelican and you put the promotion on Trevor's Way and that is the promotion to get sales for Pelican.

Madam President, when it gets to that point, I have to admit that I am not so well tutored in marketing or business to understand the logic in that, so I have to give up on that and, Madam, I have given up on it. I think that the tenants in Pelican will continue to do what they can and that it will either flourish or it will fail, so we will see what happen. Madam, that is what I have to say about Pelican.

Madam President, finally, I want to remind this chamber that some time ago, we debated a Resolution on a small business project and at that time I was elated because every single Senator spoke on that Resolution without fail and it was passed unanimously. Madam, there was no divide, there was no political discussion on that Resolution and, Madam, I am pleased that the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Small Business heard this Senate and in his wisdom created a Committee to develop a small business policy for Barbados and recently I have heard him say that policy is in its final stages, that it should be going to Cabinet soon and I think he said that he would bring it to the House as well. I think that we need to congratulate ourselves on that. Madam, when I wrap up I want to say that I still believe that the Senate is not a talk shop. I believe that ideas raised here are good ideas. I believe that we hear good political discussions but we also hear some very good national discussions as well. I want to point out that even that small thing I have mentioned just now about the small business policy is an indication that this Senate does things that are worthwhile.

Madam President, I will have a few other things to say because I think that either a Bill or a Resolution will come here soon that will give me the opportunity to say a little more on industrial development in Barbados.

Madam President, I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. I hope that some of things I have said would have resonated in the minds of some of the decision makers. I think the idea of the nursery schools and the idea of the productivity officers is critical to the further development of Barbados.

Madam President, with those few words, I am obliged.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Husbands, you have the Floor.

Senator H. HUSBANDS: Madam President, I am a bit nervous having to speak on this Resolution today. We have had such fine speeches from Senator Hunte, Senator Ince, Senator Todd, with some prompting from me, of course, that it sets me on the back foot. Madam, in the days when I was in the trade union movement, working along with Sir Roy, he always used to trick me by speaking to an audience ahead of me and then I had this hard act to follow and I have alwasys promised that I would try to speak

ahead of him, so that he would have such a hard act to follow but, Madam President, I will tell you that the next time, I will not be speaking after these honourable gentlemen because they all spoke so well and Senator Sandiford-Garner also outlined the position of the Government on issues in tourism. They have been several philosophical issues raised by both Senator Adams and Senator Watson on the issues in education. I want to spend some time again dealing with education but not right now. I will do so later in my presentation but unfortunately, I have to avoid those philosophical issues largely to deal with some more mundane, every day administrative matters that I think are more pertinent at this moment because what they are discussing are continuing issues in education and we will probably touch on some of them. There are some aspects of Senator Watson's speech in the beginning when he referred to persons he thought made significant contributions to Barbados that I want to align myself with.

Madam President, I too am a great fan of Rhianna and the New York Times have a habit writing about her and analyzing her

, analysing her performance, her clothes and speaking very highly of her. In the most recent release of her latest album "Anti", the New York Times said that Rihanna has reached the stage as an artist where she is redefining the very thing we refer to as popular music, that the album is a collection of songs produced and sung by a person who now does not have to rely on the sale of music for her existence. She has reached that stage where few artist have reached where they do just what they want to do for the pleasure of doing it and not have to look over her shoulder at who is listening or whether people are listening, and they found that to be the essence of the level that she has reached and it is important that we recognise that this is the work of young Barbadian. He mentioned the number of people, Senator De Peiza also mentioned a number of others and for some strange reason I thought she would have mentioned Hayley Matthews the student from Harrison College who has given up her education, she has left 6th form at secondary school, to take up a professional career as a cricketer and is doing extremely well in Australia in the women's version of the Big Bash. This is important because it says to me, and I hope it says to all of us, that there are avenues opening up locally, regionally and internationally for our young people especially our young women. The idea that a young Barbadian woman would give up her secondary education - admittedly at the second best school in the country - I am sure you would agree with me, Madam President, to take up a professional career as a cricketer in far away Australia indicates the difference, oh, how times have changed. We need to draw our young people to the opportunities which have become available to them now even in this time of difficulty and challenge so that they can set their heights elsewhere.

Madam President, to blend that into the issues around education, about two months ago I had the privilege to attend a performance at The Alexandra School and it drew to my attention the vast talent in our secondary schools both on the teaching side and on the students side in musical performance. It seems as though you attend a secondary school now that does not have a band, and that could vary from classical to jazz to popular music or all three, your school is pretty low down on the totem pole. It pains me to admit that on that performance that night, the best band on display was from Harrison College. These young people were operating at a professional level. Any one of them on that stage, especially with reference to the band from Harrison College, could transfer to any professional band playing.

I was informed by other people that the band from - I keep on saying St. James Secondary and I should know better - the Frederick Smith School which did not perform that night is the best of all. The idea then occurred to me that night - and as we are doing this in education now - that we are certifying so many skills that probably existed before in the schools but were not certified, that we should look to certify musical performance as a Caribbean Vocational Qualification. I toyed with the idea, I discussed it with the Minister and other people, but only a few days after I noticed in the newspaper that the TVET Council has put out a tender for somebody to write the standards for musical performance, so I did not even have to pursue it, these people are thinking of this thing. The importance of that is that many of those students, they leave school certified to in a skill and that can be "transitioned" - that is one of those new American words - to the field of employment quite easily. Senator Sandiford-Garner spoke about the number of cruise ships that are going to be calling at Barbados over the next three years and these are employment opportunities in the field of entertainment that many of these young people must be looking at. We have to provide the certification, the experiences and so on so that they can make that easy transition. I have to compliment the teachers in those areas. You could always tell the ones that had a teacher who was also a performer in a band some years ago, they not only knew the music but they mastered the art of performance. Both Harrison College and the Frederick Smith School have teachers who performed professionally before working with these. That is only a very small snippet of what is going on in the educational system as we speak.

Madam President, if I could take up the some of the other philosophical issues, the point that Senator Watson was making is kind of difficult to place the onerous responsibility, and maybe that is why I left the classroom, on to the shoulders of the teachers for seeming to have full responsibility for the raising of the nation's children. They have some responsibility, they are paid and so on and so forth. I think what the school must do is to create an

environment that is different in many ways from what exists outside of its boundary. When the children step over that gate every morning they must enter an environment that is different with rules, with reward, with discipline, with punishment and with a range of stimulating experiences that will serve them in good stead. We, working along with the parents, have to make sure that we do all that is necessary. We cannot guarantee anything but we need to make sure that we do all that is necessary, as we would say, go above and beyond our duty to safeguard the future of these young people.(S15) There are many weaknesses. We do not want to run away from the weaknesses but I am convinced as I look at the new directions taking place in education today that we are on the right path.

Let me step back though to make a few comments on some other matters, such as this issue of the \$7 million for the independence celebrations. In 1966 I was in Class 3 at Wesley Hall School and the act of this country becoming independence had a profound effect on me, it shook my entire world outlook, my teenage years and so on and so forth and do not regret that. I am proud. My biggest regret, as I have heard one other Senator say, is that we do not have \$20 million to spend on this activity.

There are two aspects to the public discussion, as a person born or coming into teenage years in 1966 as I was, that I find particularly offensive. The first one is that I have seen and heard an argument that what we should do is follow the President of Tanzania, that he postponed independent celebrations to clean up the streets and we should do that. Now, I am the original African liberation day man. I had an African name, I wore the dashiki, everything, so I am not taking anything from anybody telling me that Barbados should follow Tanzania and the President of Tanzania. The President of Tanzania banned mini skirts because he said that they were related to HIV/AIDS and he imprisoned a set of civil servants because they went to a meeting with him late. Tanzania is a country in which people ... and killed them. There are people in this country telling me and going on the radio to say that this country should follow Tanzania.

I am sorry that I have to put this discussion in this context. People who served in this Senate are writing in the newspaper that we should follow Tanzania and that is the model of leadership. Tanzania is a country riddled with Cholera. On any Human Development Index it is way below Barbados and I find I offensive that anybody could advance that as an argument.

Now, I feel that the Opposition does get up and throw out things for sprats, run after that and they really talk about something else because this argument I heard advanced about the \$7 million could help poor people and they have so many poor people in this country and it could

fix roads, listen, listen we just had... You could use that argument and apply it to anything. I went to Germany at Christmas with my family. The Leader of the Opposition when we were discussing domestic violence went to Australia with her family. Do you know how much money that costs, my Germany and her Australia, and how many poor people that could feed. I was just in St. James with the Hometown Festival. A lot of people were buying and selling. There was great activity. Do you know how much money was circulated down? Hometown Festival is way cheaper.

Crop Over is coming up. A lot of people will be dancing in the street and drinking alcohol. Let us call off Crop Over and spend it on poor people. I said on this Floor already that the Barbados Labour Party are a group of people founded in the agricultural sector by the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams who the agricultural workers referred to as either Joshua or Moses. They went into the agricultural sector rubbing shoulders and told the people in 2014 that they did not know that things were so bad for agricultural workers, so if you could that you could use any ridiculous argument about \$7 million.

My regret is that we did not have \$20 million to spend on it. I went to ShopSmart on Saturday and I saw boxes and boxes packed up Hennessy Brandy, what the young people does call the long necks, in big blue and yellow boxes with the Barbados Coat of Arms in the middle, a big thing saying 50th Anniversary of Barbados Independence, and it hurt me... Madam President, you know I take a little drink sometimes for the worms as the old people would say. I was hurt as the old people would say to think that a French brandy manufacturer could produce and send to Barbados and then when you look at the bottle and the label 50th Anniversary celebration Barbados.

They say the Government should set the tone. The \$7 million lays out a set of activities. Then we the producers come in and take... We talk a lot about American businesses. Do you see how the leading Fortune 500 companies in the United States of America take advantage of Black History Month? They use the concept to sell more cars to black people, but were are our producers that somebody could come from France...

I will tell you how the story ended. I was with my wife so I was looking at the bottle turning it over, counting the few cents in my pocket and looking to see if I could afford one and she come up behind me and said where you going with that and I had to put it back. Madam President, if anybody is willing to give me a gift of Hennessy the 50-year Barbados special I am willing to accept it. It reflects poorly on us. When I see the \$7 million sets the tone and our people then there is thing the Opposition runs around with about being left out. The members of the Democratic

Labour Party criticised the Party because they felt that they were not involved enough in the celebrations, own members did that. What we had to do was that we had to organise 50th Anniversary Celebrations for our people. What is wrong with the Barbados Labour Party organising 50th Anniversary Celebrations to talk about their contributions to Barbados during the last 50 years?

Madam President, we cannot deny that the Barbados Labour Party was the Government for almost half the time and if Barbados has been recognised as being an outstanding place in which to live, to raise your children and so on, then the Barbados Labour Party must have contributed, despite whatever criticisms we may have of them.

Madam President, the way I see that \$7 million is that it provides the platform for communities, businesses and so on to join in the celebrations. Madam President, whatever that is one, anybody who has anything going on and slaps 50th Anniversary on it, I will be there. I do not care who it is, it could be the Barbados Labour Party or whoever, I will be participating in it because I am proud. Madam President, as I said, I am still one of those people of that era that sang "God Save the Queen" and so I understand the significance of this and that is my position on it.

Madam President, there are some issues in relation to education that I want to address. Madam President, before we get there let me address the issue of fingerprinting. Again, I am the original civil libertarian, I have protested against everything in this country and for everything, I have protested for and against but times have changed. When I saw what happened in Brussels, a city that I have visited, where I had headed straight to the bars, there have over 900 varieties of beer in the country of Belgium. Belgium produces the best beer in the world. Anybody going to Brussels, I can advise you on a few to try, since I have tried them myself.

Madam President, when I saw that, and the area is near the town hall area, it is a part of Brussels with which I have had some familiarity, based on my vast experience in these matters, so it touched me. Madam President, I am saying this, this is a free and democratic country, my advice to the Right Honourable Prime Minister, if he asks me, is to take whatever measures that are necessary to protect this country.

Madam President, if you are opposed to it, this is a free and democratic country, you can go to court, I prefer to err on the side of caution. If you are not satisfied with the fingerprinting business, you can take it to court, the court will decide whether it is constitutional or not.

Madam President, on the subject of education, I have said already in various forum that I am pleased that we had last year more people qualifying for the Barbados Scholarship than we had money to pay for them, that is a good position to be in. we had to go and look for the additional money but it is a good position to be in to have more people qualifying than you made provision. If we had made provision for 40 persons, 50 persons qualified and so we had to find the additional moneys to support that extra.

Madam President, I spoke earlier about how our young people are doing. This is not to say that there are not challenges. This is not to say that there are not boys and girls on the 'block' but the majority of our young people are doing well. I spoke about the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications and I tied that, again, to the performance of our young people with the school bands.

I have spoken in this Honourable Chamber before about the work that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and Innovation is doing for those young people in our schools who are challenged. There is the School Positive Behaviour Management programme, the Student Services section of the Ministry has a number of psychologists employed there, but that is way not enough. I wish there were more, if we had more money we would put more.

Madam President, the Sandy Lane Trust or the Maria Holder Trust have given us money, they have supported the activities of some of these young psychologists and social workers in some of our primary schools. We are eternally grateful for that. It is not enough, there is need for much more, but there is a recognition that these are issues to be dealt with.

Madam President, we have spent, and Senator Todd alluded to it, to date \$24-minus-8 million refurbishing the Lodge School, I am told. It was reported to me recently that a young lady was up there recently. She looked at the campus and said that it looks like a university.

Madam President, part of that, I must admit, Senator Fraser, had to do with the restoration of one of the historic building there, the original inclination was to push it down but the Ministry was persuaded to refurbish the building because of its historical value. That did not add to the cost significant but it took a little longer because obviously it took a little more care and you had to have who could have done that in a specialist way.

Madam President, these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure make provision now for the completion of the Auditorium. As I said when Senator Todd was speaking, we are building a 1 000-seat auditorium which will serve the school and the community. The work there is well underway.

Madam President, the issue of fees at the university always comes up. I am not going to go over the rationale, we have discussed that time and time again. The cost of university education outstripped our ability to fully 100 per cent fund it. We are only funding now 80 per cent. It is a decision that was recognised years ago, it was staring us straight in the face and as you know education and health services are, as the Americans would say especially in the North East, the third rail in the subway track which is the one carrying electricity, so you do not touch that.

Health and education; but we had to deal with the issue of university education. We could not meet the costs, and that is a reality. Listen. Anybody, any young person in Barbados leaving school or having left school who is walking around telling people that they are not going to university because they cannot afford it, they are joking. They are jokers, and probably do not deserve to be in any university. This is the middle class society that we are rearing our children in now, where the children do not do anything for themselves. Do you know people come to me to discuss their child's future in terms of university and what is available, and I have never seen the child? People come into my office to fill out a form to apply for aid, and I have never seen the child. It is only on faith; well, they produce the certificates and so on, but they do not say to their children, "Go to the Ministry of Education and enquire". An adult says to me, "I cannot get a student revolving loan for little Johnny because I have just started a mortgage"; but it is nothing to do with you. It is little Johnny's loan. Little Johnny is who is going to repay it in four years with a year off when he or she graduates. People do not understand that. Anybody that says to you that they cannot go to university because of money....

I discovered that the Ministry of Education, even in the times when the Ministry was paying the fee fully, had a fund set up where you could apply to get money to buy your books. You could get \$900, you could get \$1 800 to buy books. I have seen the forms come before me. The argument about means testing is a difficult one. I heard it mentioned earlier, and the problem with means testing is that sometimes it is more trouble proving this and checking that than it is worth. If a youngster is applying for \$900 to help him buy his books, to go and show that his father works for this and his mother works for that and so on, it is \$900. It is not \$1 million. I am kind of here and there on the means testing business, but you can apply to the Ministry and get money to buy your books, or supposedly to buy your books, because you get a cheque for \$900 or \$1 800. You apply and they give you a cheque and you say I am buying books with this.

Right now, there is what is popularly referred to as the bursaries where the Ministry of Education, depending upon your circumstances or the circumstances of your parents, provides money. We were a little behind for this

current academic year, but it has nothing to do with availability of money. It had to do with administrative issues, but come September now there is going to be more money available for bursaries and grants at varying levels. The people in the Ministry of Education are not fools, and if you enter the University of the West Indies and you are gifted and show great promise, you are not going to drop out of university because of money. Some provision would be made for you. So when these people say, "I cannot go to university because I do not have any money", of course you do not have money but there is the Student Revolving Loan Fund. We have removed the need for sureties because that has created some problems, especially the challenge of getting sureties who were substantial enough, so we took the decision to do away with the sureties. If you want to go to the university, there are resources available so that you can go to the university.

Madam President, there are some other things going on in education that I need to mention. The Opposition talked about school meals. The leader who spoke is a distinguished medical practitioner. He did not quite blame the school meals for childhood obesity but he walked near, because he talked about how much bread they have. I am a primary school teacher. Despite whatever you put before or after my name -- my wife may put "idiot" before and after -- I am a primary school teacher of social studies. Therefore, just as I said earlier that I have consumed a little beverage here and there, I have eaten a school meal here and there also. When I visit schools now, I do not see it and I am hurt by it. In my day, I walked around that room -- your son can tell you -- and made sure that everybody had a knife and fork. I meet big men today who tell their children that all they remember about me is that this man taught them to eat with a knife and fork. I do not see enough of that today, so when I talk about the school meals, I know what I am talking about. As you know, my wife is a principal of a primary school, so I know about the school meals.

I went and I got the menu for the School Meals Department for Term 1 from the Lancaster Centre. Term 1 is September to December. We are in Term 2. I got that too. January to March. These menus are prepared in a three-week period, and in Weeks 2, 7 and 12 the menu is the same, so let us start now and go back. The menu says, and I am assured not from anybody in the Ministry but from intimate knowledge of this menu, that they vary very little from what is here. No official in the Ministry told me that; I got that from intimate contact with the School Meals Department.

Asides.

Senator H.A. HUSBANDS: Weeks 2, 7 and 12 in Term 2: Codfish kedgerree which is cooked up salt fish with a fancy name.

Madam, they tell me that is cook-up salt fish with a fancy name, pickle cucumber with parsley and half of an orange. Madam, that is on Monday. On Tuesday of week two, seven and 12, macaroni and cheese, peas and corn and fruit cake. Madam, you have a give children a little macaroni and cheese. Madam, if you remember, today is Wednesday, so it is the last day of school for the children, so it may not be what is here but generally, flying fish, turkey ham and a salt roll, lettuce, tomato, dressing and a banana. Madam, on Thursday, chicken weiners, hot roll, ketchup, relish mustard and ice cream. Madam, on Friday, if they were at school, pasta twist, creole mixed beef, with peas and carrot and banana bread.

Madam President, I am making the point that this menu despite the challenges we face is essentially, the same menu of my days and your son's days when he was in my care.

Madam President, I am sorry, I know you do not have sight yet but that deals with the menu. There are some schools, if you read the newspaper everyday and listen to the call-in programmes, you would think that there an explosion of safety and health issues at schools. Every now and then, you read about some school being closed and so forth and so on. The reality is that there are 22 secondary schools and 80 odd primary and nursery schools. There is the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, there is the Community College and so on and so forth. Madam, all in all, the Ministry of Education administers about 150 sites. Madam, not 150 sites, not 150 buildings because, as you can imagine, at the Community College there are several buildings and at whatever school there are several buildings, so on any one day, there must be some bird in some roof, especially at this time of the year when they are cutting the canes, there must be some mouse running around somewhere. The things that you see in the newspapers are just the ones that the newspaper hears about but with 150 sites and all these buildings, on any one day something must happen. Madam, last summer, for example, the Ministry did its summer building programme and hired a contractor to go to a particular school where there were birds in the roof. We have a lot of problems with birds and a lot of problems with monkeys even at some of the better known schools in the City. Madam, the monkeys come under the premises and take things out of children's hands. You do not hear about these things because for some reason they do not reach the Press. Madam, my point is that on anyone day there are lots of things that can happen. Madam, that is what it is because we live in an era when people are much more aware of safety and health and, Madam, that is a good thing.

Madam President, people are aware of these things. We have 24 hours news and social media that would cover them and so on and so forth. I am not blaming them but all I am saying is that this represents the regular activity

associated with running all of these sites on any one day. Madam, there were birds in the roof and the job of the contractor was really, I believe to seal the roof but what he did, he went and he applied the terms of his contract. He sealed the roof. The contract did not say that he should remove the birds first, so he sealed the roof with birds in it and by the time school opened in the first week, the birds died and then you had to deal with the smell and whatever, so they had to close the school. Madam, these are some of the realities.

Madam President, some of the schools, for good reasons, because of our climate are constructed with bricks opening and that may be good for the winds and for cooling but it also good for mice and rats to get into the classroom, so any one day we come across these things. Then there are the wider significant safety and health issues. I have had a long initiation from my days as the Secretary of the Teachers Union with safety and health issues at schools beginning with St. Leonard's Girls School. There was a school called St. Leonard's Girls and my sister has never allow me to forget that I close her school while mine is still open. She now says to me, "Why do you not go and close yours now. You closed my, why do you not close yours". Madam, in all seriousness, going back to those days, one of the things I have learnt is that when people are on a site whether it is a school or a regular work place, come to the genuine conclusion that something in the atmosphere at that institution is making them sick, you are worse off if you try to convince them that they are not sick. You have to do everything possible, something regrettably, it cost a pretty penny to make sure in your attempt to convince them it is okay. You cannot just convince them by telling that they are not ill. You have to do everything scientifically possible to make sure sometimes that these issues are dealt with and, Madam, that is the only way to confront it. The general public may say whatever but there are real challenges that you have to face.

Madam President, since we have so many medical doctors in the Chamber, that brings me to a concern I have had about medical doctors and these issues. I have difficulty understanding how a doctor, a general practitioner or maybe a heart specialist can sit in his office, never see my school, never see my work place but writes a medical certificate that says that my work place or my school is making somebody sick.

At least you got to know where the place is. You must have seen it in order to come to the conclusion that you have come to, and that is another issue altogether. There have been challenges at some schools. Some are pretty simple and straightforward. I spoke earlier about the birds in the roof at St. Leonard's Boys' School. At the Springer Memorial School, because of the neglect of the water system, the reservoir next to the school is on the

verge of collapse and it would be a tragedy for all of us if that reservoir went out of production because we would not have this meeting here today because there would be no water so the Barbados Water Authority (BWA) has had to take emergency measures to construct a new reservoir and in doing that dust went into the school. The teachers and the students were very gracious. They held out, held out and held out until they could not hold out any longer, but that work has to be done so the decision was taken to send home the 1st and 2nd formers for the remainder of the term.

At Grazettes Primary, again in their enthusiasm in dealing with the Chikungunya Virus the people spraying the thing pushed the hose in the closed building and left it there and the entire mist of the disinfectant or whatever the correct name settled in the walls and in the furniture. These are every day problems that happened and then there are the more complicated ones like at Combermere School on which a lot of time was spent. We had local the Environmental Protection Department, the local private sector, safety and health people, the CBC, and people who have come and done their work and so on and we are well on the way to resolving that give or take a few little hitches or a few little trees.

The issue is that we have had to confront these things. As I say sometimes the issue is straightforward and simple like the birds in the roof and the construction of the reservoir and other times it is more complicated and more technical, but rest assured on each occasion the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation employs the best available resources to resolve these problems and sometimes they cause some dislocation.

Madam President, let me end by talking about the work that is going on at Erdiston Teachers' Training College because this is important. Just as we have dealt with the curriculum issues, certification and so on and so forth, we are dealing with the issue of teacher training. Let me begin by saying, again for Senator Fraser, that we are about to finally and completely refurbished the original building at Erdiston Teachers' Training College. That is the house that had the fire and the roof collapsed. For me that has been a difficult process. Again, I am intimately connected to Erdiston Teachers' Training College. I was trained there by Senator De Peiza's father and I met my wife when we were students at Erdiston Teachers' Training College so I have an intimate and personal interest in Erdiston Teachers' Training College.

We are preparing for the first cohorts in the Bachelors of Education in Primary Education and the New Diploma in Educational Leadership. In order to be able to do this and do it properly, we have had to start, and it is not something that is planned. As we speak, the entire place is being completely rebuilt. The library facilities are being

expanded and improved. All those old rooms that used to serve as the dorms in the days when student-teachers lived in Erdiston are also being refurbished to be used as classroom and lectures offices. We have also started the construction of a 300-seat auditorium and teaching facility. Major work is being undertaken at Erdiston Teachers' Training College, not to begin later this year, but has been begun and certain sectors of its are nearing completion.

These developments, Madam President, I am pleased to note and I am convinced will help improve the quality of our teacher education providing broader and better approaches to dealing with challenging and difficult students and will augur well for the educational system in Barbados.

Madam President, I thank you.

SUSPENSION

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for lunch until 2.30 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and MADAM PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

MADAM PRESIDENT: The Sitting is resumed. Senator Crichlow, you have the Floor.

ORDER No. 2 (RESUMED)

His Honour Senator the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLLOW: Thank you, Madam President. I rise to speak on certain aspects of the Appropriation Bill. I should be dealing mainly with education as I have been dabbling in that for some time. I am proud to be a Barbadian. I think that one of the reasons why Barbadians are proud people is that we have been blessed with leaders over the years who have considered education to be vital for the building of a country. Of course, it is body, mind and spirit we are made of. The State for the most part looks after those things that concerned the body and mind and we leave religion to look after things of the spirit.

I have been involved in education for most of my adult life. After leaving sixth form at Combermere School I was invited by the Headmaster to act on the staff and I did that for about two years and then I went off to study theology and graduated in 1960, I think, and then when I came back from England I was asked to be Headmaster of Christ Church High School and I spent six years doing that and I went back to my old school as a master and from

there I went off to Jamaica to be the Chaplin of the University of the West Indies at Mona.

Asides.

His Honour Senator the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLAW: You cannot hear me? Is it any better now? Sorry, I have not been blessed with a very strong voice. I do not like shouting. I remember shouting on one occasion, that is when I was at the Cathedral and this member came in to the porch and the bulletins were on a table there and she took up a bulletin and saw that only one side of it was printed and she said "looka my crosses", so I had to shout at her and told her to put that bulletin down and take up another. She thought that was put specially for her and she was sure that it was not a good sign, it was really obeah, that is what it was really. That is the only time I remember shouting apart from shouting at cadets giving orders but "looka my crosses". There is still a lot of obeah in the island I think. Sometimes when I see the lottery being played at night and I see the power ball, number 2 seems to be loaded or something. When I see number 2 occurring all the time I can say it would be number 2 and then number 2 turns up, but do not let me prevent you from buying your normal number of tickets every evening.

Asides.

I have no luck where that is concerned and I have never bought any tickets myself. I remember being at a fair some time and there was a game which you could win but you had to take a magnet along a wire without allowing it to touch from start to finish, and I won so much money doing that that they had to beg me to stop and it was just because my nerves were very steady. The person who was running it asked me how it is that your nerves are so steady and I said I am really a priest, I was just in 'civis' so he would not have known that but I attributed it to the fact that I was not stressed out. For those who want to know how to get rid of stress I usually tell them to live one day at a time. I have found that helps. People say they cannot believe that I am 81, they think that I am 60 so they asked what I am eating or drinking and I said I am just taking one day at a time. That is important because I remember a very good friend of mine who was a Professor of pediatrics at university and every year in summer he used to go back to England to see his family, they could not cope with the violence in Jamaica, and this particular year when he was to leave we found him hanging from the ceiling in his home and we took him down and he recuperated at Chaplins' Lodge and then I took him to England. I mention that because the problem that he faced was that in retirement in 10 years time he saw himself as a very poor man. It is this that made him attempted suicide because he was living 20 years at one time and that is too much strain on your system, that is why I was quoting the words of Jesus when I spoke of one day at a time. Jesus said

sufficient until the day is the evil thereof. Madam President, that is the answer to stress, those of you who maybe stressed out, start thinking of one day at a time.

Madam President, in our Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure education and health are the two items that we spend most of our money on and that is how it should be, one cannot be looking after the body, the mind...

Madam President, we in Barbados are very fortunate to have had education from nursery to tertiary. I do not think that our young people know that this is a considerable expense for a very small country because university education in larger countries like Britain and United States of America is not free, it costs a lot. I would like to remind our young people that they should make the most of it because to be able to have a university degree... Now we have only recently decided that students will pay 20 per cent of the economic cost of tuition but that is wonderful, really, for a small developing country like Barbados. I think that they should make every effort to make the most out of it.

Madam President, one of the things that disturbs me very much is the number of young people who are addicted to drugs. When I think of the beautiful young lives that are just being thrown away, it makes me very sad. I have had friends who have suffered like this, one of whom I remember quite well. He was a very fine literary person, a short story writer. He wanted to write a book for parents whose children were on drugs to help them to cope. He felt that he could not write this book unless he had experienced the effects of drugs, so he tried it and got hooked on his first attempt. That was a beautiful young life that was wasted. He was at the University in Jamaica. As I said he was a brilliant young man. The thing was that he wanted to write this book to help parents to cope with their children on drugs but he felt that he had to experience it.

Madam President, I would like to say to young people, especially men, because I do not think there are not as many young women like this, not to throw away their beautiful young lives by taking drugs. There is so much beauty and life, there are so many things to do, so much to think about and imagination that all of us have we can use it to do so many things, but it is really a great pity to see young lives being thrown away like that.

Madam President, if I can start from the beginning, I would want parents to understand that the nursery school age is very important and that I look forward to the time when every primary school in Barbados will have a nursery department. I know a few of them have them now but I think that every primary school should have a nursery department.

Madam President, in my own family I built a small book shelf and put about 25 books on it when my first daughter was about three or four years. By the time she was 10 years old she had over 1 000 books in her collection, all of which she had already read. Our friends knew that she liked reading and some Christmases she would have had over 300 books as gifts. Now she has about 4 000 or 5 000 of her own books, in the different languages.

Madam President, that early period is very important. I think that parents should treat that nursery school period as very important; a lot can be done at home. Most of our parents now are able to read and write and so they can read to their children and get them to love books. Madam President, there is the Public Library.

Madam President, I noticed that at some of the primary schools there are libraries, and I know that she gave a few thousand of her earlier books to one of the primary school she attended. The love of reading is most important at that very early stage. If we were to get our children to love reading they will grow up to love knowledge and it will keep them so busy that they would not have time, really, to stray into undesirable fields. Nowadays our secondary education is free. I had to pay for mine. We paid \$8 a term at Combermere in the junior school, and then \$12 in the senior school. I think at that time Harrison College was \$24 a term throughout, while Lodge School was like the English public school which is very private, and was also a boarding school and the cost would have been \$25 a term. Now everything is free to the parent, and sometimes you get the impression that parents do not value the education of their children as much as they used to when they had to pay for it; but that happens with things that seem to be free. They are not really free. They have to be paid for. Then from secondary school you go onto university which is, again, free until recently. We are very fortunate in Barbados, and it is good to know that as a Barbadian, if you use the opportunities which are there for you, you can really reach the highest level and be able to cope with life in any country. You will find that with our nursery, primary, secondary and tertiary, we are on the same level as people anywhere, for a tiny country.

I remember one day speaking to a class in Birmingham, I think it was. I told them I was from Barbados and I said I would show them where it was on the map. They brought out the Atlas and I looked all over it and could not find Barbados. It was not there, actually. The scale was too large, and the youngsters laughed at me because I could not find Barbados on the map. We still had a good chat. I was also in Jersey in the Channel Islands and a man who was about 70 years old saw me and asked, "How did you get like that? Were you standing in the sun all day?" He was around 70 and he had never seen a black person. When I went to talk to children, I knew that what they wanted most was to touch my hair, and I would walk

through the class and let them touch it and then I could tell them anything. It is important, though. I am talking about the 1950s just before the large-scale emigration to Britain took place. At that time, many people in Britain, especially children, had never seen a black person.

We are very fortunate in Barbados and we ought to help our young people to appreciate that and to know that they can go to any part of the world. One of the things, too, I think we ought to spend some time on is helping our youngsters to be able to speak a language other than English. There is French and Spanish which we are accustomed to. Of course there is German as well, but especially for a country with such a large tourist industry, more of our people ought to be able to speak French, Spanish and German, if only those three. It helps the visitor to feel more at home if he or she meets a person who speaks their language. After the very fine presentation on tourism that Senator Sandiford-Garner gave this morning, I thought I ought to mention that. It would help. Is there anything more to say? I promised not to be too long. I have spoken about nursery, secondary and tertiary. I have told the youngsters to avoid drugs, so I think that is all I would like to say, Madam President. Thank you very much for listening.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Boyce, you have the Floor.

Senator Hon. DARCY W. BOYCE: Thank you, Madam President. I am delighted to be able to contribute to this debate on the Appropriation Bill and to say very clearly that I am in full support of the Appropriation Bill which we have before us. Just as a note of clarification for some Members who did mention to me the question of how to reconcile the figure in the Estimates book for expenditure with the figure in the Appropriation Bill. There are some items of expenditure which are defined by statute. Personal emoluments is one of those, retiring benefits is a second one, and debt service is a third one. When you add those three together and take them away from the total expenditure, that brings you to the amount in the Appropriation Bill. Since those other items are already by statute defined, we do not have them in the Appropriation Bill, which essentially covers the discretionary spending of the Government.

Madam President, we have made good progress in our fiscal position. We are not quite where we want to be, but we have made good progress. I would suggest that maybe we should spend a little time thinking about the major events over the last eight years that have occasioned us considerable fiscal distress.

Madam President, I want to start there because Senator Ince mentioned the loss from taxation of the international business services sector. We began in 2008, to

feel the effects of the investment crisis that had started in 2007. Of course, losses were made on their investment portfolio which means we did not earn the tax. In 2008 and 2009, the losses from 2007 were carried forward, as the law permits them to do and so we did not make any taxes and they carried forward the losses they made and certainly, the Canadians changed their tax system and we had to adjust and find a way to keep the companies here. We made that judgement intending to keep the jobs we had in that sector here in Barbados, intending to keep those 3 000 and 4 000 persons employed in that sector and to continue to earn most of the income that we earn from that sector. The last figures I saw put that income at close to \$900 million dollars which is close to 10 per cent of the GDP.

Madam President, the effect of that was that we have lost essentially "around \$200 million a year". It was not a one-time loss. It was not that we lost it in 2008 or 2009, it meant that for every year thereafter our tax take was somewhere between \$150 million and \$200 million below where it would ordinarily have been. When you take that over eight years, you are talking about somewhere around \$1.2 billion of revenue that you would have lost. We tried to make up some of that by other taxation, by cutting expenditure some places but there is only a limit to how far we can go with either of that and so, of course, you had to borrow some money to help you pay the bills that you would normally have had to pay because you lost this much money. Madam, my estimate is that you probably would have had to borrow another \$250 million just to service the interest on that debt and when you consider what Senator Ince told us on Monday about where our debt really was, I think it was \$6 billion, and you add another \$1.3 billion because of this loss in revenue and the associated interest cost, you see where that would have put us.

Madam President, we continue to forget that event. It was very quite but it was a very drastic cut on our taxation revenue. It was probably around eight per cent or so of our revenue tax per year that we have had to endure for several years. Madam, of course, that was associated with the slow down in tourism, the slow down in the international business services sector itself, and all related to the slow down that went on in the rest of the world. Madam, people would say that you are repeating that and that we have heard it many times before but it bears repeating because we continue to forget these things.

Madam President, last years, the UK for the first time since 2007 its GDP reached back to the level of 2007. The USA only reached back to its 2007 GDP the previous year and Europe continues to struggle and to have anemic growth and, Madam, those are the countries that drive our economy in terms of tourism or international business. Madam, for the last couple of years, Canada has struggled because of the fall in oil prices and generally commodity price because Canada also has minerals. Brazil which was

the bright spark on the horizon is now in severe trouble. China that had rolling growth is beginning to see a reduction in its growth. (5:26) We have to remember all these things.

Madam President, the pound sterling has fallen from around perhaps \$160 US dollars to the pound and this morning it was \$144 US to the pound. It is over a 10 per cent fall and we have to begin to consider what it does to the spend. It may not affect the visitor numbers initially but it will effect the spending that happens here.

Madam President, we have had those things and it is worth repeating so that we continue to remember them. The European Union has not gone again on the attack with this tax on fare business where countries such as ours continue to be on the black list of some European countries and that is going to continue to impact our international business services sector.

Madam President, I say all this for you to remember we are not playing on an easy wicket. We have not played on a good wicket for the last years and the wicket is not getting much easier. We have to continue to play very carefully and all that affect the level of revenue that we get and it affects the amount of money we can spend.

Madam President, everybody talks about the Government spending too much and that Government needs to cut its deficit faster. I am coming back to some figures in a minute about that. Madam President, whenever the Government tries to raise a little revenue by raising the VAT rate for 18 months or any such thing, the very people who say to us that we should cut the fiscal deficit. If Government decides to reduce its goods and services, there is a hue and cry from the same people who tell us that we should reduce our deficit because they depend upon the contract for those goods and services. If we say we are going to lay off some people, and we do that with very heavy hearts and only when we cannot do any better but there is a hue and cry from the very people who tell us that we have too many people working in Government and that our wage bill is too high but then they realise that these same wages of these same people go to buy the goods and services that they sell in the private sector, so you have to walk a very delicate balance in terms of how you cut this fiscal deficit and how fast you cut this deficit. Madam, the trade off is between the numbers game, keeping the confidence of the financial sector and keeping the economy from imploding. If the economy implodes, the same financial sector will lose confidence in you. If the deficit continues to rise too fast, they will lose confidence in you, so you have to be able to walk and juggle this thing all the way.

Madam President, I thought I would just want to remind people of the circumstances that brought us here

and where we are. Madam, all of those circumstances that brought us here are not the fault of this administration. I have heard a lot of talk about the cost of running the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Madam President, I suspect that cost is higher now because vital maintenance which should have been done over the years was not done. There was a time soon after this administration took office when there was a real concern that the power company had about putting power into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and we had to move very quickly to change the arrangements there and put in new systems for power intake. The equipment had not been maintained for years and then we had to find money to maintain them. We could not do it all at once so we have had this overhang of maintenance that we have had to continue to do and the same persons who know about this would come and pretend it did not exist.

Madam President, this question that was raised about we are putting into the Estimates a certain amount of money for the Hospital, the Transport Board and so on, knowing that they would take more did not start with this Administration. What both Administrations have found is that you make enough savings from the other things that you have in the Estimates that you are able then to find the money to put the supplementary in the Estimates. I suspect that if you put in the full thing in the Estimates people would probably spend it all too, but when you feed them with the long spoon then they know that they have to do things a certain way. I just wanted to raise that because it gives the impression that we are doing things wrong.

Madam President, I do not get into discussing the cost of financing the University of the West Indies. I am a graduate of the University of the West Indies albeit the Mona Campus. My daughter and my wife are both graduates of the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill and I love the University. One of these good days I might even become a professor and teach from experience because I know a little bit about many things. Madam President, most of the increase costs at the University of the West Indies that we are now made to bear were commitments made before 2008. All of the expansion of that plant were made before 2008. We would do is to try our best and we will eventually get to fund the university properly and on a secure basis, but let us not forget that we did not get here only on the steam of this Administration, the momentum of prior decisions took us here and we cannot avoid it. We have to do what we have to do and we have to be careful how we assign blame.

Madam President, I am delighted that The Lodge School is getting repaired. The Lodge School has been an unfortunate school for many years. When I took the Screening Test, as it was called in those days, The Lodge School used to be one of the schools ... You would toss a coin and I chose Harrison College because it was easier to get there from Chalky Mount than to get to The Lodge

School so I went to Harrison School. The Lodge School used to get as many Barbados Scholarships as Harrison College did. It was a good school and then suddenly it went through a phase of turbulence where all kinds of funny things happening at The Lodge School. I was too young to fully appreciate what happened, but The Lodge School went through a terrible time. Apparently it was not only did the administration, the management and the teaching staff, but the physical buildings and now we have had to fix that school and so it should be. I hope the Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation would fix the one in Crumpton Street too because let me tell you something, we who went to school there do not complain about it and ones who go to school there now do not complain about it, but if any of you all go inside there you would want to leave in there immediately because of the condition of the school which is very bad. A lot of the heritage schools have been neglected over the years and that goes for Combermere School, Foundation School, Coleridge and Parry School, Alexandra School and Alleyne School, but time is longer than twine and the good Lord does not sleep, so let us move on.

Madam President, we have a problem with the Sanitation Services Authority. We do not have a enough trucks. As I was contemplating I asked a question of my good friend Senator Ince, and he would not dear tell me the answer. How many millions dollars did we spend on Greenland? I do not know what the cost of a sanitation truck is, but I suspect that for the amount of money that we spent on Greenland we could have brought 100 sanitation trucks, enough to last us for many, many years. I am not blaming anyone, I am saying that you make a judgment at a point in time and that judgement may work out or it may not work out, but when you have to deal with the effects of it, it is somebody else's problem very likely.

Madam President, I want to talk a little bit now about the cost of borrowing in this country. During the recession we have had in the world, we have seen interest rates go down everywhere, perhaps not as far down in Barbados as they have gone down in other places. There used to be that Barbados Treasury Bills would yield you probably 1.5 to 2 per cent more than US Treasury Bills. US 3-month Treasury Bills are now close to zero, if they have not gone below that, but I think it is close to zero, which suggests to me that Treasury Bills in Barbados should be around 1.5 to 2 per cent but they are closer to 3 per cent. That difference between what I think they should be at and where they are in interest rates translates into significant amounts of expenditure for the Government. A 1 per cent reduction in the Treasury Bills rates would probably save this Government about \$30 million a year. A 2 per cent reduction phased in over time on the debentures as they mature could probably save the country over the next year bringing us up to the level of probably \$50 million a year. Madam President, when you put those two together you are

probably talking about the opportunity to reduce interest costs by close to 1 per cent of GDP somewhere between, I would say, \$70 million and \$90 million. Madam President, this is happening at a time when there is extremely high liquidity in the banking system. Normally, when you have high liquidity, when the banks have a lot of money at the Central Bank you would expect interest rates to come down further than where they have come. They have not done that. Are we in the public sector therefore being forced to subsidise somebody else's profit?

Now, Madam President, the point would be made that much of the debt is held by the National Insurance Scheme, and that is true and that is in my view as it should be. The issue I have is whether or not the National Insurance Board needs to earn the rate of interest that they are earning from Government Paper. I do not have the figures, I have to ask Minister Byer Suckoo, but I believe that the National Insurance Board Actuarial requirements to the National Insurance Fund from Government Paper is somewhere around 5 and 6 per cent per annum. I also believe that the National Insurance Board earns on average somewhere between 7 and 8 per cent per annum on Government Paper so the National Insurance Board earns super returns paid for by the taxpayers, I will say no more. If we could get a 2 per cent reduction in the cost of Government Paper held by Barbadians we could save this country, I am sure, \$100 million or more per year.

Madam President, we continue to have to pay a big subsidy to the Barbados Water Authority to pay their debt and so on and so forth and to the Barbados Agricultural Management Company (BAMC) in order to support their operations and to subsidise sugar cane industry.

Madam President, why I mention the Barbados Water Authority is because I just want to recognise the work that it has started on the mains relaying scheme and the metres and so on. Madam President, I never did geography past first form but I wonder how much water we lost over the last 20 years which did not go back into the aquifer and which therefore caused us to have to pump those aquifers more than we should have been pumping them. Sometimes we are afraid to take hard decisions that have implications for the long term and we continue to take short term palliative decisions.

We had the desalination plant and it has taken many years to get desalination to have the water to use. Now I think there are plans in place to get that use. I think the work has started, Sir Roy might be able to tell me better about it, but I think the plan is and I think it has been done to get that water into the national grid. To the extent that we did not use that water before were we not then over pumping the aquifers? These are decisions which at the time they were made might have been good decisions, I am not knocking the decision-making, but they have turned out

not necessarily to have been the best decisions for the country going forward because I do not think anybody factored in a three-year or four-year or five-year drought period. California has just been through five years of drought. We are hoping that ours will only be two years or three years but we have to begin thinking how do we survive going forward with a drought situation.

Madam President, if we think about it, if Sam Lord's Castle comes on stream in a couple years and the Hyatt and the Sandals expansion, that water infrastructure has got to be rolled out and it has got to be rolled out consistently and it has got to be rolled out as quickly we can but we cannot afford not to roll it out otherwise we are imperil and kill off the development that would take us forward.

Madam President, we get some comments all the time about the Administration indulging in too much expenditure. We have done a little quick analysis on what I would call discretionary expenditure. The expenditure of non-discretionary would have been your debt service and your pensions. You can assume that everything else is discretionary. In 2007-2008, that discretionary spending was \$2.54 billion. In 2016-17, the Estimates has got it at \$2.557 billion, an increase of essentially \$250 million over eight years and nine years.

At the same time, Madam President, most of that increase would have come from transfers to critical institutions, the hospital, the university and the Transport Board, so really and truly it is less than a 10 per cent increase over nine years in the discretionary expenditure of the Government. The increase has come in the debt service and pensions and we will explain why in the debt service so when you get the calls for further reduction in Government expenditure to balance it, where do you get expenditure. Senator Watson was right. You got to pay the debt. Barbados will always pay its debt. Whichever party forms the Administration Barbados has and will always pay its debt. Whichever party forms the Administration we will always seek to preserve the Barbados dollar.

Madam President, when you hear Honourable Senators speak in this debate, there is something else that each Honourable Senator wanted to see included in the Estimates. They cut the Estimates for my portfolio too, but having sat just below the chair which the current Minister of Finance now occupies, I understand what the problem is, you only have so much money. Notwithstanding that we all want to have all these lovely things, as the Dean said you have to live one day at a time, you have to take your time to get to these places. The vision is wonderful but we have to take it gradually as we go forward, a little piece each year, trim a little bit here so that you could do

I only said this, not that I am saying that any of the suggestions that came from Honourable Members are not

wonderful suggestions, but you have to put on the hat of the pragmatist, how much of it can you do.

Madam President, what we have taken to doing in the Cabinet of Barbados is to say to people that if they want Supplementaries tell us where they are willing to give up money in whatever area, for them to get \$100 they must show where they are going to make such savings. That is the only way that we have been able to get things managed. I throw out that challenge to all my brethren, and as they say in Jamaica, to all my 'sistren'. This is what managing the Government is about, if you want to have one thing, then you have to cut somewhere else. All Government at any point in time has had to make those decisions.

Madam President, let me move on because I do not think that you are going to give me two hours to speak. Madam President, I want us to come to this matter of productivity in this country. Along with Senator Sir Roy Trotman, Ambassador Robert "Bobby" Morris, the then Right Honourable Prime Minister, Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford, we fought hard to set up a National Productivity Council. When it was first set up, we were all very enthused about it because things were not so good then, hard times were upon us, everybody wanted to look at the National Productivity Council. Madam President, good times returned, the world economy grew and grew fast and nobody wanted to hear anything more about productivity, nobody in the private sector...

Madam President, I think the Government people at the top wanted to push productivity but coming down the line you did not get any encouragement from people to deal with productivity. Madam President, John Pilgrim at the National Productivity Council tried to do a scheme to look at compensation in the public sector based on productivity, and nobody would pay him any mind.

Madam President, it had nothing to do with either the Barbados Labour Party or the Democratic Labour Party but the country that took a decision at the level of enterprises, both public and private sector, to do nothing about productivity for 20 years, so that Senator Watson was right, the Chief Executive Officers needed to be involved in the training for that.

Madam President, not only do the Chief Executive Officers have to be involved, let me tell you something, in Government the Ministers can want anything, no matter how good it is, but if you cannot persuade the technical people to do the work that they have to do to get there, you will still not get there and so it is with any organisation.

Madam President, we have to go back to this matter of productivity. The economy of the United States of America was able to grow the way in which it has grown for 20 years because they always had annual gains in

productivity in the country. But in Barbados you cannot get people to put in IT systems, you cannot get the commercial banks in Barbados to give you an easier e-commerce system with which to work, you cannot get private sector or public sector to work in groups or to work simultaneously, rather than working sequentially to get things done. Therefore, we end up with problems in the banking system, in Town Planning Department and everywhere else because people refused to look at ways of changing how they do things in order to achieve greater output in the country and so we continue to struggle with the matter of business facilitation, the matter of planning facilitation, as we have been struggling for 20 years because people submit plans and oftentimes do not submit those plans fully, and people who oftentimes deal with those plans do not deal with them simultaneously or expeditiously.

Madam President, those arrangements have to change if this country is go to forward and in this celebration of the 50th Year of Independence we have got to commit ourselves to dealing with productivity in a very serious way, not only in terms of technology but in terms of the way that we do things and in terms of encouraging people to innovate, to come up with new products, new services, new ways of doing things. Madam President, I was hearkened to hear Senator Sandiford-Garner this morning talking about those young people who are doing wonderful and new things in the country, that has to happen if as a country you are going to move forward.

Madam President, they say that you cannot pay public servants based on productivity or performance. Maybe in the same way we give the world a Social Partnership, maybe we should give the world a way to compensate public officers on the basis of performance and productivity. We need to have it.

Madam President, let me move a little bit more to the vision for what we have to focus on going forward. I should only spend a little bit of time on one part of the portfolio for which I have responsibility, the renewable energy sector generally. I am sure that a lot of sentiments have been expressed here about how far to with renewable energy. I would wish like most Honourable Member to see us own our electricity coming from the renewable energy. I would like to see too the renewable energy technology moved to a stage where it is cheaper for us to do business with electricity from renewable energy than it is from fossil fuels and we will have to find a way to get there.

I believe that we will get into 100 per cent renewable energy, I reckon maybe early 2030. Why is that, is that we have plants that are there already which can be installed, which are not going to be retired for a little while and if we retire it too early then the consumer is going to have to pay

more for it than we were paying for renewable energy than we are paying for the plant that it has been stranded there.

Madam President, when we talk about moving to renewable energy let us remember that you already have a fossil fuel industry and that there are several persons who are employed in that industry. We have to remember that as that industry wanes and the renewable energy improves, we have to have a plan of action to transition people out of the dying part into the rising part so that we do not compound the issue of unemployment or poverty.

Madam President, we have talked about electric cars. We are going to do a pilot study this year in the Division of Energy on electric vehicles, because we have to understand very clearly how long does the battery last, how do we dispose of such batteries, how many people are required to work in the electric car business as compared to working with the other business, how do we price it. Are we going to generate electricity from electric cars by burning heavy fuel oil or are we going to do it by renewable energy? I raise that because it is not a simple set of solutions. We have to work them through and see what the policy should be. I am all in favour of moving us to the Green Economy. We will get there but we have to be patient about getting there in some instances. Notwithstanding that, I believe that before the end of the third quarter of this year, certainly by the fourth quarter, we will have awarded licences for about 55 kilowatts of capacity out of a peak kilowatt range of 165 in normal times. I expect that come the end of next year we will move that up to about 80 kilowatts. This is for systems that are already under planning or in actual construction.

Right now I think we have got Barbados Light & Power doing ten megawatts solar photovoltaic (PV) plants and a wind energy plant of another ten megawatts, I am told. Then we have a number of people who want to do independent power producer (IPP) plants; large plants over one megawatt of power. We will have a share of the industry for them. We have a share of the industry for the homeowners, and a share of the industry for businesses which want to put in more than what the rider requires, such as ten or 15 megawatts; so we will have an opportunity to segment the generation of electricity so that all sections of the economy are able to participate in that project. The legislation which we would have done is to be able to allow more democratisation in the generation of power.

Madam President, I am hearing that a number of people are very keen to establish agricultural enterprises on the same land as they have the renewable energy operations. They say to me that, depending on how you lay out the PV, you can have the sheep grazing under there. Blackbelly lamb is a very good product. We can normally not get enough of it, either in the hotels, restaurants or in homes, but if we can get that under the solar PV it would

be wonderful. You can certainly get it under the wind. Many of us would remember when you used to pass windmills operating around the country. It would not be a whole field of them but you would find a windmill here and a windmill there, pumping water from the wells and so on, around the place. I believe and I know the people who are working on that intend to integrate windmills, which we call wind turbines now, into their agricultural operations. It does not impact agricultural operations very much, so you would try to help them to bring back not only the energy but also some of the agriculture that we have.

Madam President, there is work going in the Barbados Water Authority to look at solar energy to help them to pump water, so as to save the costs they are now incurring from electricity. There is also work going on to look at all the liquid waste that is being generated and how we can convert that into material to generate electricity as well. That is important so that we can help to save some of our coral reefs, because you do not want all of that liquid waste going out into the water. Looking forward, we are at a stage where the cost of the solar photovoltaic is going down and making it a lot more efficient and a lot more possible for us to put in, and of course the wind power continues to go down as well.

Madam President, we also feel that we need to push hard in reducing the amount of energy the country uses in order to generate \$1 of GDP (Gross Domestic Power). While we may be able to generate electricity from renewable energy sources, it makes no sense to generate electricity and then waste it. What we have to do is to find ways also to save on usage of electricity without impacting negatively on the economy's ability to produce what it produces. Madam President, we are really going to spend some time this year starting with the Government buildings and looking at ways to reduce how much electricity we use. They want us to take that effort into the hotel sector, and we are talking with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) about how we can fund a programme that gets renewable energy and energy efficiency into the hotel and restaurant sector, so as to reduce the costs of operations therein or make it a little bit more profitable for them. Lots of buildings here in Barbados generate waste heat from their air-conditioning systems. How do we take that waste heat and put it into some kind of co-generation arrangement to generate more power for institutions such as hotels, hospitals and so on? We are looking at it because we believe these are ways that we can save. If we push resolutely on these matters, we can get some improvement in the economy.

The oil prices have fallen, and that has affected to some extent what is happening in the industry. What we have done is that the power company has submitted a proposal through the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) to look at an arrangement to establish a price for the

renewable energy producers which does not fluctuate with the cost of fuel. They have got to be able to know what revenue they are going to earn if they are going to continue to invest in the industry. That matter is under consideration now by the FTC, and I am sure they will soon invite comments on the proposal so we can all have a chance to make inputs and help them come to a sensible decision. We are going to have to make that policy decision if we are going to maintain interest in the renewable energy sector at this time of lower oil prices. Oil prices are not as low as they were a month ago. They are back at \$42 a barrel, I heard this morning for West Texas Intermediate, but they were \$36 a barrel a month ago, so it is going to come back up. We cannot have the people going and borrowing money, putting in their renewable energy equipment and then the revenues are all over the place and you cannot forecast what it is going to be. The banks would not lend under those circumstances, so we have got to make sure that we continue the momentum there. We are going to place a mechanism to make sure that momentum continues. That is an important bit of work which is going on.

Madam President, last year this time - it might have been two months before that - we were getting a lot of lashes because of the natural gas situation. I am glad this year that I have not heard a peep from a fellow. We took a decision which may not, unless you had the ideal situation, have been the decision to take, but I am conscious of what Senator Irene Sandiford-Garner said about what happened to the horse while the grass was growing. I could not afford to have the same problem occur again this winter as occurred last winter. Those people at Barbados National Oil Company Limited (BNOCL) and the National Petroleum Corporation worked day and night from last September until Christmas to make sure they had in place arrangements that they could back up whatever the hotel industry wanted.

Madam President, I know on Christmas Eve day I sent a little note to the General Manager of the NPC and asked him where are you with this thing. I asked him if we were ready for Christmas Day and he said yes. Madam, I was in Paris, so I woke up before him and I sent him another little note saying, "James, how are things". He answered that we are on right now, so that plant has been operating. It is a liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant. It is very small but it can handle our needs and it can take care of what the hotel sector needs and what the domestic customer needs so that if BNOC ever had an outage, we can put that into the system and look after them. Madam, we will move further than that. I believe that we have an opportunity to put an energy plant in Barbados that can service Barbados and the rest of the Eastern Caribbean and we shall look at that very closely in the next few months but we have to put that within the whole context of what the national energy policy wants because since it is fossil fuel, we want to balance that against the idea of a green

economy. We are not going to make a commitment at this stage. We have had to make a commitment on the small plant we have in order to make sure that the hotels and domestic customers were not inconvenience but we have to come back to look at that matter.

Madam President, one quick note before I touch quickly on the immigration matter is to say that we have just recently agreed to award another offshore licence to an international company and we are now in negotiations with them on the actual contract. We expect we will be able to complete the environmental impact assessment for BHT in third quarter of this year and to move on with this major international business company which has done very good work in the rest of the Caribbean.

Madam President, let me quickly before time goes on go the matter of biometrics and immigration but first let me say that I am delighted that we have been able to work with the Barbados Tourism Investment to find a way to accommodate the immigration department staff to put them in better facilities. They have suffered a long time. I would have liked to have it done a lot sooner but we have to let the public officers do things in the way they are happiest with to make sure everything go properly.

Madam President, we have met with them and last week I have asked the chief if he is sure people are happy below there. He told me yes, that they have asked for them, so we are going to make it decent for them to go there in that facility.

Madam President, the issue of the biometrics have come up. The Prime Minister has already issued a statement about how he intends to proceed at this stage with the implementation of the biometrics. I just want to say a little bit about the security issues that we face. I do not want to bring the Belgium situation too much into it but we face persons presenting Barbadians passports that have not been properly obtain and we have no way of finding out until afterwards that they have been fraudulently obtained.

Madam President, we have people who are coming in with passports that really and truly have pictures that look like them but the passports are not theirs, persons who have been asked to leave and may have even been deported and who reenter with false passport. Madam, people come in with false passport and may have criminal records and may be on the prohibited persons list. I am sure that the security forces have got several cases of finger prints but no base against which to match them.

Madam President, these are some of the security issues we have at border control. I am also saying that around the world, a lot of Governments are moving towards the use of biometric passports, so that when you

apply for a passport it takes your biometrics and it is encoded into the passport to make sure that when you present that passport, you are who you say you are. When you go somewhere else you can see that it is you. You have the two checks both when you issue the passport and when you present it somewhere else.

Madam President, I am not one to talk too much about security matters and I shall continue to keep my silence on security matters. We will look at the suit very carefully but we will have to make sure we do whatever we have to do within the laws of any Constitution to make sure that we are able to secure the borders of the country. We cannot yield on that. The Prime Minister said he is going to defer the scheme until we have some other things worked out and I agree with that wholeheartedly. Madam, that is my view on it as well but once we have the things worked out, we have to make sure that we put in place a security system that protects this country, protects those people who are here legally in this country and protect us from criminal elements that seek to come.

Madam President, you would be surprise how many people call me each week to say that somebody could not get inside the country. They came in before and now they cannot come in again. Madam President, the data bases that we now use are very updated databases. They give you more recent information and they give you a more extensive past information and normally whenever things happen and you enquire, you find out it is somebody who has committed a crime somewhere which puts that person on the prohibited person list. I cannot tell people what is the crime but I have to say stay out of the matter for now. Madam, as the Prime Minister said, we will look at everything and we will work it out properly, have all the full discussions and then we will make sure this country continues to be well protected and the immigration people, while facilitating good business in this country would also do its security business.

Madam President, while I am on immigration let me mention one before I sit. I think I heard that out of 600 people employed at Sandals, there are 150 work permits. I have checked both with the Barbados Tourism Investment, who has been handholding the Sandals people and the immigration department and out of 570 persons at Sandals, there are about 36 work permits issued to non-Barbadians.

Madam President, your watch did not stop and so I have to stop, but it is time again to talk about all of the other things that we would talk about. I really wish to commend this Appropriation Bill to this Honourable Chamber. Like all other things it is not ideal, it is not what we would all love to have, but it is the best that we can do in these circumstances and I commend it for your approval.

Thank you, Madam President.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Byer-Suckoo, you have the Floor.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Thank you very much, Madam President, for allowing me to enter this debate at this time as we wrap up three long days of debate. I plan to begin by just focussing on some areas of my ministry. There have been some concerns and questions about my ministry and I wanted to deal with that but because of some other things that were said I think I would start elsewhere.

Madam President, I have heard the Opposition suggests and make a case for us not celebrating our 50th Anniversary of Independence suggesting that, for example, that there is nothing to celebrate and outlining reasons why we should not celebrate and still asking to be part of the celebrations, that is true too. Essentially, the question that was put by them was why celebrate. Honourable Senators have spoken and they have addressed that matter. The truth is you only pass that way once and I know that when I turn 50 I plan to celebrate too somewhere down the line.

Asides.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER: In 15 years, Sir Roy, thank you very much. If you are around Sir Roy you are invited and we would have the first dance.

You only pass 50 once and 50 is a reason for celebration, but I do not want to spend time dwelling on why you should celebrate the 50th Anniversary or not, but just to lay out indeed that we do have so much to celebrate. I picked up almost where Senator Hunte left off, well not quite because Senator Hunte dealt with our early years and I thank him for the very lively and entertaining history lesson. I have said that if he were my history teacher I would not have dropped history at 3rd form, he really did bring history to life for us yesterday.

We have a lot to celebrate. Barbados has been described by a former Secretary General of the United Nations as a country that punches above its weight, a tiny country that you cannot find on most maps, but a country that has left its stamp in so many areas, and indeed we punch above our weight and that in itself is something to celebrate.

I wanted to address for the Opposition their concern that they were not being invited and they wanted to be included in our celebrations. The celebrations of our 50th Anniversary of Independence are for all Barbadians black, white, green, yellow or blue, whether you come from the north, the south, the east or the west or anywhere. Our Independence celebrations are for all Barbadians. We have not had any events so far to which the Barbados Labour Party was not invited. The Barbados Labour Party was

invited to participate in all of the events that have been coordinated by the 50th Anniversary of Independence Coordinating Committee and our Secretariat. Indeed, Members were present at the very launch on 6th January here in Independence Square.

Our next iconic event was the Trident Run. We would have seen that in that Trident Run, Barbados Labour Party's Members of Parliament carried the Trident. There were more than one, a Member of Parliament, Mr. George Payne, and a former Member of Parliament and then other Members of the Barbados Labour Party, ran with the Trident, so they were a part of that iconic event. Furthermore, after the Trident Run, there was an event in The Glebe in St. George, a sunset concert.

Senator Dr. J. X. WALCOTT: On a point of order. The Honourable Senator is unintentionally misleading the Senate. The Honourable Senator said that the celebrations are for all Barbadians and made the point that the Opposition was at the launch. She omitted to say that the Opposition never received invitations but went there as they thought it was their duty, and indeed the Permanent Secretary apologised. This is something that I have discussed with the Honourable Leader of Government Business and it is not something that I wanted to raise so the Honourable Senator should be advised. The intention is not to create some mess about this but I would appreciate if the Honourable Senator be clear.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER SUCKOO: Thank you. Madam President, indeed invitations were sent but as Barbadians I hope that the Barbados Labour Party knows that they are invited to every event that we advertise for Barbadians to come. They were there and indeed, thousands of Barbadians were in attendance at that event.

I went on to say that after the run we had a concert in St. George and at that even the Member of Parliament for the area also spoke at that event. Indeed, the in its very last lap, the Trident was handed over to the two sitting Members of Parliament for St. George both of whom are Barbados Labour Party Members of Parliament and they were therefore involved in that activity.

When the Trident left St. George it went to St. Thomas and we would have seen numerous reports in the media with the Member of Parliament for St. Thomas at various schools and churches with the Trident. For Honourable Senators who are not aware, the Trident is doing a 11-month run through 11 parishes visiting churches and schools and other activities where people will be so that folks can celebrate our commemorative Broken Trident standing 50 years ago for our independence and breaking away from England, but now 50 years later standing for everything that it means to be independent and all that it we have achieved as an independent Barbados.

As it goes across Barbados, we remind people of who we are as Barbadians, what we have achieved and what we have to do to continue to achieve. Indeed, Barbados Labour Party Members of Parliament have been carrying that message as well when they have been where the Trident was. Not every activity with the Trident is something that is organised by the Coordinating Committee. In fact, it is the Parish Committees that are responsible for the movement within the parish of the Trident and so they would arrange for it to go to a church, a school or wherever, and if an Member of Parliament can be there a Member of Parliament is there. In St. Peter, for example, I know that for one event the Member of Parliament could not be there, but I am told that the person who has now decided to run for the Barbados Labour Party was there and did speak at that event as well. There has been no effort made to exclude anybody. This is our Trident, this is our Barbados, we are not excluding anybody.

Furthermore, the point that we have been making about independence is that Government is not going to coordinate and fund every single activity. We are encouraging every community to do their own thing, to get involved in something and let us know and we may put it on our website. If you want the Trident there, let us know, we can have the Trident there.

The Democratic Labour Party is having their activities as well for the 50th Anniversary of Independence and I believe they have applied to have the Trident with them on one such occasion, all sorts of groups are having it. It was at Ellerslie Secondary School when they launched their celebration to mark the 50th Anniversary of their school's existence, it was at Special Olympics, church groups and so on. Everybody has the opportunity to be able to do their own thing, have their own celebrations and various churches have asked for the Trident. There is the netball competition that is coming up, the Jeanne Pierre Competition and they have asked for the Trident, so I encourage the Barbados Labour Party to get on board and have your activities as well. Furthermore, the Coordinating Committee is not a Government Committee, it is public and private sector people, non-governmental organisations, it is chaired by a Minister, I am the Deputy Chair and the Secretariat is civil servants so it is not a political thing. I just wanted to deal with that. The Trident is continuing to make its rounds. It is in St. Peter for the balance of this month but I know it would be at Oistins Fish Festival this weekend as well along with the pledge book where we are asking Barbadians to make a pledge in the book. This month we are pledging around the area of health and wellness in particular focussing on persons with disabilities. We are pledging as we say in our National Pledge to in some way do something better to be a credit to our nation.

Madam President, let me go back to some of the things that we do have to celebrate. I heard somebody said our founder, the Father of Independence may be turning in his grave. Suggestions have been made that we have abandoned our social democratic agenda and I just wanted to carry you through a couple of things that we have managed to do since we have returned to office just to point out that this Democratic Labour Party has not lost its moorings or its foundation, furthermore we have continued on the path that the Democratic Labour Party has always ascribe to and we will continue to do so because it is a path that have put people first.

All of our activities, all of our plans, have always been about putting people first and that is why in this term we have committed to a Barbados that is socially balanced, economically viable, environmentally sound and on top of that characterised by good governance. These eight years have found Barbados in a recession and we could have thrown our hands up and said well we did not do this, we did not do that because we did not have the money because our debt was too high because the world is in an economic recession. Yes, we have remembered that the world is in a state and because we are reminded of it we remind folks of it. Yes, the global economic situation is our reality but that has not caused us to sit on our hands and declare there is nothing we can do.

We have insisted that Government continue to run, in fact, that we improved governance in this country wherever we could and we have gone through looking at ways to improve the efficiency of Government, at ways we can reduce cost in some areas in Government and looking in general in ways which the governance can be improved. We have also determined that we have to consider the quality of life of Barbadians and that a time of recession is no reason for us to decide that we are not committed to people and so we have determined that the quality of lives of Barbadians will be our priority, so there has been focus on economic activity, economic growth, on looking at our debt, our budget and so on. We are always reminded Barbados is more than an economy, Barbados is a society and it profiteth us nothing if at the end of the day we balance our books, we eradicate our deficit and as a society we have lost our way, and so we have determined that still has to be a priority and so we have worked in the social areas as well on a number of social programmes.

I am responsible for the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development and I am going to tell you a few of the things we have done, because indeed that ministry has done quite a lot not only since I have been Minister, this month March marks six years I have been in that ministry, certainly in this last three years that we have been in office. It is no secret in my ministry, they would tell you, that they have never seen in memory of anybody who is working at that ministry more

legislation done on labour than they have in the last 30 years. When you talk about labour legislation invariably you are going back to the 60s and the 70s for any significant changes in legislation, and you now have to push the clock forward to the last four to five years to actually see where some other major legislation has done. In the intervening period very little has happened as far as labour legislation has gone. That is something we could have done without having to look at our economic situation and we decided those are some of the things we can do let us do that and so we brought, for example, the Employment Rights Act onto the statute books.

Along with that it Employment Rights Tribunal which I am hearing being touted is an industrial court and that this Government sat back and introduced an industrial court whereas instead the Employment Rights Tribunal was something that was agreed to over many years in consultation with our Social Partners. We have an Employment Rights Tribunal, it is not an industrial court and what one does not need to have a lawyer to come to the Employment Rights Tribunal. I heard Members of the Opposition saying that is what it has come to in Barbados that you have to have a lawyer to go to the Employment Rights Tribunal you do not. Some folks, not all, have opted to have a lawyer some. In the several cases that have already been heard by the Employment Rights Tribunal not everyone has had a lawyer because we have set it up so that it is not about having a lawyer, anybody can get justice. At the end of the day it is about justice and everybody should be able to come through the system and have justice and that is what we have in place. We are fine-tuning the Employment Rights Tribunal and the Employment Rights Tribunal Act both of which are very new to ensure as we get feedback that it continues to serve the people.

The Shops Act was also done here recently. Again that is was the Act that expanded the hours of business and ensure that workers had certain rights under the Act when folks expand their hours of business so that they have their safety, sanitation and other services in the shops when they work those extra hours.

Safety at work Act was passed in 2005 and it was not proclaimed, and we proclaimed that Act since I became the Minister. The Holidays with Pay Act is now on our Order Paper to be addressed. Even though every time we think we have it on the Order Paper we get a call from the private sector saying oh you need to look at this and you need to look at that, pull it back, let us go again, but it is on our Order Paper. We have actually been asked to look at one area again we have and so we would be able to debate that probably when the House sit again in a few weeks.

We have the Anti-discrimination in the Workplace legislation and the Employment Sexual Harassment Act which I am now going to go into but those are finalised

now. Those are things that we have done because of the impact on the people. It is not always about how much money you spend. When your focus is on people and on looking after people, you find ways to do it regardless of how much money it is. You may not have a lot of money to spend but you could find other ways that you could serve and protect the people without having to spend money that you do not have. That is the stand that I took and that is the stand that the Cabinet supported in the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Human Resource Development, let us ensure that workers' rights are protected and that is what we have done.

As far as labour relations in this country are concerned, of course, anybody knows, it is no secret, that during a recession labour relations become very, very tense and it has been about balancing the needs of the two sides, the employers and the employees but also considering the needs of the society and in our situation now considering too the needs of Government and Government resources and us trying to get out of the situation we are in. It has not been easy but I want to thank everybody who has been part of the process. Our unions have walked with us, they have threatened us from time to time but they have also advised us on what we need to do to ensure that the workers can get the best of out of the situation. Our employers too have been looking at their bottom-line so you can understand that there has been a bit of unease but at the end of the day you give credit where credit is due. Our employers have not have been as difficult as we would hear they have been in other places, and I want to congratulate them on that.

This has been a test of our industrial relations and you have felt the tension, you feel it sometimes almost at breaking point but I am pleased to report that our industrial relations is still sound. We have had to put a patch here and there and put a plaster here and there but it is still ticking away.

I think at the end of the day everybody knows that it is about decent work, about rights in the workplace, about social justice, about social protection and about workers having the right to be represented not only in terms of bargaining but to be able to have that dialogue with their employers and those are things that the Labour Department, along with the unions and the employers have been able to maintain, even during this period. Madam President, we are a blessed country, we have gone through the last eight years and we have had our industrial relations tested and it has stood the test of time.

Madam President, moving away from my Ministry, there are other things that we as a Government had done and you would find some of it reflected in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure; in the Cultural Industries Act; in the Domestic Violence Act; social things that speak to the

quality of lives of people; the Trafficking in Persons Act that we did here speaks to the quality of life for individuals.

Under the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development they did the Identification, Stabilisation, Enhancement and Empowerment-Bridge project. That has gone into the full phase where they identified persons who are impoverished, they did an analysis of their needs, not just their financial needs but where they may need training, where they may need housing, where they may need help. We took a holistic approach to those individuals and then provided the assistance in that regard. They started with a pilot of 30 persons and that pilot has been quite successful.

Madam President, additionally, they are now going to do the strengthening of the Human and Social Development programme, along with my Ministry as well. It is about taking persons who are poor and not working and preparing them for the work place, then to get them into jobs. Therefore you see where the partnership with my Ministry comes in, because my Ministry is about training, job placement and career counselling. Therefore we will be working with the Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development to bring yet another project in place, therefore we have not forgotten the poor, we are still, at the same time, to empowering the poor persons in our country and giving them hand-up and putting them on a higher surface.

Madam President, in this eight years of recession in which this Government has been, we have passed the Child Maintenance legislation. The Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development has provided an energy grant for persons who are disabled, including the elderly for them to be able to have money to be able to pay their utility bills.

Madam President, as far as the young people are concerned, there are numerous youth programmes, some in partnership with the private sector and some coming out of the Ministry of Youth Affairs, for example, Endless Possibilities; they have also been working with my Ministry about training people for the workplace because one of the concerns we hear is that young people do not have the skills to make it in the workplace and my Ministry has been working alongside the Ministry of Youth Affairs.

Madam President, we have done a whole Youth Policy in this period, we have not sat back and said there is nothing we can do, we have found ways that we can improve the lives of people, so that the Youth Policy is one of those ways.

My Ministry is also working with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management and hats off to the Ministry of Agriculture,

Food, Fisheries and Water Resource Management for they have been doing a lot to try to reform agriculture, reform the Ministry, diversify agricultural industry and tried to make more out of it, in terms of foreign exchange but also in terms of livelihoods for people.

Madam President, they have also worked with my Ministry through the Human Resource Development Strategy in developing an 'agri-preneurship' project where we have trained young people and trained them, not only in the how-to of agriculture but also talked to them about business, about how to start a business, how to make a business out of their agricultural ventures. Some of them have already launched into those ventures, it may be agro-processing or particular crops, but we have started businesses.

We also assisted them with some funding, my Ministry was responsible for money in terms of an Incubator Fund and a Green Product Fund. Some of them then started to get together and started their own cooperative, so that they are sharing resources and that they have a community of practice, if you would. They are now taking that agriculture effort to another level.

Madam President, we have done a number of other things and Honourable Members have already spoken about more schools, about more sixth forms, more nursery schools, more houses and land to persons. We have done these things through the last eight years. Through the National Insurance Scheme and with the Ministry of Home Affairs we have just embarked on a project to improve our police stations. We heard about university fees and about the fact that students are now being asked to pay 20 per cent of their tuition cost and where that is not possible bursaries have been established. Student loans have been expanded and the need for sureties have been removed.

Madam President, we have done what we can, even though we have not been able to pay the full tuition for everybody, we have said this is what can happen, but should you not be able to make it, because we know that many people can now, but that if you cannot, we still have a way that you can get the education that you require.

Madam President, we go further, we have developed a Sports Policy, we have developed a lot of facilities, we brought in a lot of tournaments, road tennis now being one of the hottest thing around. We have developed a number of tournaments. We have had a lot of activity in the sporting arena, we built facilities across this island, even in a time of recession, when we came to office in 2008 and found a recession now brewing.

We built new facilities, the David Thompson Pavilion was built in Gall Hall. Of course, in St. George South at Greens we did the Greens Pavilion. We then put a

resource centre under it and a very massive playing field, all of which we came and did in a time of recession.

We were able to do so much, even in the area of sports. I have heard all kinds of criticisms about what happened in St. George but I am proud to list the things that happened in St. George, certainly between 2008 and 2013. When I compare that to the 15 or 20 years before that under the Barbados Labour Party Administration, in five years we saw so much more happening than we had seen in the 15 years, but as a constituent of St. George South, I could only hang my head in shame because now I am seeing that for the last three years everything has reverted and the Honourable Member for St. George South has gone back to being a constituency that is virtually without representation.

Madam President, nothing is being done in St. George South. I know this is not a secret because I am being called by people to highlight these things; people are showing me what is and what is not happening. We had roads built, we had bus routes. We had roads built specifically for bringing buses in. Madam President, those things were happening and now nothing is happening.

Madam President, it is not just about the money, this Administration has proven that it is not just about the money. When we put a playing field in Todds, it was not about money, the Government did not put one cent into it, we got private sector support and they came and levelled the field. They terraced the land around it so that they had a kind of built-in seats. You can find ways to do things if there is a will, but sadly there is no will. In St. George South we had a new Ellerton Day Care, it was there for as long as I know myself and that facility was totally redone. We put a new play park at Ellerton field.

Madam President, I do not want to spend too much time on that because those are things there that you can see for yourself and the time will come when I will have to go back over those again but that time will come. Madam President, I really know that the people of St. George South are not blind and that they are noticing that they have been shortchanged.

Madam President, there are two areas on which I want to focus, the first being the Human Resource Development Strategy. I mentioned it in here time and time again and I will do so a little more. The truth is that it is a massive strategy, it has five pillars and each pillar has several activities all going on concurrently, so that I could never tell you everything that is going on under that strategy. It is 50 million Euros from the European Union (EU) over the five-year period of 2011-2016. This year you will just see some \$9 million in the Estimates for it because this is the final year. We are wrapping up those activities, and then we are looking at how we can consolidate the

Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDS) and look at ways of sustaining the work and the effort so far. We have partnered with the EU. We have also had the IDB (Inter-American Development Bank) come on board with some technical assistance, as well as cooperation from the CDB (Caribbean Development Bank), because we have determined that our human resource is still our most vital resource.

While we have focused a lot on our academic training, we are hearing from the market that there is so much more that needs to be done, and we are seeing where skills, technical and vocational, are needed. We have seen where those skills need to be certified, and we are seeing where persons, having come out of the formal system, want to do more and want to get further qualifications. They may want to transition from a technical area into an academic area. We are promoting life-long learning. All of these things are part of human resource development. It is not just about education from age five to 20-whatever when you graduate from high school. Human resource development is more holistic and it looks at all those areas in which we have capacity that we can develop. That is what the strategy is about so, as I said, I cannot ever stand here in any time allotted to me and tell you everything about the Human Resource Development Strategy, but I will focus on a few areas right now. Just now I mentioned the agricultural project and how we are working with agriculture.

We are working also to create an enabling environment in the Civil Service, so that persons working in the Civil Service have opportunities to grow and develop, and so we have worked with the Training Administration Division, the Personnel Administration Department and now with the Ministry of the Civil Service, so that very soon we can introduce what is called a 360-degree performance management system. Senator Boyce spoke about productivity and measuring productivity and so on in the Civil Service, so we are now developing a 360-degree management system. This is not necessarily about payment by productivity, but it is about performance management in allowing people to be assessed for their skills and their weaknesses being positioned according to their skills, being trained so as to eliminate those weaknesses, and ultimately having a sharper, fine-tuned Civil Service which we know will redound to all our benefit. That is something that we have been doing under the Human Resource Development Strategy.

I mentioned persons having a technical skill but now wanting to go and do something academic, so you may have a skill, for example, in masonry; you may even be certified but you want to go and do something at the university, and you do not have a CXC to your name. What we have done now, and it is just about finalised, is a framework, a national qualifications framework that gives

vocational qualifications a sort of ranking, if you will, at the NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) and CVQ (Caribbean Vocational Qualification) Level 1 to 5. You may have academic qualifications and you can match them up, so that a person with a vocational skill can go to one of our institutions and be assessed. We are offering that assessment. You can go, for example, to the Vocational Training Board and they will assess your carpentry skills and say whether you are at a Level 3 because you know this, that and the next and you perform at that level. Then you can match yourself up on this framework and say, "Okay, with a Level 3, that is the equivalent of this academic qualification, so I have what it takes to get into this programme, get into a first year at university, or whatever", for argument's sake. That is what we are developing. Then it goes the other way as well, so that persons can move across - sideways even - the academic and the vocational spectrum when we line them up and match up their qualifications. Persons can therefore achieve career development, so that you do not have to be a Level 2 carpenter always. If you desire to take to your Level 2 carpentry and then do management studies, and then do another qualification vocationally, you can do that and achieve all that you want to achieve. At the end of the day, productivity resides in persons who are achieving what they were meant to achieve. They are achieving their full potential. They are happy with what they are able to contribute to society. That is where productivity resides.

Then we are looking at a demand-driven educational system where we are determining the needs of the market and training people to suit. We are enhancing the NEB (National Employment Bureau), again, through funding under the Human Resource Development Strategy, and just now you heard me mention a project that we are doing with the Ministry of Social Care called Strengthening Human and Social Development. Because that project is about taking persons who are unemployed and getting them into jobs, there is money under that project for the NEB, so we are building capacity in the NEB. We are restructuring the NEB. We are also training guidance counsellors in schools, because that is an important aspect of persons achieving and an important part of our human resource development being achieved. Persons have access to proper guidance counselling, from trained guidance counsellors who can then help them to find their niche, find something they are good at, something they are passionate about, and convert that into some means. In fact we are now even offering an NVQ at Level 3 for career counsellors, so we are training counsellors. We are doing a knowledge management system as well, where in Government we are ensuring that in the information technology system everything is seamless, that there is easy sharing of information from one Ministry to another, from one department to another. That would prevent long meetings, make for greater efficiency and greater sharing of information. You would not have to

wait for the messenger half a day to bring you a document; you can share it.

Of course, I am hopeful that these things come with the right security because right now the paper trail we have and things travelling on trucks, too many things are falling off trucks in spite of an official Secrets Act. I do not know that if officers are not aware that when you have access to Government documents, that to do anything with them other than what they were intended for is actually in some cases a misdemeanor and in some cases an offence under the official Secrets Act. We have information that could only come from Ministries. They could only come from Government officers, and they are passing this information and we just laugh it off and say, "It fell off a truck". The thing is, so what? There have always been trucks. That is not the point. If we at 50 years want to look at where Barbados is and where we need to take Barbados, we have to look at ourselves, and decide what kind of people we want to be. That means not only looking at where the country is, but on a personal and professional level and having some integrity. Integrity means you are not the truck that anything that anything is going to fall from. When we move to our knowledge management system and e-Government and the wide area network which they are working on now, these things will be traced. Who handled what when and what they did with it. There will be tags on everything, and we need to move to that yesterday.

Through my Ministry the money was in there and the work has started on that. As part of sharing that information, too, under the Human Resource Development Strategy is money for the modernisation of our library system as well, because there is information there that you would want to have access to. I should not have to leave here to go to my Ministry to get information or have a messenger leave there to come here to get information, when maybe at this time the messenger has already left and I will have to go up there and look for it myself, if I know where to look in the Registry and so on. I should at my clearance level be able to just go on a system and access the information that I need. It allows me then to work more efficiently and more effectively, and that is what we are moving to in Government. Notice I said "with the right clearance", so that anybody going in there knows who went in there at seven o'clock tonight and looked at which file. That is what has to happen. The last part of the Human Resource Development Strategy, and I have just touched every one very briefly, is the research, entrepreneurship and innovation and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), and we have been partnering with a number of people. We have partnered with Professor Cardinal Warde, whose name I heard already here today looking at robotics and science and getting young people excited about those disciplines, and about research because that is another area of human resource development. If we take our young people and get

them involved in science, who knows what we can develop next? Madam, in the same way we are looking at the cultural industry because we know there is potential there. Madam, that is why my Ministry is also working with the cultural industry under human resource development because these are areas that we have identified for human resource development for the next generation to find opportunities. We have identified the cultural industries, tourism, agriculture and STEM and that is where we have actually put our emphasis. In ICT we now have a community of practice call ORBIT, so coming out of that community of practice, we expect to see some new exciting things happening. Madam, there is so much happening under the human resource development strategy that we have only now started to say let us get some promotion going. Madam, at the end of the day, human resource development strategy is not just about my Ministry spending money, it is about every Barbadian knowing how they can have access to the tools they need to develop the skills that they have to the greatest potential and the greatest output. Madam, it is about everybody, so we have put a lot of money in there, it is coming to an end soon but we intend to sustain what we have been doing so far.

Madam President, from time to time, I hear persons talk about the MVQs and CVQs and they do not know what is happening in the MVQs and CVQs and that they are not hearing anything, so I just wanted to mention, just for the benefit of this Chamber, that there is so much happening in the area of MVQs and CVQs. The TVET Council is the agency that is responsible for developing the curricula and assessors to MVQs and CVQs, and they have awarded 238 MVQs and CVQs in just this last year alone. They have trained 36 trainers and instructors certified in the competency based method. Madam, 88 assessors and verifiers were trained and certified. Madam, if you remember I said that if you had a skill you should be able to come and be assessed and get an MVQ. They have trained assessors and they have trained trainers and they have actually awarded CVQs. Madam, outside of the CVQs, they have also awarded another 100 certificates of competence. They have developed 10 occupational standards and competency-based qualifications and they have had meetings with the workforce, with employers and so on and with trained persons in the field of training. Madam, they are also now 26 centres that have been approved and that are currently centres for this type of assessment and qualification, so we have 26 centres. There is a lot that is happening under MVQs and CVQs. It is not just some nebulous idea that would some day replace CXC's, it will stand on its own side by side with CXC's. Madam, we are working on it and we have developed the curricula. We have awarded CVQs, we have trainers and we have centres and we are actually getting a lot of things developed in that area.

Madam President, just a little plug for the world skills. We have the World Skills Barbados. Madam, that is a competition where we take the best of the best in four areas, hairdressing, garment making, culinary arts and automotive technology and we have a competition. Madam, this year BIMEX have partnered with us and the competition is going to be at BIMEX, so you would see young people creating on the spot in that competition arena and then we will take the best that emerge to World Skills America and hopefully some day, we can get to World Skills International. We have medaled at World Skills America. We have got a bronze and a silver in hairdressing, so this year we are going for gold, so if you go to BIMEX this year, go and look for our young trainee. These are young Barbadians who are going to be competing in those four areas.

Madam President, the last thing I want to get to is the area of the National Insurance Scheme which is also under my Ministry. I have talked about other things that are under the social security net, all the projects that I have mentioned happening with the Ministry of Social Care and that my Ministry is doing as well. Madam, I want to speak to the National Insurance Scheme because there are just a couple of things that I want to say.

Madam President, I was very pleased to hear the opportunity begin by saying that we know that the Fund is safe. I believe those were the exact words. Madam, this was after a year of trying to convince all Barbadians that there was no money left in the Fund, that they pensions would dry up and that they could not get anything out of there because the way the Government is spending, God help you when you retire, get sick or anything else but I was please to hear that you started by acknowledging that after all the huge and cry and after all the fuss, what we have been saying on this side, as verified by the information we receive is that all the funds are safe.

Madam President, I have pointed out before the Fund that took the greatest hit was the Fund we expected we take the greatest hit, and that was the unemployment fund because of the unemployment level. Madam, that is what typical happens with an unemployment fund, it is set up to be built up during the good years and you draw on it in periods of high unemployment. Madam, indeed, when it reached a critical level, options were presented to the Cabinet for boosting it, and the Government of Barbados did actually transfer \$12 million to that unemployment fund. When you hear all the fuss about Government taking money from the National Insurance Scheme and Government leaning too heavily on the National Insurance Scheme and the Government not paying National Insurance, the National Insurance Scheme knows that every cent that Government owes them, that the Government will pay. Madam, every debt that the Government has for the National Insurance Scheme, it pays. Madam, when it

comes to pensions and so on because Government may be behind on paying their contributions, at the end of the day, when those contributions are to be paid, the Government puts the money. Madam, when they need money for other reasons, like when the unemployment fund ran low, it was the same Government that took \$12 million and put it in there.

Madam President, this is not a Government that is about pillaging the National Insurance Scheme and the National Insurance Fund, we are working with the National Insurance Fund and ensuring that their investments are sound but, at the end of the day, it is people's money that we have been putting to work for the people. There are a few governance issues that I do want to address. I have heard, quite regrettably, concern being expressed about a decision that was made to increase the fees for members of the National Insurance Board. It may not have come from in here but it has been expressed and, I was reminded yesterday that as the Minister, the buck stops with me, so as the Minister I will speak to it.

Madam President, the Cabinet of Barbados did consider and agree to raise the fees of the Board members, not the Chair or the Deputy Chair but to raise the fees of the board members to bring their fees in line with the fees that are being paid to members of the Financial Services Commission and the Barbados Revenue Authority. Madam, where they were getting \$900, member of the National Insurance Board, which manages a larger portfolio of \$4 billion was getting only \$234. Madam, when the Ministry of Civil Service sets the fees for the Barbados Revenue Authority and the Financial Services Commission, we said, hold on, the National Insurance Scheme is way behind that, so let us bring the fees for the National Insurance Board in line with the fees for these other agencies, end of story. There was no need for all of the fuss.

Madam President, I just wanted to say that for the records, so nobody can say that the Minister never spoke to it because I have.

Madam President, in addition to that, I did bring in that very same paper, which now is another thing that feel off the truck is all over the place and I am seeing it on Facebook, Whatsapp, newspapers and everything. We asked and the Cabinet approved to have the Chief Parliamentary Counsel amend the National Insurance Act, so that the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry responsible for the National Insurance Scheme can also sit on the Board. It is a Government's issue. Madam, right now the Permanent Secretary responsible for the Ministry of Labour does not sit on the Board. The National Insurance Scheme has been under the Ministry of Finance and the Permanent Secretary of Finance is on the Board. Madam, for obvious reasons, we do not want to take the Permanent Secretary of

Finance off the Board but the National Insurance Scheme has been under the Ministry of Health already. It is now under the Ministry of Labour and wherever they go, they should be that administrative arrangement that allows the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry to also sit on the Board. That should be coming to us shortly because the Cabinet also approved that we do the legislation because it has to be an amendment to legislation to put that person on the Board.

On the Board of the National Insurance Board there are only three persons appointed by the Minister. The Board is made up of seven appointed persons and then the ex-officio is the Chief Labour Officer and the Director of Finance and Economic Affairs and when we have the amendment, we hope that we could have the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry responsible. The Board has three persons of the seven and ex-officio, as I said, that the Minister names and appoints. There are two persons appointed by the Minister, in that I sign the instrument, but these two persons are named by the trade unions because our Board is a tripartite arrangement, so the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW) and the Barbados Workers' Union (BWU) are represented on that Board. Then there are two persons who are representatives of the employers associations. Right now one from the Barbados Employers' Association and the other is from the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (BHTA).

Asides.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: There are two Barbados Labour Party candidates, one ran in the last election and one is hoping to run in the next election.

I say that to say this because I have been hearing criticisms made of the Board as if the Board has been a puppet for the Government or for this Minister and if this Minister has been directing the Board to do anything. Take the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTI) issue, for example. The Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTI) took a loan of \$55 million for Almond Beach from the National Insurance Board for two years and every month they made their payments on time, a good client, no problems with them as a client, and then when it came to maturity they approached the National Insurance Board and said: "Listen, we cannot do this right now, can we have an extension?" because they were actually needing to put the money into another worthwhile project that would generate jobs.

Asides.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: I do not even remember, that is the Sam Lord's project, but that is what they wanted and the National Insurance Board said: "Look we need to have that project going because it would

benefit Barbados when more people are working. Furthermore, you have been a good client but we are not going to roll over and play dead, bring another Letter of Comfort from the Government, which the Government provided, and these are the conditions." The entire Board met, including the two Barbados Labour Party candidates, and voted unanimously in favour of giving the BTI that extension under those circumstances, just for a couple months, but to hear the story you would think that the Government is using some sort of back arrangement to allow the BTI to get away with it and not pay their loan. They had to come like any other client and meet the new conditions having paid everything on time before. They came and the whole Board met and they dealt with the matter. That is good business practice, but the impression would want to be given that somebody is using the Board. In fact, I am not even sure that it is proper that Members who are declared candidates of the Opposition should be on a Board such as that anyhow, but that is another discussion for another matter. I do not think it is proper, but anyhow I have very little time left, so let me go on.

Madam President, I want to say something. Again, I was reminded that the buck stops with me so let the buck stop with me now. The IT: Last year I took a lot of licks for the IT matter so I just want to give an update.

MADAM PRESIDENT: The Honourable Senator has seven minutes.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: All of the issues that developed over the last year with the IT project have been resolved. The back office functioning is up to 100 per cent, front office functioning is 98 per cent of what it was before, 99 per cent of the data has been successfully migrated, I am told that the other 1 per cent is not essential, and the processing of long term and short term claims have returned to normal levels. It is the SAP system that was used and SAP assigned an Escalation Manager who came and helped to resolve the claims processing issues. The disablement payment issues have been resolved. All of the systems performance, database or authorisation or work flow issues that were reported on 5th January last year at Go Live have all been resolved. There are no further problems outstanding with the IT System and we have now moved on to training of all the staff. We are training them in tranches at the National Insurance Scheme not in IT because those in IT were trained but more customer training, customer service and that kind of training for the staff.

There were hurdles with that project but I did not run, I took a lot of licks for it and all the staff at the National Insurance Scheme took a lot of licks for it. I tell people that I stopped walking my usual places because people knew where to stop me and ask me where are their pensions. If I was accustomed walking on Browne's Beach

and Lady Haynes would tell you that she did not see me on the Boardwalk at times and she would not see me on the Boardwalk because too many people knew that they would see me on the Boardwalk and they would stop to ask me about pensions. Even in St. George, anywhere you walk, you cannot walk the same day, at the same place at the same time.

Asides.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: I would have to walk with Sir Roy and he would have to protect me the next time, but I did not throw anybody under the bus. There were a lot of complaints but I did not throw anybody under the bus. I have been described as ineffective as a leader but I will tell you what I did. I worked with that team, I supported the team and I approved the measures that they came and said to me that we are the ones working with this, these are the problems, these are possible solutions and I worked with them and I had my support. At the end of the day everything is being brought up-to-date. All of the backlog of reports and the audits that are outstanding are being brought up-to-date, and the National Insurance Scheme is now back on good footing.

Asides.

Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER SUCKOO: Those have been outstanding now by about 20 years.

Finally, at the National Insurance Scheme there has been a soft launch of the Easy Pay Online Payment where earnings schedules and payment of contributions can be done online. Already for the year we have had \$2 million paid in online, and that was the soft launch and we are going to go full in the next quarter.

Madam President, I took some licks for it. Everybody at the National Insurance Scheme took licks, but Madam President, I am pleased to report the buck stops here and the problems have been solved. The Fund, as we have heard from the Other Side, is sound and Barbadians have nothing to worry about. There would always be a few little hiccups here when you do not submit everything in time and you need to bring this documentation or something, but all of the issues that we faced last year have all been resolved.

Madam President, that is what I wanted to say from my ministry. We have the Estimates before us as we debate the Appropriation Bill. A number of projects you have heard discussed that will bring more jobs and make our National Insurance Scheme even more sound and will raise our economy. As my colleague, Senator Boyce, said, we are not where we hoped to be, but we are better than where we were, and I believe that we have to accentuate the positives. The Bible says that the power of life and death is

in the tongue. As a doctor, I know that when my patients sit down and lament: "Oh woe is me, I have X, Y, Z, and I do not know why I am going to do" they always do worse than the ones who say: "Oh, this is my diagnosis now what can I do" and take steps to do it. Any doctor that can tell you that the two scenarios are completely different and we chose the latter. We realised that this was our diagnosis and we look for ways to improve our situation. We got down to exercising, we got fitter, we got trimmer and we got healthier. We are getting Barbados healthier and we are seeing the benefits of it. We have so many benefits to count. Count your blessings. Let us count our blessings in here. As we celebrate 50 years, count your blessings, name them one by one and it will surprise you what the Lord has done, furthermore it would surprise you what the Democratic Labour Party has done in the last eight years too.

We cannot be accused of doing nothing. When all you hear is that you did not do anything and this is where we are this is how bad our situation is, you would think so but when you start to look at the positives and look at all of the gains, then you realise no it could have been a lot worse. It is not where we want to be but by the grace of God working through the Democratic Labour Party this is where we are today and we will keep looking forward. We will forget what is behind and we will keep moving forward.

We cannot be accused of doing nothing rather we have done the very best possible. We have balanced our social agenda with the realities to the point that sometimes we were accused of not being the social democratic party that we are because we have had to balance that with the economic realities.

We are looking forward in not only dealing with what we have, but we are looking forward at renewable energy, diversifying agriculture as I mentioned, looking at water and looking at solid waste and so on and at the same time we are taking care of the poor, we are cleaning up our books, we are fixing the budget, we are training people and we are anticipating those new things that would come.

Madam President, whether one group of people decides - Madam President is not guilty, Madam President, is part of the coordinating committee too and she is celebrating and she is prepared to celebrate.

I have not even mentioned things like UNESCO and our tourism achievements, those we dealt with but we have so much to celebrate. When we look at that commemorative Broken Trident and anywhere we see the Trident in our flag, let us not just think about the breaking away from England 50 years ago, that was then, but let us now look and celebrate what we have accomplished in the last 50 years, who we have become as Barbadians and what

we are poised to be. We have shown our independence in our ability to cut a path through very, very rugged terrain and still continue to grow and protect our people. The Estimates are our effort to continue on that path and I want to congratulate the Right Honourable Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance and the entire team not only for the effort but for the vision and sticking to the vision in spite of the detractors and for the creativity to work with the challenges and still achieve all that we have achieved even in this time.

Madam President, I am obliged.

SUSPENSION

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.25 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 5.25 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and MADAM PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

MADAM PRESIDENT: This Senate is resumed. Senator Abrahams, you have the Floor.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAM: Madam President, I rise to contribute to the debate of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for this year. Madam President, this is perhaps the most difficult contribution I have ever had to prepare for, for a number of reasons. Madam President, I could have defaulted to lambasting everything that came from that table and contributed nothing useful at all. Madam President, I could hear all the asides and take them on and respond or Madam President, I could try to talk from my perspective as a Barbadian, one who cares about Barbados, a Barbadian who cares about the direction in which our country is heading, not necessarily due to the situation in Barbados but recently I am becoming a lot more thoughtful about the things that are really important, Madam President.

I have thought a lot about where we are as a society, I thought about the importance of God in our lives, in the life of our country and in the decisions that we take for the benefit of Barbados. Madam President, as such, I got to thinking what really is Independence and are we truly independent. Are we independent as a country? Are we independent as a people? Are we independent as individuals?

Madam President, I think it was Sir Roy who said that independence is just not switching out the Union Jack for the Broken Trident but it also Madam President,

requires a mind shift. I sat down for the last three days to hear abuse and vitriol from one side of the table basically castigating the Barbados Labour Party for every single thing that is wrong with Barbados, every challenge the Government now faces, every hurdle they have had to go through and every target they have failed to meet, it has all been, to hear that side of the table tell it, the fault of the Barbados Labour Party.

Madam President, late this afternoon somebody made a very interesting point and I think it was Senator Husbands. He said that we have been Independent for 50 years, 26 of those years the Democratic Labour Party has had the helm of Government and 24 of those the Barbados Labour Party has been in charge of the country. Madam President, so all of the advancements we have made as a country have been due to the efforts of the Barbados Labour Party and the efforts of the Democratic Labour Party and the combined efforts of the people of Barbados.

Madam President, each Party has done its share of good; each Party has had it stand out; each Party has also had its signalled failures. Madam President, at some point in time this Government is going to have to stand on its own two feet and answer for what it has done and for what its policies are. It is not sufficient for this Government now to blame everything on outside forces, a Government has to play the hand with which it has been dealt and that is the harsh reality.

Madam President, it is very easy yardstick to success if you measure that success against the failure of something and somebody else, so that if that success was not measured objectively in what it has achieved and the benefits it has gained to the people of Barbados and what it has done for the advancement of us as a country, and the success is simply measured against an established failure then it is easy to pass the Litmus test.

Madam President, it cannot be an excuse to the handling of the whole CLICO International Life Limited and British American Life Insurance Company Limited matter. We had an issue with Narsham Insurance. Yes, there was a failure of Narsham Insurance under the Barbados Labour Party. Yes, we have heard it over and over. Yes, there were repercussions. Yes, people were hurt. Madam President, since then the Barbados Labour Party has lost a Government. The reality is that yes, Narsham failed but it cannot be the continued excuse and justification from that side of the table and from the Government of the failure to address and to resolve the matters with CLICO International Life Limited and the British American Life Insurance Limited.

Madam President, it is not good enough to say, well, CLICO International Life Limited failed under us but Narsham failed under you all. The fact is that the

Democratic Labour Party is the Government of Barbados now and it is for the Democratic Labour Party...

Madam President, Senator Todd you are correct, eight years in. By eight years in you should have shed the vestiges of Opposition and be guiding the country down a path that you have set to prosperity, you should be guiding I with cogent, tangent results. Where that fails, Madam President, it is not sufficient to point fingers at a party or at a previous Government, even your own Government some time ago.

Madam President, if we even consider, for example, scales. I do not know what was the total amount of loss under Narsham was, I know it was not \$390 million, so that even if you want to measure apples and apples then do that but do not measure apple and oranges. A small failure cannot be a justification for a bigger failure, especially when the failure has not been solidified.

Madam President, the situation with CLICO International Life Limited can still salvaged to the benefit of Barbadians but it requires and upfront and honest assessment of what is necessary and the desire and political will to do it. It is not sufficient to keep hiding from your obligations as a Government. I am not here to debate whether or not the Government should actually be bailing out CLICO International Life Limited and paying out the policyholders, the fact is that a decision was taken, it is well passed that so that if the Government has decided to pay out \$390 million, then let the Government do this quickly so that people can start to recover.

Madam President, it cannot, in the same way, be a justification or answer whenever Cahill is raised that there had an issue under the Barbados Labour Party with Greenland. Greenland was years ago. Greenland was \$40 million. Cahill is going to end up costing us over \$700 million and lifetime commitment to the supply of garbage to Barbados. Why is the Government not coming clean on the issues with Cahill, Madam President?

Madam President, I keep hearing from Senator Ince in particular that not a toffee paper has gone into Greenland, that it went from \$40 million to \$80 million, to \$100 million, all in the space of one afternoon. Greenland is being used as the justification for entering into a reckless arrangement with Cahill, the details of which are uncertain to everyone.

Madam President, this Government came to power on the basis of transparency, accountability and good governance. The Government pledged that it will institute integrity legislation. I heard recently in the Other Place that it is considered that there is no need for it now. There is always need for integrity in Government. Integrity in Government should be a given, Madam President, not

something that has to be enforced. Madam President, if we look in particular at the Estimates, if they are examined carefully, they are window-dressing for the Government for this year; political window-dressing, Madam President. In the Estimates, the projected revenue is inflated. We have had no significant growth in Barbados for years. Every year, the Governor of the Central Bank predicts three per cent, four per cent, five per cent growth. Every single year, and he has done so since 2008. I do not think we have passed one per cent in any year, and are currently at a projected 0.5 per cent increase. When the Government in its Estimates projects revenue up to March this year - that is, \$250 million in excess of last year's revised Estimates - then you have to ask what the Government knows that we do not know, Madam President. If the Government is supposed to take in \$250 million more by March this year that it did last year, and we are already 2.5 per cent in decline, behind the target, in January, when the Estimates are produced to be laid in March there must be some correction if that was the position of the Government. March is about to end and in fact ends on Wednesday next week, so unless God Himself comes down and touches the Government and touches the public purse, there is no way that projection is going to be met. Ma'am, it will require a miracle or a record-breaking intake of money by the Government of Barbados, but these are the Estimates that are put before us.

Madam President, I wish as in some countries that the Permanent Secretaries were brought before the House and before the Senate to answer questions on the Estimates. Those who prepare the Estimates are sometimes subjected to questions about the Estimates. You then would not see what we see here, because if you have to come and stand before a tribunal, you as a Permanent Secretary would be very hesitant to pin yourself to something which, for all intents and purposes, is a fiction. There is a reason that the Government seeks to inflate its revenue in the Estimates. The reality is that everybody in the Government knows, but a lot of the public does not know that the Central Bank is only authorised to lend the Government of Barbados up to ten per cent of the projected revenue. When you see an inflated amount for revenue, that is to set the stage for the borrowing from the Central Bank later through the ways and means; that is what it is. It is a projection down the road that we know we are going to have to get money, so let us start at the beginning by padding our Estimates so that the facility is there for us. It also goes the other way. To appear to have a lesser fiscal deficit, within these Estimates you also see an understatement of expenses. If you are padding on one side to provide yourself the facility of an overdraft from the Central Bank, which is over-exposed to Government, and reducing on expenses, then there can be no reliance on these Estimates. What are the true figures?

To use an example, I would go to something that Senator Ince touched on. My friend Senator Walcott, in his presentation, had indicated that in the Sanitation Service Authority's estimates there was nothing for trucks. Senator Ince correctly corrected Senator Walcott and advised him that under 416, Grants to Public Institutions, there is \$3 million voted, and that note says "operating expenses and purchase of equipment". Madam President, it is not true to say that \$3 million has been allocated for the purchase of trucks, because in 2014-2015 that same Head had \$2.44 million and no trucks were purchased then. Madam President, in the Approved Estimates for 2015-2016 it had the same figure of \$2.44 million. Page 288. In the Revised Estimates for 2015-2016, Madam President, it had the same figure of \$2.44 million, and we know that over the last two or three years not one truck has been purchased, so that means that the operating expenses of the Sanitation Service Authority are approximately \$2.44 million. When you see the \$3 million this year, Ma'am, an increase of about \$600 000 or less, then perhaps they plan to buy trucks with the excess, but it is not the 20 trucks proposed by the Minister of the Environment. Madam President, I did my research. Senator Ince always tells me, "If you want to fool black people, stick it in a book; people do not like to research". Sorry, "put it in a library", that is what he says. I went and did my research, Ma'am.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, on a Point of Order. Senator Abrahams is misleading this Senate. Page 288. I said go to the explanatory notes, Subprogramme 0372, Item 416, "provides for capital works and the purchase of vehicles for the Sanitation Service Authority". That is what I stated. That is what I said.

Senator W.A. ABRAHAMS: No problem, Madam President, my point still stands. My point is that there is an increase of \$550 000 over last year and the year before, and if not a truck was purchased last year and the year before, then it stands to reason that the \$2.44 million has an allocation that is being spent every year on something else. What are we realistically looking at to buy the trucks? We are realistically looking at a bit over half-million dollars. Madam President, a compactor truck costs US\$250 000. The price varies slightly if you get it from China but you are looking at US\$250 000, so with the increase, Madam President, we can safely say that the Sanitation Service Authority is purchasing one truck, if they purchase any trucks at all.

Madam President, the Minister of the Environment came out and said he is purchasing 20 trucks. He then back-pedalled from that and said that they have to do a study. Senator Walcott spoke about the study that is being done in Sanitation Service Authority to look at the rationalisation and what is important. That is fine. Let us not spend money foolishly, but Madam President, it does not take a genius to know that we need more than one

truck. It is about priorities, Ma'am. Government expenditure should be about priorities. The reality is that we have heard Senator Ince lambast Senator Walcott, saying that when the Democratic Labour Party demitted office in 1993 that they left 50 trucks and that Senator Walcott only bought seven as the Minister of Health. Senator Walcott said it was 39. It does not matter. They left with 50 trucks. The fact is we are down to five. That is the fact.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, on a Point of Order. Senator Abrahams is misleading the Senate. Sanitation Service Authority is not down to five trucks. Tell him to bring the proof. Do not get up in here and swipe. Sanitation Service Authority is not down to five trucks.

Madam President, to the best of my knowledge, information and belief last week the Sanitation Service Authority had five trucks on the road servicing the whole of Barbados.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, on a point of order. Senator Abrahams is misleading the Senate. Madam President, to the best of knowledge and the information given to me, Senator Abrahams is misleading this Senate. To the best of my knowledge and the information given to me, the Sanitation Service Authority did not have only five trucks servicing this entire country.

Senator W.A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, senator Ince will not able to argue that for the last 2 years, with the exception of some time coming up to December last year when they manage to muster 17 trucks on the road that the fleet hovered around 15 working trucks. I do not think Senator Ince will get up for that. The fact is, Madam President...

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, on a point of order. Senator Abrahams is misleading the Senate. There were 20 trucks and if we have to spend the whole night in here, I am prepared to do it. There were 20 trucks, I am sitting in a position to know.

Senator W.A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, 20 something years ago, they had 15. When the Barbados Labour Party left Government there were no garbage collection issues. The garbage was being collected regularly and efficiently. The fact is, Madam President, let us say that Senator Ince is right, which I am not admitting, and they had 20, every where in Barbados in Barbados is plagued by poor garbage collection and it has reached crisis proportion and everybody knows that. We have had an increase in vectors, we have had an increase in illegal dumping in the gullies and we have had all sorts of problems that the Sanitation Service Authority is not able to keep up with. Madam President, in Christ Church on

Wilcox Ridge, the garbage as of this morning has not been collected in over three weeks and that is repeated across this fair country. Madam, this is a fact that nobody can get away from. The Sanitation Service Authority does not have sufficient trucks to service Barbados. It is about priorities. We are a tourist destination and the health of our people is most important. When you cutting the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, you have to make sure that people do not get sick.

Madam President, after the Minister proudly got up and said he was planning to have 20 more trucks on the road, I think by November and the Estimates point to a figure barely able to purchase one truck if they get it at a bargain, then the Ministers are not clean and they are misleading people. Madam, that is the bottom line.

Madam President, I did note with some interest that there was nothing at all in the Estimates in relation to Cahill, nothing at all. I am wondering now, there having been no official announcement, has the Government pulled back from its position in respect of Cahill.

Madam President, the undertaking was made that the ground would be broken this year. Madam President, we know that agreements were signed. We know there is MOU and we know that commitments have been made. We know commitments in respect of water in a perilously water scarce country, we know that commitments have been made in respect of the lease of land and infrastructural developments committing the people of Barbados. We know that commitments have been made to give all of the garbage in Barbados to one country in breach of its standing agreement with SBRC. Madam President, the Prime Minister said this year that before anything could happen, they have to have the environmental impact assessment. Madam, the environmental impact assessment is the responsibility of the Government of Barbados not the developer and that is per the MOU, the document that fell off the truck. Madam, there is nothing in these Estimates.

Madam President, I do not want to waste too much more time on that but, Madam, the point is simply this. The Government was all hot and sweaty to defend Cahill and the advantages of the Cahill project. If it is now resiling from that position, let the people of Barbados know so that we can put our minds at ease.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, on a point of order. Senator Abrahams is misleading the Senate. I would advise him to read and understand. If Cahill is supposed to be a private sector project, not funded by Government, why are you going to put it into the Estimates. We would have to be the biggest fools in the world. It is a project not funded by Government but you are going to put it in 2016/2017 Estimates, to do what, Madam? To write a zero balance against it?

Senator W.A ABRAHAMS: Madam President, I did not say the Cahill project should be in the Estimates because as Senator Ince has said, it is a private sector project. I said I saw no provision in relation to Cahill at all. Madam President, I clarified by saying that the environmental impact assessment is the obligation of the Government of Barbados and there is no provision in here for it either. Madam, that was my point.

Senator J. INCE: Madam President, on a point of order. As have said, Senator Abrahams is misleading the Senate and we are going to spend a long time in here. Madam President, he has no proof that the MOU is the obligation of Government. I have said before, if it is a private sector project, you do not put projects that fall under private sector funding in the Estimates. You are misleading the people of Barbados, you are misleading the Auditor-General and you are misleading the Parliament and that is a serious financial breach. Madam, you cannot make those kinds of statements and sit in the Senate. I am not going to allow it.

Senator W.A ABRAHAMS: Madam President, with your permission, I will continue to sit in the Senate. Madam President, I did not realise I was forced to beg the permission or get the consent of my friend Senator Ince. Madam President, I just crave your indulgence for one second.

Madam President, as have said, Government is about priorities and another thing that has to be considered is what really is the state of the transport system in Barbados. I wish to completely thank Senator Trotman for his entirely comprehensive and most informative presentation about UCAL. I knew to some respect the issues with UCAL. I think I now have a fuller and clearer picture of the injustice that has been wrought on the workers of UCAL but, Madam, we cannot look at things in isolation so if UCAL, which is the organisation best able to repair the buses of the Transport Board and there is an insufficient fleet in Barbados, Madam, we have to look at it seriously because it is about priorities. The reality is that a lot of people in Barbados depend upon the public transportation system to get around. In almost every district in Barbados there are transformational issues, there are scheduling issues and there is no regular bus service. A lady beseeched me to raise this point, that something has to be done. Let us be realistic. We are in no position now to provide the ideal bus service in Barbados, the Government is in no position to provide it, but the reality is that the barest minimum must be provided.

It cannot be that in districts or areas serviced by the Transport Board that there is no scheduled bus service at all, so people who are bound to take the bus cannot at any point in time plan their business to know that a bus would be available on this day, at this time and can plan to go to

the doctor, can make appointments or can plan to meet their friends. In every area and on every route, there should be at least two scheduled buses, one in the morning going to town and one in the afternoon or evening coming back, at least those two. Madam President, if you cannot do it every day, then set a schedule, let it be defined days in the week so that an old lady knows that on Thursday she can safely schedule her doctor's appointment for 10 o'clock because a 6 o'clock bus is coming to take her to town. That is not there, it is unacceptable.

The bus service and the transportation service in Barbados must be prioritised, it is not and if it is not and, it is not a but, not everybody is fortunate enough to have a car, to have access to a car, or to even have a friend with a car. A lot of people a lot of Barbadians depend on the bus service. It must be made a priority whether that involves settling with UCAL and putting UCAL back to productive work, whether that involves optimising the purchase of buses and the repair of buses, whatever is necessary, Madam President, something must be done that the minimum bus service expected of a developing country should be accessible to the people of Barbados who depend on the bus.

Madam President, I move now to the hot topic of the biometrics. My biggest difficulty with the Government is that it seems to advise itself entirely and take no further advice from anyone. A lot of people have made a mountain out of a mole hill about the biometrics and the fingerprinting at the Airport. Mr. Comissiong, the Bar Association and other people have been lambasted. Madam President, I am to even getting to the point the merits of whether it should or should not be done because there are arguments both ways. The point that was made by Mr. Comissiong and the point that was made by the Barbados Bar Association was that the procedure for amending the regulations was not followed and that the regulations were therefore null and void *ad initio* from the beginning. If the Government wishes to do it then wheel and come again, pull it back and do it properly. Madam President, amendments to the Immigration Act and Regulations are subject to negative resolution and what that means is that when, in this case, the Right Honourable Prime Minister lays the regulations in Parliament there is a 40-day period in which objections or opposing resolutions can be taken and it is then discussed, it is then voted and whichever side wins, but thereafter comes the publishing in The Official Gazette. The problem, in this instance, Madam President, is that the Right Honourable Prime Minister laid the Resolutions in Parliament and we know how the laying of Resolutions go. Madam President, you get up and say that you want to lay X, Y, Z, you have a whole suite of them and, Madam President and six days later the Regulations were gazetted. Simply, the fact is that the procedure was flawed that is what the Barbados Bar Association attempted to point out to the Right Honourable Prime Minister it was

flawed the regulations as they stand were illegal. You could not implement them because there was no legal basis for implementing them because they were not validly approved and passed that is the simple point but once again ...

Senator Miss V. A. G. De Peiza: On a point of elucidation.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAM: Madam President, I will correct myself.

Asides.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAM: Ma'am, subject to negative ...

Asides.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Just a minute. Senator De Peiza rose on a point of elucidation. I believe you sat down and that means that you gave way. Is that correct?

Senator W. A. ABRAHAM: No, Madam President, I sat down because I did not know what she was going to say.

Asides.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAM: I thought she had gotten up on an objection, Madam President.

MADAM PRESIDENT: I see. Do I therefore interpret that you do not give way?

Senator W. A. ABRAHAM: I do not give way, Madam President.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Okay. Senator De Peiza, he does not give way.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAM: Madam President, the bottom-line is that the Regulations and the implementation of the Regulations are illegal. That is all the Bar Association sought to point out. Mr. Comissiong has further points in relation to this, but let not the public of Barbados get distracted one way or the other as to the merits or demerits of it because as I said there are merits and demerits, there are arguments one way or the other, but the point simply is not that everything that anybody says that is in opposition to the Government is wrong. You are not simply wrong because you hold an opposing view and when we hear those from the Other Side speaking the point comes across quite clearly that if you are not fully in accord with what is being said from That Side then you are in opposition to the Government.

Madam President, somebody wrote in today in the newspaper and they made a point about the same fingerprinting, it was in the Editorial, Madam President, in the Nation Newspaper and they made a point about the same thing fingerprinting thing that because we hold a different view or because we want an explanation does not mean that we support the Opposition or that we are opposing the Government everybody is entitled to a view or say. Madam President, I have been complimented maybe twice or three times since being in the Honourable Senate from those on That Side and that was, to hear Senator Ince called it, when I gave non-partisan and balanced presentations. Madam President, non-partisan and balanced presentations, in the eyes of Senator Ince, appears to me as agreeing wholly with the Resolutions or agreeing wholly with the legislation. I make a point, Madam President, when the amendments to the Family Law legislation came before the Senate I said then that the mandatory requirement that counselling must be have before divorce can be filed for is impractical and will not work. I said it was impossible a performance and divorces would not happen. I was castigated by Senator Ince and told that legal luminaries way senior to me and Queen's Counsels - and he made sure to point out that I would never be one - drafted that and effectively if they got together and drafted that who am I to complain. Madam President, the Court in Barbados found itself in a funny position where it had to disobey the laws of Barbados ignored the law as passed in order to get divorces to go through and when it came back before the Senate a year later, I was told outside okay do not make it a big issue, but the fact is my cries and my objective points were derided and ignored simply because they came from this side. If the Government is serious about representing the people of Barbados then the Government has to take into account all opinions even those that are not in concert with what the Government is saying.

Ma'am, obviously the sore point now is the \$7 million that is being voted or being allocated to the independence celebrations. Like Senator Husbands and all on that side, I am a Barbadian and I would like to celebrate my independence. I think it is important. I think the fact that we have reached 50 years as a country as a solid democratic country with no major upheavals is a signal effort especially in this turbulent world.

Madam President, I fully support and laud everybody who played a part in the independence of Barbados and then the development of Barbados post independence to get us to this point. I laud and applaud everyone concerned, but, Madam President, it is a matter of priorities.

A cash-trapped Government can find \$7 million to put into an independence celebrations because that is a priority for the Government but in the same way that if free

education was a priority for the Government it could find some money to send there. I am sorry that Senator Husbands is leaving.

Asides.

Senator A. A. Adams: Madam President, we have heard from this table that anybody who is objecting to the independence celebrations is not a patriot, the word patriot was bandied. Barbadians want to celebrate independence but not everybody is going to agree that \$7 million is the appropriate figure. Senator Fraser indicated that he is on the Committee and he knows there is a vote of \$7 million but he has not seen a budget for it. Where is the \$7 million plucked from? That is what people want to know. People want to know how did you arrive at the \$7 million and what are we getting for the \$7 million. Is the money being well spent? Is it worth it to do that as opposed to something else? Those are valid questions that a Barbadian could ask. The fact that you asked the Government are you rationally and reasonably spending the public's funds does not make you a traitor or un-Barbadian, it makes you a thinking Barbadian. You cannot educate per from cradle to grave for free and then treat them like idiots. Barbadians are capable of sound and reasonable judgement. We want to know the fact in order to make an assessment.

Madam President, the reality is that the people in Barbados are hurting. No matter what the Estimates say, no matter what the respective Ministers or those representing the ministries come and pat themselves on the back and say we have done this or have done, the fact is that if you talk to the common man, the people in Barbados are hurting. The people in Barbados do not care about the Estimates. People have not come out to attend the Gallery. People have not greeted us in the yard as before. A lot of people are not even listening.

Ma'am, the very, very real point is that the average Barbadian is hurting, they are feeling it in their pockets. What the Barbadian is concerned about is he has not had a salary increase since 2009. If you have not have a salary increase but the cost of living has gone up by more than 40 per cent, then your real ability to spend is not there. You have taken a wages cut so when you cannot feed your family and you cannot do the things that you are accustomed to, then the fact that the Government is spending \$7 million you want to know what it is spending it on. It is a reasonable and legitimate question .

Madam President, I also take issue with perhaps the most insensitive I heard Senator Husbands say, which I why I have said that he has left. Senator Husbands said anybody who said they cannot go to the University of the West Indies because they cannot afford it - I do not want to misquote him - effectively that person is an idiot, that is the bottom-line, but tell that to all of the people who dropped

out of the University of the West Indies. The reality is that the registration in the University of the West Indies is down.

The reality is that I know a woman who is in law, she had a dream to be in law, she entered law, she worked her way up and entered law from the lowest of the socioeconomic brackets, she went to the Foundation School, I am not going to call her name but if she is listening she knows I am talking about her, and left in 5th Form before getting a certificate because she was pregnant. That person never finished at Foundation and that person was on the cusp of being lawyer and they were faced last year or when the cuts were introduced in having to make a decision, should she continue her dream and follow it through to become a lawyer or should she take a step back and allow her son who had just gone into university to continue, that is the reality of a number of people in Barbados. If we think education is expensive, as somebody said, then try ignorant. When you have people who entered the educational system and they had an aspiration ten years down the road as we encourage people to think forward, to go into university of the West Indies and get a university degree and you then now that avenue is no longer available to you then, Madam President, you have destroyed dreams, so somebody who is progressive who looks for things to do if they cannot take their chosen course are going to look for other things to do, then you get the block culture, the degradation in society and people turning their minds to less than honourable means in making a dollar and that is another reality in Barbados.

Now if this Government is not committed to free education which was one of the linchpins of Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, Madam President, if you are not committed to funding everybody, then when you say that you are going to do things follow them through. If you say that you are going to have bursaries, then have bursaries but when you announced that you are having bursaries and people applied and then they get \$400 somebody in law gets a bursary of \$480 what could \$480 do, it cannot buy you one law book. You are being told to go to the Student Revolving Loan Fund but, Ma'am, that takes a long time. If you are already on the verge of dropping out and everybody is flooding the fund, then you have a problem.

Madam President, moving along. Madam President, we also need to prioritise our legal system. Senator De Peiza spoke to this briefly but the reality is our legal system has ground to a halt. We need a serious capital injection into the judicial and legal system in Barbados. Madam President, we all hear about the backlog issue. Some people have approached it and tackled it, backlog reduction programmes and what not, but Ma'am, I have no hope because unless something drastic happens that backlog would never come down unless more judges...

MADAM PRESIDENT: The Honourable Senator has 15 more minutes.

Senator A. A. Adams: Ma'am, unless more judges are appointed we are not going to bring it down. Unless the CAT transcribers are put in place, we are not going to bring it down. Unless there is a culture shift in Government, we are not going to bring it down. Every case need not be fought. Mediation should be encouraged. Any civil aspect of governance, there are some cases the Crown knows it cannot win but it insist on taking them right up to the day of the court before settling. In some cases in criminal courts you know before the PI is done the Crown knows it cannot win the case and they insist on following it through. Sometimes the accused man gets off.

The reality, Madam President, is that if we do not resolve the issues in the courts, we are going to end up with a situation where people get frustrated and resort to self justice, and we do not want a situation of that. People should be able to get their day in court. Madam President, if you have a man who has been charged, he should not be waiting for five or six years for his case to come on. If it is a victimless crime, if somebody is caught with a spliff or two, something that is an injury to themselves and the Prosecution cannot get the case of the ground, then that case should be kicked it out, stop cluttering up the system with such cases.

Madam President, the courts also need to stop sending people on remand to Her Majesty Prison Dodds to teach them a lesson, to prove a point, or to let them get a sniff of what jail time is like and hope that they would correct themselves. Madam President, bail is a right. We need to look at our entire system and do what is necessary to make it more effective.

Madam President, with respect to the allowances, the greatest injustice I think that this Government has wreaked upon the middleclass in Barbados is taking away their allowances. Madam President, a lot of people in Barbados save money through the Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs), because you get a tax break you put that money into an RRSP and that money accumulates. You can pull it out if you need to but it accumulates in stages and Barbadians need to be incentivised to save. Madam President, savings are down in Barbados, now you are getting less than 1 per cent at the bank.

Madam President, so that with no allowances for RRSPs, and we are talking about the National Insurance Scheme and whether the National Insurance Scheme is going to take us into 2025. We know now that the National Insurance Scheme is actually paying out more money in benefits than it is getting in contributions. We know in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, Madam President, there is a reduction in the allocation for paying pension

benefits, so unless the Government knows something that I do not know, like the fact that they are projecting that a whole set of people are going to die this year, I do not understand that reduction but it makes sense considering the state of the National Insurance Scheme, but we need to incentivise people.

Madam President, if we are talking about incentives, if the Government knows it cannot pay for healthcare... Yes, Sir Henry's suggestion of a health levy is one option but also people who use or choose to use private medical care should get a tax break on that, up to a certain amount. If you know you have up to \$10 000 that you can reduce your taxes by for using private medical care, you are not going to go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The same thing then goes for schools, if the Government cannot afford to support everybody in the public school system in Barbados, then the people who send their children to private schools and take that burden off Government should be entitled to some tax concession in that as well.

Madam President, I am not just criticising, I am trying to give suggestions that the Government may want to look at, to ease the burden of the middleclass. Right now the middleclass is feeling it and it is feeling it hard. Madam President, with a reduction in allowances, Madam President, the middleclass is going to feel in another ten days when they file their taxes for this year, because then it becomes very, very real the amount of taxes that you have to pay. If we start as I said with the premise that salaries have not gone up for the most part since 2009 but that the cost of living has gone up by 40 per cent, the reduction in the allowances is crippling the middleclass.

Madam President, I think that at this stage we need to be honest with the National Insurance Scheme being as exposed to Government in relation to its investments in Government, then we need to be honest and to encourage people to be off the scheme. We need to provide incentives for people to not burden the public purse and the public healthcare system. We need to provide incentives for people to invest privately in pensions.

Madam President, as I said, people will not say unless they are incentivised to do so. Madam President, the fact is that the savings in Barbados are down now. A lot of people save through their RRSPs; those insurance companies who provide the RRSPs will tell you that from the time that concession was taken off the subscription to RRSPs took a nose dive. That is a reality, one thing followed the other thing, Madam President. Let us try to put liquidity back in our system.

Madam President, we need consumption in Barbados for Barbados to grow. Consumption is one of the things that drive the economy of Barbados. I think consumption is responsible for almost two-thirds of the economy of

Barbados. Consumer spending is down, it is at an all-time low. Following the debate a couple of weeks ago about Bridgetown dying, the merchants came out and people had their full say that things are difficult, that Barbadians are not spending. We know they are not spending, people who are seeking funding, people who are seeking donations, people seeking charity know that the Barbadians are not 'pulling' their pockets, it is not that they are worthless, they cannot afford to. Madam President, as people start to hurt and the Government provides no alternatives, then you start to get an underground economy.

Madam President, taxing is not helping us, the way to reduce the deficit is not through taxation. That is a stark, stark reality, the taxation is not helping us. It is getting to the point now where people are doing everything to avoid the tax man; people are having second receipt books or no receipt books at all; underground transactions are being fostered and encouraged.

Madam President, Barbados has always been a law-abiding society. We have always happily shouldered our share of the public burden but right now, Madam President, because the money is not in your pocket. If it is not in your pocket then you cannot spend it, if it is not in your pocket then you cannot pay the taxes.

Madam President, a figure came out that there are 30 000 uninsured vehicles on the road in Barbados. Ma'am, that is not Barbadians, it is not that the drivers are worthless, Madam President, the money is not there. Madam President, you then get the other slap in the face of the house owners. We are in a valuation cycle, every single property that has been valued recently has gone up, to the point where the value for land tax purposes has no relation whatsoever to the market value of the property. People are finding themselves marketing their properties or putting their properties up for sale with some reference to the land tax value and having properties on the market for a year, two year or three years and they cannot get the sale, then when the bank sends somebody to value the property...

Madam President, I know a particular property, a transaction I am dealing with, the Land Tax Department has the value of the property at \$560 000, the property has been on the market at \$560 000 -- not a sniff, Madam President. There now have a buyer, that buyer went to the bank and the bank sent in a valuation of \$360 000, \$200 000 below the land tax value.

Madam President, when the Government came to power they said they were not going to raise the land tax rate. Do you know what? They did not raise the land tax rate, but they doubled the land tax value of properties, so that the tax collection was still the same. I see some Honourable Senators in here nodding because we all know that the value of our houses has gone up and that our

exposure to land tax has increased. The Government must have a conscience at some point in time, you cannot bleed the country entirely dry.

Madam President, revenue comes from growth. We have had eight years of stagnation, there is nothing going on in these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure to inspire the confidence or hope in the economy of Barbados. The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure do not show any significant plan to get the economy back on a growth path.

These Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, Madam President, are an exercise in statistical gymnastics. They are window dressing, Madam President. Barbados is in a dire economic situation. Our ability to borrow money on the world market at less than extortionist's rates is very, very limited. We now have to seek to get grants from the Chinese and from other benefactors but eventually that are going to run dry, that is not a sustainable approach to advance a country, through the generosity of others, we have to be able to stand on our own two feet.

Madam President, we keep talking about punching above our weight, we have to be able to stand on our own two feet. A serious look has to be taken at the economy in Barbados and what is necessary...

SENATOR the Hon. P.M.T. TODD: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House, to suggest that this Government is relying solely on grant funding from the Chinese. Madam President, a number of speakers, including your humble servant, have indicated that the bulk of this capital works that the source of funds will come from concessional loans, so that we are in fact, standing on our own feet. Madam President, the fact that it is coming from less than our ability to represent ourselves internationally and hold our heads up high in the way that we were accustomed as a country able to stand on its two feet and support itself by strong economic policies, fiscal development and prudence and a healthy reputation on the world market, says it all. We need to do what is necessary to get back to that point. Madam President, the Government is failing in the 2013 adjustments. We cannot believe the figures in the Estimates, and that is a dire situation for us to be in. The figures are overstated quite often in terms of revenue, and understated in terms of expenses. To make a point, Madam President: In sanitation, the Approved Estimates for salaries and wages last year was \$26.6 million, which is \$6 million below the Revised Estimates for last year. In last year's Estimates, we saw approval for \$26.6 million. The actual at the end of last year was \$33.49 million. The estimate for the year before that was the same \$26.6 million, so what effectively happened is that the Minister of the Environment knows that when they laid off the people, he took back on people, and it is reflected here in the salaries. There is \$6 million

more in salaries than the Minister of the Environment wishes to cough up and admit to. I am not saying fire the people, but if the people are on the payrolls, then provide for it in the Estimates. Do not come back for another Supplemental to pay them again this year. Put it in the Estimates. Ma'am, next year, once again, the Estimates is back to \$26.6 million, so there is padding there. The true figures are not being put in but he is coming year after year to get a Supplemental to pay what he knows, at the beginning of the year when the Estimates were prepared, is the obligation of the Ministry to the people it has employed. We need to be able to look at the documents that come from the Government, look at the positions of the Government and have confidence that they are what they say they are, Madam President. We cannot plan and take ourselves forward if we are not honest with ourselves and if the Government is not honest with the people of Barbados.

Madam President, Barbados must come first. Whichever Government, whichever party forms the Government in Barbados, Barbados must come first. We need to treat people in Barbados on the basis of genuine need and merit, and not on the basis of partisan concerns. We do not just want growth in Barbados, Ma'am, we want growth with equity. Senator Todd summed it up in his presentation. He said if certain programmes came on stream, the Government is sure to return to power. He listed some of the programmes, and said if these programmes come to fruition, the Government is sure to come to power. That seems to be the sole basis of this Government's position.

Senator P.M.T. TODD: On a Point of Order, Madam President. The Honourable Senator is misleading the House. I would have said, being a mathematician, that the Government would have a very high probability of retaining the Government. I am not God. I cannot give anything with surety.

Senator W.A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, that proves my point. Further and utmost is the return to power by this Government. It should not be about that. Right now, it should be about focusing on what is best for Barbados and what is best for the people. Madam President, the time is now ripe for a new brand of politics; a brand of politics that is truly transparent, accountable, caring and effective. Madam President, with regret, I cannot say that these Estimates take us any further in that direction. The people in Barbados must come first and the Government must do what is necessary, including coming clean when it is painful to do so in order for us to take the hard decisions and take the necessary steps forward. Barbadians are reasonable. Barbadians want to see Barbados grow, but Barbadians need to understand and make informed decisions. Buy-in of the public, especially in relation to hard times and hard situations, is essential. Madam President, I am urging this Government: You are now eight

years into Government. Act as a responsible government. Act as a caring government. Act as a government that has Barbados at heart, and do what is necessary to move Barbados forward. Prioritise the people of Barbados and not the Democratic Labour Party and its policies. Madam President, I am obliged.

SUSPENSION

HON. Ms. M.P.O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for ten minutes.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend for ten minutes was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Her Honour THE PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

MADAM PRESIDENT: This Senate is resumed. Senator McClean, you have the Floor.

Senator Hon. M.P.O. MCCLEAN: Madam President, thank you very much. Madam, let me start in this wrap-up of the debate of the Appropriation Bill, 2016 by first of all congratulating all Senators. I want to acknowledge the significant contributions of persons on this side. I have to apologise for a few absences during the period as I needed to multitask in relation to matter of importance to the Ministry particularly with some China/Caribbean consultations. Madam, as I said that, it reminded me that perhaps I need to address some comments that were repeated often and it brings to mind some comments made by the Opposition lead spokesman, Senator Walcott. I guess he did not have a lot to say in relation to the many issues that I raised in the one hour and 50 minutes for which I spoke, having just come from the dentist on Monday morning but he made comments about my call-in hosting days and I will say, as have said before that more than a decade I did that and I did that because, as a former caller who must have been making good contributions, I was asked by Mr. David Ellis to host that programme back in the early 90s. I did so and for more than a decade and nobody had any complaints. I know certainly what were the views of Senator Walcott about me at that time because I shared them with a very good friend of mine but I presume that he felt he needed to say something. I want to speak to the issue that he rose before I get into the substance of what I want to raise and respond to and that was a supposedly change of position on my comments on the call-in programme about Chinese labour in Barbados. I presume he spoke among other things about the Four Season project which was private sector project under the then Barbados Labour Party administration and projects like Erdiston School and the training college. I make no apology for the comments then. I argued back in the 90s down to when I stopped that programme in 2006 for acceptable terms and

conditions under which Chinese labour would have been used on public and private sector projects and indeed what I would describe at that time as domestic or personal projects as I saw instances of Chinese workers at work on properties owned by political figures of the time or persons connected to such individuals. I can probably say today that as I negotiate as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade on behalf of the Government and people of Barbados I seek at all times to make the case for what is in Barbados' best interest. Madam, in relation to that, you would see that we have been negotiating where we are getting financing for percentages of labour and we would ask for more and more but to suggest that there has been some about term, that is not true. I could not stand here and let my distinguish colleague on the other side say that. I want to stress that since Government has come to office and I have been asked to serve and had the honour to participate in a number of important projects including the Barbados Embassy in Beijing in 2010. I want to say that since then, I have seen our two ambassadors and our small diplomatic team undertake the task of representing this country in a highly professional manner. They have facilitated many delegations, Government and private sector, journalists and so on and we have seen the finalization of many cooperation agreements in education, health, sports, tourism, concessionary financing et cetera. Therefore, I take this very serious. I do not like any suggestions that somehow I have no principles or whatever might be inferred by the comments. I do not know what was inferred but it was wrong, so I need to correct that.

Madam President, overall, I would want to acknowledge the very good contributions on this side where the Chamber and indeed those following the debate on radio or online would have been reminded of many policy priorities pursued in the past financial year and the policy priorities going forward. We also would have heard demonstrating in very clear and unequivocal terms the many achievements that we have made today. I would just quickly talk about some of those policy priorities and to on to respond. I think that while the last speaker's contribution benefits from decency, I think it also benefits from a number of inadequacies, misunderstanding and I think it is incumbent on me to address them.

Madam President, at the end of the day, we would have heard of the importance for this Government and as we look to take Barbados forward, the importance of energy, security, which is linked to the development of a green economy, the importance of diversifying away from fossil fuels not only to protect our environment but to substantially bring down in the short, medium and long term the leakage of foreign exchange for the purchase of fossil fuels.

Madam President, water security is an importance issue. Madam, many Barbadians challenged Barbados's

classification as a water scarce country. While the drying up of the Aral Sea is one of the environmental challenges -- a whole sea drying up facing the Republic of Kazakhstan, for example, which would be very obvious - our water challenges are less visible but no less important and critical. We have had the fact of scarcity made worse by current climate trends. I am sure that by now everybody is aware that in 2015, we receive only approximately 50 per cent of the customary rainfall. We have heard of the importance of education from nursery to tertiary and I would want having raised that to right away tackle one of the points made by Senator Abrahams.

Madam President, it is customary for critics of Government decision to ask the University of the West Indies students to pay 20 per cent of the tuition cost. Madam, tuition cost is not the total cost covered. There is also something called economic cost which is substantially more. Madam, on average economic cost is maybe two or three times tuition cost and, therefore, if you were to add up the total and look at the 20 per cent of the tuition cost, which if it is a third of that, you can work out that it is less than seven per cent of the total cost of that student.

Madam President, anybody who wants to engage in an argument that in a situation that we are facing in the short term and in the long term where the demand for tertiary education particularly university education, the cost is skyrocketing. The numbers demanding the service is increasing exponentially and suggest that we in Barbados with the tax base that we have can continue to carry full cost is being dishonest.

Madam President, more importantly, it has been made clear that we will not see persons disadvantage. This does not mean that John Brown or Mary Smith can go to the university at the year that they might have been planning and I will use, Madam President, myself.

Madam President, I put myself through university because my parents could only give me their blessing and the good values that they did. I left school at 18 years old. I got a job, I studied part time for two years, I saved some money and the good officers at the Welfare Department, where I worked as a clerical officers went to Service Commission and were told they should not do it but they did it, organize their vacation so that I could come back and work in the summer, and I put myself through University of the West Indies. I have a son and I can put him through the University by paying the fees that I am asked to pay. Why should I not do that? I also had a helper at some point whose granddaughter needed to go to the University and do you know what I did, I helped her too, and that was before they were paying fees, because I feel as somebody who received the benefit, we should help one another but criticism was talked about bursaries.

Madam President, this is Barbados and I have lived here longer than the young Senator on the Other Side, but I also recognise that I know how bureaucracy works, and where a decision is taken it is the officers who have to put in place, it is the administrative systems that have to work therefore, there might have been delays. I am happy to hear and read the new Principal of the Cave Hill Campus say, as reported in the media - and I will pick up the phone and call her to verify because she is my personal friend - that the numbers are going up. It was predicted that would happen. We have to ask ourselves: "Can we pretend away the reality". This notion that people kicked down the fence and so on, is nonsense. It might work better, Madam President, and we would have more money if a number of well paid professionals in this country would bear part of the burden and I will illustrate this. I might be sounding a little bit like my colleague, going all over the place but I am trying to address some of the issues that he raised in relation to a broad issue that I raised, I talked about education and its importance.

There was a suggestion that persons should be encouraged, and I underline the word "off" the National Insurance Scheme and I think that is a dangerous, backward, uninformed position to take but let me say why. We contribute and we benefit. Across the world and in this country people have been told you cannot or should not rely solely on a national pensions scheme like this one. For those persons who can do better they should, but do you know what happens, Madam President? There are some professionals, and I am made to understand that the profession of our dear Senator on the Other Side is one of the categories guilty. If I have it correct because I have not been paying as a self-employed person recently, the maximum salary that is covered is less than \$5 000 a month and I can almost guarantee that even the hungriest of lawyers in Barbados will work for more than \$60 000 a year. Now if we take that maximum that is covered by the National Insurance Scheme - and I challenge a former President of the Bar Association to go and do some research and come back and tell me I am wrong - many of these professionals will pay the statutory amounts for their staff including secretaries and so on and they will pay a minimum for themselves, earning more than the \$5 000 a month that I am using as the maximum you can use, and if it is five years that you have to pay in the maximum, having worked in the profession for 20 or 30 years, they would then run in the last five years and pay the maximum and the travesty is that they will then get the maximum benefits. Those are the people who should come off the system and that has to change.

The point I am making is that when we start to criticise systems or we start to make recommendations we need first to understand the system, we need first to understand how it is abused, who abuses it and to whose detriment because the problem then is not the people who

go and get the benefits paid in by their maids, their gardeners, their secretaries, their assistants and so on. Those are the people they are taking advantage of because those people have worked hard, never had the opportunity to earn the kind of money they do, but then this person for 25 years pays the minimum to say they are registered, and that is bad, but I am happy to hear, Madam President, that is being addressed and it needs to be addressed very promptly because it is not fair, and that is one of the issues. I needed to say that, so when we start to talk about encouraging persons off the National Insurance Scheme that the problem.

We talked about other priorities, food securities, et cetera, but I think I would pause on that and speak to some issues that the Honourable Senator on the Other Side in his last presentation of the last element of the debate would have made. I want to say something about Cahill Energy. I have taken a studied decision not to speak on this because I heard all and sundry bring "experts from all over in away" as Bajans would say, and bring them here to talk and so there has been this continued reference. I take guidance from the Prime Minister of this country who talked - and it think it was referred to either indirectly or directly by Senator Abrahams just now - about the process of final approval. The argument being made is: "I looked in the Estimates and I did not see a provision for Cahill Energy." Even if what he is saying is correct, Government is supposed to pay for an environmental impact assessment. This is the financial year 2016/2017 that we are looking at. If that is to happen before anything else can happen and you are saying that even if Government has to pay for it and it is not budgeted and it is done, what does that say to you? The project cannot go anywhere. I do not get into discussions ... The Prime Minister spoke on that and as far as I am concerned, until I hear and see decisions taken otherwise, his word is the last word on this so I would not quibble to see what is there. If it is not in there, there must be a logical and sensible reason. I think that is one of the issues that I want to raise. If we were to do things as the Honourable Senator suggested perhaps we would have what he called political window dressing for the Estimates but that is not the case, and I think that I need to say something about using those kinds of statements as well.

Madam President, when these Estimates are being prepared - and I would use my ministry because my ministry is illustrative of the others - we sit down, and this is what should inform the things that should happen ... Ministries have priorities. We have the person who is the accounting officer in the ministry, it is not the Minister, it is the Permanent Secretary. There is an accountant or financial controller and they sit down as a management team based on what has been identified as the programme agenda for the ministry and they prepare these things. With the programme agenda we have inputs but we do not sit down as a Cabinet and hustle together numbers. When we

start to talk about these in this way we are disrespecting the professionals young, middle age and old that we have in the public service. Nothing has changed since independence to a large extent in terms of how decisions are made. Certainly nothing has changed in terms of the preparation of the Estimates since 2008.

I said in my opening comments, Madam President, as I reflected on the eight years, that when we came into office the process of Estimates - because the Appropriation Bill 2008 was the first piece of legislation debated by the then new Democratic Labour Party Administration - we would have built on what the public servants had been putting together, and so we need to be careful what we say. When we describe these things you may not agree, you may not see what you want in there or you may not understand what you see when you read the document, but to give the impression that these things are somehow bogus, does not make any sense.

I want, Madam President, to speak about the issue of CLICO and BAICO. I think that was the place from which Senator Abrahams launched his contribution trying to suggest that we, being this Administration, blamed the previous Administration for all that has happened. That is not true. I listened even when I was not physically present here, for example, when I was travelling back here I made sure that I tune in, I always listen, and I listen to the contributions.

Madam President, my background is management. I heard Senator Walcott tried to denigrate my 17 and a half years at the University of the West Indies. The University of the West Indies is a teaching institution. If you look at the Campus right now, the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences is one of my students, and I could go through the list, so I must have done something right. I can even say that if you go to Glendairy you would find a student of mine, the Superintendent of Prisons. I have trained these people. I am sure that the Superintendent of Prisons would not have a problem with me saying this because it ties in with how we do some of these things. I remember when he was offered that job and he told me that as soon as he was informed about that he sat down and applied the knowledge of strategic management that he was taught in my class. I recall seeing him sitting next to his wife in class, so I must have done some right, Madam President, because my students are all over, they are in my ministry, across the civil service and across the Caribbean from Belize down to Guyana and I could Government on.

The point I am making is that from a management perspective when you are making decisions or when you are explaining something, this is contextual, what we inherited we cannot ignore. The reason why we refer to these things is because as we seek to explain positions and

numbers, and I would give an illustration of one of those, we cannot pretend that it had its genesis since 2008.

I would move away from you a little bit to illustrate the point, Senator Sir Roy Trotman for his exposition on UCAL yesterday, but I would also say that he sent me to read to go back and do some research. There was an outstanding balance owed to the company, I believe it was \$22 million identified, I believe in all fairness he did trace that, that that is not something that occurred or accumulated overnight.

The reality is that if you look at the amount of business done in any one year in terms of maintenance by that companion terms of its earnings from the Transport Board, you can ask yourself what does that translates into business on a yearly basis. That \$22 million was not incurred in two or three years. For anybody who understands accounting, there was a hardcore of bad debts, that is what you could call it bad debt, because the Government was not paying, but it was not one year or one Government.

When we talk about inheritance it is to get Barbadians to understand that some of the noise they hear, some of the things that they read and some of the things that are reported do not give the full picture. We are not blaming anybody. If we were blaming people and not doing anything we would not be here today being able to celebrate.

I drove up here this morning and I listened to Senator Sandiford-Garner in a precise highly analytical way explaining the successes of tourism. In listening to that there is no denying those facts. In fact spent almost 15 years in cruise tourism and I told people that when you do not hear taxi drivers or hoteliers complaining something is happening that is positive. When you hear representatives of the Barbados Labour Party Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association singing positive songs something really good has got to be happening, so we talk about these things for people to understand. We have to use comparators, so when we start to talk about \$7 million to be spent on an Independence Celebrations and I heard you make reference to Senator Fraser not knowing about that or not seeing the budget, let me explain to the public and to you Madam President, and to all who are listening how this was arrived at.

As Senator Fraser and others should know, because we explained the process and I believe Senator Byer Suckoo went over part of it today, the Prime Minister invited two Members of his Cabinet to sit on a Committee with a cross-sectional, cross-sector, interfaith, all kinds of committees, from priests to young people, to sit down and discuss how Barbados, not Senator Byer Suckoo or me or the Prime Minister or the Cabinet, should celebrate

independence. We did not go with anything other than to suggest that the Prime Minister's instructions were, it should be a period of reflection and he identified areas and a process of reflecting not only celebrations and wining and dining or whatever.

It was also decided that because this Administration has made the diaspora a priority, because Barbados is more than the 300 000 or whatever the number of Barbadians on this rock, it is the hundreds of thousands of Barbadians across the diaspora who constitute Bajans, that they as they celebrate every year would participate. Some of them were asking before we even got to them. When we look at \$7 million, it was derived at first of all by the Director of Finance writing, not to me, not to the Deputy Chair or any Member of Cabinet but to the permanent secretaries across the public service to identify area which would fall under their purview as we celebrate that would have to be costed outside of their regular budget. It had nothing to do with me, it had nothing to do with her and it had nothing to do with the Democratic Labour Party because that is a separate and distinct thing. I do not have time to speak about that I do not think, but I could speak about that because I heard somebody on the radio say, when I explained that this was not a party thing but that the party would celebrate, then they want to know if you have a national why the party wants to celebrate. Anyhow that just shows that people would always find a problem for the solution rather than find a solution for the problem but anyhow, so that is what happened. They were asked to identify, then things were brought to the Committee and we said we have to prioritise, so it was not done by anybody deciding that is the case, so that is the process. It was transparent and as with other things we did not have any inputs in that beyond having a discussion as to some things responsible under certain ministries.

The other important thing to understand is that as you heard the Prime Minister say over and over, and I refer to that, we cannot only focus on the cost, we have to focus on the value. I can tell you, Madam President, that there are a couple events outside of Barbados as part of our 50th Anniversary Celebrations that in the short, medium and long term will generate substantially more benefits than \$7 million. At the end of May this year we will have an event in Atlanta and that event is intended to forge relationships at the level of research institutions investors and we were able to strengthen a partnership with Delta Airways, et cetera. That is not something that we can dismiss in terms of value. We go to London, New York and Canada and look and see what is happening there. All of that build awareness. A lot of it is intended not just to celebrate among Barbadians but to sell Barbados and there is a cost to doing it, but there are substantial returns projected. We are working with agencies such as the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation, Invest Barbados and so on

making sure that as part of their regular work we incorporate them in these activities to promote.

Madam President, it brings me to something else. There is a gentleman who used to sit in here with us in the Senate who has made it his business to put yachting back on the map so to speak as a tourism attraction. I can tell you that since 2008 we have seen the expansion of a high-end niche area in tourism. On the 28th March, and we started with one event I remember if it is 2008 or and on, we have something well at least every year at least one of two things . Next week, 28th March, we have something called GP.14 Barbados and I wanted to know what is GP14, which is the (J)Gam Purpose 14-foot-boat and this is a competition... Madam President, this is an example of the success we have been able to achieve in that lucrative tourism niche. As of March 28th it will be the largest sailing event to have been hosted in Barbados.

Madam President, for that event there will be 105 boats. I am not sure what is the worth of a GP-14 but it is not ten cents, nor \$10 nor \$10 000, it is a lot of money, and they are not owned like poor people like me. There will be 210 sailors so far, 184 non sailors, 20 officials from Barbados, representing 14 countries. This is not the whole cheering side that will come.

Madam President, when these people come here, and I say that because I have seen the conversion in tourism that has taken place, being they come, they see, they like, they come back, they buy property, they enjoy accommodation, et cetera. After that, coming at the end of the year, Madam President, close to the important day, November 30th, there is a second event. Madam President, do you remember we used to have something called the Ark Race that we lost to St. Lucia, it was it was Atlantic rally for cruisers, let us get something back like that. Let us understand what is happening, it will run from November through to January 21st, which everybody knows is an important day. It is the birthday of the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow. It happens also to be, and I discovered very recently, the birthday of Eric Holder (Jr.) who has participated in what will be a tribute to the late Right Excellency Errol Walton Barrow. It is a very interesting coincidence, a wonderful serendipitous occasion and on that occasion we will have 50 yachts crossing the Atlantic for that race. Madam President, when we look at these things we have to understand that we are not just blaming anybody, we are explaining to the public what has been our situation.

Madam President, I talked about teaching Strategic Management and there are some basic questions that you ask when doing Strategic Analysis. You ask yourself where are we, why are we where we are, what are we going to do about it and where do we want to go from here and how are we going to get there. Madam President, therefore when we

start to look, we cannot walk into a situation blindly without understanding why we are where we are. Madam President, it is important to understand because if people do not understand that they will say things like what we were told, for example, give back everybody the allowances that they first had. Madam President, we cannot be all things to all people, especially in times of economic hardship and difficulty.

Madam President, we are told that there needs to be a serious capital injection in the Judicial and legal system. That may be true, but can we do all of these things simultaneously. If we want to do all of these things we have to ask ourselves, can we afford it, do we have to borrow. Madam President, if we have to borrow, then we have to ask ourselves, what can we borrow, what is the impact of borrowing, and what has created the situation that we can only borrow so much or that we can borrow only of this type. Madam President, it is because of what we found and so people need to understand that. It is not people are sitting down and saying, well, we inherited this and we are going to sit down and wait it out.

Madam President, we have run this country for eight years and we have heard of our achievements in education, we heard of our achievements in education, we have heard of the wonderful work we are doing in social care, in labour issues, challenging...

Madam President, I have heard things and I would hate to think that what I heard as of yesterday, for example, somebody called me and said: "Do you know what the plan is?" Madam President, I cannot use the words they said but they said, "They gonna do something to wanna, they gunna alternate and who ain't striking, going on go slow." I said, well, if people are going to do that without a basis, then that is a very sad thing for this country, because at the end of the day we have had in this country excellent, mature industrial relations and I would hope that the efforts of persons like Senator Sir Roy Trotman who has given his working life - and I hope he would have a long life after - to building that climate. Therefore, I trust that has successor, the successors in the other unions, of the stalwarts that we knew, would recognise that at the end of the day what we are doing is serving the interest, not of a Government or an Opposition, but of the people of the country.

Senator Sir ROY TROTMAN: Madam President, I rise on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable Chamber, not deliberately, I am sure, but misleading, nevertheless, by praising me and saying how well I have worked in the sacrificial work of the country and by juxtaposing that alongside the younger leadership, the Honourable Member has managed to give the impression that younger trade union leaders do not have the concern of the country at the centre of their interest. I

am sure the Honourable Member would want to correct that and I do draw it to her attention that the Honourable Member should withdraw the comment.

Senator the Hon. Miss M.P.O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I do not know if the Honourable Member heard what I said, but I certainly did not suggest that, I am suggesting and hoping that they will continue along the same tradition. I hope, therefore, that the concerns that were flagged with me are not going to be the case, but I will leave that alone.

Madam President, the key point I am making is that as we look to these things, we need to recognise that it is important that we all work together. We have said to the world that we as Government, as a Trade Union Movement and the private sector know how to work together, in good times and in difficult times and that has brought us very far. Madam President, all I would caution is that we can continue along that trajectory because when we move away from that, we are going to find ourselves with lots of problems.

Madam President, I believe also that Senator Abrahams suggested -- and I wrote it in quotation marks -- "Barbados is in dark economic situation." Madam President, I do not know that we are in a dire situation, we have difficult times, we have battled difficult times and we are working hard to change that. Madam President, what I would also want to say is that if that is the Honourable Member's understanding then I have difficulty of appreciating -- and again I want to spell this out -- how we can realistically meet all the demands, additional expenditure, et cetera, in the short term. Madam President, we have gone through over the last eight years serious belt tightening. We are seeing opportunities where we can address that, but we cannot willy-nilly abandon the efforts to bring reform, et cetera.

Madam President, I also want very quickly before my time runs out to say something about the issue of biometrics and the legislation related to that. I was happy that Senator Abrahams was able to make it through... I think his Tablet might have frozen but I was hearing some things that sounded very similar to things I heard elsewhere. Madam President, first of all, let me define for people what do we mean when we talk about biometrics in the context of immigration and national security, et cetera. We are talking about indicators which facilitate the verification or the means by which a person can be uniquely identified. You go from hand geometry. You go and you are asked to put your ten fingers on a reader. In earlobe geometry you look at the iris, your fingerprints, your voice waves, your signature and your DNA. All of those things are means by which people can be identified, and I have heard it before but I believe I have to say it again, because Barbadians seem to run away with some of

the half-information or less than half-information which they receive. The reality is that if you go into the United States, you go through a booth, which is one of the things I am sure that we would have when we put his system in place for Barbadians. You go through a booth as an American but it scans. You hear that they have moved from machine-readable passports to biometrics, and it is the biometrics on that passport using the latest technology. They have records of your fingerprints, your iris if they are using that, and all of these things; so that when you go through, they are checking against your record. How, therefore, do you get a record?

I am not going to say much more about that but that is the first thing. We need to understand that when we talk about biometric data what you are really talking about. I have heard about its use and I think a very good explanation was given by Senator DePeiza yesterday, but the one thing that I heard and I need to explain is this whole question of legislation and the reference to the regulations not being done well. I am not a lawyer. The bit of law that I did was commercial law when I was doing my M.B.A. (Master's in Business Administration), but there is a concept, I believe, of the process of negative resolution. If I can go through it step by step as a lay person as I understand it, it perhaps would help us to understand what happened, what should happen, what normally would happen, and what should be done if people have difficulty.

Madam President, as we know in terms of passing legislation, there is a two-step process. An Act goes to the House of Assembly, it is debated by Members of Parliament, and it then comes up to the Senate. We debate it and that Bill, amendment to legislation or new piece of legislation is passed, and an Act is passed which allows for regulations to be made. Some pieces of legislation will have regulations as part of that legislation. For example, the charging of fees would be part of something related to Licensing Authority. Okay? The regulations are made by the legal persons employed by Government to do so, and are laid. In the same way that you have something dealt with in the House of Assembly, it is laid in Parliament and the Senate.

Madam President, I further understand that there is a 40-day period during which a Member who opposes that must file a Resolution to trigger a debate; so if they felt that something was wrong with the regulations or the process by which they were handled, et cetera, you have 40 days in which to, for want of a better word, appeal the decision. Madam President, I also understand that from the time the regulations are laid in the House and so on, they become operational. In other words, if the regulations say "charge fees", you start to charge the fees. My understanding further is that within the Act -- you can go and find the Section -- it speaks of being without prejudice to the validity of anything done under that. In essence, there are

clear procedures within the rules speaking to that. Therefore, there is a process of appeal, and none was appealed. In relation to that piece of legislation for the fullness or completeness of the point that I am making, having identified the steps that you should go through, Madam President, if we had the legislation to which we heard objection to the regulations, et cetera, my recollection is that it was laid in the House of Assembly on June 15, 2015 and we dealt with it in the Senate on July 8, 2015; almost a year ago. There was nothing filed to challenge any of that, so I do not know how, after the fact somebody is going to come and tell me it was not done properly.

Anyhow, Madam President, I think I needed to clarify that because we run off and say these things and we end up creating what I call misrepresentation and misinformation. Having said all of that, Madam President, I believe that I need to spend the rest of my time providing or paying tribute and reiterating some important points that would have been made by my colleagues. I think, as I said before, there was a suggestion that we had done nothing for anybody, and we have done a lot for the highest and most critical sector of the economy, tourism. Madam President, we have given them what they have asked for, to all intents and purposes, and I must say that Government has been committed. I recall somebody asking that there be accountability for the \$100 million or so that is spent in promotion, and my question would be accountability at what level. I think the accountability has to come from the persons who have benefited.

Madam President, I want to say, though, that there was something that was raised. I believe Senator Sandiford-Garner articulated very well what has happened, but I have a concern. This concern or my consideration of the issue came when I listened to the call-in programme on one of the stations. Somebody was saying, "If we have such a substantial increase in arrivals and so on, why are we not seeing certain other indicators?" It led me to think about the nature of the tourism industry, not from the perspective of the support Government gives, because Government has done that, but from the cooperation, for want of a better word, and the reciprocity that perhaps needs to come from the industry players. Let me explain what I mean: Tourism generates a lot of revenue but there is also significant leakage. In some other jurisdictions, Madam President, we have a situation where - I believe the United States Virgin Islands may be an example of this - the whole notion of reciprocity is one that is important. In other words, in order to get certain concessions, there must be some evidence, solid evidence and some specifics, as to participation in the local economy. In other words, hotels must demonstrate that they are doing business with, let us say, food suppliers, furniture manufacturers, and with the providers of soft furnishings and other services, for example. In other words, taxpayers are foregoing benefits

of revenue that would have otherwise been collected by Government, and as such, we need to be able to see that this benefit is shared. We have talked about it. I do not know the extent to which industry players have sought to do that, but I believe that is something which we really have to look at.

Madam President, I am therefore happy to say that, of course, in addition to all that was said by Senator Sandiford-Garner today, performance continues to be good, so I hope that the industry players would look to share their successes. We have seen reductions in VAT (Value Added Tax), et cetera, and the statistics recently revealed that having seen the increases in 2015, January and February 2016 are up eight per cent over the same period of 2015. I therefore have to say to my colleague who is with us, the Minister and the team, including my old classmate from university days before he went off to do tourism management, Mr. William Griffith, who I am happy to see return to Barbados and who is one of the first graduates in the tourism hotel management programme in the University of the West Indies, well done. These people are working very hard, but I want to make the point that as we do that, we also have to look at making sure that we are able to see the multiplier effect, the spinoffs of that by the sourcing of products and services from indigenous suppliers. I am not talking about suppliers who bring in things, import and distribute them only. I am talking about people who are sourcing, as I said, local craft, furnishings and furniture, trading services, and whatever the case may be. In terms of entertainment services, I believe that I heard Senator Sandiford-Garner talk about the period where there was significant investment, not only by visiting groups but by organisations such as hotels and so on. I believe that is another issue which we have to look at.

Madam President, I want to commend Senator Husbands and the Minister of Education on all that we have had in terms of improvement in our education system. Madam President, social care. I listen very carefully but it is beyond the institutional arrangements that I want to pay special tributes to Senator Durant. I do not know if we have many chairpersons like him. Madam, as a Chairman, he is very hands-on and I think that is important. Madam, maybe it is part of his religious calling but I think the fact that time is taken particularly in relation to our elderly to go and personally investigate along with public officers cases of hardship to my mind is commendable because I think our elderly need special care and attention.

Madam President, I do not know that I need to use all my time. I certainly could but having spent seventeen and a half years teaching, three hours standing on my feet in a class is but a little time and one day, I will teach Senator Walcott how to manage his surgery but I will do that privately.

MADAM PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member has 11 more minutes.

Senator Hon. M.P.O MCCLEAN: Thank you. I will give five of those minutes to Senator Walcott. I will reduce it so that he will get home five minutes earlier.

Madam President, I just want to wrap-up by saying that we were not considering the Estimates, we refer to the Estimates. We do not approve the Estimates. We approve an Appropriation Bill, which is a statutory requirement in terms of having the law which says you can take a specific amount of Government expenditure from the Consolidated Fund. Madam, Senator Boyce explained that for the second time but unfortunately, I do not think that, unless he was within hearing, the explanation would have been heard by Senator Fraser. This is one of the concerns but I believe it has been explained. Madam, I want to say that as usual, colleagues in this distinguished Chamber to all intents and purposes take this exercise very seriously. Madam President, on this side of the table, we take it extremely seriously and many of us have day-to-day responsibility for elements of the programme captured in the Estimates on an annual basis. A lot of us have come to this country to what people say not looking for grandiose benefits because as I tell people when I think of some of us, we are making certain kinds of sacrifices but I think this country has given us much and many of us are quite prepared to accept the abuse not only from your colleagues and so on but from people who are misguided by some of their comments but then many of them would meet you at the beach on morning and commend you for the hard work and ask you to say to your colleagues to keep on keeping on because it has not been easy. It has not been easy but the last 50 years for the persons who laid the ground work, for some of us who were children of that Independence era, who did not have the luxury of a middle class existence, we appreciated education. We appreciate the sacrifice of our parents, we appreciated the support of neighbours. We appreciate the fact that we wanted to make this country look good and that there was nothing wrong with hard work and being productive. We appreciate that nobody owed us a living or owed us anything for that matter but at the end of the day by sheer dint of hard work, commitment, dedication, support for each other and a good strong community spirit, we make it from 1966 right through to 2016. I want to say to people that I have seen Barbados in tough times, I have seen Barbados in good times, I have seen people make sacrifice and I have seen people waste. I have seen people respect institutions and I have seen disrespect institutions but I think as the father of Independence and now National Hero, the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, would have said to people and challenge them...

Asides.

Senator Hon. M.P.O MCCLEAN: I was in Independence Square when he gave that famous mirror image speech and he asked us the question. Madam, I suggest to some people to find it and read it. What image do we have of ourselves and that question is being asked again in this 50th years, in the form of a set of questions put to the people.

Madam President, I have heard some people complain about a letter they receive from the Prime Minister but then other people say they have to frame it and keep it because my grandchildren and my great grandchildren must see it. I am lucky, Madam President, to be of a family where there are four generation of us. Madam, I am a great aunt and also a great great aunt, so you can work out what that means. I am very serious that those children who are the children of our children, that is my siblings' children and their children's children and so on must understand that we did not get here by 'vaps'. It did not just happen, we got here by hard work and by a dignified approach to living, by a respect for law and order and by a respect for systems. We used to hear about things falling off a truck but when people who aspire to positions of eminence, prominence and whatever else in this country can wave about documents and put them on media where it can go literally all over the world with impunity. Madam, forget the impunity because impunity is about somebody punishing you, without a care in the world with no sense of hesitance, remorse, shame or concern that they are doing the wrong thing, something is wrong. We have to pull that back, Madam President.

Madam President, I therefore recommend to everybody to forget that you may not like the Prime Minister because he sits on the other side of the fence or because some politician tells you that you should not like him and therefore, you are following that, listen to what he has asked us, read the letter he has sent us and commit, not for me, not for you, Madam President, or not for anyone of us here but for yourself and for those who are to follow in your immediate family and neighbourhood. We have to look to move forward. We have gone through difficult times and we will get out of it. Madam, nobody in here can say this Government has done nothing and nobody can say that we have not made very good use of the resources we have. We have looked at the Transport Board and we have made old buses work. Madam, all of that is because we have a commitment. I want to say and I would reiterate where I started that the four pillars of our future success and what we have been putting in place. We intend to continue socially balanced policies, development that is economically viable, practices that are environmentally sound and good honest governance and all of that would translate into a Government committed to doing the best for this country.

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

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

The Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Appropriation Act, 2016.

ORDER No. 2

BARBADOS INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2016

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator McClean, you have the Floor. Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I rise to move the second reading of the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2016. This is a pretty short amendment and it is intended to make an adjustment to the size of the Board of the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation, CAP 340. The intention is to increase the number of persons who can serve on the Board of the BIDC as we know it by the abbreviation. In essence, there is an amendment to the Schedule which is really intended to increase the number of the Directors and also to change the size of the quorum to six Directors, so there are two simple amendments to identify the Board comprising 11 members.

Madam President, we have had a long discussion on the importance of, and I certainly would have spoken to the role and importance of the ministry under which this falls and the intention, of course, is to allow by the expansion the broadening of the categories of persons who would constitute part of the Board. The expectation is with the expansion of the Board that you would have an improved level of contribution to the decision-making. I think we talk about the inclusion of different sector interests, skill sets as well, therefore, this should enhance the capacity of the Board to advise management, to engage in policy development, of course, with the increase in the Board, a corresponding increase in the quorum is one that is deemed necessary.

With those words, Madam President, and with the assurance that there is a commitment to enhance and expand the role and importance of the BIDC as identified by the activities to date, I would want to beg that this Bill be read a second time.

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

On the motion of Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Senate resolved itself into Committee, His

Honour Senator the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLow in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 - 2 inclusive were called and passed.

On the motion of Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to Her Honour the PRESIDENT, the passing of one Bill in Committee and MADAM PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation (Amendment) Act, 2016.

ADJOURNMENT

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I beg to move that this Senate do now adjourn sine die.

Speaking on the adjournment though, Madam President, I want to take this opportunity to wish you, Madam President, all the distinguished Members of the Senate, officers, members of the Royal Barbados Police Force, all the staff of Parliament, the caterers and all who have worked hard to make sure that we have been well taken care of and that we are able to undertake the work before us in as comfortable a manner as possible, as we celebrate this very special season, the season of Easter, I wish you God's blessings and I hope that you would use that period of time to get some rest and relaxation and do some introspection especially as it relates to our spiritual selves. Blessings, Madam President.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Abrahams.

Senator W. A. ABRAHAMS: Madam President, on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, I want to thank the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk, the Marshal, the Deputy Marshal, all the officers who ably protected us long into the night, the caterers who make sure that we are in a position to concentrate and do the business of the Senate, all of the staff associated with Parliament, the support staff and the staff downstairs in the dining hall.

Madam President, I would like to thank all of you here, all of the Honourable Senators here on this side of the table and as table is round we take it all the way to that side. I want to wish everybody God's riches blessings for this Easter season. I hope everybody have a sober and

reflective Good Friday and that we learn and appreciate the miracle that was the resurrection.

Madam President, I am much obliged.

MADAM PRESIDENT: Senator Trotman.

Senator Sir Roy TROTMAN: Madam President, I think it would be remiss of me if I did not rise particularly since we have are at the end of what was a marathon session in paying our respects. I would want to take note of the fact that the Senators on the Government side were noted for the sterling performance that they made and we had said so before they have made sterling performances and should be congratulated, unfortunately, the Leader of Business for Government did not recall that there were other contributions and we therefore would need to express our appreciation to the other persons beyond those on the Government Benches, the Opposition itself and those of us who are Independent. I think that the quality of the debate was quite sound and that it is a pleasure to see the growth that Senators have made in their capacity to represent their points of view over the period of this Parliament.

At this time we wish to thank you Madam President, your entire staff, members of the Royal Barbados Police Force and anyone else who contributed to the time we have been here during this debate including those who are downstairs to whom we should repair, some of us anyhow, in a moment or two.

I would wish, as Senator Abrahams did, to hope that we would reflect on the season that is before us Easter not merely the Good Friday which we would want to reflect on but the equally important resurrection because that is a very basis of our faith. I should hope that coming out of this season of reflection we would be the wiser and the stronger in His name.

Thank you, Ma'am.

MADAM PRESIDENT: As we prepare to adjourn, I too will take this opportunity to first compliment all Honourable Senators regardless of where they sit on their sterling and excellent contributions over these three days. It is not easy to sit for three days to listen to debates only easy because Senators conduct themselves in an orderly fashion and even when they do not it adds some spice to the events and proceedings, it keeps things lively and interesting. That notwithstanding ladies and gentlemen, let me offer my sincerest thanks to the staff of Parliament, those within and without the Chamber and those who service in any capacity, assist us, support us, guard us and guide us. Let us always remember and be humble by the fact that the work of this Parliament is not conducted by the 51 Members who sit in either Chamber, it is augmented by all of the others who make contributions to our daily

comforts and direction. Let me offer all of you sincerest blessings for this Easter season and let us return after a period of reflection invigorated to continue the work of our country.

The question that the Senate do now adjourn until sine die was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and MADAM PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.

CONTENTS

RESUMPTION

His Honour Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow, 22, 23; Senator Hon. Darcy W. Boyce, 24; Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo, 31, 39, 40; Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer, 31; Senator Dr. J. X. Walcott, 32; Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer Suckoo, 32, 39, 40.

RESUMPTION

Senator W. A. Abrahams, 41, 43, 44, 45, 49; Senator J. Ince, 43; Senator J. Ince, 43, 44; Senator Miss V. A. G. De Peiza, 45; Senator A. A. Adams, 46, 47; Senator the Hon. P.M.T. Todd, 49.

RESUMPTION

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, 50, 55, 57; Senator Sir Roy Trotman, 54.

BARBADOS INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2016

COMMITTEE

SUSPENSIONS.....22, 41, 50.

ADJOURNMENT.....58

Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN, 58; Senator W. A. Abrahams, 58; Senator Sir Roy Trotman, 59.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ABRAHAMS, Senator W. A.

Adams, Senator A. A.

BOYCE, Senator Hon. DARCY W.

BYER, Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R.

BYER-SUCKOO, Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R.

**CRICHLLOW, His Honour Senator the Very Reverend
H. E.**

HUSBANDS, Senator H.

INCE, Senator J.

J.INCE, Senator

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

Peiza, Senator Miss V. A. G. De

SANDIFORD-GARNER, Senator Mrs. V.I.

SUCKOO, Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER

TODD, Senator the Hon. P.M.T.

TROTMAN, Senator Sir ROY

WALCOTT, Senator Dr. J. X.

WATSON, Senator J.A.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

Q2. Opening. The source has no PRESENT list and no record of prayers; it opens with a line '(Seq 1) MADAM PRESIDENT: Good morning, the Senate is now in session. Senator Sandiford-Garner, you have the Floor.' set as an ordinary paragraph, and the Order No. 1 heading for the Appropriation Bill, 2016 is not given. Please supply or confirm.

Q3. Appropriation Bill, Senator A. A. Adams. After Senator P. M. T. Todd's first point of order, the paragraph beginning 'Madam President, Barbados must come first' follows under Senator Todd's label, and after his second point of order the reply 'Madam President, that proves my point' is labelled 'Senator W.A. ABRAHAMS', although Senator Abrahams had already spoken and the passage appears to continue Senator Adams' speech. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Appropriation Bill, third reading. The source goes from the second reading of the Appropriation Bill directly to 'The Bill was read a third time and passed'; no Committee stage is recorded. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 2, Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean. The Leader's speech moving the second reading of the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2016 is run into Madam President's call ('Senator McClean, you have the Floor. Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McCLEAN: Madam President, I rise...'), so it prints under Madam President's label. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Speech labels. The Minister's name appears as 'BYER-SUCKOO', 'BYER SUCKOO' and once 'BYER'. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate met on Wednesday, 23rd March, 2016, the third day of its debate on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and the Appropriation Bill, 2016, with Madam President in the Chair. The source opens with the President calling Senator Sandiford-Garner.

Senator Mrs. V. I. Sandiford-Garner, speaking for the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport, said that long-stay arrivals had risen by 13.9 per cent to 591 892, from 519 000 in 2014, in the best year in the history of tourism arrivals, against global growth of 4.4 per cent, and defended the Minister of Finance. Senator J. A. Watson, for the Opposition, said the country faced a deficit of about \$1.6 billion, spoke on health care and nursery education, and urged that the sugar cane industry be kept and expanded. Senator H. A. Husbands spoke on, among other things, the school meals menu.

After the lunch suspension until 2.30 p.m., His Honour Senator the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow spoke mainly on education. Senator the Hon. D. W. Boyce said the Government had made good progress in its fiscal position and traced the fiscal distress of the past eight years to the effects of the investment crisis from 2008 on revenue from the international business sector. Senator Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo dealt with her Ministry and the Independence celebrations, rejecting the suggestion that the Opposition had not been invited, after a point of order from Senator Dr. J. X. Walcott.

After a further suspension until 5.25 p.m., Senator W. A. Abrahams asked whether Barbados was truly independent and criticised the state of garbage collection, which drew repeated points of order from Senator J. Ince on the number of trucks and the Cahill project; he declined to give way to Senator Miss V. A. G. De Peiza and said the Bar Association had only pointed out that certain Regulations and their implementation were illegal. Senator A. A. Adams questioned whether \$7 million was the right sum for the Independence celebrations, called for more judges and CAT transcribers to reduce the backlog in the courts, said the Government had doubled land tax values while keeping the rate, and called the Estimates 'statistical gymnastics'; Senator P. M. T. Todd raised points of order that the Government was relying on concessional loans and not only Chinese grants.

After a ten-minute suspension, the Leader of the Senate, Senator the Hon. Miss M. P. O. McClean, wound up, setting out the Government's priorities including energy security and a green economy, and answered a point of order from Senator Sir Roy Trotman. The Appropriation Bill was read a second and third time and passed as the Appropriation Act, 2016.

Senator McClean then moved the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2016, which enlarges the Board to 11 members and sets the quorum at six Directors; it passed through Committee, with the Very Reverend H. E. Crichlow in the

Chair, and was read a third time. On the motion to adjourn sine die, Senator Abrahams for the Opposition and Senator Sir Roy Trotman thanked the staff and Senators, Madam

President complimented all Senators on their conduct over the three days, and the Senate was adjourned sine die.