

**No. 3**

**TUESDAY**

**First Session**

**29<sup>th</sup> May, 2001**

**Seventh Parliament**

**SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

**THE**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

**ADVANCE COPY**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

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**THE**

**THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE THIRD MEETING, FIRST SESSION OF THE SEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES CONSTITUTED AS SET OUT IN SCHEDULE 2 TO THE SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES ORDER, 1979.**

**FOURTH SITTING**

**29<sup>th</sup> May, 2001**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

The Honourable House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. in the Assembly Chamber, Court House, Kingstown.

**PRAYERS**

**MR. SPEAKER IN THE CHAIR**

Honourable Hendrick Alexander

**Present**

**MEMBERS OF CABINET**

Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Planning,  
Economic Development, Labour, Information,  
Grenadines and Legal Affairs.

Dr. The Honourable Ralph Gonsalves

Member for North Central Windward

Attorney General

Honourable Judith Jones-Morgan

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign  
Affairs, Commerce and Trade.

Honourable Louis Straker

Member for Central Leeward

Minister of National Security, the Public Service  
and Airport Development  
Honourable Vincent Beache

Member for South Windward

Minister of Education, Youth and Sports  
Honourable Michael Browne

Member for West St. George

Minister of Social Development, Co-operatives,  
The Family, Gender and Ecclesiastical Affairs  
Honourable Girlyn Miguel

Member for Marriacqua

Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries  
Honourable Selmon Walters

Member for South Central  
Windward

Minister of Health and the Environment  
Honourable Dr. Douglas Slater

Member for South Leeward

Minister of Tourism and Culture  
Honourable Rene Baptist

Member for West Kingstown

Minister of State in the Ministry  
of Education, Youth and Sports  
Honourable Clayton Burgin

Member for East St. George

Minister of State in the Ministry  
of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries  
Honourable Montgomery Daniel

Member for North Windward

Minister of State in the Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Trade  
Honourable Conrad Sayers

Member for Central Kingstown

Minister of Transport, Works and Housing  
Honourable Julian Francis

Government Senator

Honourable Edwin Snagg

Government Senator, Parliamentary  
Prime Minister's Office, Special  
Responsibility for Labour and  
Grenadines Affairs

## **OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE**

Honourable Arnhim Eustace	Member for East Kingstown/ Leader of the Opposition
Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday	Member for Northern Grenadines
Honourable Terrance Ollivierre	Member for Southern Grenadines
Honourable Juliet George	Government Senator
Honourable Andrea Young	Government Senator/Deputy Speaker
Honourable Joseph Burns Bonadie	Opposition Senator
Honourable Gerard Shallow	Opposition Senator

## **ABSENT**

Minister of Telecommunications, Science Technology and Industry Honourable Dr. Jerrol Thompson	Member for North Leeward
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# **SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**

## **HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

29<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2001

### **PRAYERS**

Honourable Mr. Speaker, Honourable Hendrick Alexander read the Prayers of the House.

### **CONGRATULATORY REMARKS**

**HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to congratulate a number of persons and organizations in Sports.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would like to congratulate the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Women's Cricket Association for thus far conducting a very successful National Lottery, West Indies Cricket Federation Tournament. This Tournament Mr. Speaker by far, is the most successful in recent times that has been conducted by the West Indies Women's Association. And for this we must commend the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Women's Cricket Association, who in their second year of entering the West Indies Tournament took the challenge to conduct the Tournament here. And it is the first time in history they have been having seven teams participating in such a Tournament.

Mr. Speaker, also permit me to congratulate Janelle Greaves for scoring the one and only century thus far in the Tournament. Permit me to quote the Vincentian newspaper of May 25<sup>th</sup>. It says here:

**"Behind the high-class century by opener Janelle Greaves, St. Vincent trounced the Guyanese by 185 runs."**

It further states that:

**"Janelle Greaves who missed her team's opening match against Grenada, because of external exams, batted confidently to reach 134 before falling to the last of the innings."**

So she almost batted through the innings Mr. Speaker. She also followed up with a good bowling figure of four for twenty-eight. It shows Mr. Speaker, that when you are involved in sports, it does not affect your academic performance. And we see that we have to encourage our students, children and young people to get them involved in sports, because it helps them mentally as well in the academics.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate Mr. Cameron Cuffy for his sterling performance at Arnos Vale on the 16<sup>th</sup> May at Arnos Vale in the international one-day match against South Africa. His performance propelled the West Indies to victory, and through that performance he has been named in a 22-member West Indies team for training for the trip to Africa, that is, Zimbabwe and Kenya.

Mr. Speaker, we know that Mr. Cuffy has shown his potential since during his youth days in school, and he continues to perform creditably, not only for this country but also for the Windward Islands and for the West Indies. He performed so well that Mr. Kroffe, the Commentator said that of all the bowlers he is sure that one person whom he knows is going to Africa would be Cameron Cuffy. So for that we congratulate him on his performance, and we hope that he will continue to perform creditably for the West Indies and to make St. Vincent and the Grenadines proud. Not too long ago he was named Ambassador at large, and I think he has been performing that task creditably well so far.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to congratulate the St. Vincent Squash Association for conducting two very successful tournaments back to back, two previous weekends ago. First, the National Championship, then the OECS championship and I also want to congratulate Rachelle Cyrus who came second in the OECS Tournament for the women, and Dr. Sherian Slater for placing third in the OECS Tournament in the women category.

Also Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Vita Malt Maple Netball Team on winning and also defending their trophy from last year quite well in the 17<sup>th</sup> OECS ECGC champion of champions Netball in Nevis. St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been performing this task very well in the OECS Netball Tournament; as a matter of fact in all levels of netball. And we have the Under-Twenty-Three Team, the Under-Sixteen Team, and the National Team, members being named to train for those various categories to represent St. Vincent and the Grenadines. And we are urging, not only Members here, but also the general public to give their support to our sportsmen and women. Go to the game; support them fully so that they can perform their best for our country, so that we can be proud of them. So congratulation again is in order for all those Associations and those persons mentioned. Thank you very much.

**HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to congratulate one of our nationals who I am certain Members on both sides will agree deserves to be congratulated at this time. I speak of Dr. Cecil Cyrus. Dr. Cecil Cyrus is currently as most of us would have noticed in the newspapers, celebrating his fortieth year in service to St. Vincent and the Grenadines and to the Caribbean, and at times, internationally as a surgeon. Dr. Cyrus hails from the town of Layou where against a lot of odds, he has been tremendously successful in his career. It is an example of what determination and discipline can do to our citizens, and I hope that our young people read as much as they can about Dr. Cyrus so that they have an excellent role model, someone to follow.

Dr. Cyrus, when he returned to St. Vincent many years ago, was one of the very few doctors that existed in the service. Today we have over sixty doctors. But in a day he almost single-handedly gave care to our citizens. He worked as a General Surgeon, as a Specialist Surgeon. He did almost everything. He was an Eye Specialist; he was a Gynecologist, an Obstetrician, and I can remember as a boy, Dr. Cyrus was one of the persons who inspired me, and many of our young Vincentians to become doctors because we admired him.

Dr. Cyrus for most of us, we can remember passing and we will see almost a thesis of letters and accreditations after his name. And we are always impressed. I can remember in Grammar School, we are always impressed about the outstanding achievements of Dr. Cyrus. Fortunately, he too thought that sports were important. And I just want to add on what my colleague said a while ago; it goes to show that sports, yes, do affect academic performance, but positively so.

Dr. Cyrus as we also know is a very ardent sports person. He was involved in cricket, and interestingly, Dr. Cyrus probably can be accredited with the person responsible for introducing the game of Squash in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Dr. Cyrus I am informed, sponsored from his own funds earlier Squash competitions in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Squash complex today is known as the Cecil Cyrus Squash Complex was named after him was also almost single-handedly financed and developed by him. We are tremendously grateful, and we should be to the contributions that Dr. Cyrus has paid towards the development of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I also know that several times even after his formal retirement he has retired several times, but his love for medicines is so great that he is finding it difficult to keep his hands off the knife. And fortunately so for us, because on several occasions when we run into an acute shortage of a surgeon or some other specialty that he has his skills in, the Government and people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines

has found it necessary to resort to his services and on each occasion that he is requested to serve, he does so gracefully and effectively.

Dr. Cyrus, I wish on the part of Members of this House, and I am certain on the part of the other Members to wish you all the best in your retirement, and I don't know if this is the final one, because we know that he is a very quick person; he has acted, and I still think he can deliver a lot of service, but if he chooses to retire now, he would have done so knowing that he has served well, and we are grateful for your service. We wish you all the best in your retirement or your future endeavours. And most of all we wish you continued good health. I thank you Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to join Members on the other side of this House in offering congratulations to those responsible for the organization of Women's Cricket here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and for hosting the tournament now taking place.

Mr. Speaker, from my observation it would appear that the tournament was very well organized. The ladies involved have taken the time to make sure they do credit to St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the organizations that they have put down for this particular tournament. And I wish them well as the tournament continues.

From the reports that we have been hearing I get the impression that the representative from the other countries are abundantly satisfied with the performance of the local Body. I also wish to join others in complimenting young Miss Greaves who I understand is a Science student and as was said earlier, she seems to be a very well rounded person, being able to perform very well in the field of sports, in this case cricket, and also academically. And I wish to congratulate her and encourage her to continue what she is doing because she can set an example to other young people in our country.

I also wish to congratulate Cameron Cuffy on his performance, which I think was outstanding during these last few matches, which the West Indies team played. I think we all know Mr. Speaker, and even again in the news yesterday, in the case that there is continued turmoil surrounding the West Indies team. But I think that Cuffy had shown Mr. Speaker, a maturity and a consistency which I believe has now cemented him on the West Indies team for some time to come. And I sincerely want to congratulate him.

I recall Mr. Speaker, at the last match at Arnos Vale he was fielding right in front of the Findlay Pavilion where I happened to be sitting, and I noted that he took pains, while recognising the applauses of the crowd as he came down to the end of the

ground to field that he did not permit it to distract him. He maintained his composure, and from time to time was in fact saying to the crowd, well, take it easy, I have to concentrate on what I am doing. So I sincerely want to congratulate him Mr. Speaker.

I also want to join Mr. Speaker, in the congratulations extended to Dr. Cecil Cyrus on his long service, forty years I think, to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I don't think anyone can question his dedication and his commitment in the field of medicine and to raising and setting standards of excellence in terms of medical services here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I think that is well known.

As a young man, I recall my father and others, along with Dr. Cyrus' father planning a large cocktail to welcome Dr. Cyrus back to St. Vincent and the Grenadines; and I remember the enthusiasm, the length of time and the various meetings being held in order to ensure that that function was one which would go very well. And indeed it did.

Dr. Cyrus had some very difficult times as with all prophets in their own land when he returned to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I am sure that on many occasions he felt that maybe he should return to England, but he has stuck it out. But a year ago, in speaking to him, he reminded me that I had written a letter to him in 1969 urging him not be defeated and to lose confidence, given the difficulties he was facing from his own people here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines at that time. And I pleased to say today, that he has persisted, made his contribution, and I wish him a well-deserved retirement. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to join all the Members who have spoken so far in their commendation of the West Indies Cricket Team and for the excellent arrangements which have been made by the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Women's Association.

I want Mr. Speaker, to report to the House and to the nation that the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been supportive of the efforts of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Women's Cricket Association and in relation to this particular competition. It was requested of me, in my capacity as Prime Minister to make available the Prime Minister's residence at Shrewsbury house, to the Women's Cricket team, and I did so without any reservations whatsoever. In fact, when one official brought the matter to my attention, the Official said, but Prime Minister they cannot go and stay in the house. I said, why not? Let the women go and stay in the house. And that is where the St. Vincent and the Grenadines team is staying; at Shrewsbury house. The house was last occupied by Sir James Mitchell. I want to say that that has also been the venue for the welcoming party for the cricketers, which event many

Members of the Government, including myself. In fact I had just come in from a meeting later the evening from St. Lucia, a Caribbean Development Bank meeting. And I went there. I got there a little late, so it is quite possible that the Leader of the Opposition had already left. I don't know whether he has been there a little earlier. (Oh, he was not there?) O.k.

I also want to say Mr. Speaker, that as Minister of Finance, I have given instruction that all one hundred plus members of the visiting cricket team and their officials would be exempt from departure tax from St. Vincent and the Grenadines when they leave the shores. So in very, many practical ways we have been seeking to assist the Women's Cricket Association. And I notice Senator Shallow is smiling and nodding in agreement with the very admirable measures we have been taking. It good to see that you are there 'Together Now', despite what your Leader is saying.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to commend Cameron Cuffy. I want to say that though we were in Taiwan when Cameron was performing his feat on the cricket field at Arnos Vale, we telephoned to find out what was happening, and we were overjoyed that Cameron had done so well and the West Indies had won. I was even more overjoyed listening to CNN in the Far East that the commentator on CNN Sports was speaking about Cameron Cuffy and the victory of the West Indies Cricket Team in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. And it is ironic that at the very moment that Cameron Cuffy was wearing Cable and Wireless Logo that the negotiation and discussions between Cable and Wireless and the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines carried out by me, that those negotiations were not yet complete to work out terms of employment for Cameron Cuffy, he having been laid off or made redundant by Cable and Wireless. I have to report that those discussions are still not yet complete. Cable and Wireless have moved a little way, but in my judgment, not enough; and I will report in due course when those negotiations are either wholly successful, from our own standpoint or whether the discussions have broken down. Either way, I will inform the nation.

Mr. Speaker, on that particular issue and slightly tangential, but still connected to the matter of the employment of Cameron Cuffy, I want to say that it is the policy of this Government to ensure that all persons who have excelled in sports and in the arts, who are unemployed, that we are seeking jobs for them, whether through the State sector or the private sector. And we are beginning first, naturally, with the three sportsmen who have been named as Goodwill Ambassadors, and who have been given the privilege to carry a Diplomatic passport. Alston Beckett Cyrus is employed as an Entertainer, and Skiddy Francis Crick is also employed full time. But neither Cameron Cuffy nor Nixon McKlean, nor Pamenos Ballantyne is employed. And it gives me great pleasure to report that over the weekend I have secured employment for Pamenos Ballantyne from the private sector entity from the Southern Grenadines; Palm Island

Resorts. And the terms of the engagement that Pamenos Ballantyne would work through the National Sports Council on a programme organized through the National Sports Council, but would also have some times to do promotional work for Palm Island Resorts. I assure you that his salary is at a level, which is far more comfortable than if he had been employed through the State directly. And I want to say that despite all the promises by the NDP Administration, for several years, they have not been able to get a job for Pamenos Ballantyne, but we have been able to do so in less than eight weeks time. We will Mr. Speaker, be addressing other persons, and I have asked the relevant Ministries to get for me a list of all the men and women who represent St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the various sports who are unemployed. And I will make it my business to go through the list systematically to see if I can secure employment for them, either through the State Sector or by way of private enterprise.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to join in the congratulations to Miss Greaves, the Maple Netball Team, Rachele Cyrus and Dr. Cecil Cyrus. I am obliged.

**HONOURABLE LOUIS STRAKER:** Mr. Speaker, I would have indulged in the comfort of my seat and not say anything, since I think there has been fulsome tributes and congratulations pass to these worthy people. But I also want to commend whoever is responsible for providing us for the very first time, with a little bit more comfort, the cushions we are sitting on. Whichever group it is, certainly it is a commendable job because those of us who have been sitting here for a number of years have known the discomfort and the pains sitting on the cane for these many years. But one of the chief reasons why I am standing is to add my share of congratulations, not only to those who have excelled in the field of cricket- the Women Cricket Team, Ms. Greaves, and Cameron Cuffy and the West Indies Team, winning the one-day International. I must confess that for the past thirty-eight years, and it was the first I have had the pleasure of attending a cricket match of that standing, and my colleagues know very well my love for the sports. I do not know whether it is the message given by the Prime Minister to me to be conveyed to Cameron Cuffy, or whether it is the messenger himself who was introduced to Mr. Cuffy in the dressing room, that has caused him to perform so well; maybe it is a combination of both; the messenger and the message. But I must confess that I was impressed with his performance, and my time there has rekindled my love and appreciation for cricket from which I have been separated for some thirty-eight years.

Mr. Speaker, the last time I was in Parliament, I had the pleasure of paying tribute to an outstanding person from Layou, that is, Alston Beckett Cyrus. Today, I want to pay tribute to his uncle, another son of Layou who has excelled in his field of endeavour,

medicine, over the years. Not only do I know Dr. Cyrus, and we are good friends of his mother, who is my cousin and his father who was my tailor. He made several suits for me before I left here and a very good friend and counselor. He was a member of this Legislative Council, that is, the Abraham Cyrus. And Dr. Cyrus, I haven't had much time with him, since he returned home until my return here in 1993. But he has always been a source of inspiration to me. As a young boy he attended the Grammar School while I was still in Elementary School. But we all took great pride in knowing that he was from Layou, and that we have produced such a distinguished man; one who has excelled and is recognised in the field of medicine, not only in St. Vincent, but in the region. We have another son of Layou, Dr. Ballantyne also who has been paying tremendous service to this country. But I want to pay tribute at this time to Dr. Cyrus, a very humble, quiet man; a man who is a patron of the sports, and has been said, introduce the game of Squash to this country. One who has assisted me on several occasions in meeting certain community needs in Layou. The school in Layou is grateful, not only for his contributions in Literary Works- the books for the Library, but making it much more comfortable for the students by providing the school with several fans in the assembly rooms and in the classrooms. He has spoken as a Guest Speaker in Graduations there, and has contributed funds to meet the needs of the students at the Layou Government School. He does not say much about these things, but I want to recognise him for his generosity, for the inspiration that he is, as a role model to our young people from the town of Layou, and throughout the country and hope that he would enjoy, if this is his wish, and I know it would be very difficult for him, a quiet and a healthy retirement and to say thanks to him for his forty years of service to this country and the region.

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to associate myself with the congratulatory remarks made by the Honourable members of this House; the sportsmen and women, and as well to Dr. Cecil Cyrus on his 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his scholarship and work in medicine and surgery.

I would also like at this time Mr. Speaker, to congratulate the Carnival Development Committee for its revitalized organization of the carnival festival, and indeed the massive official launch of our national festival on May 19<sup>th</sup> of this year. From all reports, the Police have indicated no unusual acts of violence or bad behaviour, a little exuberance, but I would like to thank the Yulu Pan Movement for providing the steel band music, the DJs and the Radio Stations, and as well the Traffic Branch. And not to forget the Sanitation Workers who did an excellent job because the next day the streets were indeed very clean. I must not forget those corporate sponsors and individuals who have indeed come forward with enthusiasm and so much exhibition of goodwill by putting their money where their mouth is in this particular festival this year. Not to forget Mr. Speaker, the thousands and thousands who came into

Kingstown to help us with the festival and making it the biggest launched ever seen. I think the crowd would have rivaled any rally put on by the Unity Labour Party at Unity Square.

Finally Mr. Speaker, there are six beautiful Vincentian ladies on Saturday night would take to the stage. And I would like to elevate our carnival to its proper status in the cultural life and calendar of this country. Too often we degrade, and mash and trample under the foot, things that ought to be placed in its rightly situation in our history and heritage. These young ladies have been given much training, and it is the intention of my Ministry to also prepare the contract. I spoke with them this morning, for the first, second and third positions, they will be given hostage positions with the Ministry to assist us in the thrust and promotion of cruise tourism, sites and attractions, and publications and promotions in the tourism industry. They are young ladies who are preparing to go to Universities in North America.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your indulgence, and I invite one and all, either to come to the festival or to listen in the many media provided in the State. Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

## **MINUTES**

### **Corrections**

Pg 1: "Dr. The Honourable Ralph Gonsalves" instead of "The Honourable Dr. Ralph Gonsalves."

Pg 2: "Dr. The Honourable Godwin Friday" instead of "The Honourable Dr. Godwin Friday."

Under "Congratulatory Remarks", third sentence, "carry" instead of "carried".

Pg 3: 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph and second paragraph, second line, "Adonal Foyle", instead of "Adonis Foyle".

Pg 4: "10." Insert "Petition" after "Humble."

Pg 6: Under the heading "Supplementary Question", second line "to" instead of "on" after contracts.

Last line under the above heading, insert "play" instead of "pay".

Under the "The Minister replied", second line, "intends" instead of "intents".

Pg 7: Third paragraph, last line, "this" instead of "that".

On page 1 of the Minutes of May 8, 2001 "Dr. The Honourable Ralph Gonsalves" instead of " Hon. Dr. Ralph Gonsalves."

Page 2: Under the heading "Motion", second paragraph, (i), second line, "their" instead of "its".

The Minutes of the sittings held on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> May 2001, copies of which had been circulated previously were taken as read and were confirmed with amendments.

## **STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER**

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to make a statement regarding the recent visit to the Republic of China on Taiwan by a four-member delegation headed by me. The members of the delegation, in addition to myself were, the Honourable Vincent Beache, the Honourable Senator Julian Francis and Fiscal Advisor Mr. Sims Martin.

Mr. Speaker, I want to depart from the practice of the previous administration where delegations go and return, and the country knows not what has transpired. We promised open, transparent Government and we are delivering it. As is well known, any time I go on a mission overseas, when I return, I brief the Press immediately or shortly thereafter. But when there are particularly important missions, it is our duty to report to the Parliament of this country and to the nation, now that we are having the proceedings broadcast live.

Mr. Speaker, in the Republic of China on Taiwan, our delegation met with the highest office holders in that land. President Chen, Premier Chang and Foreign Minister Tien. We also met other officials, and we also had discussions with investors.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I should indicate that this visit occurs in the year when St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Taiwan would be celebrating twenty years of diplomatic relations. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August this year would be twenty years. In 1981, the Rt. Honourable Milton Cato of blessed memory and the Honourable Hudson Tannis also of blessed memory were instrumental in establishing diplomatic relations. And one of the first visits to that country, indeed the first visit to that country by a

delegation from St. Vincent and the Grenadines included the present Minister of National security, the Honourable Vincent Beache, our eldest Statesman. At that time Mr. Speaker, there was a great deal of controversy as to whether St. Vincent and the Grenadines should recognise the People's Republic of China or the Republic of China on Taiwan. I believe that as our people become more mature and that their understanding of international affairs becomes more profound, it is important for them to realise the nature of the relations, and that there are in fact two Chinas in international relation; the People's Republic of China (mainland China), a country with over a billion people and a massive landmark, that country is a member of the Security Council of the United Nations. Taiwan is not a Member of the United Nations. Taiwan is a small country but much larger than St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It is an island with twenty three million people. When the Portuguese explorers went there, they called it "IDIAFORMOSA", the island of Formosa, a beautiful country. That country though small has the third highest level of foreign reserves of all the countries in the world, in excess of one hundred billion US dollars. It is a small country; it came from third world status in a very short period, it has become a very rich country, that country became occupied by the Japanese during the Second World War. Indeed it had over fifty years of Japanese occupation. And when there was a Civil War in China, when the Communist on the mainland led by Mao Tse-tung was being victorious the nationalist forces led by Jan Chuy Ched went over to Taiwan. And that is how you had the establishment. And I think it is important for our people to understand the background; and that currently, the Republic of China on Taiwan has diplomatic relationship with twenty-nine countries in the United States of America, Canada and Western Europe, it has a number of economic and cultural missions.

We decided Mr. Speaker, to go to Taiwan very early in our administration, because we value this bilateral relationship. It is one the more important relationships this country had internationally. And we did a lot of preparation for that meeting in Taiwan, for that visit, because there were some problems, which we had to sort out within a new political context here in St. Vincent and also in Taiwan. All the Governments in the past; the Cato administration, the James Mitchell administration they were dealing with a very stable political situation in Taiwan. The Kumentu, the KMT control the Presidency and control by far the legislation. In March last year, for the first time in over fifty years, another Party won the Presidency; the DPP headed by President Cheng. But he has a minority in Parliament. Because the legislature is elected in a different way than the President; his Party commends only one-third in the Legislature. So he may agree on something, but he can have it undermined if he doesn't get the support inside of the Legislature. When Mr. Cato visited Taiwan, he met the situation where the President and the Legislature were from one Party, the same thing with Sir James. My immediate Predecessor in this Office, the Honourable Arnhim Eustace, now the Leader of the Opposition, had the opportunity, but did not avail himself of the

opportunity to visit Taiwan. That was understandable; there were other matters on his mind. So I am the first Leader to go to the country in this new political situation. And therefore it was difficult for us to get a clear analysis as to that new political situation because it affects the nature of the funding. And it is important that we understand these. And that is why I am making this statement to Parliament.

Sir James had negotiated both grant and loan in two bytes of twenty-six million US. Thirty million grants and thirteen million in soft loans for the purpose of airport development, more specially the extension of the E.T. Joshua Airport and its development into a Jet Port. And the money has been lying there for two years. And individuals will remember that Sir James in his large budget presentation showed a great deal of impatience with the fact that his successor was not moving on with the E.T. Joshua Airport, and said that we have to make a decision soon on what we are doing with this money. And Sir James was correct. Because money, which is left lying there long, in this new political situation, could be withdrawn if not used. But since we were not going to the E.T. Joshua Airport, because the current Leader of the Opposition himself clearly had misgivings about the E.T. Joshua Airport and spending such large sums of money. And in that regard we are in agreement, if that in fact is his true feeling. Well I could only speak Mr. Speaker, on not only what you have said in the past, but by your conduct, because you had put the E.T. Joshua on hold.

Now, I therefore sought, and our Government sought:

- (a) To be able to hold the money and to apply it to other purposes. And we succeeded in that regard.
- (b) That we would use the bulk of that money for the cross-country road, and to use some of the money to improve existing E.T. Joshua, the Apron and do some things on the terminal building, though there is possible funding for the terminal building elsewhere. And to use some of the money to do a detailed study at Argyle which the preliminary triple m study had indicated was possibly the best site. But that study, we have been advised would take us about three years at Argyle. So rather than leaving the money lying there and the political situation changing in Taiwan, and you don't know if you will be able to get the money, you have to be practical and sensible, and use the money for another worthy and desirable purpose which our advisors told us, and which the electorates voted for, for us to build the cross-country road.

Now. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, that money however, of twenty six million dollars, we realise would not be enough for the cross-country road to fix up the E.T. Joshua Terminal Building and the Apron, and to do the study at Argyle so we were

able to get five million more US in grant on top of that twenty six million to do for those purposes. There was a sum Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, of 4.5 million dollars, which had been allocated for 1999/2000 and 2001 for US 2 million a year, which monies were not spent by the NDP administration. And shortly after I got into Office, the charge' d' affaires called me and said he wanted to see me about some important matters about our relationships and said to me that the Parliament in Taiwan was pressuring the administration in Taiwan and they wanted to pull back the money. Well, clearly, the 4.5 million dollars we should be spending but not spending it. It was also my duty to fight to keep that money, and we were successfully able to fight to keep that 4.5 million dollars to be used for St. Vincent and the Grenadines. All these monies I am talking about is \$US. I want to say this. Every single OEVS country, which has relations with Taiwan, got \$US2 million for each of the five years for 1999 onwards, finishing in 2003. But the NDP Government is the only Government, which did not spend the money. Poor people are suffering but they did not spend the money.

Mr. Speaker, I may say parenthetically that that is not the only money which I discovered which have not been spent you know. The World Bank gave 6 million US dollars for river defences, sea defences, to repair schools, to repair clinics, for disaster relief from 1998. Every single Government in the OECS had spent their \$US6 million. This NDP Government just gone did not put forward one single project to spend even one cent. Last week I met the World Bank people, and they said that they had to pull back the money. I persuaded no. This new Government, we cannot be sent to hell for the sins of somebody else. And they have given us between four to six weeks to put projects on the drawing board to be able to access the \$US6 million, and we will do so. So we retrieved the 4.5 million dollars, and then for the year 2002 and 2003, there is an additional 2 million dollars, which had been agreed upon with all the countries in the OECS who have relations with Taiwan. But when all that was finished Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I took the entire delegation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines by surprise, because I did not discuss this matter with them. Sometimes you have to have something up your sleeve. And I said we are having a relationship of twenty years we have to do something special. And I made the case and pointed out that there is nothing we can do more special than to have a modern Public Library. And I said to them that in a section in the Library we would put a special part there dedicated to the Chinese civilization. They listened and they asked me questions in the morning. In the afternoon when I met the Foreign Minister, when we have finished in the discussions, he turned to his Aide and said, well, the matter of the Library. And his aide produced a cheque and he gave it to me of \$1US million for us to build the Library. Some things, which we were asking for seventeen years, we were not eight weeks old and we got the money already. But Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members that was not all, because when that was finished, we say well, there are

some other sort of small matters, I think you will be able to give us them easily. They say, what? I said, sixty motorbikes, one hundred and twenty-five CC engines, which the Police in Taiwan used. I want those for the Police Force so that we can deal with the criminals. They say ok, you are getting your sixty motorbikes. I say well, the Police needs to have proper "walkie-talkies" to communicate with one another and the Central Police Station. They said ok, sixty pieces of Telecommunications Equipment. I say we are having some big buildings in our country; we need a Fire Tender. I said I want one with an aerial platform and they said o.k. I will give you the one with the aerial platform. I don't believe they knew how much it will cost, because I saw the Charge d' Affaires who came to see me yesterday, and he discovered that it costs over \$US300,000.00 was for it. But he said, well you have us agree already with that, so that is our problem, we have to give you because we already said yes. And then two ambulances because we promised the people in Fancy and Sandy Bay their ambulance, and we are giving them their ambulance because when we promise we deliver. Also we promised the school buses and we got three school buses. I asked the Charge d' Affaires for us to have the school buses for the new school term, and we asked for the ambulance around the same time because they have to order them. The Fire Tender will take, maybe six to eight months because you have to order it specifically, and the people who are providing the Fire Tender have to come here to train our people in the use of that Fire Tender. Either some go there, or they come here to train. But no longer will you have these tall buildings and a fear that if you have a fire you cannot out it.

Mr. Speaker, we expect to get the motorcycles quicker. And all those details have been discussed with the Charge d' Affaires. I want to say that I spoke with him so that these items would not just come out of Taiwan. He has sought tenders from firms in St. Vincent to provide the fire equipment, to provide the two ambulances and the three school buses so that the people in the business places can make a piece of change too out of the visit. And that is how the Unity Labour Party does its work.

Mr. Speaker, we saw investors, and in the month of June we expect to see at least two investors come here in matters relating to hotel development and fisheries development from Taiwan. You know we have to make sure that when we get all this assistance, we have to use the assistance properly. The people of Taiwan, they are very disciplined people. And when they gave us all this assistance, as a consequence of their hard work and discipline, and the people over there don't have a lot of crime, they don't have a lot of misbehaviour. We here in St. Vincent, we have to work hard, we have to educate ourselves properly, we have to be disciplined, and we have to create opportunities for ourselves and for our people. And this is what this Government is trying to encourage and inculcate in this country. You cannot build a

country on indiscipline, on crime, on crime, on laziness, on "vagabondry" and on corruption.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say this. After the carnival, we are going to go on a programme towards the commemoration of our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; and I am sure the Opposition will join us in those commemorations. I feel sure about this. Because what this relationship shows; when we are united on a common pole, when we come together on a common policy, we see the fruit from the result. Mr. Cato had set up the policy. Mr. Mitchell followed that policy in relation to Taiwan. And we in the Unity Labour Party are building up on the work in that regard of Mr. Cato and Sir James in relation to the foreign policy connection with Taiwan. Now I knew that I was going to Taiwan before the Elections because I knew we were going to win it, and I had already indicated it to the Charge d' Affaires, that we will come to Taiwan. And we were saying that, whilst the Opposition was saying on the platform that I was going to change the relations; and I was only smiling about that because they didn't know what I had up my sleeves. But in addition to commemorating this occasion-the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we have to show in some little way that we appreciate what is happening; appreciate the generosity of the people of the Republic of China on Taiwan. And Mr. Speaker, I am currently working on something, which I am going to the Cabinet about; to get four or six students from the Republic of China on Taiwan from the Kyshun Hospitality College which we visited; an expressive College in the South of Taiwan, to get those students to come here if it is even for three or four months on attachment with a big hotel, a reputable hotel. We the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines will pay the passages for them to come. Because if they are so generous to us, we must, as an act of friendship just as when a rich person goes to a poor person's home, if it is even a glass of mauby or hand of plantain, you have to give them to show your appreciation for the generosity. And that same culture, we are representing it inside of our Government. And we would like to have four or six students for the Kyshun Hospitality College come here and be attached. And I am pleased to announce that one big hotel in this country, I would not call the name yet until we get it all, had already agreed to take two such students for a period of attachment when they come. We Mr. Speaker, have to show a good partnership between the private sector and the public sector. That is evident in what has happened, as I have spoken about Pamenos Ballantyne earlier today, evident in this particular relationship with these students whom we are trying to get, and also evident in the delivery yesterday of two vehicles over one hundred thousand dollars; two four-wheel drive vehicles, jeeps; four doors jeeps, 2000ccs where CLICO gave them to the Police. On my request I have asked for four, they said they are giving two and I said I am taking those two as a down payment because when I am begging, that is how I am begging. And in Canouan where \$US200 million worth of foreign investment was made, the NDP had down there a twelve year old Korando jeep with no brakes, and

the gas tank leaking. The Commissioner of Police had assured me that one of those vehicles would be going down to Canouan right away. But I had already instructed that we buy a vehicle for Canouan, and the Tenders' Boards are dealing with that. So that when we get the new vehicles earmarked for Canouan, which we will be purchasing we will take back that one from Canouan when the other new one goes down because you know sometimes the Tender's Board they take a month to decide something and then they have to order it and so on. I notice the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is smiling but I have ways in getting around them. So that when you wait on that, I go somewhere else and beg for one.

Mr. Speaker, this is the report, and I want to have this as an exercise on an ongoing basis when we have Parliament and important visits are made. It is unfortunate that such reports are delivered without debate by the other side, because that is the nature of parliamentary rules. If a Minister made a statement, such a Ministerial statement, I am hoping that in due course that we could amend the rules in such a way that the Opposition and other Members would have an opportunity to debate the Ministerial statement. Thank you very much Mr. Speaker.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Mr. Speaker, before going on to question, I would just like to crave your indulgence on one matter. Standing Order 21 (1) sets out the requirements in terms of how questions are asked, by reference, the Order Paper. In light of the fact Mr. Speaker, that we now have the proceedings of the House broadcasts, I am wondering whether it will not be appropriate, that in future, persons asking questions, apart from just simply doing as we have done in accordance with the Standing Orders, be able to repeat the questions so those listening will know what the question is.

**HONOURABLE VINCENT BEACHE:** Mr. Speaker, there was a committee set up to revise the Standing Orders. That Committee never met because Sir James was the Chairman of that Committee and he never called it. That was the second time. There was a second Committee set up. We raised questions in this House before we should even read out the questions, and that was denied. We have asked that the dealings in the House be broadcast. That was denied. A former Speaker took it upon himself to try to institute the broadcasts of the proceedings in the House, and the then Government came down like a ton of bricks on him. The shoe is on the other foot now. If we want the questions, let us amend the Standing Orders. The Standing Orders are there setting out the rules by which this House is governed. It was the same Standing Orders that were used to prevent the Opposition from bringing Integrity Legislation into this House. And it should not be done piecemeal.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Mr. Speaker, I will just like to draw your attention to page 7 of the Minutes that we just approved in this Honourable House, because it is relevant to this particular issue Mr. Speaker. On page 7, under the section, "The Minister replied", the Minister of Education in response to a question the last time from the representative from the Southern Grenadines. And it says as follows:

**"Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the listening public and those gathered in the gallery, I wish to repeat the question..."**

Mr. Speaker, it is in that I am making this request of this Honourable House.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, I think that the Honourable Minister of National Security has outlined what has been quite correctly, what has transpired here, and that the NDP administration didn't want to give one inch on any of these matters. But I Mr. Speaker, see no problem. It is only that it would take us a little longer in the questions being read because I want the public to understand. Let the public understand the questions that are being asked, and the answers, which are being given because we will have absolute clarity because I am sure that any questions which they ask, we can more than answer them. I have no problems in openness. And I want there to be transparency and see how we are doing business differently. So I have no problem at all. But I believe we ought not to do these things in an adhoc way. We should, some time soon set about the review of the Standing Orders, and to make certain changes to make the Parliament more open and transparent. We have started the process.

I want to say Mr. Speaker, in the previous administration, when we in the Opposition brought a motion to the House; you will just hear that a motion is being tabled by the Opposition. You would not hear on Radio 705 the details of the motion. I gave instruction to my staff to have the Agency For Public Information, and I hope they follow the instruction or they got the instructions, that they must read the Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Arnhim Eustace's motion, which he has down today. He must read it out on the Radio Station; let the people hear what he wants to be debated. Because what he wants to be debated, those are issues, which the public needs to hear about, because you have a full answer for everything, and they will show how ridiculous that the motion is. So I am a believer in putting everything out in the open. I don't want to hide anything. And Mr. Speaker, that is why this morning I met with two persons who have worked with Scotland Yard. And the Honourable Vincent Beach was there, the Honourable Louis Straker. Because just like how we are bringing everything in the open here, what Scotland Yard and other investigators find, we will bring them in the open also. We are bringing everything in the open. So I will

be satisfied Mr. Speaker, for the Honourable Leader of the Opposition to read the question what he wants to ask me, and I will answer.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Let me just appeal to "Strangers" in the gallery, please desist from participating in these matters. You are to listen there in silence. Thank you.

## **QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS**

1. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition) to ask the Minister of Finance to state the increased annual costs including allowances for the additional Ministers, Ministers of State, Parliamentary Secretaries and Permanent Secretaries appointed by the ULP administration as compared with the most recent NDP Administration.*

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it is very interesting that the question asked for us to compare the situation now, with the most recent NDP Administration which only had eight seats. It is the usual trick question, so obviously we have more people now, we have more Ministers, the cost is going to be more. But that does not mean anything. It has to do with the delivery of services to the people, because when they had fifteen everyone of them was a Minister, and they had people from the Senate. So I want to say further Mr. Speaker, that maybe if they had a little more staff they would have done a little bit more work, as I have outlined a little while ago about monies which are left lying and nobody is doing anything with the money.

I want to say further Mr. Speaker, and I want to show you how open we are on this side. I have a way out by not answering this question you know Mr. Speaker, because the Standing Orders say that where you can find the answer elsewhere you don't ask me. And the answers are in the Estimates. All you have to do is look at the Estimates and you look at the Gazettes. You know how many Permanent Secretaries we have, you know how many new Ministers of State we have, and you just look at the sums in the Estimates because he was the Finance Minister, he knows how much each one is. So I don't have to answer the question, but I would answer it nevertheless.

This new Administration has three additional Ministers of State and one additional Permanent Secretary when compared to the most recent NDP Administration. The new Administration has three additional Ministers of State and one additional Permanent Secretary when compared to the most recent NDP Administration. The

increased annual costs are as follows: The salary for a Minister of State, monthly with the allowances: salary \$5346.13; transportation allowance \$900.00, entertainment allowance \$1,050.00 per month, giving a grand total of \$7,296.13. Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, the salary is taxable, so that part of that \$5,346.00 comes back naturally to the State. But the transport allowance and the entertainment allowance are not taxable. For the Permanent Secretary the gross salary is \$4882.00 a month, and there is a transport allowance of \$500.00 per month and entertainment allowance of \$450.00 a month; a housing allowance of \$300.00 per month; bringing a grand total of \$6,132.00. The salary of course, is also taxable, so some of that comes back. Those are the gross figures. You get therefore, gross, Mr. Speaker when you do all the additions for the three additional Ministers of State (for annual), and one additional Permanent Secretary annually. It is \$336,244.68.

I want to say further Mr. Speaker, that for the month of April, our first month in operation, we showed a current surplus of 4.55 million dollars and an overall surplus - capital and current of 4.17 million dollars despite the fact that we have paid a number of debts left by the NDP administration already. There were seven million dollars left for the University of the West Indies, two million was paid. We owed the OECS 3.5 million dollars, we paid .5 million dollars. We owed CARICOM three hundred and thirty thousand dollars; we pay half of that money already. ¼ million dollars owed to the Regional Security Service, I have given instructions for a portion of that to be paid. They left us in debt so much at the United Nations, we cannot even vote there now. And now since the announcement was made by me at the Press Conference there has been a payment to the United Nations where our right to vote has been restored.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, we are saying openly to the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the increase in the number of Ministers and the increase by one effectively, of a Permanent Secretary, that it costs, gross more than the last NDP Administration, because that was one where they only had eight seats. But the results, which we are presenting, are more positive results and results of a different nature, and at the end of the day, the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

I want to say finally Mr. Speaker, that it may well be felt that we should have at least two Permanent Secretaries new, because there are two new Ministries. The fact of the matter is that, where there was a Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Legal Affairs, and there was a Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, because the Prime Minister now has Legal Affairs under him, there is no longer a Permanent Secretary in Legal Affairs, so that there is a saving there of one Permanent Secretary. And that would provide the answer where the saving there was made.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Would the Minister confirm what the figure for the current surplus was?

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** 4.17 million dollars.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** So there was money in the Treasury.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** No. In fact, I want to say this Mr. Speaker. I am very glad that he has raised that. For the first three months of the NDP, we met a deficit overall, both current and capital, of nearly 10 million dollars. For instance the current account surplus in 1989 for the first three months was just over 4 million dollars. Then you went into the deficit in the first quarter of 2000 by just over 2 million dollars. And then you left me on the current account for the first quarter - When I came in you left me a deficit of nearly 5 million dollars on the current account. You left me no money. I had to look for it. I set the trap for you and you fall in it.

Mr. Speaker, he said that I was able to travel. I want to say, and I am glad Mr. Speaker, that you gave him this opportunity and in the new openness. The trip for the four of us, which was a long trip, did not cost the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines one cent. Through the request, I asked the Charge d' affaires if they would pay for the passages. I am not too big to ask for that. And they paid for the hotel in Taiwan. And when we pass through Los Angeles, they also made the arrangements. And when we came back through New York, they also made the arrangements. So they are going about saying that I take four people to Taiwan and I spend so much of Government money when it hasn't cost the Government of St. Vincent one cent; and you see what I brought back.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** That was a special between both Members so we will proceed in the normal manner.

- The Honourable Dr. Godwin Friday (Northern Grenadines) to ask the Prime Minister and Minister of Legal Affairs to list the names, addresses and dates of appointment of the Justices of the Peace whose appointments were recently revoked by the ULP Administration.*

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, the ULP Government met a list of close to two hundred Justices of the Peace. The names of fifty-seven were removed from the list. Among those persons are individuals who have died, persons who have migrated, one or two who are infirm in mind, politicians and their wives or their brothers or sisters and other persons whom we, in our deliberate judgment considered not to be suitable as Justice of the Peace.

The list, which I have here I will hand it out. There are a couple of dates Mr. Speaker, which the public servants did not provide, but most of the dates are here, and I would like to submit it for the Honourable Members, What I can also do too: I can promise the Honourable Member. I can give you the whole list, including those who have remained, because I know the suggestion is that NDP persons have been taken off, but there are a lot of known NDP persons who are still on the list. I want to say that, because a far smaller number has been removed than is on the list. And practically everybody on the list were NDP people because we are in this real world, and we know what had happened. We have not put on one single politician, nor their wives or their brothers and sisters as a matter of principle. If any of that happens, it unknowing that somebody is a half-brother or something like that. You know how St. Vincent goes in that regard. And I would also, when the new Justices of the Peace are sworn in, I am prepared to give a list of those Justices of the Peace to the Honourable Member who asked this question. We in the Unity Labour Party, we have nothing to hide. The list I have here, Madam Clerk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

- 3. The Honourable Gerard Shallow (Opposition Senator) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries to please indicate whether the Government will honour the commitment to purchase lands, earmarked at Greggs (Banana co-op Boxing Plant) for the construction of the Medical Clinic.*

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, before the Honourable Member answers. I have spoken to the Honourable Leader of the Opposition this morning. I have an important personal appointment at 12:00 O'clock, and he had agreed with me to have the adjournment at midday. He normally like two hours for lunch, so I don't see why we should depart from his usual lunch practice. The last time I was saying one and half hours, and he said no, he wants two hours. We can finish the questions later.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** It is just two more, so we can just finish them.

**HONOURABLE SELMON WALTERS:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the answer to the question is quite simple. The Government made no commitment.

However Mr. Speaker, I will attempt to answer the question, which I think the Honourable Member wanted to ask.

Mr. Speaker, the former Government signed the contracts for the upgrading or construction of four medical clinics since March last year. To date, designs are only completed for one of them; and this is the one at New Grounds. It is good to note Mr. Speaker that the Greggs Clinic was not put out for designs by the New Democratic Party. This makes the question by the sinecure rather opportunistic, because nothing at all was asked about the New Grounds Clinic.

Lands were earmarked Mr. Speaker, not paid for. Lands vested in the Greggs Co-operative Boxing Plant. Mr. Speaker, the Government is looking into the purchase of the lands, and the construction of the Clinic, and I would inform the people of Greggs in due course.

4. *The Honourable Gerard Shallow (Opposition Senator) to ask the Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries to please state if the Government is committed to the construction of the New Agricultural Headquarters at Campden Park.*

**HONOURABLE SELMON WALTERS:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the commitment to build the Ministry of Agriculture Headquarters at Campden Park is an NDP commitment. Because of what took place on March 28, my Government is not bound by that. However, my Government is aware of the need to re-locate the Ministry as the present location and the immediate environs are earmarked for educational, institutional expansion. To this end, I have made visits to three sites possible to relocate the Ministry. We have made visits to Rivulet, to Dumbarton, and to Campden Park. This list is by no means exhausted. My Government, after consultations and technical advice will chose a site for the relocation of the Ministry of Agriculture in due course.

4. *The Honourable Gerard Shallow (Opposition Senator) to ask the Minister of Social Development, Co-operatives, Gender, the Family and Ecclesiastical Affairs to please state when will construction on the community centers at Fancy, Diamond Village, Questelles and Ashton Union Island, which were approved and funded by the Republic of China (R.O.C.) commence.*

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I wish at this point, before I begin to speak, to ask the Honourable Senator please to be careful with the kind of questions that he would pose in this Honourable House. My Government believes in transparency, and as a teacher, I believe in giving details, and hence I would proceed. The sum of one million dollars was recorded in the Estimates in 1999,

and it is found on page 350; project number 2901. And then the Estimates for the year 2000, page 90; project number 309902, for the construction of Community Centres under the Republic of China Project. These were identified as Community Centres at Fancy, Diamond and Union Island. No mention was ever made of a community centre at Questelles. In 2000, the Ministry engaged the services of Moulton Mayers, Architect, and Tomlin Voss Associates Consultants Limited who provided architectural design work for the community centers at Fancy and Diamond. Stewart Engineering should have provided similar services for the proposed centers in Union Island. In 2001 Estimates page 422, project No. 309902, there is a token provision of \$10.00 which means that no funds have been provided to undertake the actual construction work of this Community Centre.

Further Mr. Speaker, the Ministry's record does not indicate who would be responsible for the construction of these Centres in 2001. My Ministry is committed to national development, and would therefore investigate to see how the situation could be redressed.

Mr. Speaker, I did further investigations. In 1996-1997, I have something in my hand, which says: "Questelles Community Centre Rehabilitation." And I am told that there is no such Centre that exists. I would continue Mr. Speaker, to give details of materials that have been issued for such a Centre.

- "700 sacks of cement
- 128 5/8" groove ply wood
- 236/80" panel doors
- 630/80" panel doors
- 8 pairs of 4" butt hinges
- 4 mortis locks
- 50 sheets coated galvanise
- 25 sheets of 8ft ridging
- 1,147 6x6 white tiles
- 20 sacks of white cement
- 4 toilet sets –5 trap
- 4 washbasins
- 4 paper holders
- 3,298 6" blocks
- 834 4" blocks
- 338 decorated blocks."

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know who collected these materials. My Government would like to know. This Mr. Speaker highlights the corruption that we in our Government have been speaking of for so long. I thank you Mr. Speaker.

### **SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

**HONOURABLE GERARD SHALLOW:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to know is the Honourable Minister is aware that these funds are brought to the account by supplementary provisions, and if she is also aware that the \$10.00 token is normal. Funds cannot be put in until these funds are drawn down from Taiwan.

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Mr. Speaker, maybe I missed the question from the Honourable Senator, but I did not get the question Sir.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** It would appear to me that the Honourable Member seems to be supplying the answer to the question. So I don't know.

**HONOURABLE GERARD SHALLOW:** Mr. Speaker, I got the impression that she said there was no money. I don't know.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** So your question was what? Whether she is aware....

**HONOURABLE GERARD SHALLOW:** Whether she was aware that these funds are brought to account by supplementary provisions?

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** The question is whether you are aware of how these funds are arrived at?

**HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL:** Mr. Speaker, as you would have seen from the report I gave. I am quite aware, but according to his question I have brought everything to the fore.

**HONOURABLE LOUIS STRAKER:** Mr. Speaker, based on the statement made by the Prime Minister prior to his departure, I would like to move a motion that we adjourn until 2:00 p.m.

*Question put and agreed to.  
House adjourned at 12:05 p.m. for lunch.  
House resumed at 2:05 p.m.*

**HONOURABLE LOUIS STRAKER:** MR. Speaker, in accordance with section 12 (5), I move the sitting of the day be exempted from the 'Hours of sitting.'

**HONOURABLE VINCENT BEACHE:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the motion standing in my name dealing with the question of political victimization by the Unity Labour Party administration.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any debate on the motion?

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Mr. Speaker, let me commence by reading this motion before this Honourable House.

(a) WHEREAS the Unity Labour Party campaigned in the last General Election on a platform of numerous promises; and

(b) WHEREAS the ULP Government has appointed private sector employed, party officials to oversee the implementation of the 100 Days Programme and to direct the relevant public service officers and the implementation thereof, thus circumventing the authority of the public service hierarchy; and

(c) WHEREAS time is running short and that the inexperience of the nucleus and their lack of understanding of the rights of the people are causing the ULP Government to ride roughshod over principle, and

(d) WHEREAS many workers who are supporters of the New Democratic Party are being systematically deprived of their jobs as water carriers, time keepers, road drivers, labourers, and

(e) WHEREAS the Constitution of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Chapter one protects the fundamental rights and freedoms of every person including protection from discrimination on the grounds from among other things political opinion, and

(f) WHEREAS the Prime Minister on the night of the General Elections and at his premature swearing ceremony at Government House solemnly promised the nation and the international community at large by radio and television that his Government would not, repeat, not, carry out any discrimination, and

(g) WHEREAS the ULP administration continues its deliberate and systematic programme of politically motivated dismissals aimed mainly at the poor.

1. BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House condemns the actions of the Government in its wanton victimization of workers and in particular persons perceived to be supporters of the New Democratic Party,
2. call on the Government to reinstate all aggrieved parties who have suffered this discrimination, and
3. further call on the St. Vincent Christian Council and all religious bodies and organisations to investigate all instances of politically motivated discrimination and report their findings to the general public, and
4. be it further resolved that this Honourable House call upon the Organisation in Defence of Democracy to defend the democratic rights of all those who have suffered political victimization and call on the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Human Rights Association, and its regional parent body Caribbean Rights, to investigate and speak out against this infringement of people's constitutional rights.

Mr. Speaker, that is the motion that was scoffed at this morning that we on this side of the House bring before this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, it is well known that on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March there was a change of Government in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the ULP administration was elected to run the affairs of this country. We on this side of the House accepted the decision of the people without any queries. The new administration said that a new era had dawn in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines would now be better off, things would change. He went further, not only was this said Mr. Speaker, but we on this side of the House were invited to join what was called 'together now'. Together now. But today, Mr. Speaker, May 29<sup>th</sup> just two months after the Honourable Prime Minister took the oath of Office we find it necessary to bring to this Honourable House a motion condemning the Government for wanton acts of political victimization.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that in this Honourable House we are all realist and we know that changes will come, but I am particularly concerned Mr. Speaker, that in this particularly short period of time, two months, not only with the numbers who have lost their jobs but also Mr. Speaker, in the way this has been done. In the way, Mr. Speaker, it continues to be done almost on a daily basis. If we were under another dispensation, Mr. Speaker, I would have said that we are involved in a process of ethnic cleansing but in this instance Mr. Speaker, we are talking about politics, politically motivated dismissals. Mr. Speaker, there is a unbelievable lack of concern displayed in the manner in which these dismissal are been carried out. I would use the word, Mr. Speaker, callous, to describe the manner in which these dismissals are taking place. And Mr. Speaker, what is worst is that these dismissals are aimed at the poor, those who are less well off in our society, they are feeling the brunt of what is called 'together now' by the loss of their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is important that I explain to this Honourable House, that there are different types of persons that are being dismissed. There are those who by virtue of their office have had the courtesy of receiving letters telling them that they are dismissed, in most cases, no reason is given but they are thanked for their contribution, so under one hand you are dismissing a person without reason, and on the other hand you thanked them for their contribution. But, the Honourable Senator Bonadie would deal more with the labour aspects of this particular matter, and I leave that to him.

Mr. Speaker, there is another category of workers who by virtue of their jobs, at a part-time nature of their jobs they do not get any letters, these are persons, Mr. Speaker, who in most instances work at the sides of the roads, cutting and cleaning the drains and who work periodically from time to time. There is no particular guarantee of employment and many of them work for less than a hundred days in a year, sometimes significantly less. Then Mr. Speaker, there are also time keepers who are responsible for monitoring projects in the various constituencies under implementation and they too, Mr. Speaker, have lost their jobs. So basically we have two types of persons, those who have received letters and those who have not. And Mr. Speaker, the context of this discussion, when one begins to look at the numbers of persons involved, you would have found that there are many other persons who have lost their jobs without receiving any letter, the leader of their particular gang is simply told well, somebody else, there is a new gang leader and a new gang working.

Mr. Speaker, in a sense I am surprised at the extent to which this exercise is being carried out and the levels to which it has reached in terms of persons who have been employed. I am in politics, there is a certain realism that one has to bear in mind and

would have expected that there would be changes, and Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that since adult suffrage in this country, we had such a wide spread attack on the poor and the disadvantage in our society, I do not think so, I am appalled Mr. Speaker, at the extent to which this government, newly elected government has gone to deprive persons of their jobs. Mr. Speaker, I listened this morning, in this Honourable House, to the Honourable Prime Minister speaking about finding a job for Pamenos Ballantyne and as he spoke Mr. Speaker, I was thinking what is all this about, pumping his chest, finding a job for Pamenos Ballantyne while hundreds of persons are being sent home, everyday. Mr. Speaker, since elections. Mr. Speaker, and I would give my figures, Mr. Speaker, those persons who are being sent home are persons at the bottom in many instances of the socio economic ladder in our country and their can be no justification, Mr. Speaker, none whatsoever for such a full scale, wholesale wanton level of discrimination at the political level. [Interjection]. We will come to that too. Mr. Speaker, one day, Mr. Speaker, when we are all away from this place history will judge all of us. We may pout and we may talk in this Honourable House, but the end of it all, Mr. Speaker, one day, we will be judged, and we will be judged, as the Deputy Prime Minister well knows, at different levels.

Mr. Speaker, [Interjection], I have had several judgment days, do not worry about that, and there are more to come for all of us. Mr. Speaker, I want to say to this Parliament why I described some of this victimization as simply wanton, without cause, without rhyme or reason and I shall do so Mr. Speaker, by giving examples of persons, in my own constituency, and there are others here who will give for their own constituency, who have been deprived of an income. And perhaps, Mr. Speaker, this may soften some hearts. Mr. Speaker, there is a gentleman in my constituency by the name of Eli Thomas. Mr. Speaker, Eli Thomas is 62 years old, this year, on Sunday the February 26<sup>th</sup> 1961, Mr. Speaker, Eli Thomas then 22 years an employee of the Ministry of Works, he was in fact a gang leader for 9 years having started at the age of 13 years, he was riding his bicycle coming down from Block 2000, what is now Block 2000 and ended up in the river, fraction his spine, therefore loosing the use of his legs, 22 years old, he spent many months Mr. Speaker, in hospital, at that time, when he fell many of us including myself and indeed I must say, the Honourable Prime Minister would have been hard at work in school, at the Grammar School in those days, of course he was a few years behind me. But Mr. Speaker, Eli effectively became almost totally incapacitated, he walks with two crutches, he virtually swings between those two crutches to move along, Eli wife, Mr. Speaker, is a blind woman Celia. Eli went at the end of 1962 and appeal to the then Governor to be allowed to go on public assistance, public assistance at that time, Mr. Speaker, amounted to the princely sum of \$2.50 a month he could not live on that Mr. Speaker, but he was glad to have it, and at Christmas 1962 the intervention of Governor of St. Vincent and the Grenadines he was granted some work at the Public Works. And I want to describe his work

because there are a lot of people like that in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, who depend on the public purse for a living, whether by way of public assistance or whether even when incapacitated from getting a job, but they do not do the job themselves, they hire someone to carry out the job for them and they share the proceeds. There are a number of people Mr. Speaker, in this system who live like that. Mr. Speaker, if we have some concerns for the poor of our country we will find ways and mechanisms to ensure Mr. Speaker, that at least they can earn some sort of income. So Eli has been doing that for many years. In a subsequent administration Mr. Russell then the Honourable Randolph Russell attempted to stop it, and Eli appealed to the then Premier Cato to reinstate his job and Premier Cato did so. And Eli has continued Mr. Speaker, over these many years to operate in that manner, getting a job a maybe 20, 25 days a quarter sharing the work and getting some income right up to this year 2001. He falls in a category Mr. Speaker, call jobbers. Mr. Speaker, I really do not believe that members on the other side of this House would wish to deprive people like Eli from earning some income. I really do not believe that, I cannot believe it, I can only put it down to either a lack of supervision or something on their part, but I cannot believe Mr. Speaker, that members on that side of the House would wish to see someone like that deprived of something that probably earned him \$150.00, \$200.00 dollars in a month assuming that he got something every month which is often not the case. Mr. Speaker that is what I mean by wanton. There is no examination of the circumstances which people face when decisions like this are been made. So, Eli today is deprived Mr. Speaker by this administration of that money.

**HONOURABLE DR. JERROL THOMPSON:** Many Eli's have suffered under the NDP administration, many Eli's.

You will have your turn to talk. Mr. Speaker, Eli is not alone. There are many other people like Eli who have been removed from work in circumstances where they have been put in a position where they cannot make ends meet, where they will not be able to send their children to school and meet their basic expenses.

Mr. Speaker, I refer to another instance, there is a lady in my constituent again, Mrs. St. Patrick whose husband, known as Viola or Enola, her husband was a strong supporter of the Unity Labour Party during my house to house campaign in East Kingstown especially in the area of Sion Hill we often came into contact and I would say this for him, he had his views and he would argue vigorously in support of his party, I have no problems with that. But it is a shock to me about two months or so before election he suddenly passed away, I was absolutely shocked because he was a relatively young man, showed no sign of illness and then suddenly one morning, it was called in and said that Mrs. Fitz Patrick husband is dead. I went to his funeral Mr.

Speaker, and I remember well, Mr. Speaker, that as I look at the family and knowing that Mrs. Fitz Patrick probably work about 120 days a year, I wondered how she would be able to cope with the five children that she had. Indeed in speaking to her this week she told me that last Sunday her husband would have been 47 if he had lived. So she has been deprived, Mr. Speaker, of her job as a timekeeper at the Public Works and left to fend for herself. And Mr. Speaker, I can go on, because there are quite a number of persons who find themselves in that predicament. There are a number of persons Mr. Speaker, who are in fact incapacitated. And that is one way of providing them with some income. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, those on the other side must examine more carefully what they are in fact doing.

Mr. Speaker, can refer again to Megan Wilson, an old lady in Frenches 70 years old who walks with a stick and operate on the same basis, she too has been deprived of her income, \$95.00 a month on a job which she has to share. Mr. Speaker, these are examples of what I am talking about. Mr. Speaker, there are others, involving Carlton Keizer, there are a number of other names I would like to call from my constituency alone, Mr. Speaker. You have the list, your Ministry has it. Your Ministry changed the list. Mr. Speaker, one other thing I want to point out that Eli Thomas was not put on the list by the NDP, he was there long before there was an NDP. I want you think about that. Mr. Speaker, [Interjection]. I would be glad if you do that.

Mr. Speaker, there is another issues that is arising with these dismissals that are taking place, that Mr. Speaker, has to do again with the callous way in which it is being done. You have instances where both husbands and wife are being dismissed. What do they do? How are they to feed their children, pay their light bills, send them to school, provide water, food, when you dismiss both husband and wife. Is that what we mean by together now, that they go together. Mr. Speaker, these are serious matters, very, very serious matters indeed. And I am saying to those that have the responsibility Mr. Speaker, that they better take a second look. You are causing people to suffer. [Interruptions] [Gravel thumps.]

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Members of the gallery.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** I shudder to think, Mr. Speaker, of what will happen in this country if this sort of thing continues indefinitely. [Interjection]. I understand a lot of things long time. Mr. Speaker, I want to say this, we have been working on a compilation of a list of persons we have not yet completed it, of a list of persons who have already been dismissed and we will carry out that exercise for another month or so, but I will say this at this point, Mr. Speaker, based on what we have so far by constituency, I will say this, we have here, Mr. Speaker, just over 200 names of persons who have already been dismissed. That is a fact, I have the names

where they work, how long they work, in addition to that Mr. Speaker, I have 45 leaders of gangs who they and their gangs have been dismissed, and those total 357, so Mr. Speaker, I am saying in this Honourable House that 557 persons that we know so far have lost their jobs. I am saying Mr. Speaker, and I repeat in this Honourable House, [Interjection] My constituency is small compared with some near to you. Mr. Speaker, I am saying that 557 persons thus far are here and we will continue because we up-date this list daily.

Mr. Speaker, you know the insidious nature of this exercise has to do with those persons for whom there are no letter. But fortunately, Mr. Speaker, and Senator Bonadie will do that. The trade union started their series of meetings today to try and deal with this issue. So it is not me alone dealing with it, it is not us here alone dealing with it. Others will have to deal with it, all I am saying that think about it and the numbers are growing and I believe that when we come to this House the next time we will have a fuller list, and the fact remains, Mr. Speaker, is that the vast majority of these persons are people who are poor.

Mr. Speaker, I want to move on. Mr. Speaker, you know I have learned a lot of things Mr. Speaker, since entering politics. It is now three years, not a long time, I do not have 30 something years like the Honourable Prime Minister but I have three years, 1/10 of his time but I have learned a lot in those three years Mr. Speaker, I have learnt a lot and one of the things that I have learnt more than anything else Mr. Speaker, and I have said it over and over in the campaign is the opportunity to go in the homes of people. I have learnt about it first hand, I go into the homes of people, it was a habit, but now I have to do it all the time. Now and then you go and see somebody who is poor, now as a politician you do it all the time. And I go more than many of you, and I am saying Mr. Speaker, that because of that I have been in politics and my politics has been fashioned in a particular way, it is not an accident, Mr. Speaker, that right after I was elected, I doubled the Public Assistance, it was not an accident, Mr. Speaker, that as Chairman of the NIS, I introduced the non-contributory assistance pension scheme these are my manifestations, my way of saying that I have some concerns. That is my way of saying that I am concerned. I am concerned that every citizen of this country should have an opportunity and that there are people who without the Government would have very little opportunity. There are many people like that who are not in the position to help themselves. Very often we point to someone who may not fit the bill on a certain matter and I appreciate any change that is made in that regard. But when it comes to Eli and others don't tell me that's what the ULP intends to do. That is how you intend to create jobs? Is that how you intend to create jobs in this country? You are taking away jobs, not creating, you are taking away jobs from people.

Mr. Speaker, you see it seems that there is some sort of malaise setting in Mr. Speaker, even those who are not paid are removed as Justices of the Peace. Some of them very good Justices of the Peace, but I understand the reason. I am getting a better understanding of the reason, I will listen to the Prime Minister and I will wait for the developments before I make any further comment on that matter, because I cannot see for the life of me, Mr. Speaker, why someone like say, is it ASP Wright, former policeman why he should be removed as a Justice of the Peace; is he not able to perform? You know whom I am talking about, is he not able to perform? I have no problem when one wants to make changes in divisions but oh gosh do it with some decency, na man. [Interjection]. Well you will get that too, you know, we used to get that all the time, and you will get the same thing. You noticed what the Prime Minister had said this morning. That he has to learn how to circumvent. That is based on his new experience as a Prime Minister, something that was spoken about in this House over and over again, and you have a lot to learn as far as that is concerned, Mr. Minister, it is your ministry that you will find a most of that. You work on it.

Mr. Speaker, could you tell me how much time I have left?

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Twenty minutes.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Oh, I have a lot of time. Mr. Speaker, while, -- I have some other things to say, -- Mr. Speaker, we come to this House of Parliament, we are elected here and when sitting on this side of the House for years you flogged the NDP administration for doing this or not doing this and so forth and you said, you will do better, your Prime Minister said there will be no victimization, -- well now I have the explanation, the Honourable Minister of National Security victimization as correction, but Mr. Speaker, I want this Honourable House, I want the members of this Honourable House to think carefully of the implications of the exercise that they are carrying out. Think very carefully about it, not every NDP person who you dismiss is without a ULP family. [Interjection]. You said I would not win last time, I am still here. But, Mr. Speaker, -- one nevertheless -- but Mr. Speaker, you know, in the Honourable Prime Minister's constituency and someone will deal with that on our side, and I want to say it, among those dismissed, their families are ULP so very often you hurt your own when you try that. You try your own and you hurt them. But Mr. Speaker, I say this with all seriousness you know, I really cannot believe that in some of the instances that I have seen, that really is the intention on the other side. I will be a very poor judge of character, because a number of persons including my good friend the Deputy Prime Minister, there express concerns all the time and clearly Mr. Speaker, is a Christian gentleman, but I wonder where the Christianity is gone in this exercise, Mr. Speaker, I really wonder. But Mr. Speaker, the tears of those mothers who are unable to provide for their children will lie on your head. So continue, if you

think that is the way you should go, but when you do that don't talk about any 'together now,' say we are dividing this country into NDP and ULP say that and I will understand because I am not counting PPM. Say that. [Interjection]. My partner? Mr. Speaker, that is what is being done Mr. Speaker, we are dividing this country down the line. Worse than it has ever been while we talk from one side of our mouth about 'together now.' 'Together now' my eye. I never took that seriously in the first case, I do not take it seriously now, now I know it is a farce. Well, I do not want it echoed to me every time I come in the House, because I hear it every time I come in here and I am tired of that because it has no meaning.

Mr. Speaker, you know when the NDP was in office very often the slightest little thing happen in this country was all over the press, the Christian Council talking, Human Rights Association talking, everybody running down the NDP. They had a prisoner on top the roof there where two others trying to hang him last week Thursday which cannot even make the newspapers. His tongue was out of his head as the rope stretch around him, can't make the newspapers. One of your people explain it to me, the Human Rights and all the other bodies we are not hearing them, with all the people they dismissed. Have they checked, that is why this motion, Mr. Speaker, I am asking them to look at it. I do not want them to take my figures. I want them to find out for themselves, but I want them to make the effort. Not cower in a corner. In the same way you spoke out when the NDP was in office speak out now, speak out now. Let them speak out now, every little thing, anything happened you had something with Human Rights, with Cuffy going on the television, every little thing, but I cannot hear him now, has he gone away, has he died? Cannot hear him. [Interjection]. I do not have any paper to waste, let him come out now, Mr. Speaker, let him come out and say to this country that no jobs are being taken away. It is a lie. Let him come out and say that Mr. Speaker, let the Christian Council say that to me also, you are lying Eustace. Let him come out and say so, but I want them to do the work and check for themselves. I have called them, you know, what happen to your voice? All of a sudden you are dumb, they say well you can give us some figures, I say no, go and do it for yourself, you will say it is Eustace figures. And I want them to get an independent view, Mr. Speaker, because these are compiled on a basis of people who we have been checking on, I do not want to give them, I want them to come to an independent view on this matter. Because Mr. Speaker, we could laugh in here, you know, not every one is going to sit down and take that you know, we can laugh in here, make whatever fun we want about the matter, Mr. Speaker, we can do that, we may feel well protected but Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with the lives and the livelihood. We are dealing with the life and the livelihood of citizens of this country. You could say what you want, I am saying to you that what you are doing will not be good for this country.

Mr. Speaker, a fellow came to me yesterday, he is now unable because of his dismissal to pay the secondary school fees of his child. Mr. Speaker, his whole demeanour is one that spent a long time with him trying to calm him down. I did not like his demeanour in the matter, I understood it but I did not like it. And I am saying to this Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, that we must not take this matter lightly. I perceive a certain levity inside here Mr. Speaker, a certain atmosphere as if we are joking. I am not joking Mr. Speaker, I am not joking at all. This is a matter of life or death for many citizens Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Speaker, it becomes more pronounced, it is sending a wrong signal. A very wrong signal. You know, yesterday or day before yesterday, I do not want to go into that now into any detail, I heard the Prime Minister calling on the NIS to assist the banana farmers who are going out of business. I heard him asking for it, well I want to see the compassion properly manifested but I will deal with that particular issue at another time, that is not the time and place for that one. But, Mr. Speaker, let us not in this Honourable House forget why we were put here. Why we were elected to serve in this Honourable House, let us not forget that. We are put here because people in the country in various constituencies repose confidence Mr. Speaker in all of us, that we will do something good. Confidence, Mr. Speaker that all of us in each constituency, all of us will try our level best to improve the well being, the standard of living of each of our citizens. That is why we were put here Mr. Speaker. We have gone through a very gruelling election and your side has won the election, Mr. Speaker, none of us has queried that on this side, we did not talk anything about any maleficence or anything of the sort, I accepted the results of the elections.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** You said that my side has won the elections.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** No, I said that side. [Interjection]. No I am not in this obeah business. [Laughter]. Mr. Speaker, the people of St. Vincent has made a decision, Mr. Speaker, I have accepted that decision, the Honourable Prime Minister will tell you within hours before he went on national television I called him and congratulated him on winning. He can confirm that.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, may I? Just to correct, a correction. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition did not call me immediately before I went on television, he persists in making this error, Mr. Speaker, I called him, immediately before I went on television and he conceded to me just before I went on television, about an hour before apparently he had called my house and had spoken to my helper but who for security reasons did not give him the number where I was, but I heard he had called, so the first time we actually spoke was when I called him, before I went on television, I am not saying that he had not called my house, but he persist in saying that he called me just before I went on television, that is not a fact, I

did call him just before I went on television and then he conceded. I just want to have the facts straight.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Mr. Speaker, I accept the technical explanation. The fact remains that I called him. To offer my congrats, I was told that they would get in touch with him for me. I was told that. So when he called I was not surprised. So if he wants to make a technicality with it I have no problem. The fact remains Mr. Speaker, that I called him. That is what is important. I called to assure him that I accepted and congratulated him on his victory, that is what is important.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Just a minute please. The strangers in the gallery you are keeping too much noise, you are disturbing the debate. Would you please be quite? I do not want to speak to you again on this matter.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Mr. Speaker, the trade unions in this country now have to play a role in relation to this exercise on which the ULP has embarked and I believe that when Senator Bonadie speaks, he will deal with matters pertaining to Protection of Employment Act, because a lot of what has been done is not legal. And he will go into the details of that. And I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that this matter does not rest her. It has to be examined and dealt with. It has to be. We are creating too much strife, Mr. Speaker, because not sufficient care is being taken in the exercise of the power that you now have. That is the problem, Mr. Speaker, instead spending so much time trying to send people home, you should be spending time trying to find people work. The effort that has been put in this exercise may be would have borne fruit in something else had it been put there, [Interjection] so because it has been done for the past 17 years you want to do it? So what are you telling me then?

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that you need to put more effort, I know the Prime Minister has been trying, he made a statement today, as it is we cannot respond to those statements in the House but I will respond in due course. It was a masterpiece in a lot of ways, in a lot of areas where you wagged and wiggled and so on and we will deal with those in another forum, Mr. Speaker. I know he is good at it, I know, but Mr. Speaker, I am saying as I close here that this matter that we have before this Honourable House, this question of the victimization of persons taking people out of jobs is something that you will live to regret. You cannot Mr. Speaker, in that wholesale manner just send hundreds of people home. It just is not tenable, Mr. Speaker, not in a small society like ours. Not in a small society like St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Mr. Speaker. This thing is having effects all around. Even people do not want to talk to the census officers because they say they lose their work, I have to be going on television to say that I still support the census. Because I know it is an important exercise because all these things are affecting even that. So people feel

that they should not co-operate with enumerators on these matters. [Interjection] I am not saying it is the first time, you understand what I am talking about, you are trying to put me off. Mr. Speaker, the issue is that this wanton victimisation of people has to stop. It has to stop, Mr. Speaker, you cannot have an administration that on a daily basis is sending people home. You cannot have that. And I want, Mr. Speaker, to say to the members, on the other side of this Honourable House, that they need to look again closely at what they are doing, they need to demonstrate Mr. Speaker, a greater sense of care and concern for those who are less well-off in our society. We have said those things in our manifesto, but you are not living up to them. And Mr. Speaker, I say as I close that history will judge us all. Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, first I would like to say that there is no factual basis for the proposition that the ULP Government has been victimizing anyone. We have indeed gone out of our way, to ensure that no person would lose his or her job for political reasons, that no person would lose public assistance for political reasons. It is very interesting that the Leader of the Opposition says for example, that Mr. Eli Thomas of East Kingstown, whom I believe is Eli Thomas of Richmond Hill. That he would get maybe 20 to 25 days per quarter under the NDP the party which he supported. We have been in office just a mere eight weeks; we have been in office after an administration has been in office for 17 years. It took us at least four weeks to get the administration of this country in order and to put the boards in place, and to put the departments in place, indeed it is still a process which is on going, in the United States of America, they would have had two months and a few days to prepare to go into the administration, that is the difference between the British System and the American System. Therefore in the quarter, a quarter of the year is three months, we have not even been there three months yet. And there are some persons who no doubt who have worked in the first quarter, who have not yet worked in the second quarter, not because anybody has been fired for any political reasons, but the NDP simply did not leave any money for the Unity Labour Party. I just said this morning they left when I came into Office, when we came the Cabinet was sworn on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, I got the figures for the first quarter to the end of March, there was a deficit, a minus on the Government accounts for the first three months for some \$10 million and then there were lots of debts before we could do anything, we had to pay certain debts. The overdraft at the National Commercial Bank had gone past its \$25 million legal limit and gone to \$30 million. All those are facts. It is true, that there are one or two persons who have lost their jobs, one or two, but that has absolutely nothing to do with politics. You have, this is the point I mean. You have somebody down their shouting I am lying.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Just a minute. Could I ask that person to be removed please, from the House, immediately?

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** You see I do not mind the hearing, but at least the Leader of the Opposition would know too. We can get the House here full with people as you know, because we have the crowd to shout when the Leader of the Opposition is talking and say he lie. In order to have a civilized society, you have to listen; you cannot be rude and ill disciplined. You just cannot.

Now what is happening Mr. Speaker? You have for instance, I do not know if people would know this, there are some watchmen who they have a very ingenious scheme, they hire out their watching. They on the job, they get the job they go home, and get somebody to pass by now and again and share the money, but yet, we know them you know, but we have not even remove those watchmen yet, for the simple reason we are doing a systematic analysis of the watchman system, is 300 and something of them. And we are getting criticism on the ground because some of those same watchmen and NDP gang leaders who have work, do you know what they are saying on the ground, that ULP in power and NDP run things, that is that they are saying. But I do not want to hear any of that talk from anybody, because I am talking 'together now'. And we are not firing anybody on the basis of any politics. If you have a driver, for instance in a hospital, let us take an example, and he should be on the job, and he is driving mini bus, drawing Government's salary and driving mini bus, what do you want us to do with such a person? Keep him? You cannot do that. We have had a handful of persons who have been relieved of their jobs, but they have been relieved for reasons of a lack of performance.

Now, the talk about Eli Thomas, is a gentleman whom I know, I do not know him as well as Leader of the Opposition, but if we were going out to victimize Eli Thomas we would have taken him off the public assistance list but his ID card number 047214 up to this month he is getting his public assistance, I have the list here. So we are not, there is no question of victimizing him. Why should somebody want to victimize an individual? The larger question, of course, which is being raised is why should somebody be drawing public assistance and also be working. That is a different question that has to be addressed in the analysis which has been given. And why I have been calling out and asking for the names, I came prepared with the most recent public assistance list, and let me say it, I am going to leave it here in the House, I am going to leave it in the House, because what you would find on this list there is not one single person who is in St. Vincent and the Grenadines who is alive who received public assistance at the end of March, who at the end of April and now at the end of May not getting public assistance. Not one. The only persons who have been removed from the Public Assistance list are those who are dead, those who are overseas and

they have in the mental asylum. And I heard a couple of people on the radio talking, and it is because of together now, that I have not asked the police to go and deal with them in respect of putting them in the Courts for receiving Government's money under false pretenses, because some of them who are talking and they are calling where they are from and I check the list, they were collecting money for somebody who is dead, or somebody overseas since 1990, in one case, so if they want me to stop 'together now' with that and go and call the police, it is easy for me to do that you know, and say you see, down in that particular village there is somebody who has been drawing public assistance for Tom Jones, but he has been dead since 1990, I do not want poor people to get locked up for things like that. And I know that some of my own supporters and people in the country who will say that I am wrong, not to call the police, but that was just the way I was born. I am concerned about people and I do not want to put pressure on people unnecessarily, but some may say that it is necessary because you should not go and do that, but I am inviting persons on the Opposition, I am putting in this list, and the press can come here and look at it; and more than that I have six of these, from the end of March, they can come and look at them too, we put them back to Social Development, they can go there and I invite anyone of you and if you find one name which has been removed where the person is here alive in St. Vincent and the Grenadines who got at the end of March and who not getting now, bring that name to me. Because we are doing a review and when the review is completed, when the review is completed there are persons name which will be removed. There is no question about that, because there are some young strong, men and women, who have no children who are not infirm or anything like that, and there is no reason for them to be getting public assistance. But they are getting. When that happen they will say victimization, but we have to make sure that the elderly persons who are poor and the sick and the infirm, the physically challenged, the blind that they get their names are on the list, some of the young, strong people should have their names off. And we are going through that process, and I am not the one, the Minister is not doing it, the public servants are doing it, so we have no political input in that matter. I know that I for one has not asked for the dismissal of one single individual, and the persons on this side of the House have not asked for one single dismissal in relation with anything to do with politics.

When we came into Office on Tuesday the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April ask the sanitation workers, ask the Minister of Health the Honourable Douglas Slater. I got a telephone call from a union leader at about half past 6 Tuesday April 3<sup>rd</sup> that some public servants sent home 18 sanitation workers. I went, I called the Honourable Minister of Health and asked him to meet me down there with the senior team. I went down and enquired about these dismissals, they said they did not know about these dismissals, I as Prime Minister and Minister of Finance did not know about the dismissals, but there was a decision which was taken by the NDP Government to dismiss them from the first

working day in April, and the public servants simply continued that decision and dismissed them, and gave them the letter on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, so I went there and I told them that nobody is going to get fired like that under a ULP Government, because after all we are a Labour Government and they were reinstated then and there. And almost all of them were NDP supporters, now of course, not only 'Labour Now,' but 'together now.' For those 18, -- [Interruption]. But I am telling you what happened, I had them reinstated. What you are asking, who did the dismissal. But the point about it is this, the Minister did not know about it, I did not know about it, and when I was informed, I asked who made this decision. I was told that the NDP Government had made the decision and they are only carrying out the decision now. Just like, Mr. Speaker, down at the Town Board, a decision was taken before the ULP came into office to hire six or eight persons and the individual who is in charge down there completely forget that a government was changed, that an event took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> March and sent out the letters still. I said, but how can you do that. Naturally he is transferred to another establishment, not fired, transferred, because he disrespects democracy. You cannot disrespect democracy, it is not me you are disrespecting, you know, the voters, the people, thank you, very much, and we are looking at those jobs to fill them, and I know for instance in one out of the eight cases, I know, but there might well be others, but I am only talking about what I know about personally, one who was suggested for work is getting the job and it is an NDP person, but I happen to know that that young man is a good worker. And these are facts upon which I am speaking so that when you hear this talk about political victimization, it is completely untrue, there is no political victimization in this administration.

Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that in relation to the public assistance issue for example that what I demonstrated here today, will put that issue to rest and when we publish, because that list is now here, when we do the review, I will do the new list and let the press and anybody who wants to examine, to see who are taken off, because there would be people who would be taken off, and those who are put on, and when the press wants to ask the questions do not ask me, do not ask the Minister we ask the public officers who are responsible to answer the press, because we are following the law, under the Public Assistance Act.

You know what happened up there, in the Public Assistance Department, I signed as Prime Minister a form for public assistance for somebody to get \$750.00 worth of material maximum. The woman told the person she does not recognize my signature. The individual took it back to my office, all this happen and I do not know, you know. My secretary called and said yes it is the Prime Minister's signature, she said to make doubly sure, she wants the Prime Minister's stamp on it. When it was taken back to the lady, she told the gentleman who had the form, well I see now is fuh he signature but I need another one before I could do anything. I need the signature of the person

on the board from that area. But she knew fully well that that person was oversees getting medical attention at the time. So I then called and inquired what was the position, she said well, there is a regulation, she says that somebody has to sign, don't matter who you are. You understand? Don't matter who I am. So I say tell me the regulation, she could not tell me. But I had the regulation so I read it for her. I as Chairman of the Cabinet I can do it, because whereas it says the Governor General it means the Cabinet, I am the Chairman, I request a report, people asked me if I wanted her to be disciplined and so on, I said no. The Public Service Commissions transferred her, had nothing to do with me, but that is a person who is following NDP alone. The logics of the Leader of the Opposition but I am turning my cheek several times. But no one must believe that a veteran like me turning my cheek several times, that I am an easy walk over. I have a vision for this country and we have to work together to build this country and I know that some of our supporters would feel that I am not doing the right thing by not following everything they want to say and do on the ground and I know some of the NDP supporters would disrespect me, because they feel I am soft. But they all would be making a profound mistake. Because when I have to move, I move as fast as lightening. But I have a vision as to how we have to go.

Mr. Speaker, there are things which we have done, the motion speaks about how we are inexperienced and we are not getting things go well. I have in my hand here, you see this black book it is called 'First 100 Days Programme, Implementation Plan'. Every single task to be performed is listed, how many days the task taking, when the task started, when the task is to be complete. Then we have a group, two individuals basically, two public servants monitoring the performance of the 100 Days and you get a report every month. There has been three meetings so far, the first one to outline how this process is going. You see the document I have here? Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines First 100 Days monitoring report, NO. 2, reporting period, May 21<sup>st</sup> 2001. The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank and the CDB have come in, they say they have never seen any Government in the Caribbean performing, carrying out their task in such a thorough and professional manner. The public servants are applauding it, the CDB and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, they are saying, well all you do not need us here, we should get all you to go around the Caribbean and lecture people as to how this thing is being done. It is a remarkable exercise. Yesterday, the Head of the administrative reform exercise unit said, at a consultation which we had, one of the reporting, she said this is administrative reform in action. The real thing. She said in fact, today in this exercise, history is being created. That is the group which is supposed to be inexperienced. Doing it as it has never been done before and delivering results.

For example I spoke this morning about the issue with Taiwan. I spoke also about the World Bank. With the European Union. I asked John Caligurie, His Excellency, head of the European delegation in Barbados to come here, the European Union has over a hundred million dollars for St. Vincent and the Grenadines under STABEX funds and under special framework of assistance monies. John Caligurie came with his team and I sat down with mine, having got a detailed report and from 10 o'clock one morning until 3 o'clock the afternoon, we went through every item, one by one, we had lunch right there, we bought roti, I bought the roti. Not government money, you know, I put my hand in my pocket and bought the roti to do government business. We all, the Europeans and the Vincentians sat there and ate roti, continuing to do the work, and when I finished I took three vehicles and we went to the country. And when I went Byera Hill and I put some farmers in vehicle and we went up in Byera Valley mountain road, and I said this is what we are taking about. When I was coming back down 7 o'clock the night, John Calligurie said I have been in this Caribbean and you are the first Prime Minister who is so thorough. He said you would have gone through an exercise with me that none would have every gone through with me and the results are beginning to be shown in terms of our accessing of European Union money.

For example, \$5 million for the school repair programme that is a new dimension, getting it out of STABEX 1996, '97 money for the months of July and August, this year to repair the primary schools and secondary schools. That is what we are doing, you know. You saw the transformation which we did to this House of Assembly in one week, it even continuing. You notice the lovely seats you are now sitting on. You feel how they soft now. We give you cushions and so on to sit on. You see. And we will organized for the back later, because we doing the thing, you notice how we doing it. [Interjection]. Thank you very much, we making it extra, we have padded the Opposition seats even softer so that you would not want to move from over there at all. It would be so comfortable over there.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you this, we got inside here, the Public Sector Investment Programme, supposed to have, we budgeted last year in the budget because we have to deal with law. We would be amending certain things before the end of June. Not a full budget, we are not calling it a mini budget, we are altering one or two priorities. We supposed to get \$15.8 million dollars from local loans, to help with the public sector investment programme, the Minister of Finance left office without raising one cent of the local loans. I had to call a meeting of the banks and insurance companies to organise the raising of the money. There is another entity, which he was negotiating \$20 million dollars from outside of St. Vincent, the effective rate was close to 11%, that they were charging him. I said, no, the documents were already prepared and ready for signature when they got out of office, the effective rate was almost 11%.

**HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:** Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Finance I did not accept the terms of that loan and that is why, it was not signed.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Well, I see something different on the file. I know it was not signed. You noticed I said it was not signed, but that does not mean, that it was not accepted, because the Honourable Leader of the Opposition gave instructions for the document to be prepared, and they were prepared. They are there, prepared, and I, do you know where I carried them at the moment, and I am still battling with them, at 9.5%, and I am inexperienced, I do not know what is happening. And I cut down on the fees too. But I want to show you, not only there, you know, the Leader of the Opposition, I brought the whole file, 'British Development Division in the Caribbean'. And there are many more to bring to the House.

On January 27<sup>th</sup> 1999, the Minister of Finance then, now the Leader of the Opposition, wrote to the British High Commissioner in Barbados in reference to a letter which the High Commissioner had written in January 1998 concerning debt relief for St. Vincent and the Grenadines, under the Commonwealth debt initiative, of some 3.5 million pounds, over a 12 year period, that is about 14 million EC dollars. The British wrote to them in January 1998, saying that we can give you debt relief if you meet certain conditions. It took a year before they wrote back, you know, one year, that is how they are going on with their government. The Government of the NDP had stopped to function. It was not functioning at all, for about four years, five years. In fact, say what you want about Parnell Campbell, after Campbell left Government the NDP practically stopped functioning. And that is why the Leader of the Opposition 'fraid him so. Afraid that he will come back. Now, so he wrote on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January, the Leader of the Opposition, then Minister of Finance, 1999, he did not follow up, and then on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August, 1999, eight months after the British Representative replied, the High Commissioner, but interestingly this reply is not on the file, because it is such a bad reply to the Government. I got a copy from the British Representatives from the Department for International Development. They gave me a copy on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April. The 12<sup>th</sup>, not even two weeks after we took office. I want to read what the British were saying about the NDP Government. And you can see why they did not want to put it on the file. This is to Mr. Eustace.

*“Dear Minister, Re: St. Vincent and the Grenadines Loan 1987, Commonwealth Debt Initiative”. (This is what the British High Commissioner is writing). I am sorry for the delay in replying to the letter of January 27<sup>th</sup>. We have given your letter careful consideration but I am afraid that my authorities do not yet feel able to grant your Government relief of repayments of the above loan under the Commonwealth Debt Initiative. As you know, the three broad criteria apply to CDI, Commonwealth Debt Initiative, to ensure that this relief is used effectively, to tackle poverty are: (they are*

*giving this debt relief, if the Government can satisfy three things.) 1. Government commitment to internationally agreed development targets and pro quo policies. (That is to say the Government must show that it has policies designed for poor people. First thing. 2. Active pursuit by the Government of policies which promote responsive and accountable government, which encourages transparency and bear down on corruption. (That is the second one the British say, apart from having policies favouring poor people, you have to have policies reflecting accountable government and which encourages transparency, that is openness and which bear down on corruption, you must not have corruption in government) and 3. The application of economic policies, which encourages sustainable development. (The British High Commissioner goes on now to say, my authorities feel that more progress would need to be made particularly on the first two criteria, namely policies for the poor and bearing down against corruption, before our authorities could make a positive decision on debt relieve, under the initiative.*

In other words, the British Government was telling you, you do not have poor people policies, you are too corrupt, so they can't handle you to give you any debt initiative. It is here in black and white. They say there have been recent contacts with your government on some of these matters, for example my letter of June 6<sup>th</sup> to the Prime Minister about offshore financial services, and then he goes on to say, we will be able to reconsider the debt relief question again with you in a year's time. This was August 1999 the British wrote and then the British said well you have to do certain things. Of course, there is nothing that they went back to them within a year's time. Because they did not do anything to help poor people, and they did not clean up the corruption. So I am amazed that the leader of the Opposition, two weeks into office can get up here and talk about the NDP Government is for poor people. Incredible! Absolutely unbelievable.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, you have 10 Minutes.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I am obliged. Mr. Speaker, I have written to the British on April the 30<sup>th</sup> and I have written a four-page letter, outlining what we have done so far, giving sections of laws and five page as an appendix with 27 points. Under the heading Good Governance Measures, March 29<sup>th</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> what we have done in one month. They wrote back and told us that they are considering the matter carefully, and I spoke to their representative recently in St. Lucia and they said after the British election they going to address this question for us. I received yesterday a letter from the American Embassy, from the Charge de Affair, the top man there congratulating this Government on the excellent work it has been doing in the area of good governance and encouraging us to continue on that path. Is not one or two people because they were working and not doing government work and they no longer on the gravy train, they want to talk for the talk. But this is where the British and Americans and the Europeans commending after two months the work

of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines headed by ULP and those are the facts.

Mr. Speaker, you know, you can listen to the hyperbole, the gross exaggeration of the Leader of the Opposition, when he talked about so far 557 persons in St. Vincent and the Grenadines who lost their jobs because of politics. No, no it could not be his constituency; I think it was in the country. I think it is in the country he is talking about, and it is just a joke. But he got carried away and said every day, hundreds are losing their jobs. Well, I have it here. Everyday hundreds, but in fact hundreds are losing their jobs, well it is amazing that you still have people working in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Since the elections I am talking about. Because we are now about 50 days properly in office, so hundreds by 50?

Mr. Speaker, I think that what the Opposition should do is to watch carefully the thorough and scientific manner in which we are proceeding to put this country on a firm and proper footing. The Leader of the Opposition attacks, he said that we are, -- and it is an untruth which he says here in the motion, he says that we have appointed private sector employed party officials to oversee the implementation of the 100 Days Programme. That is not true at all, there are no party officials and we have not employed anyone. You know what has happened, you cannot take the transparency, and how we do our business. It is a group of public servants, and private sector people who took the 100 Days Programme of the ULP, put it out in the form of a programme. Not just policies. Detailed programme, put time lines to them, how the task must be performed and then I held the first meeting with everybody, every single person in the public service in the leadership, Heads of Departments and Permanent Secretary, plus the Ministers and this outside group mixed with public servants and we agreed that we will put two public servants, Andrex Wickcombe who is a new Permanent Secretary and Bentley Browne who is not a Permanent Secretary but is at Permanent Secretary level, to help to monitor the implementation of the 100 Days Programme. So they will go around in addition to their own jobs, to the various departments and say how is it you are doing with this item, and they are grading the ministries, they are grading them. How they are performing and we are discussing the grading. Yesterday we had a session with overhead projector with every single ministry reporting on every single task, in the 100 Days. In fact, if the Leader of the Opposition wants to come to the next one, I will invite him to see how government functioning. I will invite him to come and see how government functioning, but he would not come because he is not interesting in 'together now'. He would not come, you know. I am inviting him, because if I invite the others he would be left alone. If I invite the others they will join me, and you would be left alone over there.

Mr. Speaker, all this work which is done, extra by the private sector and done by persons inside of the public service, not one single cent extra is being paid and the private sector people did not ask for one single cent. Not one single cent and they are all Vincentians. But it does not matter if they were not all Vincentian. But they are all Vincentians carrying the science of Government to a higher level. You know, Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition knows some of the tribulations some of us have been suffering from some of his supporters whom we have left on the ground in certain positions. People who have particular jobs who are in a position to hire others, in talking to some of the Ministers as though they are nothing. I can give you an example. A fellow hired a man with a vehicle to do a job, the man with the vehicle tried to run me down in Owia during the election campaign, I had to get police escort to take me out of Owia that man got work under the ULP Government you know. You heard me, and you still talk about victimization. Well, I tell you if I continue like this, Pope John Paul have to put me up for Sainthood. [Laughter]. He has to put me up for Sainthood.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, if there is any breach of the law with anybody who has been dismissed from their employ and dismissed obviously, because nobody is dismissed for politics and they are entitled to severance pay they will get their severance pay. There is no question about that.

I had to overrule public servants, and you may know about it Senator Bonadie the contract for CTWA workers, artisans and so forth in the Ministry of Works. The line of the public service is that because the contract had come to an end, we are not paying the extra payments under the contract, we are just paying the basic thing, I say no, it is an elementary trade union principle here. The same trade union is negotiating with you, for a new contract, you cannot talk about going back to basics without paying the extra frills which have been negotiated. I say it is a rolling thing and you have to do that until the new contract is finalized. They said to me Prime Minister, if that is your direction put that in writing. I put it in writing. So you do not have to fight about that Senator Boandie, I did your fight for you. All could talk all day about the examples and about the instances. I have fought all my life for poor people. All my life. Right now, we promised that the people at Rabacca Farms and down at Richmond Vale will get their severance.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Member you have two minutes.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I am obliged, Mr. Speaker. The list, it was reported to me yesterday in the 100 Days that the list for Rabacca is already complete. And they have not yet gotten the complete list for Richmond. I said as soon as you get the complete list for Richmond, send the list with the names

and addresses to the Ministry of Finance with the cost of it. That's, -- for 17 years they did not get their severance pay from the NDP, in eight weeks I am organizing for them to get their severance pay. [Applause]. And you know what I am going to do since you all talking like this, when we paying them the severance pay I personally going with the pay master, with a vehicle up in Rabacca with API to distribute the checks and when I done there I am going down to Fitz Hughes and do the same thing, and let me hear all go there and talk to them about poor people. I want you any time to go up there and talk to them about poor people, and for 17 years you did not give them their severance pay, and in eight weeks I am organizing it. Senator Bonadie come home. [Laughter]. Come home. Come home, come home, here is your natural home. Here is your natural home, come to the poor people party.

Mr. Speaker, we will not support this motion, the facts are completely against what the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has been saying. Unfortunately, when 5:00 comes, the debate on the motion under the rules would come to an end. But it would have been interesting if we had a different route for us to have a complete hearing of the motion, which I would have liked. Unfortunately, that would not have been possible. But I think the public, they have heard the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, they have heard the Prime Minister and I think they must be able to judge that this government in eight weeks, we looking after the interest of poor people and the nation and we are not victimizing one soul, on the ground of politics. Those who are not doing their work and who skulking they going home. There is no question about that, no question about that, and they would include persons who are ULP supporters too, because we are not discriminating between non-performance between NDP and ULP, non-performance, and there are some people who are in hospitals, rural clinics about this country, and I want to sound a warning to them. People who sweeping yard, people who sweeping the floor because they were put there by an NDP representative they have had a history of directing doctors, and senior nurses, and pharmacists, those days are done. You do your work properly or you are going home. [Applause]. Those days are done. And we are taking care of the banana elderly and we are preparing the programme for the national insurance scheme to help those in the banana industry. The old and the marginalized who are going to be leaving the industry, we are helping them and that is a precursor to we seeking to get recovery monies from the European Union for the elderly. The good Lord says, you have to first help yourself. We are going to try and help ourselves with a little bit of NIS and when go to the European Union, I notice here that Senator Bonadie is smiling again approvingly, come home. Come home. I am obliged.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any further debate?

**HONOURABLE JOSEPH BURNS BONADIE:** Mr. Speaker, the first I noticed is that the television camera departed as soon as I got up. I would lend my voice to this debate and I am very happy in deed that I am coming after the Prime Minister has spoken. I wish to take a slightly different approach to the motion. I wish to say Mr. Speaker, based on observations that over the years what we have in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is what we can call political tribalism and patronage. It is a sort of carrot and stick approach to the political process in St. Vincent and the Grenadines where we promised things to those who support us and we with hold rewards for those who oppose us. Poverty ad the dependence and such are perquisites Mr. Speaker, for the system that we are accustomed to, for it to thrive. And if this situation continues what is going to happen, is that it is going to erode the spirit of building a proper nation called St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The national interest of our country must be put before party interest, before individual interest, and when we listened to the Honourable Prime Minister when he speaks about together now it rings a little hollow when one looks at some of the things which are happening in our country. And it reminded me of a noted historian and political commentator, Selwyn Ryan, in his Caribbean Political Thought said and he speaks about our societies including St.Vincent and the Grenadines which is hemorrhaging. He talks about the societies dying a slow convulsive death and he talks about our civilization is now in reverse. And I read it and I looked around Mr. Speaker and me, I wish to begin by turning to page 2 of the Throne Speech. Page 2 of the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, the second paragraph. The Governor General says in his Throne Speech

**that the Prime Minister's passionate speech call, Mr. Speaker, for the healing of the nation after his party's overwhelming victory at the polls has been well received, at home and abroad, in this regard apt slogan "together now" resonates with the politics of inclusion. My Government would ensure in practical ways that no one will be left behind because of his or her political affiliation.**

Mr. Speaker, I liked that. If Mr. Speaker, the Government is launching a war on poverty, the Government is launching a war on ignorance and disease and illiteracy, a war to correct poor health and to improve the environment, Mr. Speaker, we have to live by what we preach. Policy seven of the Throne Speech speaks about the war. It says we are launching a war on poverty, on illiteracy, inadequate housing, poor health and the environment. How could we, launch a war Mr. Speaker, on poverty, by targeting and relegating people to the unemployment line, there is a contradiction in my own mind in terms of what the Government has spelt out in the Throne Speech and in what little experience I have had in talking to some people who are aggrieved. I am not going to paint with a paint brush, the Ministers of the Government over there, I am not painting them with a paint brush, but what I attempt to do in support

of the resolution for a reversal on some of the things which were done, is to point out where I believe mistakes have been made and asked that they be investigated and hopefully corrected. I am persuaded Mr. Speaker, to give the Honourable Prime Minister the benefit of the doubt, he has said to the nation that he has not made one decision, none of his Ministers made any decision to dismiss anybody on political ground. He speaks about people who are inefficient; he speaks about people who are not performing, but nobody can save those people. I am not arguing about the poor relief list, those people who are young and should not be on the list should be taken of; nobody could disagree with you on that, there is no disagreement on that, we are talking about people who had jobs, who had good jobs, who had not have a bad report in terms of their performance, because people have personal files and it is very unfair to dismiss somebody with nothing on their personal record and say that you do not know anything about it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am saying that I give the Prime Minister the benefit of the doubt. He has said together now, he has said no victimization and I give him the benefit of the doubt because I believe as well as several of the Ministers might not know what is happening. Other people think otherwise, but I am saying that I gave the benefit of the doubt. Where my faith is a little shaky is that I heard the Honourable Prime Minister state was that there was a man driving a van and he supposed to be the ambulance driver. I intended to raise his name as one who was dismissed on political grounds, but I will refrain from doing so for the simple reason that I know he is a van driver also. But I do not know if he drives the van when he is supposed to be at work, so I am not getting involved in that, but I want to say this, that at a meeting in Georgetown a ULP meeting it was said to the crowd, that there were three persons at the Georgetown Hospital that would be dealt with who are NDP supporters, and low and behold three letters were sent out for three people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister says the report is false. It might be false but I am saying what I heard. But what I have in my hand is a letter sent out to the gardener at the Georgetown Hospital. A man by the name of Ruben Latham who incidentally Mr. Speaker, attempted to come into this Parliament this morning and was turned back because he had on some gong slingers shoe and this is the letter that went to Mr. Latham.

**"I wish to direct your attention to the fact that for some time now, your performance and attitude on the job as a grounds man are way below standards and are unacceptable. Please note paragraph 1 (2) of your letter of appointment. Your appointment is non-pension able and will be terminable at any time with one month's notice in writing on either side or payment of one month's salary to you in lieu of notice.**

**However, in light of the above fact, your services as a grounds man are terminated with immediate effect, and you would receive one month's salary in lieu thereof. You would proceed on six days vacation leave from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2001 for which you are eligible.'**

Now, I mention this Mr. Speaker, because I am sure that the Honourable Prime Minister was sincere when he said it was not his intention and this man is in his constituency to dismiss anybody for political reason. I heard the man's wife making an appeal; she said she was at the meeting when those remarks were made and that she was a strong supporter of the Prime Minister, her children are strong supporters of the Prime Minister and she persuaded him to vote for the ULP, but he would not listen and lo and behold he is now out of a job.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned that because there are other people that the Prime Minister alluded to his speech, and I understand where he is coming from in that I myself at one time had charge for the Ministry of Health and a lot of complaints used to come into me about people who want to give instructions to doctors and dispensers and so on. I am well aware of that, and it is not only ULP supporters but NDP supporters who attempted to in a sense usurp their authority because they might have figured that they had protection in political terms. But Mr. Speaker, I had complaints about an ambulance driver who used to carry his wife to church in the ambulance, who used to cut feed for his animals in the ambulance. Go and buy gas in the ambulance, and all sort of stories, but I knew that the unlined reason for all of those complaints were coming to me was that the individual in question was the campaign manager of the Honourable Prime Minister's constituency team. I will have nothing, nothing absolutely to do with attempting to dismiss or to penalize a person because the motive is wrong. Even though the things that they said were right, I knew that the underlying reason was political. And you know what I speak about, I will not be persuaded as the Minister to deal with that, but the reverse is now happening and people who were aggrieved at his behaviour have now been dismissed immediately in the same department. I said I want to look at it again, have another look, if the people were not performing their duty it must be recorded. The Labour Party Government in 1980 brought in the Protection of Employment Act, which is an act which makes provision to give people a chance, if somebody does something wrong, you write them, you give them notice, that is happening in a civilized country, and I am sure if you examined the personal files you will see nothing recorded there in terms of the performance or non performance of those persons. I checked with the union, Mr. Speaker, and under the agreement if somebody is not performing you notify them and you send a letter to the union. The law says so; the law says you must give the person notice particularly if that person has worked for over five years. And in this

one case this man was employed for over 17 years under the previous administration, but he was dismissed forthwith following that meeting in Georgetown.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Honourable Prime Minister and the Minister of Health under whose portfolio those people fell will investigate the matter. And I want to tell you why, I believe something should be done. The union in question that represents these people took the matter up and it is surprising to me Mr. Speaker, that the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health whose previous appointment was Labour Commissioner agreed with the Union that the individual was not wrongfully dismissed but he was unfairly dealt with. I understand what the Prime Minister is saying when he says he is paying severance payment that was due 17 years ago and I commend him for that, and I know Casper London would be the happiest man to know that those people getting their severance payment. But it is not severance payment we are asking for. What we are asking for is to address the situation of the wrongful, unfair, however you want to call it, dismissals, let the people go back to work. And treat them in the normal industrial relations manner you treat anybody working with you. If they not performing you write them, and if they do not improve, you fire them. That is the normal course of things. But Mr. Speaker, to say, that the dismissal was unfair is to admit that something was wrong. And to say to the Union, that if you do not like it, you can take the Government to court. That is callous behaviour. That sort of behaviour is not something that I believe should be condone. So I want to look at those cases.

There are other cases Mr. Speaker, a lady, for example received a letter, she works with the Barrouallie Town Board and she received her letter on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April and it says,

*“Dear Mrs. Johnson,*

*I have been directed to inform you that your services as Assistant Clerk at the Barrouallie Town Board will be terminated effective the 14<sup>th</sup> of May (and that letter was dated the 24<sup>th</sup> of April), you will proceed on 18 days vacation with effect from the 15<sup>th</sup> of May to the 7<sup>th</sup> of June, the Ministry takes this opportunity to thank you for the valuable services you rendered over the many years to the Barrouallie Town Board. Please note that arrangements would be made to pay you an ex gratia allowance for the services you rendered.”*

Now this matter was taken up with the Honourable Parliamentary Secretary in the Prime Minister’s Office and the Parliamentary Secretary who has some measure of responsibility for labour inquired further, it is my understanding, and inquire of the Minister who is responsible for this particular Ministry and the Minister of Social Development, Gender Affairs, Ecclesiastical Affairs, the Parliamentary Secretary

inquired and somewhere along the line got the view that we would look at this again, so Mr. Speaker, on the first of May, another letter was sent out, and it says:

**“Please refer to my letter dated the 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2001, I have been directed to inform you that your services as Assistant Clerk at the Barrouallie Town Board will seize as of the 8<sup>th</sup> of June, 2001 and not on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May 2001, as was in advertently stated. The Ministry regrets this error and sincerely apologizes for any inconvenience caused.”**

Now, as a trade union leader I saw what was happening, because what was happening was that you were terminating the services of an individual and after termination sending them on leave. You cannot do that, if you terminate, you terminate. So I think what was happening now was that a longer period was given to the individual, nevertheless, the person was dismissed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I mentioned these things, there are others, there are other letters I do not want to bore the House but I simple want to make the point that I think that it is time that the Prime Minister and his Cabinet review this sort of dismissals that are taking place. We are told that there would be no political victimization but I do not think Mr. Speaker, that one could convince Ruben Latham’s wife that her husband was not performing, I think that something could be done, there are ways, Mr. Speaker, in which one can deal with problems in an enterprise and if you have people Mr. Speaker, who are working in an enterprise and they are not performing you can deal with them. You can sit down, you have your personal Management Department, to sit down and talk to these people. I am not talking now, about the persons who are working on the roads where you have to create employment in this country and that you have to operate on the basis of some measure of rotation. All of those things are acceptable but I am saying the other things we can look at them.

Mr. Speaker, I would not for one moment support what I have been hearing as a deliberate attempt by the Government at Union Buskin. I know better than that. I know that there is the social contract, you have it in your manifesto, it is something you expounded in terms of what you plan to do, in terms of the future development of the relationship between workers and the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have to get rid of what we call this political partisanship and call for political blindness. I believe we should have political blindness in terms of our own political involvement. Not blindness to interfering with Government’s programme, blindness to destabilizing, not blindness to undermining, not blindness to sabotage, but blindness to the political process of openness. So that we do not target people by their political labels. There is a constitutional right of

people to belong to any party they want to belong to Mr. Speaker. We have freedom of conscience that is enshrined in the constitution. I am not concerned whether it was not practiced for years or not, I am saying now that we have an opportunity to do something about it, and I am saying now that together we can make your words a reality, that is what I am saying, that is the point I am making. I am not interested in what happen 10 years ago, or 20 years ago. I am interested in steering the ship clear now, that is what I am interesting in doing. Can't go back. To look back is death, that is what the Rasta says.

Mr. Speaker, sex, religion, political opinion, those things should not be counted in terms of our differences politically. Mr. Speaker, do not bother with the new doctrine, this is a new millennium, a new century and I am saying that 'Labour Now' must be accurately reflected in the policy of the Government and the continuing targeting of people must stop. That is what I am saying. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we are guided by what was said and I refer now again, Mr. Speaker, to the Throne Speech. And I go to page 5 of the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. On page 5 of the Throne Speech this is the Government's word, Mr. Speaker,

**"My Government has pledged Mr. Speaker, that their number one job will be the creation of quality jobs for the people of this country, there are immediate and more medium term proposals which will be implemented to create jobs through the Youth Empowerment Service, the Information Technology Industry, the Offshore Financial Services, Tourism, Fishing and a renewed agricultural sector both banana and non banana, private construction and the private sector investment programme. Mr. Speaker, in pursuit of its programme of job creation and the sustainable development my government will do all that is within its power to establish the type of investment climate which will attract the necessary capital resources from both local and external sources consistent with our national interest."**

Mr. Speaker I applaud that. I believe that the Opposition will work in concert with the Government to ensure that that is implemented in terms of whatever we could do to put forward our best foot, but I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that those words will ring hollow to some of the people who feel, that they have been politically victimized. And I tell you why they feel so. It is not right for an overseer to speak to a time keeper and to say to the time keeper the powers that be say to send you home because you are appointed by the NDP. That is the message, it might not be the message that is being transmitted from the Minister but that is the message that is going around. That is the message what they are telling the time keepers, that is the message that is going around, that is what they are telling the time keepers, that is what they are telling the

road drivers, that the powers that be say to send you home, that is where the bad blood is springing from. And I am saying that I gave you the benefit of the doubt as Ministers and I say to you, and Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, I agonized as to how I would make my contribution to this debate, because sometimes when you are in a country, do you know what you do, you go to the Bible and you read the Bible. [Interjection]. I am coming to you just now. You go to the Bible Mr. Speaker, and it is a good refuge, because you see it put things into perspective, and I tell you Mr. Speaker, I am seeing the political tribalism must stop. The resolution of our political division and the hostility which will inevitably follow what is happening now will lead to some measure of violence and we cannot have that. Not in this country and I am saying Mr. Speaker, just as the Honourable Prime Minister made a plea for Cameron Cuffy, there are other people who went, the President of the Union gone, Salluce gone, all these people, either they took up, they buy out or they got thrown out of Cable and Wireless. And I am saying in the down sizing, in the coming in the modern world, they gone. A lot of people gone, and I saying that the Government base on what is written here is not down sizing. So there is no reason for the Government to be sending home people. There is no reason. I am saying why target some, because of their political beliefs?

The majority of persons who are target are union members. But, Mr. Speaker, why I say I do not believe, I know that there are some enthusiastic people you know, who like to go about and speak in the name of the Government, it used to happen in my time, speak in the name of the Government. It used to happen in my time, speak in the name of the Minister, one chairman of a statutory corporation told the board that he is under instructions from the power that be to fire two people and they say who the powers that be, and he says the Minister. That happened, not even a week ago. I know, I inquired. I understand that the two people were called up and I think the board is dealing with it in the correct way. That if you have a reason you write the person a letter and say look, you are not performing, we give you so and so to perform, if you do not out goes you. But the mere fact that the chairman would say, they shared no tact, using the Minister's name to get his way, because he wants to satisfy a few people, but Mr. Speaker, I coming back to the Bible now. You know, Jesus when he came to Jerusalem, he walked into the temple and he cast out people he saw inside there selling and buying. The Honourable Minister knows the story quite well. And the Chief Priest and the Scribes and the elders, all these people were inside there and they question Jesus seeking to find out whose authority did he have to do these things, and he spoke to them in parables, the parable of the Vineyard, and certain of the Pharisees wanted to catch him with his words, and they say it is lawful to give tribute to Caesar and Jesus said why you are tempting me, bring me a penny, he looked at the penny, he said whose image is super subscribed on the penny, they said Caesar, and he said render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the

things that are God's. The Scribes then asked Jesus, which is the first commandment of all? Listen to what he says, the first of all commandments is hear oh Israel the Lord of God is one Lord, and thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, with all thy strength. This is the first commandment, and the second, though shall love thy neighbour as thy self. There is none commandment greater than these. My question to you Mr. Speaker, who is your neighbour? That is my question. Who is your neighbour? ULP supporters alone? No. I say no. Not ULP supporters alone, is your neighbour. [Interjection] I read my Bible all the time, do not be sarcastic with me with Bible now. I am making the point and I want you to listen. I am asking you who is your neighbour. I know who is mine. I asking you, who is your neighbour. Mr. Speaker, when the Honourable Prime Minister had his spiritual wakening, he told the nation that during devotion that he had the experience of watching blood flowing from his fingers while he was reading the Bible. Some people mocked, some people doubted and I listened to the election campaign. The Honourable Minister of Social Development, the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Culture, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, always quoting scripture. I am following you. I heard the Minister of Social Development likening the Prime Minister unto Joshua but he had an experience and people questioned and he said to them you interpret what my experience was, that is why I went back to the Bible on the weekend, Deputy Prime Minister. I am not given to interpreting such happenings but you know God sees things before they happen. And I am saying to the Honourable Prime Minister there are a lot of people in politics who do things in the name of the Government. And you have to be man enough to address them. And I am going to end with this note. In Genesis and this is not a joke, this is serious business, I am drawing an analogy between the experience of the Prime Minister and something that happened years ago. We are not taking about the Passover. We are talking about when the Lord spoke to Caine. He said where is Abel thy brother, Caine said I do not know, am I my brother's keeper. What has thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. That is what the Lord said. The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. I am saying now to the Prime Minister that his revelation was in advance and he must stop the political Caine's that you have working within the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Stop them, stop the political Caine's I am not blaming on anybody sitting over there. But I am laying the blame on the people executing things in your name and I am saying, stop the political Caine's who raise their hands to deprive the brothers and sisters of a livelihood. The blood that is a sign in advance. God is speaking to you my friend. I know that you have a saying and it is something which you did long before the word Comrade became fashionable. Anytime you met anybody you said hello 'brother, hello sister.' That is your password. And I am saying to you that your brother and your sister asking for some redress. Together now must have a message. God is saying to you don't forget the sign at your devotion.

I want to say Mr. Speaker, to turn to page 71 of the Standing Orders of this House and to read what we read every day we come inside here. I do not know whether we are serious.

**"Almighty God, who in Thy wisdom and goodness hast appointed the offices of Rulers and Parliaments for the welfare of society and the just government of men; we beseech Thee to behold with thy abundant favour us Thy Servants, whom Thou hast been pleased to call to the performance of important trusts in this land.**

**Let Thy blessing descend upon us here in this House assembled, and grant that we may treat and consider all matter that shall come under our deliberation, in so just and faithful a manner as to promote Thy Honour and Glory and to advance the peace, prosperity and welfare of Saint Vincent an the Grenadines and of those whose interests Thou hast committed to our charge. Amen.**

Mr. Speaker, I mention that because we say that inside here and there is a message in that prayer, there is a message for us and I would say that Mr. Speaker, that there are three of us in here who know what is right from what is wrong. We were together worshipping, we belong to the same church, we sang the same hymns and we sat at the same pew, and I told the Minister of Housing, that I was coming back to him. We prayed together, we rejoiced together, we are the salt of the earth, Mr. Speaker, but if the salt has lost its savour, wherefore shall it be salted. Do you understand what I am saying? It is henceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under the foot of men. Are you listening to what I am saying? I am saying that there is a lesson for us, and when I hear people crying out, some people are going to cry for no reason. But some people have a just cause. I know that political vengeance is not the way to go. Mr. Speaker, I want to see the 1500 jobs within the First Hundred Days of the ULP administration. First year, I want to see them. I want to help Government create jobs. Mr. Speaker, I am saying to you that there are ways and means of extending employment in this country and I have done it successfully during my tenure as Minister. You have to share the cake. You have people who work on the roads, share them, spin them around, rotate them. Give somebody else a chance then bring them back. That is the sort of business you have to do.

Mr. Speaker, use extended hours of employment whereby people can work longer so that more people can be involved. I know it cost money, I know it will take money, but these are ways and means and I am suggesting that those avenues be explored and not people be chop down one time.

Mr. Speaker, in Jamaica at one time, the Government in an attempt to alleviate the high level of unemployment decided that they will hold back in school children rather than let them graduate, hold them back. Remove the pressure from coming on the society to create jobs. Those are ways and avenues that we can do things. You speak of a youth empowerment service, those are the things that you have to bring into play to make sure that our young people could be held back so that people who are actively involve now can get a piece of the cake.

Mr. Speaker, anything that as a Parliamentarian, as a supporter and as a member of the New Democratic Party that I can do to help to ensure that the levels of employment increase in this country, it is incumbent upon me to do that. It is incumbent upon me to do that. The Opposition Mr. Speaker, will be failing in its duty if the Opposition does not pursue and encourage the Government to walk on that part.

Mr. Speaker, the credit will be yours as leader of Government business, as Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has made a start when he said he is attempting to rid the Governments of bottle necks and you know when I spoke here in support of the Merchant Act, I was almost ridicule by the Minister of Health when I spoke about the bottle neck in the Attorney General's Office. And I said, your time will come. I was not being facetious or was not projecting anything. I am talking from experience, I was there and I am very happy that you have identified areas to alleviate some of the pressures that we have suffered over the years in terms of getting projects to come to fruition so that people could get jobs, so that employment could be created, so that the money that is there could be spent, because sitting there does not create job.

So Mr. Speaker, the implementation process to create the jobs, I am one hundred percent behind the efforts of the Government to ensure that those jobs are translated into meaningful jobs for people who walk in the streets of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. So I say again Mr. Speaker in closing, that the Government can count on the Opposition, to support the Government in its efforts to create jobs and I appeal to the Ministers, and I think the onus really falls squarely on the shoulder of the Minister of Works and Transportation, because his Ministry is the target Ministry. His Ministry is where a lot of jobs could be created because we know the nature of employment in the Ministry of Works and I believe that if the Minister takes a hand, you have to make sure that the work is spread around.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke to a man from Rose Hall and he told me the overseer told him the same thing. The Government, the Authorities, the Minister, and I am saying that anybody that is worth the salt, who have to carry out their duties must carry it out in a fair manner and don't pass the buck, don't pass it. Now this particular man, he is

going to lose his job that is what he was told and at the end of this month his wife is going to lose her job. Simply, they feel and on the basis of what was said to them that they are going to lose it for political purposes. I say I give the benefit of the doubt to the Ministry and I ask you to investigate and to make sure that those who are now off. Those who are now off will know when they will come back, those who are on the rotatory system. Those who have been dismissed, and I believe unfairly or unjustly, look at it again, reinstate them and do it the correct way. Because we cannot on one hand be crying for the reinstatement of people who are outside of our sphere of interest and those who are within, we ignore that is happening around us.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution calls for the Government to look at this situation. I personally don't have any confidence in some of the organizations, which are included in the resolution. Well I thank you Mr. Speaker, but I wanted to get back a minute from the interruption for the Honourable Minister of Transport. So I hope Mr. Speaker that some attention would be given to some of the matters that we raised today in this debate. Thank you.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Before I recognize the Honourable Minister of Works I want to draw your attention to rule 22 (5), subject paragraph 2 of this Order, no private member business can be considered after 5:00 this afternoon. This matter comes to an end as was earlier alluded to at 5:00.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** Mr. Speaker, I rise here this evening to speak against the motion that is here before this Honourable House. It's a motion that I cannot support anyway whatsoever. I think the motion is..., the Leader of the Opposition was ill advised to bring a motion or such a motion at this time. His presentation this after on this Bill of gasoline misguided. The presentation of the Senator, Senator 'Burns' Bonadie was more in tune of what was happening on the ground than the presentation of the Leader of the Opposition.

As Minister of Works Mr. Speaker, I want to state categorically, that there has been two fundamental changes within the Ministry of Works, Transport and Housing and will say this that after two months in Office, the majority of my time there has been spent there on works and I have had very little time to deal with housing and transport, but those would be coming. The two fundamental changes Mr. Speaker are: that there will be rotation of workers within the Ministry of Works and the second is that we will change the approach of the Ministry with regards the way that the work was directed and carried out within the Ministry.

Under the N.D.P Administration with the Ministry of Communications and Works, the road Supervisors, Junior and Senior were directed to interact directly with

Parliamentary Representatives. So that instead of the Permanent Secretary, who is head of the Department, being the person to whom they should be looking for guidance, they sought guidance and direction from the Parliamentary Representative that is what I called political interference, Mr. Speaker. And I decided from day one that if I was to carry on the job as Minister of Works, that such a policy within the Ministry must change.

What happened under the previous Administration Mr. Speaker, and I think it resulted in a lot of corruption that existed within that Ministry today, there is no doubt in my mind that corruption existed with the former Ministry of Communication and Works and still does exist today. I have seen evidence of it. Persons have been written to, to bring back what is missing. In fact, yesterday I was in the Prime Minister's Office speaking with two officers from the Ministry of Education on the matter of the Sandy Bay School and it was reported to us that on the computerization programme when we got on to discussing that, that furniture that have been ordered and paid for have been delivered short at the schools.

The Prime Minister immediately saw red and called the Commissioner of Police to commence an immediate investigation and he asked the police to carry out the investigation regardless to who is found guilty and that they must be brought before the law courts or taken to the Director of Public Prosecution. But this is the approach we are taking within this Ministry Mr. Speaker. My efforts within that Ministry, my energies within that Ministry Mr. Speaker, are geared towards firing poor people. I heard the Senator 'Burns' Bonadie taking there a while ago. My dear, good friend for many years, I see that he has chosen to go outside while I wish to speak. I know he is gone for a nicotine break but he will be back shortly, I do the same thing sometimes. But I heard him (interjection) yes we are brothers in the shankylah religion, the proper name of it being the Evangelical Church of the West Indies. I will correct the Prime Minister on that, but it was popular called the Shankylah religion and the last time I heard him speak from the bible, it is a far cry from what I heard from his presentation today on the bible. He was very convincing in those days; today obviously he has lost the stool as regards to the use of the word of God. But it is very pleasant to see that Senator Bonadie is returning to the bible. His good friends and friends of I think the speaker as well, Mr. Speaker, if you will permit me to include you in this discussion, I have been behind him for a long time to return to the church and I know that it seems from his presentation this afternoon that we are getting there.

What I was saying there, Mr. Speaker is that, it is not the intention of this Minister of Works or of this Administration to go out and fire people whole scale as the Leader of the Opposition is presenting. He said that there are some 200 persons who have already lost jobs and if you add the road gangs that have not been brought out, that

that figure will take the total number to some 587. Well if he is excluding 200 from 587 it means that 387 persons have been dismissed from road gangs not going out on the road. There is an average of about 7 persons per road gang Mr. Speaker, and if you divide that my mathematics, which I left many years ago, tells me it's about 55 gangs that have been dismissed. I think Senator Bonadie understands the principle and the policy of the Unity Labour Party Administration more so than he understands the policy or more so than the Leader of the Opposition understands the policy of the Unity Labour Party and would say further that maybe he understands the Unity Labour Party's Policy more than he understands the N.D.P's Policy. But the policy is one of rotation and I want that to be understood very clearly. That for seventeen years, there have been persons out there who have not received one day's work on the roads in this country, who in 1985, were road gang drivers and were removed as road gang drivers, not rotated. They were removed in about 1985, because it took the NDP 5,6,7 months to start firing people and victimizing people. I was one of those victims Mr. Speaker. I can speak from experience, but I would not waster time on my case. I have done fairly well over the years to maintain my status in this country and the people have rewarded us and rewarded me personally for the hard work that we have done in this country. But the NDP in 1984 came on stream and took away the jobs of hundreds of poor people in this country and never rotated them for one single workweek in the whole of seventeen years. I wish Jenny, is Jenny here today? I wish Jenny was here, Comrade Vincent, she is not here today. This is a lady who I will think is going into her late seventies and in 1985 when she was removed as a road gang driver, she would have been fifty something. Middle aged, I consider fifty something to be middle aged because I am approaching 50 this month. But Mr. Speaker, our policy is totally different to that of the NDP Policy, we are on a rotation policy, they were on a dismissal policy, because they were there for seventeen years and they did not rotate any of those workers. Sitting in the gallery Mr. Speaker, another perfect example, Edgar Cruickshank and I trust that he will not have to make any noise in the gallery so that you would have to asked him to leave, but Edgar Cruickshank suffered under the hands of the NDP for almost seventeen years. So much so that Edgar Cruickshank was given a job by the Town Board up at Laynes Veranda and a former Minister of Communications and Works met Edgar Cruickshank working there and fired him on the spot. That is how the NDP operated in this country Mr. Speaker. That was political victimization.

**HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE:** And he has his family.

**HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS:** We heard sad stories of Eli Thomas, but I am saying to the Leader of the Opposition, he should be ashamed to come into the Parliament today to speak about somebody like Eli Thomas slinging on two crutches that has for the past seventeen years, been kept as a road worker. The hardest job in

this country you putting on a man who is only on two crutches, can only sling between two crutches. He should be ashamed of himself to come in this Parliament to speak about it. The State should be taking care of such persons and not put them out to cutlass the sides of the road or dig potholes out; he should be ashamed of it. He calls the names of one Elena Fitzpatrick; he couldn't even remember the names, because as the Prime Minister always said, the Leader of the Opposition enjoyed a very soft, youthful life up into his middle age and the only time he really started to understand what people are like, is when he entered Politics.

I was very pleased today to hear him say that he understands the way poor people live, but I am putting it to the Leader of the Opposition that he only understood that after he entered the field of Politics which the Prime Minister has been in for the last 32 years and for which the Prime Minister and many of us on this side of the House have been understanding for 17 years, 18 years, 20 years and beyond, Vincent Beache has been there much longer than all of us. But we understand the plight of poor people and it is not our intention to hurt poor people.

What has happened also under the NDP Mr. Speaker, and again I really thought, that's why I said that the Leader of the Opposition was ill advised to bring this motion in the House today, because I know he is going to get plenty blows on it. There are persons who supported the NDP Government. They were hired as NDP supporters and I am speaking specifically now within the Ministry of Works are related to members of the NDP, Cabinet Members and have abused and misused poor people money in this country, taxpayer's money in this country, they have not been fired. If we wanted to politically victimize persons, those will be the first we will go at. But you give them a chance. You create the hardship, I am a smoker when I can't get my cigarette I become desperate my nicotine level falls and I have to go outside and take a cigarette to build back up my nicotine level. The same thing I am doing with them within the Ministry of Works Mr. Speaker, I am taking away their nicotine, so that when they can't get their nicotine, the galvanize, the lumber, and the cement I call them nicotine and the blocks and the Rabacca sand and the aggregate to give out in South Leeward, they will become desperate and we will not have to fire them, we will have sufficient to send them to the Director of Public Prosecution.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say this, that the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing and as I said I have been concentrating mainly on Works. When I took control of that Ministry Mr. Speaker and up until now, it had a bad name in this country and I want to give this blessed House the assurance, this Honourable House. I am very pleased and gratified that the people of this country saw it wise to elect the Unity Labour Party Government and I am doubly pleased that the Members of this Administration and the Members of our Party has placed sufficient confidence in me to make me a Senator

and also to give me a Ministry, particularly, that of the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing. I want to give this Honourable House the assurance that I will do everything within the powers that have been placed within me to clean up the act of the Ministry of Transport, Works and Housing. I want to change the image that it is a den of thieves. I want to change the image that it is the worse run Ministry in this country. I know that it has always gotten a lot of licks under the previous Administration and I don't intend for that to happen.

In the process Mr. Speaker, heads will roll, but I want to give those heads sufficient chance to prove that they can do the work for the people of this country. But I know Mr. Speaker that they cannot do it, because under the NDP Administration because of the high level of corruption and the good Prime Minister read out the letter from the British High Commissioner about the level of corruption that existed under the NDP Administration. Corruption has permeated the entire Ministry and I will say without any apologies Mr. Speaker that I think it has permeated the entire Public Service and it is going to take a lot of strength from this Unity Labour Party Administration to return this country to normalcy and to wipe out corruption. I do not want the Leader of the Opposition when the head starts to roll, because heads will roll, I am saying it now and those within the Ministry that I have written through the Permanent Secretary I am doing it all the Civil Service Mr. Speaker, all the Civil Service way. No Ministerial directives, the Permanent Secretary is the head of the Department, let all the correspondence go through the Permanent Secretary. You can't blame me. We will write them, we will point out where we think they have gone wrong, give us your explanation and if it is not satisfactory, you must go home you cannot continue to thief Government material. And we have made it plain Mr. Speaker, in our days on the ground on the campaign trail in the fields and the sides of the road that there will be an investigation into the wrong doings of the NDP Administration. And where the chips fall they will stay and whoever has to be taken before the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Professionals will take them there not the politicians. You heard the Prime Minister say that 2 Scotland Yard fellows come down here this morning to talk to him, that is what they come for, that is what they come for.

So Mr. Speaker, this motion that is before us has no grounds. It is not something that is to be brought at this time to this Honourable House Mr. Speaker, totally misdirected. The Leader of the Opposition is totally misled and I am very pleased that finally the Organisation in Defense of Democracy has gotten some recognition from the Leader of the Opposition, imagine that. It took an event of the 28<sup>th</sup> of March on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April in the year 2000 I will never forget that day. The 19<sup>th</sup> of April on the year 2000 right outside this Parliament I was up here. We were down there with our placards and I came up and I heard the Leader of the Opposition debating up here on the Bills that he wanted to pass before Parliament and I remember some of the statements that he

made about the organizations that were downstairs, both in Parliament and on the political platform and I would have hoped that Fitz Jones would have been in Saint Vincent today. He is? And I trust that brother Fitz Jones is listening on the radio, since he is in Saint Vincent to see that a motion brought before the House of Parliament, the first motion by the NDP recognized that the ODD is in a very effective body and that it is in defense of the democratic rights of all those who suffer political victimization. So when we called on ODD and when the ODD was formed on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April shortly thereafter in the year 2000 we did not make a mistake.

Mr. Speaker, we have just about time and I will definitely not be in support of this motion that is before this House. Thank you very much.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** I have spoken with the Leader of the Opposition in relation to these four supplementary Appropriation Bills. They relate to Supplementary Appropriation for a number of years prior to this new Administration but we still have to have them dealt with. As you will notice only on 2 of the Bills that there are the explanations, which are required by law, and I don't know, we can proceed in one of 2 ways. We can either postpone all four of them or if we could agree that we have the first reading on all four and then for the second reading that the requisite explanations will come, that's the only way.

But what I will think Mr. Speaker; probably it may well be better if we were to wait until we get all the explanations. It's no big thing and so that we can defer those for the next sitting of the House, 1,2,3,4. If I may just say something Mr. Speaker with your permission, we didn't address the question but I don't want the motion Mr. Leader of the Opposition brought here to go the way of which all opposition motions will go that you just have a debate on them part of the time, part way as used to happen in the previous Administration. I am hopeful that between the Leader of the Opposition, the Speaker and myself that the three of us can work out some Parliamentary time for the completion of the debate. We can allocate a certain number of hours, if it is another 2 hours or whatever it is on another day, I know we don't have to do that under the rules, because it is here at the moment. Every other business crowds it out and then we simply moved in the motion for the adjournment and then it never gets the light of day, which is what use to happen under Sir James's Leadership in the House and also the current Leader of the Opposition, but I want to have things done differently. And I want the public to see we are doing things differently and in a thoroughly Democratic fashion. So I want to give the undertaking that I am prepared Mr. Speaker as Leader of the House to discuss with the Leader of the Opposition and you Mr. Speaker at an appropriate time, whether it's the next sitting of the House or the one following for the allocation of a particular time in which case the Honourable Senator Francis would continue the debate, because he has only

have 18 minutes of his time so that it will go on like that. So I just want to make that point Mr. Speaker to assure the Leader of the Opposition that it is not business as usual that we are prepared to be very open and transparent, together now, (interruption) the 4 of them, we defer the 4 Supplementary Appropriation Bills until the Staff provides the explanation.

Mr. Speaker, we have the first reading of the Securities Bill on the last occasion. The Bill has been photocopied and sent, I have given instructions that it will be photocopied and I have told that it has been done. It is a big Bill and has been sent to a number of interested stakeholders in the community to have a discussion among them. And I think we should give a certain amount of time for that discussion so that they can get to us and make suggestions so we come back for the second reading. But I gave the undertaking to the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank Governor that by the end of July, I am hoping that we can have it concluded though we are the only OECS country I understand which has been proceeding so far. So I think I will like to explain that to the House so if we can also defer that for the further discussion in the community.

## **THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (AMENDMENT) (No.2) BILL 2001.**

**HONOURABLE VINCENT BEACHE:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move the first introduction and first reading of a Bill to amend the Merchant Shipping Act Cap. 364.

**HONOURABLE LOUIS STRAKER:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Members the question is that the Bill for an Act to amend the **Merchant Shipping Act No. 2, 2001** be read a first time.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HONOURABLE VINCENT BEACHE:** Mr. Speaker, under section 48(1) of the Rules of the House I beg to move that this Bill be taken to all its stages. It's normal Mr. Speaker before you put this to state the objects and reasons for this Bill although it is not mandatory, but for the elucidation of members and the public the objects and reasons of the Bill seeks to amend the Merchant Shipping Act (Cap. 364) in order to ensure compliance with the Standards of Training, Certification and watchkeeping for Seafarers Convention 1978, as amended in 1995.

In so doing a number of sections have been repealed in their entirety either because they are obsolete or they are now provisions that properly belong in regulations. Some new sections have been added to bring the Act in line with the convention.

**HONOURABLE LOUIS STRAKER:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable members the question is that an act to amend the Merchant Shipping Act No. 2, 2001 be taken through all its stages.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HONOURABLE VINCENT BEACHE:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

**HONOURABLE LOUIS STRAKER:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, the questions is that the Bill in question of the Merchant Shipping Act be read a second time.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** There end the debate on the Bill.

**HONOURABLE VINCENT BEACHE:** Mr. Speaker, at the last sitting of the House, we had to do to amend the parent Act that is Cap. 364. We had to do this with some urgency because there is a time line that we have to get through in order that we should not be black listed. If we are black listed that means that we cannot register or other shipping companies would not seek to register ships under our flag and that can create not only an imbalance, but a loss a substantial loss in revenue. We did the first part Mr. Speaker and we have also done the regulations, the regulations are not here today. This amendment although it seems large, deals mainly with Bareboat Charter. The parent Act was amended I think in 1995 or 1991 and later on in 1995. But it is found that there were some errors or that the amendments did not go far enough to satisfy the requirements dealing with Bareboat charter. There are other areas of amendment, for instance, in the parent Act we deal with NRT, which I think is Net Register Tonnage. In this Act we are not using NRT, we are using NT, which is Net Tonnage and in the interpretation in this Bill, NT would become part of that section. There are some other areas where maybe it was not clear in the interpretation, GT for instance means Gross Tonnage, so that any new comer who is not really accustomed to shipping when they see GT, unless there is some explanation to this might not understand what it means and also there is also an interpretation to state that High

Court, wherever it appears in the Act, means the High Court of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

We have marine casualty, there is an explanation, an interpretation for that as well and person, these are new inclusions which would mean persons in this case includes but is not limited to an individual, collection of individuals, company, corporation, trust or similar entity. They do not want that if there is a matter that goes to the court that the argument can be raised that you stage a person and person maybe, would be in the singular in that case so this is making it quite clear.

Also, what is very important Mr. Speaker as well, is that in the old Act, a ship up to 40 years of age could have been registered. It is felt now that ships at that age may be a derelict more or less, that they are not sea worthy enough and that you should not register a ship more than 18 years old so there is a limitation here, whereas you could have had, what they call drunks, being registered under our flag when this is past if it is past, then it's going to limit registration of ships 18 years and under and not 18 years. I am not quite sure, well I believe if the ship is registered, if it registered 17 years it can go on to operate maybe up to 40 years, but the question here is that if somebody come to register a ship under our flag and that ship is over 18 years of age, then the requirements are it would not be legal to register that ship.

There are some other cosmetic changes and so on Mr. Speaker, but we are bringing this, we don't like as I say to do this, we like to give time that the public and Opposition and other members of Parliament should have enough time to look and evaluate the changes, the amendments of the legislation and so on, but because of the time constraint that we are under, it is necessary that we put this Bill through all its stages and I am hoping that it will have an easy passage, because I am sure that the members of the Opposition understand fully the implications and that I am hoping that they will give this full support.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Our debate, Honourable member for the Northern Grenadines.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY:** Mr. Speaker, this matter has received a fairly fulsome debate that is, not this specific amendments, but the amendments that were introduced back in May 3<sup>rd</sup> which relate to the same Act and the members on this side rose and supported the amendments and cooperated with the Government in pushing the matter through as quickly as possible, because the point was made that this is a very important piece of legislation because it has implications for the entire fleet that is registered under this Act and under our flag. So therefore, we are in agreement with the Government in ensuring that this Bill goes through as quickly as

possible because we recognise that it's in the national interest to do so and it should be remembered as well that the previous N.D.P administration had been working on similar efforts to push this matter forward.

Mr. Speaker it is a highly technical Bill, I have had an opportunity to skim through it but as the Minister of National Security mentioned, it deals primarily with issues relating to Bareboat and some changes in the definitions which are in the Act that are intended to bring the matter into accordance with the changing regular touring environment in the international community. So essentially, if we want to play in this game we have to adapt to the rules and we recognise that this is what this Bill is intended to do and therefore, we are prepared to support this legislation.

Naturally with more time and giving that we have an audience listening, it would be preferable to go through the Bill and explain to them what's happening, what it intended to do and how it intends to achieve that. But giving the urgency of the moment and the recognition that if we do not act as a Parliament in an expeditious manner, that the fleet could be jeopardised in these circumstances. The IMO apparently has a white list which was published back in November and another one is to be published in May of this year and then another one in February next year. That list includes all countries which are in compliance with the international regular tourist scheme and we are not on that list currently, so it is important that we act to ensure that we are on the white list of the IMO, so in those circumstances Mr. Speaker, the members on this side and myself, we are happy in the national interest to support this legislation.

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I would first of all like to thank the Opposition for supporting amendment No.2 to the Merchant Shipping Act. As Minister responsible for Legal Affairs, I would like to commend very much the Officer of the Attorney General in bringing this second amendment within a month to put our house in order so to speak to avoid certain adverse repercussions to our Merchant Shipping Regime from which we earn at 4 million dollars annually. I know there are sometimes there are some confusion in the public when it is said that I am Minister of Legal Affairs and I speak about the Attorney General. The Attorney General being a public officer cannot hold a Ministerial Portfolio and you are not required actually to be a lawyer to be Minister of Legal Affairs because the job as Minister of Legal Affairs is really one of ensuring that the staff is in order, that all the administrative and physical arrangements are in place, but the actual Law itself, is a matter addressed by the Attorney General. Indeed, in my own capacity as Prime Minister, I do not and I cannot advise myself on the Law. Indeed, from the moment I took Office I ceased to function as a lawyer and in my own thinking I try not to function as a lawyer in the narrow legal sense. Of course, the

methodology and the knowledge, you cannot take it out of your head, but any subject, which comes to me as legal matter, I seek the advice of the Attorney General, which is the right and proper thing to do. I think I am duty bound to correct my friend from the Northern Grenadines where he said that the previous NDP Administration had this matter in train or words to that effect, that really is not so.

And I do not think you should cover for the real slappy Legal Department, Ministry of Legal Affairs, Attorney General's Office which the last N.D.P Administration and the one immediately before that. On the last occasion I think that Senator Bonadie did not try to cover for them and I think that is really the correct approach. You must not make people who did not do their work properly try to get credit for things they did not do, or the fact of the matter is this, is that for years, certainly since the amendment to the Treaty, the 1978 Convention, the standards of training, certification and watching keeping for Sea Farers, when that has amended in 1995, it was known that our own Merchant Shipping Act had to be amended in order to have it in compliance with the amended Convention, and what happened was really a sad display of a lack of common sense by the last Administration in respect of this matter.

They took the view that they did not have to amend the law and that the Regulations which were to be made that they could simply ignore what they want in the Regulations which was sent out by the IMO (the International Maritime Organisation) out of London and in that effect is that they did not amend the law the actual legislation, but passed in Cabinet the Regulation, a set of Regulations which were not in order. So what this Government has had to do, what the N.D.P Administration did not do in six years, when we got into office we had to proceed to do it in less than eight weeks. And how did we do this? And it is important for us to be reminded. I got into office on Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> sorry, Friday the 30<sup>th</sup> of March, but just really to see the staff, get acquainted. I properly got into office on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April, I was in contact with our Maritime Commissioner in Monaco on this subject.

Of course, Sir James when had called me, congratulated me on our election victory, as very exercise about this subject among others because he thought that the Ministry of Legal Affairs, the Attorney General's Office then, was just playing the fool wasting time and I think the new member from the Grenadines should accept that view which is now pretty much settled that they were playing the fool. The N.D.P Administration in respect to these matters. And the Maritime Commissioner came to Saint Vincent, my instructions within one week and she brought her lawyer and the AG's Department, our very hard working AG and her staff they set about with the Maritime Commissioner and the Maritime Commissioner's lawyer in conjunction with a Vincentian Mrs. Euchrista St. Hilaire Bruce-Lyle, who works at the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, because the AG contacted her and I contacted the Governor of the Central Bank who

is a university class mate of mine and I told him of our difficulty and will like to have Mrs. St. Hilaire Bruce-Lyle assist us somewhat with this exercise and she assisted us from over there in St. Kitts because the new technology permits you so to do. And that is how we got the first amendment on May the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Having gotten the first amendment, it allowed us then to prepare the work on the Regulations, which is a very thick book. And in order to expedite matters, the Regulations were circulated to the Cabinet members and then we did a round robin to see what comments Cabinet members had and then to have the matter adopted, but we have clearly to get those Regulations, the Regulations of the earlier period, they have to be revoked, in fact, they have been revoked. So that those Regulations have been dealt with on the basis of the first set of amendments from May the 3<sup>rd</sup> and now we come here today on the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting the May 31<sup>st</sup> deadline. Well now that is not the work of a set of green horns. That is the work of an organised and accomplished team and I think the country should realise this and that I have been informed by the staff in the Attorney General's Chambers that an Email went off today to our Maritime Commissioner who will inform the International Maritime Organisation in London that, to remind her

(a) that we had passed the first amendment on May the 3<sup>rd</sup> here in Parliament, that we have approve the Regulations and that today in Parliament we were proceeding to have this second amendment passed to put everything in order so that we will meet May the 31<sup>st</sup> deadline and this exercise which we are doing is saving us at least 4 million dollars which is a lot of jobs for poor people. And I think that has to be emphasized. This measure as simple as you see it is a pro poor measure. It's measure in the interest of the poor and the working people of the nation. And I think, No..., so that we have to understand what has happened and we have to commend the Attorney General and her staff. But clearly, the Attorney General and her staff, hard working as they are could not have been achieving what they have been achieving if we did not have a properly device plan with reporting periods and proper monitoring, this is how you run Government. It is not a mauby shop and I think the people in the country are seeing the result of the discipline and we are setting the standards as you may notice Mr. Speaker anybody who comes down by the Prime Minister's Office by 7:00, 7:30 I am there.

Yesterday, I left down there after 11:00 p.m. when I leave here today I have to go back to the Office. And all of us we have to work hard because we have four years in which to do 15 years work. This is what we have been achieving. I want to show you the significance of all this in even wider terms. I have already indicated to the Attorney General and her staff that this exercise now being complete, they have to turn their attention which they have been doing somewhat already with the Ministry of Fisheries, with the Fisheries Act and to put matters in shape to satisfy ICCAT, (the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna) because both things

are connected. When we were in Taiwan the investors whom we spoke to, one of them said look, I want to come and invest in your country. He said, I want to set up a fish farm, I want to come and look at the fish farm, not fresh water, fish farming out there in the sea and he said I also want if everything goes well, we will like to set up a fish processing plant here in Saint Vincent. He said, but I need to be satisfied that you all are serious people. So I said, what you mean? And he drew attention to the Merchant Shipping Act and the problems of the Fisheries Act. Because he has 45 ocean going fishing vessels which fish in the Atlantic which are registered here and they are currently building another twenty and I made the pitch for the registration to be twenty here because is dollars for us. He and his partner, this company, last year they had gross revenues of US\$6 million, world wide operation in fishing. Those are the sort of persons you are interfacing with and they need you to be serious. And I said to them, when I outlined to him what we have done in the short period of time, the gentleman was amazed and when I told him what we are going to do in the month of June to meet the June deadline and we are on target, he said, well I will have to come in June which is next month he is coming here. He has promised me that he is coming, he said because it is clear that he is dealing with serious people.

Now, not only did he raise that, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taiwan raised the issue with me and it is upon satisfying them that we are proceeding properly that they know that we are a serious Government, because they are not going to give us the kind of money that they have been giving us, new monies and the retrieving of certain old monies and the change in the use of old monies certain old monies if they did not have a certain confidence in your capacity to do work and in your seriousness and the direction in which you have been going. So these things are of great importance. So it is not a matter only of this, it may sound esoteric but it connects with real flesh and blood people and it also has implications for international relations as I have just outlined, with Taiwan and it has implications too for possible investment by a serious investor in the fishing business in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

We are making certain changes in the Legal Department, in Legal Affairs. There are four important offices in that Ministry. One is the Attorney General. Well we know already that we have an Attorney General who is serious. When I came back from a meeting this week, she called me at my office at 9:00 O'clock in the night. So I said where you are calling from, said she is at her office completing these matters and this is a young married woman with children. Well you are a trade unionist for her, she deserves a bonus I have no doubt she deserves a bonus, so that is the first office. The second office is that of Solicitor General. The Solicitor General, the current one Mr. Donald Browne, he would be demitting office at the end of June. We are having a replacement. Somebody who practices in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, but who is not a Vincentian National, a woman whom I have been advised by the Attorney

General, has agreed to take the job. I have had to speak to her, the Attorney General has had to persuade her and she is really doing this, this is a tremendous contribution and sacrifice she is making to the office, because she has a very good private practice.

Then there is the legal drafts person Ms. Brown is demitting office, we have someone a Vincentian who is overseas who has been working in the Central Bank, she has agreed to come and she will be here from the 1<sup>st</sup> of August. And you know we have not had a Director of Public Prosecutions, there has been no Director of Public Prosecutions we have had the entirely unacceptable system where a lawyer in St. Kitts, Dr. Browne, who would be the Director of Public Prosecutions and he makes one or two client visits here. Completely unacceptably he is not here, he has his private practice in St. Kitts, but that is the sort of a make shift arrangement, that is the kind of a mauby shop arrangement which existed for a serious office. We will be getting from the 1<sup>st</sup> of August a new Director of Public Prosecutions. The Attorney General and I have been speaking on the subject and I have been in discussion with the Chief Justice because the Judicial and Legal Services Commission has to make the appointment and I am in touch with the Chief Justice not in my capacity as Prime Minister, but as Minister of Legal Affairs on that issue. So by August we would be having those posts, all those important posts filled with very bright, talented people and then we are trying to see how can beef up the Legal Department with other appropriate personnel.

We need facilities, for instance, the information technology apparatus in relation to the new court rules they will be in place early in June. We hardly have space to put the server. It's a it's a..., what we have been handed you know, it's not a good hand you know, we have been handed a bad hand, but ah ha to hold it tight in order to make sure that you know, that everybody don't know that is such a bad hand so that a could play a better hand. To use the language of the poker which some other persons on the other side know a lot more than about me. Why are you responding to me Senator Bonadie? Oh! yo throw in the bad hand? All right, all right.

The amount of work which we have to do in the Ministry of Legal Affairs we need additional staff, stenographers it's a real problem. The legislative agenda, which we have even with these persons, we are going to be under strain and that is why I have been in touch with a Judge, a retired Judge on the question of working out a consultancy arrangement. And then I have made representation to the OECS for them to strengthen their Legal Department for us to see if we can feed into that, because it is a tremendous legislative agenda that the Unity Labour Party has. You see how often we have to be meeting in Parliament.

So that Mr. Speaker, all the matters that I have raised, touch and concern this particular Bill and the way it has come to us. The country should feel very proud of

the Attorney General and her Department for the tremendous work they have done in such a short period of time and working under very difficult circumstances. I really want to applaud them and I am very grateful again for the kind cooperation by the Opposition on these matters. I have asked the Office of the Attorney General to transmit to the Leader of the Opposition, a copy of the Rules, even though the Rules have not yet been printed in the Gazette. In the spirit of 'together now' and the cooperation, to give you an opportunity to see this document I was never given such courtesies, but I think very highly of the Office of the Leader of the Opposition, particularly in this new dispensation, in fact, in I think higher of the Office now in this new dispensation actually. Well when you are Prime Minister with 12 – 3, you can think high of the Office of the Leader of the Opposition. For the Minister of National Security and Merchant Shipping I want to say that he has also played a very important role in helping to guide this particular Bill although he has not yet had the space, the Office space which is required for a Ministry of any type and more particularly of his type. Parenthetically I want to say, I don't know, the people who design that Office building over there where we sit in, they were looking for style more than substance and I am not sure about the style. There is so much wasted space over there, but it's there already and we have to make, we can't knock it down, we will just have to use what we have. We are hoping that the Opposition will find it possible on these matters to provide a level of support which they have provided here and I think that that will be transmitted on the ground in the manner in which Senator Bonadie spoke so that the persons who supported to Opposition in the last election would see the merit and the benefit in supporting the Unity Labour Party in the sort of measures like these which we have been presenting to the House. Thank you.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any further debate?

**HONOURABLE MR. SELMON WALTERS:** Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to give support to the amendment to the Merchant Shipping Act before this Honourable House. Perhaps it will be good to view this amendment in a globalised world in which we now live. Where what happens on the international scene affects what happens in these small third world countries where globalised organisations like the WTO can pass regulations to affect what we do in our Parliament and in the political agenda in these small countries. With respect to the Merchant Shipping Act Mr. Speaker, we were told earlier on by the Honourable Prime Minister, that our country will register ships that ply international waters and these registrations or to allow them to carry our flags we earn roughly about EC\$4 million annually.

But Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility, because these ships flying our flags, it means that we are responsible for what these ships do on international waters. Our problem though, is that we find it difficult to monitor what these ships do so many

miles from our shores. We therefore have to rely on passing regulations to ensure that these ships comply with the International Treaties and the International Regulations.

Mr. Speaker, Regulations from the IMO (the International Maritime Organisations) specify the operations of all of these ships that ply international waters; for example, all of these ships are supposed to be properly equipped with high powered radios to ensure that they can communicate effectively with land when they are so many miles out on water. And how do we know that the ships for which we have responsibility and which carry our flags are so equipped. They are supposed to be equipped also with life safety equipment. They are supposed to have sufficient space to accommodate quite comfortably, the crew on board. They are supposed to have on board fire fighting equipment, because so far out on sea should fire break out on these ships what mechanisms are there on board the ship to save lives. And so these are the Regulations that the IMO will stipulate that ships flying our flags are supposed to comply with.

Mr. Speaker, some of these ships that carry our flags have never come to shores. Many of them we have never seen. We do not know the composition of the crew on board. Of course, many of them are registered with our Agents out in Monaco, but nonetheless, we are responsible for them. And therefore, we are supposed to amend our Regulations to make sure that these ships comply with the Regulations of the International Maritime Organisations.

Mr. Speaker, should we fail to monitor the activities of these ships and if these ships fail to comply with International Regulations, then we are told that the country, our country is black listed and these ships are debarred from trading in whatever commodity they are operating and when they go out of business, it means that this approximate \$4 million that come our treasury would no longer come and put us in these embarrassing situations. And therefore we comply with these International Organisations by amending our Regulations to suit. And there is where we see globalisation affecting us sometimes in negative ways and.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister spoke about the ICCAT Regulations in terms of many of our ships that drag nets through the international waters. Under the ICCAT Regulations, many of the ships that fish in international waters for Atlantic big eye tuna to sell on the European market, fly our flags. And perhaps the main nations that operate with Atlantic tuna are primarily Taiwanese. And they have in excess of 216 ships that trade in Atlantic tuna. The trouble is Mr. Speaker, if these ships do not comply with the ICCAT Regulations, our country is black listed because you would not hear that these are Taiwanese vessels, you would hear that these are Vincentian

vessels, they fly our flags and we are responsible for them, we are responsible for their behaviour. And if we have ships flying our flags that trade in drugs, as we had some years ago, the famous Lucky Star, then these ships bring negative repercussions to our country. So we have to be able Mr. Speaker, to pass Regulations, to monitor and regulate the activities of these ships. But the difficulty comes where many of these ships fly our flags and we do not know about them, burger ships. And here is where Mr. Speaker the Regulations come into play where we safeguard ourselves by complying with these Regulations.

And so Mr. Speaker, we earn roughly about \$4 million from the selling of the flags, quote and quote. But I will suggest Mr. Speaker that the time maybe has come when we need to perhaps implement an annual licensing for all of these ships that carry our flags. Because, millions, billions of dollars in business turn over by these ships and what we get is just an annual sometimes an initial fee for the registration where they carry our flags. Perhaps the time has come when we need to collect some more revenue from these ships by instituting an annual licence. The time has come Mr. Speaker. I remembered I had discussions along these lines with my Permanent Secretary, Mr. Greene and Fisheries Officer, Mr. Murphy, who are now in Brussels to see if they can stave off an ICCAT black listing on ships that fly the Vincentian flag.

And so Mr. Speaker, we may slight these Regulations, we may slight these amendments, but a lot of money is at stake for the development of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and for the future of our children, if perhaps we go about this in the correct way. And I am happy that the Opposition is giving this good support, because we need to do that if we are going to take this country forward in the spirit of cooperation.

Mr. Speaker, with regards to ICCAT, a certain quota is given to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in terms of the taking from the Atlantic of the big eye tuna. Let us say that there is a quota allocated to us of 10 thousand tons, we have no way of knowing that these ships stick to these quota. If they do not stick to the quota, then Saint Vincent and the Grenadines gets bad name, we are black listed, and so all we can do Mr. Speaker, is to pass these Regulations to try to ensure that these ships and these massive bizarre companies comply with the Regulations. And so Mr. Speaker, I would give my support to the amendment and urge the House to pass the amendment so that together we can go forward as we diversify the economy to ensure that monies can be had from the ships that fly our flags and that we can ensure that our country does progress, does prosper as we do this business of good Governance for the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and for our future. So Mr. Speaker, I wish that the Bill will get an easy passage and the amendment would be accepted.

**HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER:** Any further debate on the Bill?

**HONOURABLE VINCENT BEACHE:** Mr. Speaker, I think all that needed to be said has been said, to thank the Opposition for the support, they like us understand the importance of getting these amendments through. So I move Mr. Speaker that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House to consider the Bill clause by clause.

*House went into Committee  
House resumed  
Bill reported, read a third time by title and passed.*

**DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES:** Mr. Speaker, again in the Consultation with the Leader of the Opposition earlier today, rather than proceeding with the continued debate on the Constitutional Motion, it is felt that we should adjourn at this point and on the next occasion continue with that debate.

Mr. Speaker we would like to adjourn for Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>. The reason I am suggesting on Tuesday rather than, I know we have been having them on Thursdays, but recently Tuesdays, we want to bring on the 26<sup>th</sup> the High Seas Fishing Legislation. So we want to have a few days between the passage of it on the 26<sup>th</sup> before the end of June so we can try and transmit it to ICCAT at least what we have passed. In the meantime I have to try and contact Barbados and Trinidad or maybe the two of them and South Africa also and ICCAT to let them raise the issue as to how we are proceeding. So that even whilst we are doing the work legislatively, we have to be doing certain external relations work. Unfortunately, that is the hand, which we have been left and I just have to get on with the business. I cannot say I am not playing the hand, I cannot throw it in, I cannot bluff either, and the real world is there I have to play it. So Mr. Speaker, I move the adjournment and suggest the date the 26<sup>th</sup> of June, Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.

**HONOURABLE LOUIS STRAKER:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the motion.

*Question put and agreed to.  
House adjourned accordingly at 6:10 a.m.*