

No. 1

FRIDAY

Second Session

30th November, 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 FIRST MEETING, SECOND 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

30th November, 2001

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

The Honourable House of Assembly met at 9.15 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 Marriaqua

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 Telecommunications, Science
Technology and Industry
Honourable Dr. Jerrol Thompson

Member for North 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 Gerard Shallow

Opposition Senator

Honourable Major St. Claire Leacock

Opposition Senator

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

FRIDAY 30TH NOVEMBER 2001

PRAYERS

APPROPRIATION BILL 2001- CONTINUATION OF DEBATE

The prayers were read by the Honourable Speaker of the House.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I just want to remind Honourable Members that Karib Cable on Channel 45 is carrying us live. Of course as well on various radio stations, about two or so carrying us as well. And of course, to those who are listening to us by radio that you can also view the proceedings here on Channel 45 courtesy Karib Cable. Continuation of the debate.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Today is Friday. It is a day of Sabbath for some of our members and of course there is a substantial community of Seventh Day Adventists to whom the Sabbath is a most important event and we would wish for them not to be excluded from the people's business, and out of respect for our members who are Seventh Day Adventists, and for the Seventh Day Adventists who worship very faithfully on the Sabbath I want to suggest Mr. Speaker, that we finished today around 5:30 p.m. But I think nevertheless given the rules I will have to move the exemption of today's sitting from the Standing Orders, hours of sitting. Accordingly Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the proceedings of today's sitting be exempted from the provisions of Standing Order Hour's of Sitting in accordance with Section 12 (5).

Question put and agreed.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Debate. Honourable Minister of Tourism and you have 1-¼ hours to do your debate.

HONOURABLE RENE BAPTISTE: Much obliged, Mr. Speaker. Honourable Members, Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my support to this budget and in this debate, for the budgetary proposals for 2002. Mr. Speaker, my Ministry is charged in a time of serious crisis in being able to chart a new course forward for this destination, already plagued by several problems when I assumed office on the 2nd of April, 2001. My first charge, Mr. Speaker was to find out how this Ministry was structured and organized. I found the staff willing and qualified and able to corporate but de-motivated. They were unaccustomed to dialogue with the Minister, as a matter of fact; staff members

remarked to me, it is the first time the Minister had lunch with the Staff, in the Ministry when I sought to break bread with the people with whom I work, in a team spirit.

Mr. Speaker, in crafting out a new Ministry by merging two Departments, the Department of Tourism and the Department of Culture, it was necessary in my view and in the view of Cabinet that we have an organizational framework. What do people do? And what are they doing all day? I discovered Mr. Speaker that at the same time I sought information from the sister islands, throughout CARICOM as to how their staff is organized and what is the functions of the staff in their ministries. Needless to say we are short staffed, we do have some institutional incapacity because researched statistic and technology, which is the way things are going in this century; we are in dire need. We tried and struggled to do so through the office of the Tourism planner who is also qualified to undertake such functions, but is at this time overburdened. I need to do what is called an assessment of the tourism assets, in the country and an inventory of those assets.

What surprised me, Mr. Speaker, is that they were not accustomed to someone preparing their own memos and drafting their own correspondence and they discovered that I do like to put things down in writing for the record and I have many records, Mr. Speaker. There are certain records which came to my attention and one of them was a certain in familiarity with how we would structure and organize things in the Ministry, so there had to be the adaptation of a new culture. Of necessity there were some knocking of heads. But I believe in being frank and forthright, upfront first time and not depend on whispers and political favour, which I indicated in my first speech to the staff, that I have no interest in their political allegiances, my interest is in doing the work that the people of West Kingstown elected me to do.

As we start doing our inventory, Mr. Speaker one of the interesting things that we came upon was the overseas tourism offices, very interesting tale. The tale of Toronto; and the tale of Dallas. The tale of two cities. I asked for reports on the functioning of those offices, and what were the result indicators of the establishment of these offices and the level of productivity out of these offices. I received a file with persistent queries and correspondence that indicated that from the Ministerial level there were several requests Mr. Speaker, for information as to progress on matters under perspective care of those offices. The overseas offices did not appear to report to the Ministry of Tourism. They reported elsewhere. What one would find as we determine and we came right in the middle of an assessment that was being done on strategic market planning for St. Vincent and the Grenadines and as if God has a hand, you know, strange some times we do not wait patiently on the Lord. That the assessment of one of those Offices in Dallas said that in future, should the Government find it necessary to establish overseas representation for marketing and other aspects of the development of the tourism sector, that they must establish a system of measurement for the productivity of the offices. Another interesting thing unfolded is the question in

relation to the property in Dallas. There were letters from the Director General of Finance and Planning, requesting copies of the deed, several letters. A photocopy of a warranty deed was send eventually to the DG/FP. On that warranty deed, Mr. Speaker, it states as follows: That this deed is between one party who is the office holder in Dallas, individually and the other party being the Government of St. Vincent and Grenadines and that party acting as trustee for the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

I then sought the guidance from the DG/FP and asked him if it is the practice of the Government to purchase property and how does the Government purchase property; who undertakes the purchase; is the name of the individuals ever appear on the documents of the Government and what were the arrangements? The Minister of National Security is the Encyclopedia Britannia of this ULP administration. [Applause]. And he brought out his notes of the debate in this Honourable House at the time of the purchase of the property, Mr. Speaker, and how much money was paid for the property and how it did come from public funds. So I got just a little concern. Subsequently, upon the closure of the offices, and the review and handing over files to the tourism personnel we discovered the following: 1. A rolodex of the names of just under 100 travel agents. 2. No files. I was not personally present, Mr. Speaker, so I have to rely upon the integrity of the tourism officer who was sent to do these exits interviews, and collection of the Government's property. I see no reason to doubt, I believe the person is very objective and professional.

And as I read further in the report, I then informed the Prime Minister's Office and asked if we can have the regular updating through the Director of Audit Office. It is difficult, Mr. Speaker, therefore for us to gauge just what was functioning out of the office in Dallas. So our decision made at the time in Opposition received factual confirmation that it was correct to close the office in Dallas. The Dallas office holder was asked to vacate the premises and thereupon remembered that-- the officer herself remembered that she owns half of the Government's property for which we have found a payment of only \$10.00 US. Faxes were sent I believe to nearly every member of this Cabinet by the Dallas Office holder, with certain contents which I will not at this time reveal. As I have discovered over my professional life, discretion is the better part of valor. We were then informed by the office holder Mr. Speaker, that she intents to take legal action to assert her rights along side those of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The property is valued over about \$700,000.00 US. So for \$10.00. We have then to engage through the office of the Attorney General's Chambers Legal representation to sort out the property rights.

The preliminary legal opinion is that the office that dealt with the title deed has gone out of business and they are searching now in Dallas to find some records because apparently when they go out of business the records are stored some place, so they have to find those stored records and then the company in Nevada that did the

warranty deed, they have some difficulty in locating that company as well, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker we are looking for poor people's money and therefore we need, I used to be a lawyer, so I am very careful with my language. I am being very careful with my language because I have seen other people burn their hands. Old people say, you see fire do not put your hand in it. And we are waiting now, because it seems as though litigation will have to take place in Texas in respect of that property.

As far as Canada is concerned I have just recently been advised that the office holder there has just handed over the keys. We give people sufficient and adequate notice because we like to do things in a humane and decent fashion, without humiliating anyone. Give you the opportunity following the principles of natural justice to be heard that is far as those two offices go. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, you will find there is no provision for an office in Dallas, all that work is to be transferred to the Miami office. In the light of two events, first the untimely passing of the Consul General designate, Mr. Michael Hamlet a former member of this House, a former Senator. And September 11th. So we will maintain the office in New York and we will double up with representation through the proposed full consulate in Toronto. Until I determine in my own deliberate judgment and in consultation after having delivered my judgment with my Cabinet colleagues, whether or not it is prudent to increase the staff in Toronto.

In London the work is being done in a satisfactory basis but we now have to focus more intently on representation out of Europe, Mr. Speaker. Why are we doing that and having organized all these Departments, we still had to run the Ministry and I was pleased that there was a work plan presented to me as to where we are going from April to December. But there was so much to be done, Mr. Speaker. There was an agreement signed for CPEC and the agreement was a little too open ended for me in relation to the passing on of certain skills in the hospitality industry to process of training as well as dealing with legislation, national tourism authority and the standards tourism legislation. I was a little amazed to find that it was difficult to find occupancy rates. Because I can call Barbados and Trinidad and speak to Dr. Carla Noel and Honourable Noel Lynch and get that information. We seem to have a culture of being afraid of information and analysis and research, but this is a scientific world and we are not going to get the sort of assistance that we assume would be available to us without doing the scientific analysis, the way things were done in the 60's and 70's certainly will find no place now. That is over.

Mr. Speaker, I then turn to the Department of Culture and I visited them, and I would not put my half-breed Doberman, Rottweiler in those places, I would not do that to my dog, I love my dog. There was a space for an air-condition unit, roaches flying around and four human beings sitting around a desk lack luster, de-motivated.

I spoke with the Prime Minister and Minister of Works and says we have to find some quarters because we have new ministries and I would like to have all the staff together,

not here there and everywhere, and so that is the reason Mr. Speaker, that we are moving up to the Cruise ship berth. Because we have to make use of Government property and so we started doing the work, calling in the Port Authority and the fence was put up. I remember the hue and cry about the fence. Well, now we are going to receive a security audit about the Kingstown Ferry berth and fortunately, for us the fence is up. Or we will have to be told by somebody that you are in violation of the IMO regulations to fence off the cruise ship berth. It is amazing; we need to be a little more informed about what is happening in the real world and not in our two by four volcanic island.

As we sought to situate ourselves, I brought in the process of dialogue and consultation with the stakeholders. The hotel association, tour operators, taxi drivers, police; and we sat down and discussed. First let us deal with the cruise tourism, because I received an invitation from the FCCA after visiting in New York on the 4th of April, very interesting question was put to the Director of Tourism when she was about to introduce me to the high level personnel. She was asked is this more of the same? Or is this going to be different. Well, I do not know what she meant about more of the same, except the same when as when I come up here on a Friday morning or a Thursday morning and listened to what was going on in the House. And she was assured certainly not, it would not be more of the same. They then came to St. Vincent and did an assessment; and they let us know, that there had been no working relationship with FCCA for 15 years. That is a serious indictment, because all of the other jurisdictions has had the support, all the other destinations had had the support of the FCCA which is a very powerful lobby.

So we were setting up a cruise ship berth and went to see them when it was a fait accompli while Antigua is putting in a third berth and they have had the value of their expertise and Barbados and St. Thomas, but poor St. Vincent. What was wrong with us why we did not understand that we do not possess all knowledge and have all wisdom and all understanding. I found it a little bit unreal. They then said to us that they were very satisfied with speaking with the police, the Port Authority people, with the arrangements that we are making to have a modern cruise ship berth operate according to the accepted international standards. Mind you I said international, not St. Vincent standards, we are trying to improve that through my good colleague here, because you know St. Vincent standards what is good for you is not good for me, until the ULP came in where you do work on the basis and is rewarded on the basis of merit.

After those discussions we then subsequently said we will meet with them but September 11th happened but I went there still, on September 24th. Because to me life goes on, I am not going to stay in the depths of despair. I am going to move on with the people's business. So I had meeting with Royal Caribbean Cruise lines, and I look at the young faces around the board room, and the Vice President dealing with

structural development said to the younger ones, you will not know but this is the first time in 15 years that we are having a Minister of Government and the Minister of Tourism speak from St. Vincent. [Applause]. When I discussed with them why St. Vincent so low on the list for cruise ship calls, they made it very clear you are not positioned. But I said Aruba is further South, why are they positioned, he said with all due respects, Minister you are not Aruba. What is so special about Aruba? They say well we attempted to come back and we met the city so untidy, they were being gracious, I supposed because I am a woman and they do not want to say it in front of my face. But we will tell you what you need to do to get your cruise tourism off the ground. I said off the ground but we have had cruise tourism all the years. He chuckled, that is not cruise tourism. He said as a matter of fact, St. Vincent is not on our itinerary which you know is made up 12 months ahead of time, and you will not get there until 2003. Fifty-one new ships. I asked despite what happened on September 11th are you still going to have them, he said the ships are almost finished. I then asked what are the other issues that we could amend? How could we bring ourselves within the market place? He says to me, you will have to find the tourists that would want to come to take a cruise to the Caribbean. You are very difficult to sell. St. Vincent is very difficult to sell.

Therefore, he advised me that I would have to go directly to the travel agents. Well, I am no marketing expert, so I hurried up the Prime Minister's Office to release the post of Marketing Manager, and I was very fortunate to get a fresh graduate, Mr. Howie Prince to take the post. I told him I might not be able to run as fast as I used to, even though I outran somebody else. But I will out paste you for energy. I am going to be working until 8 and 9 p.m. at night, I know you have a family, but we have a country to build, otherwise that little boy for you would not have a future. He understood. So we are sitting down and trying to work out a strategic plan, not by ourselves, because we are not wise in ourselves. So we have asked for the hotel and tourism association and I am pleased to say Mr. Speaker, that they have told me, and these are persons who have no reason to lie or to pat me on my back, they have not had a relationship with any Minister of Tourism.

Now they can come anytime, sit down with me, argue with me, and we come to agreement of how things would be done. But, like all associations, they have some difficulties, and some weaknesses, and I must say they are very proactive, willing to work and we now have a working relationship, with that very powerful organization of hotels and persons involved in the tourism sector. I did not request a meeting with the taxi drivers. They requested one with me and sent the two presidents and a senior member of my staff when they came down because they were on the other floor and I am on the bottom floor and I said this morning I have the Taxi drivers Association. They asked me which one. I said the two of them. They said in the same room. I said of course. So they came to me and they outlined a whole litany of woes that they have. And I explained to them what is the new thrust. You have to be professional,

you have to be committed and I have to see that you are taking your profession serious. Because everywhere I go I take note from the time you arrived at the airport what happens. They laid out to me concerns about persons who were never taxi drives suddenly decided that they want to be taxi drivers.

And this drove me to want to go a little bit further with the Tourism standards legislations and so too the Hotel Association and they brought up Mr. Errol Thomas a Vincentian, that lives in Grenada for us to sit down and go through the legislation for tourism standards. And I indicated to them be sure they understand that each of these provisions that they will come into effect, that no one will say that they did not have any dialogue on it before. So long before that bill ever comes to this House, it would have been thoroughly discussed by the stakeholders. It was then drawn to my attention that we have several tour operators. One set and another set, and they all came to see me in due course, sometimes in the same week. And they outlined their concerns. Basically, Mr. Speaker, what I discovered is that most of the people are good, hardworking Vincentians, but they were lacking any type of support at all. It is like nobody ever saw them, heard them, or wanted to know that they existed. Just let this thing run and let see what will happen.

When I subsequently went to a trade fair in Aruba, and I am still dealing with personnel and the framework, one delegate said to me, we won't have had the Minister helping us to put up the booth for St. Vincent, I said why not, he said no, he be busy collecting the pencils and pens from the other stalls. So I am just outlining to you what was the motivation or the practice or the habits. This is people's business. It was new for me in going to the Florida Cruise Association Conference, it is the 8th one and I learnt again a great deal of matters from them. I was pleased and happy that the introductions I sought were given to me with the owners of Carnival Cruise lines and we now have a working relationship. So we have three key working relationships, with Florida Caribbean Cruise, Royal Caribbean and Carnival. In last few weeks, Carnival and Princess Cruise Lines have merged. Two other cruise lines have gone belly up. Thirty-one ships have not left their port in the United States. At the conference a study done by Price Water House disclosed many things that we needed to know, why people go to St. Thomas, Jamaica, Barbados and the Bahamas. What is it the cruise tourists are looking for? How they rate each port. The most important aspect of a cruise tourist, of a cruise passenger vacation is sightseeing. That is the most important aspect. The least important is local food. They really have no appetite for local food. The second most important thing is being able to shop. What we were told is that St. Vincent should not compete with Jamaica for jewellery shopping, it is well established especially among the crew. St. Vincent should not compete with St. Thomas, or Barbados, you are not that destination, you must concentrate on things that are authentic, and cultural heritage based tourism.

Now, that is why for me I have to do it in the scientific way, Mr. Speaker. Now I know what the market is demanding, I will now be able to target my marketing and promotion, and that is dealing with cruise tourism. Now I wanted to find out about the hotels. We have reasonably good hotel properties in St. Vincent but we have problems. We have problems dealing with front office personnel, security at the hotels, because we are accustomed to having the reception close down at 10 o'clock and watchy will come on. But that is not acceptable in the international standards that we are trying to uphold. And you are not judged any longer by what happened in Barbados, but what happens in the world. You see that little dirty word that call globalization and we have this habit of flinging around this thing about a global village, trust me it is true.

We were faced by knowing what we should do in St. Vincent, I attended sourcing to find out what is the sourcing in cruise tourism about. I went to the workshop and it is to source personnel, fruit, vegetables and flowers, from the Caribbean. It would surprise you to know, that Erica made a slash but she was told, our kitchen people would have to taste you pepper sauce and by the way, it is red and our table cloth are white. It is that finicky so do not make any assumptions that things will sell because it is from the Caribbean. That is not true. But, persistence will pay off in the end. They say the flowers, they said yes you can ship us some flowers but you need to be able to do three things. There were four people conducting this workshop and these are the purchasers, these are the people who buy for the cruise ships. And they were vice presidents, not the kitchen cook. You need to be able to supply regularly, same quantity, same or better quality and we were told very frankly that by Costa Cruiser Representative, the Caribbean has been taking itself for granted for too long, and therefore we will now have to sit up and take notice. St. Kitts, however did not take it for granted, and I sat there and heard them awarded St. Kitts another contract to plant 50 more acres in tomatoes. I think we have rich volcanic soil, you do not think we could supply tomatoes too. St. Kitts. So something was going wrong with our linkages. Do you remember that word too? We tossed around all these fancy words, we really do not understand. I am a very practical person. I like to know what is happening on the ground. How it is going to work. And what it means in dollars and cents. As we moved around the sessions. I observed how the hotels operate their beaches. And the beaches in Aruba are man made. The sand hurt your feet a little bit. It is different from the sand here when you are walking around. I observe how the vending is done on the beach and I spoke with the Aruba Tourism Minister, who is a lady, and so I have work to do in cruise tourism. We have a lot of work to do, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things we have to look at is the question of safety and security. So you would have heard about the tourists police unit that I persisted with and made my case against the public servants who the Prime Minister was trying to resist. It will cost us over a million dollars to set up that unit, but we are going to make a start, because we

have to secure our ports and our sites. I saw something at the Botanic Gardens where people are running and holding on to the taxi, the car and they are not tour guides, and so we are going to correct that, Mr. Speaker. We started training for tour guides, the immigration officers and in the middle of it, I got a request from Customs for training for the Custom Officers. And while we are doing that training, Mr. Speaker, have you noticed a change when you land at ET Joshua Airport? It says in big bold writing, 'Welcome to ET Joshua Airport.' [Applause]. And it is clean and it is bright; and it is a little bit more user friendly than it used to be. So we are building up that institutional capacity. Because the tourists of today very sophisticated, they want value for their money and their value start from the time they hit that airport or the cruise terminal. It is about product, choice and value.

Let me tell you now what is happening in the marketing. Leisure travel sales in the US which held up pretty well up to April, it took a sharp decline and that was before September 11th. The Caribbean has the lowest share of the voice in the US market place, competitive destinations are heavily promoted on vision and print. High airfares for the summer months and schedule carriers from US and Canada and heavy discounting by the cruise ship lines to have an over capacity, as far as Europe is concerned, weak economies in the major source markets; non competitive package pricing in the European Markets because the dollar is strong against the Euro and sterling. Reduced airlift from Europe, with the exception of British Airways, and fierce, better-organized and financed competition which has diluted the limited presence of the Caribbean in the market place. Inter-regionally we command about the second highest number of Caribbean tours. But that only accounts for 7% of Caribbean tourism. We have to then make our people's in the region more aware and travel more among ourselves and at the national and regional level, the results studies that in the short term and long term, there is a need to address product diversification, airport facilitation, safety and security, public awareness and education and marketing.

So, Mr. Speaker, you will see that we have in our budget to establish a national parks, rivers and beaches authority. This was a study done several years ago by the OAS and other international bodies and other countries have moved in this direction because we need to streamline our sites, develop them, enhance those that are fairly well developed and put in place relevant management structures. We have to introduce environmental management systems and one of the things that will happen, with the rivers and beaches is that the Litter Act, the CWSA would have to be enforced. We saw what happened in Kingstown last week Sunday, an investigation is going on in the Ministry of Social Development, preliminary results indicate that there was some hard-headedness, I would put it that way, I would not go so far as to say sabotage. I would say, negligence, carelessness, filthiness, and naughtiness. I would not say sabotage, but my political senses at the back of my egg shaped head tells me sabotage. [Applause].

Now, tourism earns over \$200 million. It does not go into the pockets alone of those of us on this side of the House. It goes for those fixing the roads, fixing the drains, cutting the overhead branches and fixing the schools and employing more teachers, for those persons who are indulging in keeping the streets dirty, so that they can do for 'she' you are harming your country, you are harming the tourist industry. You are harming the taxi drivers who will not make a penny to drive around a tourist. That is what you are doing. I am fully aware, Mr. Speaker, that is why we are bifocals of some of the things that find its way into people's imagination and their senses. But they must understand that they are employed to do a job and you know this is a Christian nation and the first thing they will tell you when you are about to fire them, 'have mercy on me,' where is their mercy on their own country? You are employed, do your job. Do not try to undermine the Government, you will lose too. It may not be the Government of your choice but it is the government of the people's choice. [Applause]. And I have made it very clear, because I have spoken to the Town Board Warden and I listed all sorts of reasons that my intelligence could summon up; people are out to sabotage and undermine the structures of government. And that will not be tolerated. I will not tolerate it in the Ministry of Tourism and I will not tolerate our tourism assets being treated with disregard and scant respect, and the Prime Minister made it clear to the CWSA and the Solid Waste Management Unit, he wants to hear the trucks from North to North. And that has happened, and those workers should sit up and pay close attention. It will not be a question of victimization. It would be dismissal for good cause.

I went into the Botanic Gardens and I am ashamed. I have been ashamed for the last three years taking people there. Thirty-five people are working there, but the plants need molding up, and the Christmas trees have a hand out like a policeman at the traffic square. [Interjection]. Well I know they under the tree sleeping because I did not go in any of my regular vehicles, so they could not say look she coming. I went there otherwise. You should see the state and condition of the Botanic Gardens which is the oldest one in the Western Hemisphere. I spoke to Basil Charles of Mustique who is a member of our tourist's board and he and he said to me, he made the same offer to the last government for a gentleman who will do the Gardens for us, do the design and the gentleman, there was no political will. I have political will, Mr. Speaker, and the gentleman is due here on the 1st of December. This is one of his books. Well, respected throughout the world, made Waduwa; Australian by birth, and he is coming here. He was due to go to Belize and do a project on their gardens, but because of the hurricane, he is unable to do so, so he will be here and we will take a look through the Gardens and we will assess, the oldest Botanic Garden in the Western Hemisphere. I have a picture of 1902 of the centre walk in the Botanic Gardens and I am still trying to look at that centre walk and there are some photographs in here, of the Botanic Gardens, old photographs. I showed them to my colleagues yesterday. You should see how beautiful the sweep and the drive looked. So what that 35 people doing, five days a week? Now we are going to work, and we are going to do it with an expert. We

will have people understudying the expert and we are going to do the people's work. There will be no more siestas in the Botanic Gardens. That will be over.

The beaches, we have problems on the beaches. Hoteliers have complained to me, of their visitors being harassed on the beaches. But that is going to be a thing of the past too, because we are going to get some beach rangers. And I have already spoken to Deputy Commissioner, EB John and we are going to have some of the guys who are going to be trained and I spoken to a martial arts expert, and they are going to be dealt with firmly, creatively, those persons who go on the beach to harass the visitors. Port Kingstown, Young Island and Wallilabou, we understand it is like a pirate zone, in Wallilabou, little speed boats, zinging around where people diving, going on board before the Customs could even get there, because Wallilabou is a port of entry. We have inherited some systems that lend itself to lawlessness. Does anybody do anything?

I could tell you about Union Island too, Mr. Speaker. We instituted a Union Island Board of Tourism under Mr. Simmons, a gentleman. Go to Union Island now, Mr. Speaker, when you land you see a difference at the airport, there is a door there to be fixed and I have spoken to the Minister of Works, when you go there now, and you will see the difference there at that airport. We still have work to do. There are benches there; there are signs there. There are planted flowers to beautify the place. They have cleaned up the waterfront at Clifton Harbour. The vendors moved voluntarily. And when I went down there earlier this month to speak with them, the tourism week, Dafton Ollivierre told me it is the first time a Minister of Tourism has visited Union Island. First time, Union Island has always been there. People who have been, what you call them marginalized. I do not understand, there is so much tourism, tour operators in Union Island and the Minister of Tourism has never been there, Mr. Speaker? Cannot be true. But then as I told the Parliamentary Secretary, Senator Snagg, I do not live in Union Island so I depend upon the integrity of the word of the Board of Tourism of Union Island. I learnt that there was one gentleman who deems himself above the law and therefore, steps will be taken to deal with those persons who think that they are above the law. Tourists are afraid of him. He can send out his boys to sell them fuel for any price, water for any price, moorings for any price. This is what? What the thing is? The Western that you look at when you cannot sleep in the night? Clint Eastwood Westerns. Hang em High? Buccaneer Territory, Mr. Speaker. The Tobago Keys, they went over and had their bar set up on Tobago Keys, Mr. Speaker. What is going on in this country? The Prime Minister went over and took a look, instructions were given and some of these matters are now under control. And the police will do their duty. He said he does not want any softie, softie police. They would have to do their duty. When they was reported to me that tourists walking in Union Island, and Clifton and people going up to grab lady's rear. I said that cannot be happening in St. Vincent, are you sure? That is how far the lawlessness went in Union Island. I am still to visit Mayreau. I have been to Bequia twice. And I have sat with the

Bequia Tourism Association which is not a Government appointed body but a private sector organization of persons involved in the industry. And we have gone through a number of matters for garbage, for the state of the harbour, and I was pleased when I read that letter that says, some of these concerns have been longstanding. I get a little worried if eight months is long standing. That there is a youngster that breaks into people's homes and nobody touches him. He is untouchable. I wonder why. All these things were happening in our industry, Mr. Speaker. And the people list their complaints. We have a file at the Ministry with complaints. I am yet to see a Minister addressing those complaints. I have not seen that yet.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to bring some form, some structure and some order, which has started already to the Tourism Industry. Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister the Minister of Finance has made preparation in the budget for support to the hotels in the country and that tax relief of 35% instead of 40% and while that is being done this year, as well this year Mr. Speaker, we would be introducing and I have asked for their views, all the stakeholders for their views on incentives for tourism investment, so we can get of the hotel aids act which cannot serve us now. We are looking for incentives for the development of the Mr. Wynne, Chatumbay, Princess Margaret in Bequia.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen several proposals from all sorts of individuals on Mt. Wynne, none of them would pass muster with a first former of the Girl's High school. So we will leave them there. We are actively pursuing well-known international investors who would give us assistance in respect of these larger hotel investments. The projects in tourism, the Botanic Gardens, La Soufriere, hiking trail, Trinity Falls, the Euromy Village to be establish in North Windward. The petroglyphs in Layou and Buccament to be up dated. Salt Pond, Brighton, Walliabou, Dark View and Balliceau would be looking at for development as well as Black Point.

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to culture. The National Trust has been revitalized under the able chairmanship of Mr. Cicil Ryan and he has already produced an eight-page report of the plan for 2002. I have housed them on the ground floor of the Carnegie Library and already he is sorting out issues relating to increasing the membership and everybody is coming forward with old artifacts. I have in my position, Mr. Speaker, a card the coronation of the King in 1902 send from Paddington in the UK to St. Vincent, all with gold painting on it, and we are hoping to auction that card to raise some funds for the National Trust. The National Trust will also be giving its input with the Garifuna heritage retrieval programme and we are linking hands with the private sector organizations of the Garifuna heritage foundation headed by a Belizean Garifuna Mrs. Zola Ellis Browne. They will be holding a regional symposium next month early on the way forward.

The National Heroes Bill is already prepared and it is in circulation for the comments and views of the public. We hope to pursue making Balliceau a national monument

because of its historic importance as a place of exile and sacrifice of the Garifuna people. In August of this year I attended a film, OECS film proposed film commission in looking at different sites in the OECS for making of movies. Already we have had television features coming in to be made and I just received two days ago a request from a German television station for making a film a part of a documentary in Canouan. We are also pursuing with Sony pictures the making of a full-length feature film in St. Vincent, sometime next year and that is the Ron Howard Company. The famous Ron Howard, Little Beaver and Leave it to Beaver, who is now a big film director.

The National Cultural Foundation will be launched next week. Over the last few months they have been developing their terms of reference and work plan. Carnival 2002 promotions were launched at Labour Day in New York and we have already had some early feeler from Air Jamaica. I wish to announce that a group from Martinique has already booked all the hotel space in the city of Kingstown for Carnival 2002. That group will be visiting us next month for three days. In addition to that they will also be bringing persons to train in Creole drumming and some journalist. They are hoping to be involved in the Carnival band. For the first time, band leaders, ministry to ministry, from St. Kitts to St. Vincent, four Carnival band leaders and designers are now in St. Kitts enjoying the benefits of the new linkages and the Caribbean Civilization. [Applause].

Going to Guadeloupe in January at the request of the Guadeloupe Carnival group would be a representative from Mirage and Adonis Hector requested by name. Also, the Youlou Art Foundation has been launched by Camille Moussa, she is the sister of Justice Saunders, former Camille Saunders who is a visual artiste, and they will be taking up and assisting us with that project.

Peace Memorial Hall, how many times have I sat in the gallery and heard that we are going to repair the Peace Memorial Hall. You see our budget is not a going to, you know, our budget is a let's do it and get it done now. And Peace Memorial Hall repairs have started and it is expected to be completed in about 6 months.

The Centre for the Performing Arts, we have selected three sites and we want to discuss this with our cultural partners for them to continue the discussion. But we are happy that the Prime Minister and Minister of Works have designed a 500-seat theatre complete with orchestra pit and {Interjection.} 600-seat theatre, thank you. And ground breaking has already taken place and construction will start soon, and so we will have a place for the Performing Arts, Memorial Hall so we can have the school drama festivals and also the dance festival.

In the area of dance, Mr. Speaker, I have as well offers from Guadeloupe, from Cuba for dance instructors who will be coming to St. Vincent, and from the Bahamas as well, Mr. Speaker. So on the cultural front things are moving a pace Mr. Speaker.

Next year, National Heroes Day I plan to have a 7-member committee established and I have asked the Minister of Technology to give me some first day covers, he has to match it with an international figure, so we will have first day covers for National Heroes, Emancipation and the 25th Anniversary of Carnival. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, I turn now to my constituency in the last moments that I have. We have established in Rose Place a collective action group and through Projects Promotion we have obtained six computers to start computer classes. We were going to house it in a building, close into Rose Place but we got space in the Anglican School, and those computers will be housed there to start that project. The new toilet facility would be getting off the ground next month and from Nine Steps a concrete road will be made in that area and the toilets will have an attendant. The hard court, the National Sports Council has assured me, they were completing their assessment and it is on the list for repairs. The beach clean up, all the old boats and people who went there recently to squat and to prove a point, this is your second notice, please remove yourselves before it is done so by the force of law.

Victoria Park that was a scandal, however KELCOM is completing the lighting and we are hoping to have the regrassing done shortly. Lights are proposed to be put in the Kingstown Cemetery, because we noticed that funerals last a little longer and they are going a little bit in the dark. We hope to spruce up the grave of ET Joshua in the Kingstown Cemetery, because he is one of our proposed heroes.

In Edinboro there will be a new primary school. It is in the budget. A new primary school and that we voted about \$400,000.00 for design works. The public bath is under schedule for the Kingstown Board for repairs as well as the roads. Fort Charlotte, you know is doing the restoration work, and sea defences and river defences for the river in Stoney Ground, we will be doing some work on that, and the road from Granny Rose right down to the school is down for repairs as well, and the Police Youth Arm is going to be off in Largo Height.

In Ottley Hall the road to the marina has now gotten some repairs, and I am pleased that the Minister of Technology has been able to give us the nod to make use of the white elephant of the marina for a call center and the medical kit industry. So soon we will have over 600 people going down into that compound fully and gainfully employed. We will be taking charge as well of the squatting. People were just sent there by a Minister with a piece of paper and they come to me with the piece of paper and I tell them we do not do it so. They come to me for permission to put up light and to put up water, and I tell them we do not do it so, we have system in place. The Development Corporation is co-operating with me.

The playing field at Largo Height is down for grassing through the National Sports Council. The Ottley Hall playing field would also have to wait on the determination

from the Sports Council because of the dirt that has to be replaced. The hard court at Montrose the works were done in a terrible mess. It is dark inside in the daytime, but I know it was a hurry job to get some votes in Montrose. So we have to redo that. \$1800,000.00 was voted to complete it, unfortunately that is not enough.

Traffic wardens will be seen in West Kingstown to help the children to cross the street as part of the YES Programme. Not leaving out Lowmans and Bergin, applications have been in the process for the lights that you require and pipe in Cedar Valley, and the concrete strips in Spring. Buddy Gutter the road is being cut and paved and I have the corporation of DIPCON to give us assistance as a good corporate citizen. The fishermen in Lowmans Bay have asked me to assist them in forming a co-operative and I have ongoing discussions with them. I have brought the planning chairman for us to discuss how we will deal with the bathing area and also to restrict the removal of sand from the Lowmans Bay. Same thing for Rose Place.

Mr. Speaker, Gibson Corner. Oh what a scandal. What a scandal! People received \$10,000.00, some received \$10,000.00 and a piece of land at Diamond, some received \$10,000.00 and a piece of land at Pembroke, some get no \$10,000.00 and a piece of land at Pembroke, some get a piece of land at Diamond and then you find out we do not own the land at Diamond. Such competence. Such professionalism. So as announced the Gibson Corner lands and persons under that would have to come and bring their documents and give and give evidence before the Commission of Inquiry. Since we heard about people getting money twice. And who Minister did what and who Minister did not do what. So it would be an open Commission of Inquiry and the general public can come in and listen. I do not want them to say what Rene Baptiste did not say.

Kingstown General Hospital is in for the continuation of some work and I wish to thank the Minister of Health for keeping us in the fore front; and the Retirement Community in Stoney Ground, I did get your list of all the persons over the age of 65 for the reduction of the water metre and electricity and it is being handled.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to the people of West Kingstown who after 17 years and four consecutive terms of the same old khaki pants have determined that there is a woman born who could beat them in West Kingstown. And that woman is me. And never mind all the scandals and nastiness, and filthiness and ungodliness that went on the will of the people prevailed. I am proud and happy to represent you. You will be seeing much more of me in the New Year because I have put the pillars in the sand for the Ministry of Tourism and Culture and now I will sit with you and go through our development plans from dealing with primary school matters to the evening classes in the Lowmans School.

I thank the corporate citizens who have helped me with sponsoring the Stoney Ground School and the Lowmans School. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your support. And LCDO you will be getting back your library downstairs, while I work with the community group and my constituency council in looking for a new site for community Centre in Lowmans and a community centre to serve the Edinboro and Ottley Hall communities. Things are happening. Things are shaping up, hold firm. Hold strongly, I am there for you. Remember I came out and I campaigned on one leg. Thank God, I am standing on two firm feet. And I will continue to fight in your interest. I have already fought the battle for myself. I thank God for that as well, and I am willing to give all my energies to you because I am not unaccustomed to working among poor people as my record on this country already shows. I am with you; I know you are with me. Have a happy Christmas; I will be there to turn on a Christmas tree, in the hospital grounds for the first time. Our Lowmans lighting up is on the 6th, and we will have concert and everything that the Lowmans that the Lowmans lighting up at Mr. Kenneth Ash, there will be lights for Rose Place, Edinboro and Largo Height. We have a good Christmas. The kids will have the party as usual and the gift packages for the older persons and the needy and shut-ins in the reach out and touch. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I am obliged for the time of this Honourable House to make my contribution, and I do wish this bill safe passage and support of my colleagues on both side of the House, I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Northern Grenadines. Before I take you though, I was asked to make an announcement that today is Belize Solidarity Day and we asked to give support to this worthwhile venture. It is in relation to the reconstruction of Belize following Hurricane Iris, which took place sometime in October. So again Belize Solidarity Day you are asked to give support to this and I will give a further announcement sometime later, on this very important matter. Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines, you have 45 minutes to make your presentation.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you for reminding the Members of this Honourable House about the importance of Belize Solidarity Day. It is something that we as a nation especially in this time of Christmas and feelings of goodwill towards our fellowmen, to reflect on the hardship that others especially in the region have endured and continue to face.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride and a feeling of humility that I rise today to make this my first address to this Honourable House and to the nation as a whole on the important subject of the national budget. I have the benefit of the comments of a number of the members on the government side and the members on the Opposition side of the House. Mr. Speaker, as I listened to the presentations of the various speakers on the opposite side of the House I kept waiting for the revelation, the eureka moment in the budget that would signal that this government has a serious grasp on

the problems confronting this country and a serious intension or programme to address them.

Mr. Speaker, time and again I have been disappointed because I listened and I have not heard what I believed the people of this country expected given the grand promises that were made by this administration in the past election campaign. Mr. Speaker, I expected this to be a budget of hope; a budget of breath taking vision, a budget of scope to confirm the confidence that the electorate put in this present administration during the last general elections. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the disappointment that I feel is echoed throughout the nation as a whole. This is a budget essentially of half measures. It is a very timid budget. It is a budget which the Prime Minister says is a poor people's budget, it is one which it seems to me put its hand in poor people's pockets to take whatever little remaining there from the previous nine months of this administration.

Mr. Speaker, if this is the best that we can expect then we are in for hard times. Mr. Speaker, I will make my comments on the different areas of the budget that strike me as matters deserving of concern and further explanation to the people of our beloved country. You know last night as I was on the ferry and I look at the receding lights of Kingstown glittering in their beauty and a single red light on the opposite shore in Bequia beckoning the ferry and the full moon shining down on the waters and the hills of Cane Garden I said Mr. Speaker, that this is a beautiful country which we have toiled, the NDP administration of the past and previous administrations in the Labour Government to build and its one which is worth our diligence, it is worth the investments of our hope and our efforts to improve. Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to question the commitment and the desire on the part of the members on the opposite side of the House to achieve these objectives, what I wish to point out and to bring to the people's attention is the failings to achieving those objectives as reflected in the 2002 budget.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in his presentation and the Honourable Senator Leacock pointed out very serious flaws with this budget, which I will not repeat. I am here to address a number of other issues, beginning with the allocations in the tourism sector. Mr. Speaker, I awaited with breathless anticipation for the comments and the proposals of the Honourable Minister of Tourism. And what I heard in the presentation Mr. Speaker, unfortunately did not alleviate my deep concerns and my fears for the industry. We know that we are in difficult times. We were in difficult times before the events of September 11th in the United States and the efforts that it will take to address these require creativity, it requires boldness and it requires a fundamental grasp of the importance of tourism as an industry in this country. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition in his remarks reflected on this very important issue that tourism is whether we like it or not, in the short term and in the medium term the industry which will provide jobs and income for this country and it is

one whose importance we must recognize and the policies of the Government, the allocations in the estimates and in the budget must reflect a commitment to develop this industry and an understanding of its importance to our country. The reflection of tourism of having contributed 10 to 12% of the gross domestic product is not a clear indication, or a true reflection of its importance to our economy. We have to look not just simply as what is reported, and my understanding is that the figures in that regard tend to report hotel and restaurants activity and nothing more. But we also have to look at the future growth of the industry, the prospects of the industry and this is where the vision is required. First of all, Mr. Speaker, the meager allocations for promotion in this industry of \$450,000.00 is woefully inadequate. That simply does not even purchase a decent billboard anywhere in this Caribbean region of ours. Mr. Speaker, I have viewed the efforts of other countries in this region, you go and you see in the various advertisements from Barbados, from Grenada for example, I have seen them billboards posted in Trinidad advertising those destinations as places for our CARICOM citizens to visit. We still have not seen such in from St. Vincent and the Grenadines. And quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, the allocations in the budget does not permit for very much. \$450,000.000 will not buy an ad in the international media. I have spoken to members in the industry and they point out the cost of advertising in the international media in this sector.

Mr. Speaker, one of the useful things that the Government could do would be to assist the individual enterprise who are bold enough to take this step to advertise in the international media by providing matching funds. That would help a great deal in promoting tourism, it will cut the cost for this government itself by half, because you will promote the private sector to encourage them to advertise internationally which is after all where the tourists come from. This is Mr. Speaker, a kind of provision which I think would benefit the industry, I have not seen that in the current budget. You can say whatever you like Mr. Speaker, but \$450,000.00 does not split very far. It does not matter what kind of retort you give \$450,000.00 is still, and that is EC currency, is still not very much for promotion. And the Honourable Leader of the Opposition was quite right in pointing this out.

Mr. Speaker, what this shows is that this Government really does not get it with respect of promotional tourism. [Gavel pounding]. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am much obliged. Mr. Speaker, we must deal with the most serious problems hampering the industry. Proper marketing I have dealt with. The Honourable Minister of Tourism mentioned the introduction of a small allocation for a tourist police. This is a small step forward but if the proper training is not provided for the police it could actually do more harm than good. I would like to see that there is a follow up and a commitment to provide the training in the police, not just in the art of karate, and marshall arts but in the services to provide to the tourists as somebody they can approach to ask for advice and somebody who can represent this country to the people who visit our shores. In tourism, Mr. Speaker, it is an undoubted fact that we are all ambassadors for the

industry. Anytime tourists comes to our shores, the experience they have with any individual reflects on our country as a whole and has an impact on the industry, so that Mr. Speaker, is what I think this government should commit to be doing with the tourist police.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of security as well, the importance of ensuring that the tourism sites on the mainland and in the Grenadines are provided with proper lighting to ensure that the tourists do not simply come out in the day time but that they come out at night to take part in the activities that we have to offer as a country. In the Northern Grenadines I know there has been a progressive improvement in this regard, but it is a process that is continuous, it is on going and one, which needs further attention. And I would urge that the government to make allocations to speak with the representatives of VINLEC to ensure that the proper locations throughout the country are adequately lighted. This point was actually brought home to me, two nights ago I was watching television and I saw that there were two speakers on and they were speaking about Nine Mornings and the effort to try to involve the tourism in this to encourage the tourists to partake in this. And then I thought of this, and then I thought given the lighting that I have seen in many parts of this country and particularly in my constituency in the Northern Grenadines, it is a lot to ask tourists to come out at 4 o'clock in the morning and walk through dark patches to get to an obscure venue to enjoy the activities that we have to offer. Mr. Speaker, these are all things that are all small and easy to fix. We know that VINLEC is a well-managed institution and resources and the lighting should be done not just simply as a matter of convenience but one that has an important implication for tourism sector. As a visitor coming to our shores, one of the primary concern is security because you are unfamiliar with the location. Lighted surroundings especially in light of the fact that there have been incidents of harassments as the Minister has pointed out and thefts and so on, these are things that can go a long way to improve security for the tourists and encourage them to come out and participate in activities and to spend money and improve our taking from the tourist sector.

Mr. Speaker, it is notable as well that the Minister of Tourism did not refute the contention of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that the allocation was too small. Mr. Speaker, I hope that the small attention given with the importance of this industry does not reflect in any way on the importance or the influence that the Minister carries within Cabinet, because we know that this is a very important industry and it is one that should be reflected with better allocations and more serious policies from the Government.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most gaping holes in the presentation on this budget and in tourism in particular is the absolute, and thunderous silence on the development of the airport facilities in this country. There seems to be a paralysis in this government on this issue. We acknowledge that there is a problem here, the government

acknowledges, the Prime Minister acknowledges in his budget address that we have experienced a decline in arrivals and that this was affected by the termination of two airline carriers to this country. We all know what the factors were relating to this problem. We know that the importance of this is yet there is nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing said about how we are going to address this other than vague suggestion that hubs will be created at the Heronnoria in St. Lucia and possibly in Barbados and elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, hubs are created not just simply because we desire them to be in a particular place. This is determined by the airlines, their schedule and what the people flying from, Toronto and New York and so on, what fits their convenience. Many years ago most people came through Barbados but then BWIA had a service going through Trinidad and more and more people have been going through Piarco International Airport. That has become a hub, not simply because of anything we have done, but because of what the airline have done and how it suits the schedules of those people who are traveling.

So, we need more than just vague suggestions as to how the air traffic situation is going to be remedied. We need a clear statement on what will happen with the airport situation in this country. We all acknowledge it is inadequate. The previous administration had made a commitment to dealing with the problems. We know that in Opposition, this present Government had said very stridently and clearly what its policies are, in its budget manifesto it stated that it would create a new international airport and not extend Arnos Vale. Let's hear what will happen in the budget. These things Mr. Speaker, have direct implications for investment in this country. Major hotel developers whom the Minister of Tourism had alluded to which is a positive development will want to know if they construct a facility of significant size invest considerable sums of money, that they can ensure that there reliable transportation to this country. Not that it will be here today and gone tomorrow. We need a clear statement from this Government on this issue. [desk thumping]. And it has solely been lacking in this budget. In the Estimates the allocations for airport development is miniscule so it is quite clear that it has no bearing whatsoever on fixing the real problem that exist.

Mr. Speaker, the arrivals to our shores went down by over 5%, the Honourable Prime Minister said in his budget speech. The airport issue I repeat is critical to the development of tourism in this country. Absolutely critical. How can we plan a strategy for tourism without dealing with this critical issue? Why is the cross-country road more important to tourism than the airport? Before, people can travel across the country on a cross-country road they must arrive here first. Let us put our priorities right. [Applause], deal with the airport issue make a clear statement on the issue, and I hope that the Honourable Minister of National Security and Airport Development will take the

opportunity to speak clearly on this issue where the Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism have failed.

By all means Mr. Speaker, [Interjection]. Thank you, Mr. Honourable Prime Minister I benefit from your greater experience in this regard, on drinking water I will yes. Mr. Speaker, advance the industry in new areas like the development of beauty spas. I must confess that that is a very innovative approach which had not occur to me and I hope it is not just simply because it lacks any serious merit. If we are going to go into these new directions we must also understand that we have to begin with what our strengths are. You begin with what our strengths are and you proceed from there using the resources to develop and push into new areas such as the development of beauty spars and the promotion of eco tourism on the mainland, a great undeveloped resource. We have to focus on our strengths. In his budget address, the Honourable Prime Minister noted that the yachting sector remained robust. And grew by over 25% during the first nine months of this year. Mr. Speaker obviously this is one of our strengths. What the perversion is in the current budget in this sector however is that an additional tax of \$1.6 million will be imposed on this sector without any indication as to what additional measures will be taken to promote it and to ensure the more and more yachts come to our shores, remain here longer, and receive more services here.

Mr. Speaker, this industry is a natural fit for our country. It is internationally acknowledged that the best sailing grounds. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Leader of the House I have a mere 45 minutes I would like to make my address without interruptions, Mr. Speaker. [Mr. Speaker, warns]. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, much obliged. Now we have skills, skills of the highest caliber in this country with respect to the repair and maintenance of yachts, their sails, the hulls, and yes I will say and in defence of Ottley Hall that that facility is proving to be a great investment for this country in that regard. And if the Government will stop knocking instead of building on what we have there, I think the future for that institution and for the repair business and the boat business in this country would be a lot brighter.

I have visited Ottley Hall, I know what work they are doing there, irrespective of the mistakes and the problems they have had in the past, it is a viable and very worthwhile contribution to our economy and will continue to do so if the support is provided, like the provision of proper travel lifts to ensure that more work can be done in the yard, rather than simply in the water base docking facility. These are things, Mr. Speaker, that we have to focus on.

I went to Chagaramus in Trinidad to see the development that was going on there in the marinas area and I am amazed at how rapidly that has developed, and quite frankly see the potential that we can do here in this country as well. It is an area which there further exploration, promotion and development. We need to take it seriously and to ensure that investors are courted to invest in this sector and develop the

resources that we so abundantly possess. The human and physical resources. One of the things that pain me, Mr. Speaker is walking around the marinas in Ottley Hall I see the names of yachts, boats there that I have seen in the harbour, several months earlier in Port Elizabeth, and they are there pulled up because their owners probably have gone back to North America waiting out the hurricane season and then to come back. We have to try to capture some of that market, Mr. Speaker; and I would like to see that the Government instead of knocking that sector develop some policies to increase investment in that area to benefit our economy as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, I have mentioned briefly the importance of eco tourism and I think the Honourable Minister has pointed out some of the various sites on the mainland and some of the things that can be done. But again in this area we need to have more vision as to what we expect from this industry. To promote it. The taxi drivers have to be included in this. The tour operators have to be included, and there have to be given the support, both in fiscal measures and in training and in other facilities to ensure that we can exploit this vast potential in this area, on the mainland.

Mr. Speaker, the eco tourism has a good fit with the cruise industry that is taking off up at the cruise ship berth that was built under the previous administration. I am happy to see that the improvements have taken place in the cruise ship berth and that the importance of this facility is being finally acknowledged and recognized by the government. [Applause]. Now, the fence, Mr. Speaker, let's get to this fence. Say what you will, the fence looks like a concentration camp. It looks like a prison camp. It is a fence and I am sure it does the job very well. But tourism, Mr. Speaker, is all about aesthetic, it is about appeal. It is not just functionality, of course it works, it is a fence with barb wire, nobody is going to climb that fence we know that, not even prisoners, it is the same fence the Honourable Minister of National Security said some time ago, has been instituted at the prisons, so it will work, I never doubted that. What I am saying is that tourism is about aesthetic, you have to make it presentable, make it attractive. Do not make the people feel that when they walking into there, they look at the fence and you asking yourself should I venture beyond the environs of this fence, is it safe? You know, you do not want people to feel a sense of dread; you want them to feel safe. And my point is not that the security measures are not necessary but that when you are doing them, do them with sensitivity with an understanding of the industry in which you are dealing. So, it is not too late. Things can be done, at the very least the barbwire can be removed. Nobody can climb it anywhere; it is eight feet tall. That is the point I was making Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad, [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, I love to take them on. The people of this country expects us to take the Government on, and this is what I intend to do in the few minutes that I have remaining. I know the members on the other side want to distract me, plus the five that was taken out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now I am glad to see that the Minister has finally acknowledged that she is going to move up to the

facility up at the ferry berth that was initially intended to benefit the ferry passengers travelling up and down to the Grenadines. At least from a comfortable office she can look out in the mornings and see the Member for the Northern Grenadines sheltering the sun in the lamp post that is standing at the ferry wharf there because there is no place from which to shelter. In addition, if it rains he has to scamper back and all the other people from the Grenadines, tourists and nationals alike and have no where to shelter and to put their belongings, because the facility that was intended to serve that segment of the population and the industry has been taken over for other purposes by the Government. Mr. Speaker, they need not listen to me simply, look at the plans for development of that facility and you will see that provisions had been made in those plans, to provide facilities for people traveling on the Grenadines ferry, and those facilities are not there. The last time when I raise the issue, the lame excuse was made that there was access to it because there was a gate. Although we all know the gate was there just simply for traffic to go through. Now, there is no pretense of saying that any facilities would be provided so Mr. Speaker, at least we know, that it is clear and the people can make their judgment on that.

Mr. Speaker, in the tourism industry the taxi drivers need assistance as well. The cars should be allowed, we should give them facilities so that they can renew their fleet of vehicles regularly, especially with the cruise ship passengers. What we should be doing is allowing them to bring their vehicles in with the duty free concession over a period, if the vehicle is eight or nine years old, you can renew it. That is probably too old as it is, other countries in the region are doing this, we should provide assistance to the taxi drivers to allow them to renew their fleet of vehicles. I believe the taxi drivers in this country would appreciate that Mr. Speaker. Not only that it will benefit the tourism sector because that is what we are talking about. We are not talking about here, Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about benefits for any particular individuals, we are talking about the industry as a whole and I believe that that is a progressive policy and one which the taxi drivers and transport workers in this country will appreciate and one we should consider. That Mr. Speaker, is a proposal with some vision. And one that I hope that the Government would take up.

Increasing the cleanliness of our facilities. Work has been done on that and we commend the Government on efforts it has made although it has done so in a heavy-handed manner in Kingstown. But that is not all, we have the rest of the country to look at. Last night as I going in, a traveler who was just coming in from North America he looked at the harbour and said boy something needs to be done here. And Mr. Speaker, Minister of Tourism listened to me very carefully, tourism is an important industry, anything to do improve the appearance of the sites that are the main tourists sites in this country would benefit the industry, and it would benefit the country as a whole. It is indisputable that the Grenadines is a main tourists site in this country.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If the Honourable Member would give way for me to elucidate a point.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, I will require the time to added back.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No, no, no, you will get back you time.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: And doubled.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: And doubled, you want interest on it. Mr. Speaker, I very, very pleased that the Honourable Member from the Northern Grenadines is very concerned about the appearance of the harbour in Bequia, and among other things the question of garbage disposal in Bequia, which is a very critical issue. I just want to inform the Honourable Member that Cabinet has taken the decision to put the issue of the collection and disposal of garbage in the Grenadines as a whole under the CWSA; and the Solid Waste Management Unit of the CWSA, and that a temporary measure is being worked out where there will be individual contracts and monitoring by the Solid Waste Management Unit, but a comprehensive system of a high quality is being contemplated and devised. I just want to assure the Honourable Member on that matter.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You have an additional 90 seconds.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, your generosity is astounding. [Laughter]. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, now to address this issue of the garbage, now I think the Honourable Prime Minister tries to preempt the comments that I actually intended to make on this issue, because he knows quite frankly that the budget is woefully lacking in any provision for the remediation of the garbage disposal problem in Bequia and in the Grenadines as a whole. There are vague references made to it, in the budget address but nothing specific, although we know that the problem has been in the election campaign on the promotion of video of the candidate who opposed me in the election, as the primary issue, an issue of tremendous supporters of this government, the handful of them remaining in the Northern Grenadines and they will be sorely disappointed Mr. Speaker that the Government intend to study the issue and continue to study the issue and not to deal with issue. So that the people who live near to the garbage dump which has served its purpose and is now overflowing will not be able to benefit from that.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Point of Order. The Point of Order is that the Honourable Member must not be allowed to mislead the House. I just made the point, Mr. Speaker, that there is an interim measure, putting it under CWSA, the Solid Waste Management Unit. The CWSA is a statutory body. If you would notice there is

a specific subvention. Look in the section, in the appendix of Estimates on grants and contributions, you should get some advise from the Leader of the Opposition as to how to read the Estimates, and the point about it Mr. Speaker, I did not say, that we are going on again to study the problem, that as an interim measure we are dealing with the matter until we develop in practical terms a sophisticated system as one we are developing here on the mainland. It is not a question of further study and I am quite, and I believe the Member for the Southern Grenadines is showing him the appendix and he will see the subvention. Not my fault if you do not read it properly.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, I have read the proposals and they are crystal clear to me. And the sensitivity which the Honourable Prime Minister is showing to the issue confirm the validity of the comments that I have been making on this issue. Mr. Speaker, any member of our community can simply reflect on the budget, look at page 46 and to see what is said there about waste management plans for the Grenadines.; very, very little.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the issue of garbage the most significant issue which stands out of course is the \$5 a month tax which has been imposed in this area. And it is not simply me who has noticed it. Because I noticed in the newspaper this morning, that that was one of the issues singled out. Mr. Speaker, it is a five dollar amount tax which is essentially flat tax, rich and poor alike pay the same five dollars amount, a rich person who generates 50 pounds of garbage a week pays the same amount as a poor person who generates 5 pounds of garbage. So this Mr. Speaker, is a manifestation of the poor people budget. This is a flat tax, it is a tax, because you have to pay; it is the most regressive form of tax because everybody pays the same amount. If you have a household of 10 people, you pay \$5.00 a month, if you have a household of one or two you pay \$5.00 a month. If you are rich and you produce expensive and plentiful garbage, you pay \$5.00 a month. If you poor and you could hardly find a bottle to throw out you pay \$5.00 a month. Mr. Speaker, this is a flat regressive tax and it is one that is reflective of obviously the emphasis on poor people which seems to make them poorer. [Interjection] That is in the budget Mr. Speaker, I am not misrepresenting them.

Now, on the issue of health, the budgetary allocations for health Mr. Speaker, is less this year. The capital expenditure on health is a mere 3.8%. The last NDP budget, the allocation was 5% of a larger expenditure on capital projects. The capital expenditure in the NDP budget was larger, yet a higher percentage was allocated to health. In this present budget notwithstanding the grandiose rhetoric about the importance of health the problems of HIV/AIDS but Mr. Speaker this is not the manifestation of the intentions we see in the words of the budget.

Well, I have already spoken on the issue of garbage because that was under the health issue. Mr. Speaker, agriculture. I have some general comments to make in this

area. This is as we know a very important sector of our economy. We all acknowledge the problems that are there. In fact during, the election campaign, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition went through pains to explain to the people of this country what the seriousness of this issue is. What is solely lacking in this regard, Mr. Speaker, is the allocation and the emphasis or the proposals with respect to the diversification of the agricultural sector. The problems of banana, the restructuring of the banana industry is but one side of the same coin which on the other side includes agriculture diversification. If we have specifics for restructuring of the banana industry, Mr. Speaker, in order to gain the confidence of the people in this industry to show that we take their situation very seriously, there must also be specifics on the other side of the coin to assist, to assist with the diversification. I think the Minister of Agriculture yesterday essentially said whatever they choose to go into the Government would provide some support. That is just simply not good enough. What will a farmer somewhere in the Marriacqua Valley know about the market condition for any commodity in Trinidad or in Jamaica or in St. Lucia or else where. We have to have specifics, Mr. Speaker, because diversification is the other side of the coin for restructuring of the banana industry. If we want to save the agricultural sector. We have to have vision. We have to have scope. [Interjection] Well, I am very grateful the Honourable Minister. And I look forward as I say with breathless anticipation and I am sure the farmers in this country would await your comments as well, so do not disappoint them.

Now, the fisheries, my colleague will speak on that as well but I need just simply to say that the promises that were made when I asked the question in the House some time ago about what was happening with the development with the fishing facilities in the country as a whole, but specifically in the Northern and Southern Grenadines was that the work on the facilities would be done; that is the fishing processing facilities would be commenced in the last quarter of this year, I believe that was the answer given; and that the same \$730,000.00 had been allocated but no work had been done, we hear now that the work will, I hope the commitment is to conclude it in June next year and not to commence it in June, next year, because Mr. Speaker, this is a very important industry as we all know, and I am not doubting the Government's recognition of this, but we have to match the actions with the rhetoric. And the efforts of the fishermen to stay afloat in this area must be acknowledged and they must be supported.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the issues which we received the most thunderous applause when the Prime Minister made his remarks was the introduction of the barrels, well much has been said about this and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is quite right in pointing out that, you know free of charge, means free of charge, not free of duty. I believe the Honourable Prime Minister had changed his position on this issue before when he moved from a 3 tiered system of collecting the duties to a two tiered system, well I am proposing that he move to a one tiered system now, one which says zero fees for the importation of the barrels. [Applause]. That was the promise that was

made. Mr. Speaker, if you would read, [Interjection]. Thank you, very much Mr. Prime Minister for the commitment. Well, we have the commitment. Well, it is not just me, it is the media as well, because I note in an article in the paper which says 'reduce rates for barrels,' it did not say free barrels.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in few minutes I have remaining I would like to address a number of the issues facing my constituency, the Northern Grenadines. I already addressed the issue of the solid waste management. More can be said but time is short. There are projects that are on the way with the improvements of the roads in the Northern Grenadines, in Bequia. There were allocations made for the fixing of the roads to Friendship Bay. And Mr. Speaker, such work must continue because as we know that road deals directly to one of the major tourist sites in this country. I have not seen, maybe the Honourable Minister for Transport will give a commitment on that because it is very important to our country.

Mr. Speaker, again another colleague on this side will address the issue of education but I need to make my dissatisfaction and my disappointment known with respect to the provision of a new primary school in Bequia. A lot of work has been done to repair the old primary school there and quite frankly I commend the people who have worked on that project. It really was a monumental task and given the limited resources they had, they did a tremendous job. I do not want to take anything away from that but what I was suggesting at the very outset of the debate on this issue and which I continue to maintain is that the school itself is inadequate Mr. Speaker. The flush toilets is not the end all and be all of the school. Mr. Speaker, it has served 50 years in the community. It has been patched and patched and re-patched over the years. It is not in the style of a modern educational institution. If you go into the primary division of the school, you will see that it is a big open hall and everybody has to shout at the top of their lungs to get anything done. So what I am saying is that while the work that was done and the work that was performed magnificently in doing that work, it is essentially money that was good money thrown after bad. We still need the new primary school and I hope that the Minister of Health will assist me and will recognize this great need because it's a tremendous need in that community and one, which people across all spectrums, in that part of my constituency will support.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has also made a commitment to provide a reliable supply of potable water to every community in this State. We must start now to look at the Grenadines as included in the water projects of the water authority. We have reached the point where the reliance on the sentient system of water supply in the Grenadines has proven to be inadequate. The hotels in that constituency has to import at tremendous cost water in the dry season. That is an additional burden on an industry which we acknowledge is a very important and the most important industry to the future development of this country. We need to look at other options such as desalination plants, because you cannot service a hotel of any size based on the

catchment of the roof of that hotel. You will need additional resources. You will need additional supply, and you would need a more reliable supply and it is not appropriate to be telling us, the Minister has pointed out, we have to go by international standards not St. Vincent standards to be telling guests that you know that they can't essentially use the water and they must be careful how they flush and things like that. These are all needs that have to be met if the industry is to become and to remain a top class industry in this country, and in the region as a whole.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Could you wrap up in a minute?

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: So, Mr. Speaker, I think we have to be more innovative and we have to put the challenge out to the Central Water and Sewage Authority to come forward with proposals to deal with this issue.

Mr. Speaker, health, nothing has been said about clinics in the Northern Grenadines and the Southern Grenadines, again this is an issue that is very close to the heart of people of all political spectrums in that constituency and one which would not win this Government any favours there. So in the end Mr. Speaker, what this budget is essentially, it is rather long on promises, strong on rhetoric but delivers very little in the way of guidance and confidence and programmes that would put us in a position to ensure that the standard of living of the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines would not decline but will continue to improve under the present Government as it did under the previous administration.

Mr. Speaker we all have to put our backs to the wheel. The points that have made here I know it has caused some discomfort on the other side of the House, it was not my intention to make members on the opposite side of the House uncomfortable. The temperature in the room, is already hot enough without it getting hotter from any of things that were said in the debate. What I simply try to do and what I feel as a responsible representative, not simply of my constituency but of the interest of the country as a whole is to point out issues that I believe are on the minds of people in this country in the hope that the Government will take it in the spirit that is intended that is to give an opportunity to deal with the issues that are important to this country and not just simply to see it in other terms. Mr. Speaker, ..

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member you are already into overtime. Could you now wish your constituents, Merry Christmas?

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I begin by wishing you first of all Merry Christmas, and to thank you for your generosity. I wish the members of the constituency of the Northern Grenadines, those members in Mustique, the members in the various parts of Bequia, in Hamilton, Paget Farm and the Harbour, Level in Mt. Pleasant, Lower Bay, all over this great constituency and the

people of this country as a whole. Mr. Speaker, in the keeping with the spirit of the times and in reflection on the importance essentially of community which we all have do with the wake of the September 11th catastrophic in the United States. I wish to also to exhort the members and supporters of the New Democratic Party in my constituency and in the country as a whole. To reach out to other members of our community, irrespective of which political party they support and in this time that we put the political partisanship behind us and join together in the spirit of Christmas and look forward to a future which will involve struggles, but one which we, on this side of the House, will ensure that the interest of the people are represented and that those struggles are dealt with in the most effective and efficacious way possible in the interest of the people of this country.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Sir.

DR. THE HONOURABLE GODWIN FRIDAY: Mr. Speaker, I am much obliged, and to the Honourable Members on the Opposite side I did not forget you, Merry Christmas as well.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Any further debate? Yes, Honourable Senator Young. You have 45 minutes.

HONOURABLE ANDREA YOUNG: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members I rise to make my contribution to the debate on the Appropriation Bill which bill contains the Estimates for the year 2002. Before doing so Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my appreciation to you, Mr. Speaker and the Leader of the House for the kind courtesies extended to me on Wednesday, and whilst I am at this point I wish to thank also my Honourable colleague, Edwin Snagg because there was a little jostling going on in the spirit of Christmas, he allowed me to speak, and I noticed that the Speaker, himself is in the spirit of Christmas granting overtime, in extension of time for speaking.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members this is the first budget presented by Labour Government in 17 years. On the ground, Mr. Speaker, it is already heralded as the poor people's budget. Mr. Speaker, we did not make up the name the people did so and across the country, Mr. Speaker, the poor people are happy and we in turn are happy. Those Mr. Speaker, who perhaps are a little bit more fortunate might be murmuring as some of them are trying to do and thinking that they would have to foot the bill but we have repeatedly said Mr. Speaker, that we are a Labour Government and we are a government for the poor, the under privileged.

Mr. Speaker, the current international climate is a very cold and callous one. The liberalization of technology, capital and information has placed on small countries like ours seemly unsurmountable problems. I said seemly unsurmountable problems, Mr. Speaker. Our economy as we know Mr. Speaker, is affected by many external factors

which we do not have much control over and it is also affected by internal factors and other factors over which we might have some degree of control. Mr. Speaker, the world economy is now in a recession even prior to September 11th. Our own economy, Mr. Speaker appeared to have been stagnant for a considerable amount of time under the New Democratic Party regime. In the long term, Mr. Speaker, in order to improve our economy I believe Mr. Speaker, that we have to make an investment in our human resources, among other things, and we have to decide Mr. Speaker, whether we want a quick fix or we are in it for the long haul.

Mr. Speaker, economic growth and development do not come overnight, you have to have Mr. Speaker a comprehensive plan on how you are going to achieve this and the vision and the will and as we can see, Mr. Speaker, the Unity Labour Party administration is on the right track. Mr. Speaker, I remember when I was growing up and often wondered why in St. Vincent the manufacturing sector was not a little bit more vibrant. It has the potential Mr. Speaker, to contribute to our economy and it is refreshing to see the Unity Labour Party administration is planning to give it a jump-start.

Mr. Speaker, you recall members of the New Democratic Party administration making statements to the effect that they will not pay to see who can grow the biggest yam and that maybe the tourists should hold off because when they come they only buy a pepsi and a post card. But Mr. Speaker, with statement like those you do not encourage local industry and we all happy Mr. Speaker, that that attitude no longer exist. Mr. Speaker, you would recall that I said that there are many external factors affecting our economy. But we cannot expect Mr. Speaker, roll over and play dead. We cannot Mr. Speaker, accept a defeatist approach to these issues. We have to charter our own course Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Member, there is a story of a rat and a lion, and the rat Mr. Speaker, when it wakes up in the morning it starts running because he knows that if he does not run the lion will eat him and the lion Mr. Speaker, when he wakes us he starts running too, because he knows that if he does not start running he will starve, but what they both know Mr. Speaker, is that when they wake up they have to start running. [Applause]. Since the Unity Labour Party administration assumed office in March of this year the administration has taken a number of steps to quell the backlash of these international and external forces. We have taken numerous steps Mr. Speaker to gently massage the economy out of the state of inertia and lethargy that the New Democratic Party left us in. Mr. Speaker, many of the steps are preliminary or they may be viewed as preliminary steps and they are indeed Mr. Speaker, fundamental steps which will go a long way in preparing our country, not only for economic growth but accompanying social development.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to mention but a few of these steps that have been taken by the Unity Labour Party Administration. First of all Mr. Speaker, has started on a thrust to good governance, and in this regard numerous things have been done to ensure that in this country Mr. Speaker, we have good governance. Mr. Speaker, the motion on constitution reform, live broadcast from Parliament, so that the people who elected us to serve will see what we are doing. Mr. Speaker there has been the establishment of different institutions to oversee the functioning of certain arms of the State. There has been for the first time, Mr. Speaker, participatory democracy. Mr. Speaker, we saw in the consultations on the restructuring of the banana industry, never done before and even with the select committees, Mr. Speaker, by inviting members of the public and interested parties to come and share their views. Mr. Speaker, we have seen a fearless and aggressive foreign policy, befitting an independent State. [Applause]. We have seen Mr. Speaker, the restructuring of the banana industry in preparation for 2005. We have launched a war, Mr. Speaker, on corruption. Mr. Speaker, the preparatory work, the preliminary steps in tourism have begun. Mr. Speaker, I listened to my friend the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines, and I was amused and amazed at the same time. Mr. Speaker, as young children there are certain lessons we learn one of them is simply this, you cannot put the cart before the horse, and in tourism as in many other areas this has been a part of the bad hand that has been dealt to us and like, I said you do not put the cart before the horse otherwise the horse is heading in one direction and cart is going the other way. Mr. Speaker, you have to do the preparatory work, you cannot take money and just spend it willy nilly. Mr. Speaker, but I understand they are not accustomed to planning.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines mentioned the airport, they were there for 17 years, Mr. Speaker we have been here for eight months and I was advised that they had \$100 million dollars in their pocket. Mr. Speaker, he mentioned eco tourism, you cannot just get up and do eco tourism, you have to study it. In many countries it has Mr. Speaker that eco tourism is not viable because these people come with knapsacks and they go to see nature and that they do not spend, so if you are going to suggest that Mr. Speaker, you have to explore both sides of the coin. But, Mr. Speaker, but perhaps I understand because when the Honourable Member was speaking about the Estimates he mentioned that there is thunderous silence on airport development, a thunderous silence but Mr. Speaker, maybe it is the thunder in his head, and maybe Mr. Speaker, it was thunder in his head when he referred to our Honourable Prime Minister as Leader of the Opposition. [Laughter]. Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister rose on a Point of Order I had anticipated that he was going to refer him to Rule 35 (b) and elucidate that point that he is not the Leader of the Opposition, he is the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, our international financial services have had some restructuring and along with the supporting legislation, namely the Proceeds of Crime and Money Laundering Bill and the Financial Intelligence Unit Bill which we recently dealt with.

Most, importantly, Mr. Speaker, Unity Labour Party has brought a new work ethic to this country. We have brought renewed vigor and vibrancy in all Vincentians. Mr. Speaker, recall the contribution made by the Honourable Minister of Telecommunication, Science, Technology and Industry where he was speaking of the attitude of Vincentians during the last regime and he aptly described it as Vincentians being in a state of laziness and inertia and since our assumption to Office, Mr. Speaker, we have been able to bring some rejuvenation and hope, new life to the people, Mr. Speaker. [Applause]

Mr. Speaker, against that backdrop I now wish to turn my attention to the revenue measures before us in the Estimates before us for the year 2002. The budget, Mr. Speaker, is in the sum of \$419,457,128.00 and the figures are here before us, but for the benefit of those who are listening, Mr. Speaker, if I may refer briefly to the details of these figures on the capital revenue receipts are expected to be \$50,122,690.00, grants \$29,536,370.00 and loans \$59,347,400, a grand total of \$109,470,090.00 and then Mr. Speaker, on the recurrent revenue we have taxes on income and profits \$80,500,000; taxes and property \$2,880,000. Taxes and international trade and transactions \$123,550,000; taxes on domestic goods and transactions \$47,150,010; licences \$13,000,335. And the none tax revenue fees, fines, permits, etcetera, \$18,270,010; interest, rents and dividends, \$13,870,700; and other revenue \$10,520,010.00 for a grand total again Mr. Speaker, of \$310,075,730.00.

Mr. Speaker, as a lawyer in private practice, I note the revised stamp duties and file fees which have been presented, for a long time Mr. Speaker, I have wondered that fees have been very meager and this area we can expect to receive the sum of \$1.5 million in the upcoming year. I indicated yesterday, to our Honourable Prime Minister that the figures quoted in one of the documents as filing fees would require some revision due to the fact that the new rules, the New Civil Procedure Rules of 2000 are now in existence and there is a whole new array of forms which had not existed previously under the old Supreme Court Rules and so in that regard that list would have to be revised to take care of the new forms that have been issued.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to look now at the principles and the policies of this Government and this administration which has propel them to come up with this budget. And I recall again Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines making the comment that there is no revelation in the budget, but at this point Mr. Speaker, he will see the revelation. [Interjection] The new beginnings. Mr. Speaker, during the last general election campaign the Unity Labour Party expounded repeated its principles and policies. They were known to the electorate and that is why they voted for us. [Applause]. The Unity Labour Party Mr. Speaker, told the people how we would implement these policies and principles if we were to form Government. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Unity Labour Party won the elections and we are seeing now as we have

been seeing every day since then the implementations of these very principles and policies on which we approach the electorate.

Mr. Speaker, out of an abundance of caution and for clarity I wish to outline precisely what these policies and principles are. And I feel Mr. Speaker, that this is a necessary exercise because in order to understand any action in everyday living Mr. Speaker, it is easier if you understand the principle that guided the action. And in that regard. Mr. Speaker, I wish to turn to the manifesto of the Unity Labour Party which document was tabled in this House I turn to page 2, where it is set out the top ten policies of the Unity Labour Party. No. 1 making job creation especially quality jobs and sustainable economic development our main priorities. 2 Being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. 3. Moving resolutely against corruption in Government. 4. Building a top class quality educational system for living and production in the new Century. 5. Deepening political democracy, strengthening individual rights and freedoms and upholding the law and the Constitution. 6. Modernizing and reforming government to better and more efficiently deliver all the services delivered by government. 7. Launching a war on poverty, illiteracy, inadequacy, inadequate housing , disease, poor health and unhealthy environment. 8. Developing as never before in our country, sports, culture and the arts. 9. Strengthening and deepening the process of Caribbean integration, regionally and in the Diaspora in the quest of the further ennoblement and advancement of our Caribbean Civilization. 10. Providing honest committed creative, responsive, and responsible leadership. And, Mr. Speaker, you will agree with me that what we are seeing now in these estimates that the estimates predicated and emanated from these principles that I have just enunciated. [Applause.] And we know Mr. Speaker, that the short space that we have been in office that many of these promises have been made real; the Honourable Prime Minister in his budget address and elsewhere have spoken repeatedly on some of our achievements though I believe it would be impossible to have an exhaustive enumeration of what we have achieved.

Mr. Speaker, though many unreasonable people will deny the Unity Labour Party the credit that it so justly deserves, Mr. Speaker, it is an old saying that God do not sleep'. I am confident Mr. Speaker, that these core principles which I just read from our manifesto have been evident in the general administration of this country so far and also in the estimates before us.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wish to crave your indulgence to make brief reference to a few items of expenditure, solely in an effort, Mr. Speaker, to show the nexus between these core principles and what has been actually happening since we assumed office. Mr. Speaker, we have had the school repair programme, executed under the able and indefatigable the Honourable Minister of Transport, Works and Housing. Under this programme Mr. Speaker, I said the indefatigable Honourable Minister of Transport Works and Housing. Under this programme Mr. Speaker, employment was created for a number of persons. And children and teachers went back to school to meet a

refurbished, clean and pleasant environment. [Applause]. And Mr. Speaker, the simple principle, underlying this is that if we want our children to learn, and we want our teachers to produce we have to first give them the environment, which would facilitate that learning and that production. And it all comes back to same principle, Mr. Speaker, that you do not put the cart before the horse.

Further in education, Mr. Speaker, work is moving a pace to ensure the computerization of schools, some schools have already been equipped and there is a further set of computers which while we speak are on their way from our friends from the Republic of China to whom we must be extremely grateful. In the not too distant future we will be getting our public library. Mr. Speaker, we cannot seriously consider what exist now a public library. I am advised, Mr. Speaker, that the funds for the construction of the library had already been secured. The soil had been turned and the construction is due to commenced sometime next year. I remember when I was in secondary school Mr. Speaker, when the library was moved from the Carnegie building to that depressing location in Middle Street where it has remained since then.

Mr. Speaker, when members of the opposition speak about the thunderous silence, and I repeat those are not my words, those are the words of the Honourable Member of the Northern Grenadines, thunderous silence, Mr. Speaker, when he spoke about thunderous silence about airport development it pains me, because we have been living without a library and one wonders Mr. Speaker, how a party that has been at the helm of power for 17 years did not build a library, never considered it necessary and a new administration within eight months can turn the soil and on the way to building a library. Yes, Mr. Speaker, we have leadership from the country lawyer, who is not schooled in these complex matters. Mr. Speaker, just recently I mentioned to the Honourable Prime Minister compulsory education, he has advised me to speak to the Minister of Education and the Honourable Minister of State in that Ministry and I am looking forward Mr. Speaker, very soon next year when we will come here and declare that education is now compulsory for our children.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, in our history, we have a poverty alleviation fund. The first of its kind, indeed, Mr. Speaker, by this single action without more we do not need to go to the top of La Soufriere or Mt. Andrew or wherever to convince reasonable persons, persons with level heads and right thinking members of our society that we are committed to the alleviation of poverty in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Not to mention Mr. Speaker, we have launched the reach out and touch programme for Christmas. Mr. Speaker, many of the members who have spoken have touched on a range of other issues, but I believe Mr. Speaker, that when history of this administration is recorded even those of us who are seeing it with our own eyes would not believe it when we read it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is a team of hard workers, of people dedicated to task. People of integrity. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to be associated with this team. [Applause].

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You have ten minutes remaining.

HONOURABLE ANDREA YOUNG: I am obliged, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the hard work of this administration has even given me inspiration to work harder, not only in Parliament, Mr. Speaker, but in my other spheres of endeavour. Mr. Speaker, on that note I support this budget and the estimates that has been presented to us. It is a budget for people who are in need, I commend it to the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, I salute the Minister of Finance and his team for the hard work that obviously went into the preparation of this budget and for my own part I wish the bill a safe passage through the House.

Before I take my seat Mr. Speaker, I wish to take this opportunity to wish you Mr. Speaker and your family, the Clerk of the House and her family, all the members of staff, my colleagues on this side of the House, my colleague on the other side of the House and their families, the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, here at home and the Diaspora and I would like to wish you all the very best wishes for Christmas and the new year. On that note, Mr. Speaker, I am much obliged.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I was thinking that perhaps this is an appropriate point to take the luncheon adjournment, but in view of the fact that we are having a short day today we can compensate by having a short lunch so perhaps we can be back at 1:30 p.m. and I so move.

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

Question put and agreed to.

House suspended at 12:01 p.m. (Lunch)

House resumed at 1:40 p.m.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Mr. Speaker, Honourable members I rise to support the budget 2002 proposals. Mr. Speaker, the budget, what is a budget, what does it mean to the citizen of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I have listened to several presentations, and I have been very impressed from those that have been coming from this side of the House especially considering that it is coming from newer members of the House which is demonstrating the quality and the caliber of the leadership on this side. [Applause]. In comparison what we have been hearing from the other side is well you can see the expectation but I would not describe it, not worthwhile describing.

Now, this budget demonstrate an administration that has many speakers before me have said, we are not cowards, we are not pessimists, in deed we are the optimist because that is what it takes now, it takes optimism to lead in these trying times and so many people out there are saying, oh how lucky we are, it is a ULP administration and not the former administration of the NDP which guided this country in inertia and a most comatose state. They believe in fatalism, that it can't help, can't do anything about it, it is like a ship sailing with out a rudder or a captain. Just going with the tide, and when the tides are up, it may be up, and its down, it sank. We have no room for pessimism, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I will go about addressing the situation by doing what we call a swat analysis as presented in the corporate plan. You see, Mr. Speaker, we go about in a scientific way trying to recognize what the situation is we have in the country, decide how we go about deciding them and then we implement these solutions, when we do this, we do this including all citizens and that is why we have been communicating with our citizens, we let them know what is happening, we teach them and we learn from them, because we in our campaign stated that we would be an all inclusive government that we will listen to the people that is why we are here today and the other side is where they are now. [Applause].

Now, we decided to follow to follow to the letter our manifesto and our 100 Days Programme in communication with the peoples of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, so we said what did we plan for health in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines we looked at first of all what we had inherited. What did we inherit? Well, let me first say that we inherited a team of workers that were well trained but lack motivation because there was none in the leadership of the administration before. We inherited this team who was willing and able of doing much more than they were asked of. Now there is a new feeling, a new motivation in the Ministry of Health and the Environment that is releasing their energies in the development of the health sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. We will continue to base our health care approach, what we call the primary health care, health promotion and disease prevention. We found that among the strengths that we said that the committed workers; we do have an efficient delivery of some of the essential services and it is for that reason that we continue to enjoy high levels of immunization. We also have a strong health information system and we will use this health education unit to continue to educate our people so that they can be kept abreast with what is going on. We have good sectorial, regional and international linkages such as those we have with PAN American Health Organisation, the OECS Health Desk, the CARICOM and other UN health agencies. All of these will be enhanced under Unity Labour Party Government.

Before I proceed, I must let our listeners know that we recognized that there are a lot of expectations but as I said we are a practical government, our citizens must recognize that we are a developing country, there are limited resources but they must recognize

too that we have a government that is capable of being much more efficient and effective and so even though your expectations are high and our limitations are low you can certainly expect to get more from a Unity Labour Party Government than you have been getting over the years. But at the same time those expectations we are expecting of you some more responsibility. Responsibility for your health, for your families, not only in health but in many other respects, economic responsibility but that others will speak of, in their debates.

What are some of the weaknesses we found? We found some weaknesses such as outdated organizational framework and we decided that we will tackle these weaknesses in an organized well planned way, so we go to our manifesto and we look at what we had promised, and we had decided that the management of the Kingstown General Hospital, or more recently known as the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital, we must look into the management structure in an effort to consider more independence and autonomy from central government. And as I speak we have a consultant from overseas looking at that precisely. There has been several discussions at the Ministry level and we have moved ahead at looking at these issues. We also have a problem that we have inherited, inadequate resources, well, if I had to be fair this is always going to be so, the problem is we need a government, as the ULP government is to make most efficient use of these resources. And we pledge in our manifesto and we are working to making better use of our resources. Resources may be divided into human resources, material or infrastructural resources, and as you look at the proposals in the budget, Mr. Speaker, you will see where we have addressed these issues.

In respect to human resources, we have increased the staff in some very important areas. I want to start on the whole new unit that has been set up to tackle, probably the world's single most health problem, HIV/AIDS. For many years now this problem has been identified and previous administration said that they recognized it as important but very little has been done to deal with this problem. I am not blaming the past government or the present for the high rates, I am saying that if you recognize it as a problem there are things that can be done and ought to be done that were not done and it is left now for us to do, and we will do it. You noticed in the budget as I said there is a new unit which now takes the whole battle against this disease from what was basically one person, HIV Coordinator to a staff now of eight or nine persons, apart from the other systems that will help, but this is specifically to deal with this problem. This is specifically to deal with this problem. This is very important Mr. Speaker, because it is a reflection of the importance we place on this disease. It is not only a national importance, it is worldwide.

It is only last week, I was rushed off to a meeting in Brussels to represent the CARICOM Countries where we were negotiating the access to the global funds for AIDS and other infectious diseases. It was important that we show our presence in

these discussions, because as was mentioned earlier by Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, representative of Central Kingstown that in these international forum the developing countries such as St. Vincent and the Grenadines face some significant problems. Problems of eligibility and this is one that we face with access to the AIDS fund because we are not classified as poor enough to access these funds, and we had to be there to strongly negotiate why we must have access and this I can say, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, successfully done and we are still in the process of negotiating and fine tuning; and we look forward to having this access, but we in the Caribbean, in the CARICOM region have to do our part in preparing ourselves and that is why it is so important that we establish a unit such as the new unit. At the same time we continue until it is fully operational to develop our preparedness.

Another area I want to mention about the response to the inadequate human resources is in another area of health; mental health. For years, mental health has been acknowledged by Caribbean Corporation on Health that is a group of CARICOM countries as one of the key issues, one of eight areas that are of priority. That forms the priority areas in health. And in am happy to announce Mr. Speaker, that for the first time in the history of St. Vincent and the Grenadines we have on board a fully trained psychiatrist who will enhance the delivery of health care in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. [Applause]. The psychiatrist happens to be former colleague of mine; we were trained together and I am very pleased to have her here with us participating in the development of our Caribbean civilization. She is a Caribbean national and w are very, very pleased to have her here with us. This is very important. Because in mental health we all recognize that not only is the situation of mental illness in a general sense but it is tied in to the whole question to the drug problem in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and we were very impressed that the specialist is also specialized has a subspecialty in this area and we have announced in our campaign that we will be tough on crime and the causes of crime, we would equally be tough on the effects of crime and certainly mental illness is one of them. We also responded properly to the crises that was created in this country over the past few years in the nursing field.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in 1998 when this crisis really began to unfold, there was a reaction of denial by the past NDP administration, now I do not understand why they had to deny it, because the whole situation was not just as a result of the government; there were external forces, and that is why we are so different. We acknowledge the problems, because without acknowledging the problems you cannot solve them. I can remember when I try to find out about that problem they were saying that it is not really a major problem and we can handle it. It turns out that we inherited a situation where our nurses left in droves, continue to leave and the delivery of our health care was suffering. Our response to that was to communicate with the professionals involved, the nurses. We try and sort out how can we try and sort out these problem, with their input, and it was decided together with them and other Ministry of Health staff that we look at this problem, in short term, medium term and long term. All in a very organized

scientific manner. So what we did we decided in short term that we would have to recruit and in the budget we will see the proposals of new staff in the nursing organization, we will be recruiting from Cuba as is well known, 20 nurses and they should be here by the end of the year. We would be also increasing the number of training for nurses in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, a significant increase from what we had before to deal with the medium to long-term solution of this problem.

Before I go on also in the medical staff, over the years we have been seeing in the budget proposals for several consultants that go on year after year and is not being filled. And that is why you will see that the budget used to be inflated. Because the expenditure was never there, now we have recognized this and even though the total budget is somewhat less than last year it is because we are dealing with the reality. We are budgeting for what realistically going to perform, not fooling anybody. And, Mr. Speaker, this time we would be employing close to full staff, because I wish to announce to that we would be having an improvement in the staffing at the medical at the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital in Kingstown by the addition of a specialist internist, that is specialized in internal medicine, an ophthalmologist to deal with myriads of problems such as eyes illness in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. We have not had one on staff for several years now and in response to the public need for an increase in the facilities for radiological services we would also be recruiting new radiological services. We also will be recruiting a radiologist to deal with the high demand. All this Mr. Speaker I say to improve the delivery of health care in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

We also have proposed and budgeted for two other specialists that should be coming in on staff next year. One a pathologist which we had never had over the years, that would be coming on staff next year and also a urologist and also I could imagine that especially my male colleagues in the House should be very much interested in this service since over the recent pass we have been seeing an increasing in a number of these problems in males especially in the middle ages and not so old. I see my colleagues over there are looking with rapt attention, that yes the services would be improved and now you know the health care of the nation and especially in the category of persons like ourselves would be in better hand. [Applause] That is what I am saying all of us, certainly. I too look forward to the service

Yes, Mr. Speaker, even though we had not budgeted a fixed amount for the services I am going to talk about. We in the ULP Government Mr. Speaker, have recognized that over he years the question of dialysis services, that is kidney problems in St. Vincent and the Grenadines though proportionately is not as high as many common problems and remember we said that our health care delivery would be based on health care. We recognize that there is a problem there and we have made efforts in terms of administration to deal with this. What have we done, we have formed a national health forum and this health forum will be responsible for interaction between the Ministry of

Health and civic society, including NGO's and so on and private sector to advise us and to relate to us on problems as they see it. This health forum has been established and is already working. The health forum Mr. Speaker, is part of the whole question of administration of health care services and they have been given the task of having consultations with the interested parties in St. Vincent and the Grenadines where we would be looking forward to the whole question of delivering or setting up a renal care unit in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. We are pleased to announced that in fact we are looking at the possibility of a foundation. And this foundation in fact, was the whole idea came to mind at the passing of a dear colleague of ours, Mr. Michael Hamlet we are not saying that that was the only reason why, but certainly at his passing it did generate a lot of national interest and his parents and rest of his family have graciously consented to use Michael Hamlet's unfortunate incident as possible seed to generate interest in such a foundation, and we will be working towards that.

Dental services and I want to draw the attention of this topic especially to the Honorable Member of Southern Grenadines. Never has the southern Grenadines had a regular dental service in the past 17 years, and you know what I find interesting; Mr. Speaker is it is touted that the Grenadines has always been the corner stone of the former NDP administration but most of the problem outlined by the members of the other side were problems in the Grenadines; Bequia and the garbage disposal and all come to that, but I don't understand if you had an administration which considered that, that area was there strong hold with the Prime Minister from that area and so many things have been left undone; shame, shame, shame Mr. Speaker but I hope the citizens of the Southern Grenadines, I hope the citizens of the Southern Grenadines recognize which administration is solving their problem. [Applause]. And I also want to give credit to the Honourable Senator Mr. Snag because the Honorable Member has been the one who has been driving and pressuring the Ministry of Health that something needs to be done in the Southern Grenadines. {Applause}. Thank you for pushing us so much but you know that when you push is because you expect results, and that's what the Unity Labor Party Government is all about. Results oriented; so as of November 2001 there has been a regular service in the Southern Grenadines with the participation of the private sector, and I wish to take this opportunity to thank the private dentist that are involved in the service.

Mr. Speaker I want to touch nutrition. Nutrition is important to our health as the old adage we are what we eat, and I want to use this opportunity to thank the Minister of Agriculture for his outlook on nutrition because I think we all have to work together in the various ministry's to tie nutrition with health promotion; we must all eat healthily and I want to send this message first to my colleague members of Parliament here all of us the leaders of both sides and also to my colleagues out there who are listening we need to look at our nutrition because that is one of the basic factors of our health.

I know, Mr. Speaker is very careful about his nutrition as can be manifested in his physiognomy, yes he looks healthy, yes Mr. Speaker. But apart from health benefits there are significant economic health benefits. As was outlined by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture we are talking about eating what we grow and we must grow what we eat, we must utilize our local foods, our fish industry and Minister of Industry had explained about the need for us to look at our poultry industry so that we can be self sufficient in our food needs. And this is important, Mr. Speaker, in fact if I may do something that is not generally done. I want to take this opportunity to recall what was recalled by Senator Leacock, something that was done several years ago by former Prime Minister Mitchell, it was one of the few things that I remembered by him and admired, when he as Minister of Agriculture, then our Prime Minister went on a campaign of buy local and eat local unfortunately he did not live up and deliver what he proposed and that was very unfortunate. And it was worthwhile. But we know that this ULP Government will work on that and we will deliver better.

Mr. Speaker, drugs, the whole problem of drugs, another big menace in our society. We in the Unity Labour Party Government, we have established national revitalized, the National Drug Council has been reactivated and in December we will be having a meeting where we will come up with a draft plan to be presented to Cabinet to deal with this very serious issue.

Solid waste, I heard a lot of debate, most of the time this morning by the Honourable member for the Northern Grenadines discussing solid waste in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, I found it very ironic that members of the other side should make this an issue of critique. Criticism this side; because anybody who understands solid waste management will understand that you do not have things happening overnight, it takes a lot of time to properly plan it, so that you can implement these things and certainly seven months you cannot be reasonably considered as time enough to implement what was being discussed by the Honourable Member on that side.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member had an interruption by the Honourable Prime Minister which merely outlined the plans of this Government. And I can repeat them. I can repeat them Mr. Speaker, a study has been undertake, sorry I pull on that, it is nothing I am going to tackle you on, in the case of solid waste, in the Grenadines especially, the Honourable Prime Minister of this country, if anybody is to be blamed for lack of an established system in the Grenadines, not just the Northern Grenadines, is the former Prime Minister of this country. [Applause]. I have spoken about this while on the other side because the solid waste management project historically was developed to put sites in territories on the mainland and in Bequia and in Canouan and what is the history, by a signature of the former Prime Minister Mitchell he single handedly decided that he will take care of solid waste in the Grenadines and took it out of the Solid Waste Management Project and that, Honourable Member of Northern

Grenadines, that is why today you are having so many problems in your constituency of which the Prime Minister is a resident. [Applause]. So the truth must be known. In fact, in Canouan the site that was earmarked by the experts including Ministry of Health personnel was sold without a decision in Cabinet by the Prime Minister so we must know the truth and know why you have problems down there, in Bequia when the site chosen by the experts selected the Prime Minister who apparently knew everything, an expert in everything decided, no he did not want that site and so because of the procrastination that is why we do not have an established system in the Grenadines. But this Government Mr. Speaker, we will do something about it. We will do something about it and if you look in the proposals you will see where we have plans for that.

Mr. Speaker, I heard some criticism about the extra \$5.00 that is going to be charged on the water rates of households. It is on the water rates it is going to be charged, but it is for the service of solid waste. Now, Mr. Speaker, I believe that if we all were to be honest, the whole question of solid waste as demonstrated by the priority given by the Honourable Members on that side is one of the issues that is most topical in discussions in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and we are a people who recognize that if we get a service we are willing to pay for it and certainly to charge \$5.00 is hardly touching the cost that will be required to deal with solid waste management in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. So therefore, to criticize it Mr. Speaker, is something that I think was unfair, but nevertheless, that is what is the opposition is there and has decided to do. Making trivial criticisms and we do not mind it but I know that citizens as long as you have an improved service you wouldn't mind paying for it and certainly over the past few months since the Unity Labour Party Government has been in office you have had a significant improvement in Solid Waste disposal. [Applause].

You see Mr. Speaker, it is one thing to plan something but do not know how to implement and we will be implementing. Mr. Speaker, you would notice that just recently we had to put some pressure on the solid waste management unit, and I just want to take this opportunity to congratulate them on the work they have done. Because that is what Government is all about, you have to put the pressure, you have heard earlier from Senator Young and other speakers that this Government, we are here to inject a new impetus in the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines including public servants and people who serve in the private sector. A new impetus that they can respond because they must have that motivation that it is necessary in order to develop our country that all of us must do something more than we have been doing and under the Unity Labour Party Government that response is very evident, and that is why I congratulate the staff of CWSA in general and solid waste management.

Water, we promised in our manifesto, Mr. Speaker, to ease the burden of poverty, on the very poor the indigent people of our society and you will notice Mr. Speaker, almost 400 households have benefited from this by taking away the \$10.00 minimum charge

that was charged before to these households, this will affect in order of 1200 if you were to average at three point plus or four persons per household. It will affect at least 1200 persons and this was promised by the Unity Labour Party Government and has been delivered. We have also promised other things that other members would speak about.

Mr. Speaker, also in water we want to take this opportunity to encourage our citizens to conserve water; to protect our natural resources, our water shed areas; to minimize deforestation, and in the public facilities to take care of them. In fact we have adopted the policy that we prefer to connect everybody even though they are poor, give them water in their houses, instead of using public facilities, because the reality is and all of us would admit that public stand pipes, public baths, public washing areas have really led to a waste of water, a waste of resources. And therefore in the long term it is not efficient and we have now started and will continue to develop this policy where we will facilitate the connection to persons who otherwise people might think cannot afford, even free, in fact we have started it already, free connections for water services, and I want to remind you that in this month of December there will be a 50% reduction on connection fees for persons who have been disconnected as long as they make proper arrangements to pay their arrears. So, Mr. Speaker we are being proactive in trying to deliver a better service to our citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch the issue of septic. Because we talk about solid waste but we also have liquid waste management and I raise this issue, Mr. Speaker, because we have to recognize that it is becoming a problem and it is tied in with the question of squatting and all that, and this question of squatting I imagine other speakers will deal with it but it is a very serious affair. And it is unfortunate that the previous administration over the years has stood idly by as we said in a state of lethargy and unresponsive to what was happening around them and allowed this issue of squatting to go on unabated, because it is creating several problems now. It has created problems of delivery of services. In fact some of the same persons who have bragged about squatting. Now they are calling for roads, in the areas they squat, they have built houses in the areas that were surveyed to build roads. You have the whole question of waste disposals, sewage where the squatting areas cannot accommodate cesspits and you have all sorts of environmental problems, and we are left to correct these problems. We will make an effort and I can tell you that the effort will reap more rewards. Well there was no effort before.

Mr. Speaker, we recently had a consultant here from PAHO looking into these issues and outlined the big problem of squatting and again the negligence of the former NDP administration, being allowing some serious squatting at a higher level, in the quarrying activities in the site that has been designated as our main land fill for solid waste. And that is strengthening its very operation and we in this government have to and we are already discussing the measures that we will take to address these problems. All

these are issues, Mr. Speaker, that are in the plans and management that will enhance the delivery of general government services in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, some of the other issues I want to raise are related to, you would notice Mr. Speaker, and in the proposals that we increased the allowance for overseas medical assistance. The previous administration \$7200.00 was allocated for this. We in our manifesto promised that we will increase this and when we did a study of the demand it was recognized that the order of \$200,00.00 per annum is being requested for such services but we are realistic. We recognize that we cannot deliver on all the demands that were made but certainly we must be responsive to the demand and we have improved this from \$72,000.00 to \$200,000.00 a 40% increase, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have also have discussions with various neighbouring countries, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, we have establish some contacts with Jamaica and also Cuba to offer cooperation in services that we do not have in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, this is a responsive government. We have also have a programme for assistance to the poor for toilet facilities and in fact, Mr. Speaker, in Paul's Avenue we will be connecting for Christmas four households to the sewer system as a demonstration of our interest in this area, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at the Kingstown Clinic I could remember criticizing the design of the Kingstown Clinic. For those of you who may have passed there let us say up to this year, it was really a problem of ventilation and I could not understand how that was done, but again it was left to this administration to do something about it, and now the ventilation is much improved and people can await attention for medical services in comfort. Mr. Speaker, it is these little things that really impact on the people, because when you consider each day that hundreds of people go to that institution these are the little things that they look forward to and these are the things that we have to respond to.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the corporate citizens out there, the private sector for their cooperation with the government in delivery of health services in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, which is important, because even though you may not see it in a line item it is because of the proactive nature of this government why we have access to so much assistance. I speak for example of the donation of physiotherapy equipment of TV and other entertainment equipment to the hospitals. Supplies by citizens of the Diaspora based in Miami and other parts of the US of a 40 foot container equipment and suppliers to the hospital and other health services. Also, to Mr. John Bernard and his colleagues in Mustique that have donated a 40 foot container of very important medical supplies. We want to take this opportunity to thank them for this. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, the environment has not been left out, in fact, our environment is probably the most, if we have a healthy environment, our general health will be ensured and the Ministry of Health and the Environment has not ignored this area. We have been signatory to many treaties and yes, Mr. Speaker, we have paid up our arrears in many of these international and regional organizations that had been owed over the years. This is being responsive to the reality of the situation, because Mr. Speaker, I know members of the other side have criticized the ULP government for paying up arrears to institutions like UWI and to PAHO and to SAYHI but Mr. Speaker, we are a responsive government. And we take our responsibility very seriously. And that, Mr. Speaker, is good governance.

Mr. Speaker, in the environment, I want to take this opportunity to encourage our citizens to respect their environment. It belongs to all of us. Our future depends on conservation and protection of our environment. What is our environment? It is the air that we breathe, the water we swim and drink, the water we fish from. It is our land, forest that protect our water table. Mr. Speaker, too often we have reports of persons illegally cutting trees and illegitimately carrying out activities that potential risk to our water resources. This is important Mr. Speaker, because St. Vincent and the Grenadines up to now, we still boast about the best quality water in the CARICOM region. And if we are to maintain this top quality and in adequate quantities we must be responsive to the environment and we must take care of the environment. Citizens we want you to cooperate with the CWSA, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry Division. And the Ministry of the Environment, because what you do now it damage the environment now, it may not leave to be inherited a healthy environment for your children and their children.

Mr. Speaker, I will go to my constituency. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity once more to thank the constituency of South Leeward for their support during the election, during the campaign and for electing me to serve you. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to be asked to serve and I pledged once more to serve to the best of my ability and I hope and think that that would be good enough to deliver better service to our people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to especially thank my constituency council that has been supporting me over the months. Mr. Speaker, my constituents must remember why they elected me.. They elected me because they were dissatisfied with the representation of the past representative and especially the past administration. And Mr. Speaker, my constituents must recognize that they elected us to serve for five years. We want therefore to ask for their understanding that our government is one that goes about in a planned approach, in a scientific way of doing things so that sometimes even when it is obvious, even from those members on the opposite side, they seem not to understand how these things are done. Because they are not accustomed to move about in that organized way. So at times it appear as if things are

not moving as briskly as they should, but you see we are cautious but adventurous too. We try to minimize errors because that was the downfall of the administration that was over on the other side. So Mr. Speaker, we wish to inform our constituents that we do things in a planned way and they must expect to wait sometimes so that things will unfold but in an organized way.

Mr. Speaker, we have organised village meetings. We use the opportunity as we are doing now to educate the citizens of this country as to how government operates, and I encourage all constituents, and all citizens to listen to these debates, because it is important, because in these debates, we are happy that we have it not only on radio but on television, it is an opportunity for the ordinary citizen, as we say, to understand how government operates and all of us on both sides must take advantage of that opportunity to explain to our constituents the truth, and how things are supposed to be, and how things are in fact going as we are doing on this side. I do not think that the citizens that are listening are expecting a litany of management studies and a lecture form as to the merits and demerits of capitalist society, etcetera. They want to hear how the budget affects their pockets. [Applause]. Because it is a poor people budget as we say, they want to hear what is in there for them, in a language that is simple and clear as explained by the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown, yesterday. We will continue to communicate with our people in the way that they understand, if the members on the other side want to ride above the heads of the listens well, probably that is what has been happening why they are over there now.

Mr. Speaker, what we have done, is organize visits to the constituency to gather base line data as to what are the needs and there are very, very many. But we want to develop a data bank so that we know what the problems are, we have done so in collaborations with the citizens. They come out to the meetings, they tell us what they would like, we obviously cannot deliver all that they would want and obviously cannot do it in one year, but we want you to understand that some tolerance is needed, but be assured that your government, the ULP government would be responsive to your needs and therefore in that light we would have seen that we have, I would start from Campden Park, it is interesting that there was a problem in Campden Park for several years now right next to the clinic where the road was eroded, that road that leads going down to the end of the Campden Park Estate. A road that the former representative had to pass everyday because it is just 100 metres away from his home, has been eroded and the citizens of Campden Park been asking about it for years, I am pleased to say that as I speak here there is crew there correcting that problem, Mr. Speaker. And Mr. Speaker, that is to show you that we are not being discriminatory, because Campden Park not yet fully with us, but I know by the next five years in election, that Campden Park is going to be one of our strong hold. Fully integrated, it would be together now with us.

Mr. Speaker, we have a problem with the Community Centre in Campden Park. And we have inherited the problem of mis-governance from the past regime where people were allowed to do as they like in an ill disciplined way, so therefore we have a situation where people were allowed to reside in community centers and cause problems for the use of these centers. Mr. Speaker, [Interruption]

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIRE LEACOCK: Point of Order Mr. Speaker, Standing Order 35 (b) and I want to ask of the Honourable Minister of Health if he would seize the opportunity to elucidate on a point. Because I think, it is important for us because I am generally accepting the quality and importance of his presentation, I think it is helpful to the budget if he would.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand the question.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIRE LEACOCK: I just want you Mr. Minister whether you would want to

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Mr. Speaker, I am debating and I am now addressing for normal, no I am not giving way, Mr. Speaker. So Mr. Speaker, as I was saying in Campden Park in the constituency we have proposed to develop the playing field facilities there and we have just recently reopened after two years the playing field facilities there, two years under the previous regime where they started but could not finish the job.

Mr. Speaker, also we are attacking the problem, poverty alleviation by giving out, there were some outlets by the DEVCO in that area that were there for months with indecision, we have now recently allocated them to residents in the area so that they can have their own economic development.

Mr. Speaker, as we come to the other parts of the constituency we will continue to fix the roads and the Minister of Works and Transport has been very active in that area where we continue as we proposed in the budget to develop the roads in our country. In fact, there is a feeder road programme that would address several of these areas. Feeder road is proposed in this constituency for Vary Vine District up at the top of Francois. Maloney at the top of Queensbury, also in the Meriky Mountains at top Chauncey. Mr. Speaker, also we hope to look at the Carib Village in top Campden Park. These are all proposed for development in our programme for 2002, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as we say we respond. We would be developing the multipurpose systems in the constituency and in fact nationally, the present as we have heard earlier in the proposal by the Honourable Prime Minister, all the multipurpose centers will now be available to services by members of the public. This is to enhance their chances of development, not only to students in institutions and in Dubois in the

school where we have a building that was for years not utilized we are going to find some use for it by developing a multipurpose center there Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have also in the community to look at the question of community centers. The whole management of community centers in this country over the years have been very close to a disaster. But Mr. Speaker, we are still looking at Questelles for that community center which the Honourable Senator, in a question in the House some few months ago he asked about it and I am asking him to ask his previous colleagues to tell us where is that phantom community center in Questelles. And those that realistically exist they have been vandalized and mismanaged and Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the public that if you look in the budget you will see that the Ministry of Social Affairs in collaboration with the various representatives have a programme for the completion and the development of our community centers where we will make much better use of them in the year to come and over. [Interjection]. You see this whole question of corruption, Mr. Speaker, we have spoken in public about it and we will be dealing with it as outlined before in the budget.

Mr. Speaker, we also proposed that next year in the budget to look at several roads in the constituency. This include, we have visited and we are in the process of developing for the next year budget repairs to roads in the Clare Valley area we call Goat Rock, and Plan, from the BNTF project. And from the BNTF project we expect to get the allowances to deal with those roads. Also in Chauncey cemetery we proposed to fix the roads and access into the cemetery in the next year, Mr. Speaker. These may appear to some people as not being important, but when you consider a cemetery that covers. You must remember that the South Leeward district is the most numerous. I know my colleague from St. George might challenge me on that, but that last election demonstrated that elected members, South Leeward had the highest number of electors. The question of cemetery where we pay our last respects to our loved ones is important and we noticed over the years that that cemetery has been left unattended and therefore about 30% of it is unutilized or under utilized because of access, Mr. Speaker, we promised to utilized this problem in the coming budget. Cemeteries in general are very important.

Mr. Speaker, the whole question of recreational facilities will be dealt with also. We do these in steps; we might not be able to deliver definitely in the next budget but we have to start somewhere and in the next fiscal year we will be taking steps to improve recreational facilities in the constituency and I can assure the constituents of the Vermont Valley area that we are well on the way to looking at that problem, and I would say more on that as it develops.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You have 15 minutes.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, much obliged. Mr. Speaker, I have a lot and I can say a lot but we believe in action not so much in words and I may not have to use all of that time, because Mr. Speaker, you would notice that we were not challenged in the areas of health because we have been delivering such a good job and with our plans to deliver next year, we were not challenged. So, Mr. Speaker, we have to tell you that we have promised, we have planned and again let me reiterate my thanks to my hard working staff, because we interconnect and we communicate and we listen to our staff that is why we have been delivering at a rate that cannot even be understood by the Opposition because they never seen anything like that. [applause].

Mr. Speaker, in rounding up Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity again to thank the corporate citizens for their assistance, not only here but abroad. I want to also mention not only with the cooperation to the Ministry of Health but to the constituency, and I want to mention one Mr. Herman Roberts who resides in Canada and in fact just today I was informed he is here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, by donating valuable furniture to the Quetelles Government school. And there are very many other citizens who have been good citizens out there and we want to thank them. And you know, Mr. Speaker, the reason why they are responding so much you know, it says the good Lord help those that help themselves; it is because the ULP Government has been so proactive that people feel good falling in line and stretching out themselves to help us. Yes, because people now have a new pride in their country and really appreciate that.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to take the opportunity to address a problem that at this time of the year is on the increase, the whole question of motor vehicle accidents, discipline on the roads, Mr. Speaker, I may have forgotten it when I made my formal presentation, better late than never. Mr. Speaker, we have a problem in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. We have a lot of ill discipline and that is one of the issues we are trying to address and the ill discipline, stretches many areas, especially among motorists. And I do not want my minivan friends to feel discriminated, but unfortunately that fact is they are the main culprits I would say.

Mr. Speaker, I want all of us as responsible citizens to help our other citizens and we ourselves to be more responsible, because you see, it is a health problem, because accidents cause injuries to human being and it is an economical problem because when you are injured you cannot produced, it cost to the health care delivery system, because when you are injured we have to mobilize resources to take care of you, so therefore, I want the motorists to be more disciplined. There was an incident Mr. Speaker, where I had to report a certain motorist to the law enforcement officers and I heard it caused some stir; I do not mind, some people feel because I am a politician that I must not put up pressure on other citizens. Well, Mr. Speaker, this politician will

take on his civic duties and I hope that all of us will when you see a wrong is being done. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, we all know that it is wrong to overtake at an intersection and especially to overtake several vehicles at the same time. It is wrong to fly pass persons while they are crossing the pedestrian crossing and this happened to me on consecutive days, believe it or not by the same motorists and I reported this, and some people think for petty partisan politics that I was unfair and I was wrong, but this would not dissuade me, anytime I see that, and motorists anytime you see my vehicle coming you better make sure that you drive safely because if you do not I will report you. And I want all of us to take that attitude, because too any persons are injured on the roads, too many of our resources are leaving the country in the cost for repairs to vehicles. Discipline is important. Without a disciplined nation we cannot develop properly. With that in mind I want our motorists to make a dollar, the minibus drivers you deliver a very good and important service, of course. But do it safely. To the taxi men, and I have many friends as taxi drivers we hope that your business would improve during this season. To all the fishermen, my friends the fishermen in the fishing villages of South Leeward and others and especially at Tokyo fisher folks, I know you are not seeing me as often as you used to see me before but my heart is with you. Continue to catch the fishes and I hope next year you will catch more fishes, than you did this year, so that you can feed your family much more.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I hope for this Christmas season too you can catch some more fish and we all will be able to continue to eat more healthily and you will be able to earn more money. I want to send out Christmas greetings to all my constituents. All. NDP and ULP because it does not have any PPM, I heard some people mention about PPM, I do not think they any longer existed, and they never existed in South Leeward. Especially the NDP supporters that still remain in South Leeward because I know several has since come over and more are coming, welcome, welcome, together now, come over. And maybe it is in order to send a very special greeting to the former representative to Mr. Jerry Scott and let me take this opportunity to thank him for whatever little he would have done before and that he should expect better things to come in the years to come from the new representative and from this Government I wish him and his family the best, and yes a peaceful and healthy retirement.

Mr. Speaker, we expect to repeat our reach out and touch programme, so look out for that constituents. I do not want to run the risk of naming villages and blocks, because as you know South Leeward has the most villages in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, so I would just want to say all the villages from up top Vermont to Campden Park, Carib area, all of you I wish you, all the blocks, all the beach lines, the parks the nooks the crannies, because if I start naming I will forget, all of you, all the best for the Christmas season, and because the Unity Labour Party is an optimistic party we know that next year that things will be better for you and all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I want to wish my friends on the other side also best wishes for the season. You know this is new for me because I am one of those persons who really in the past regime I did not find much to wish people about during the Christmas season because things were really so rough. There was no hope. When I was in Opposition I really did not find much to wish you know. But now because of the assessment I have made that is why we are over here now. There was not much hope. There was not much hope. Now the people have seen the light and have realized what they should have done and they have done it, I feel now much easier to extend best wishes. So my colleagues over there, sincerely I wish you all the best with you and your family. On this side, Mr. Speaker, my brothers and sisters, my extended family over here and especially my colleague from the former marginalized constituency, former, because now it is fully integrated under the Unity Labour Party Government. I wish that things will continue to improve because I know that there are some shared leadership down there, headed by my colleague on this side. And Mr. Speaker, to the staff of this Honourable House, best wishes for the upcoming season. Mr. Speaker, you too Sir, your family, we thank you for conducting the affairs in the House in such an efficient manner, we hope that your holiday season you being a man of high integrity, you would be putting on your Christian clothes, kindness and devotion to all, we wish you all the best, Sir. To the police officers here and out there. We know this is a testing time for you, some criminal activities flair up, we know that you are now being given much more attention, more facilities and you would be better prepared, we wish you a safe Christmas and hope that danger may not come your way, you go about your duties, respecting the rights of our citizens but also responding to your responsibilities.

So Mr. Speaker, and for those I did not directly mention, all citizens of St. Vincent and the Grenadines a very Merry and happy and healthy Christmas. Mr. Speaker, I support this budget to the fullest and I know it is going to bring to the citizens of this country much hope and better standard of life, I am much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I have been marginalizing the Honourable Senator for quite some time. But before I take you I just want to say a couple things. I just want to remind us about Belize Solidarity Day, and your expected contribution to assist in their reconstruction after Hurricane Iris and I hope that you do so quite generously. The day is perhaps fast going and if you have not done so you need to make your contribution to this important fund.

Also I would like to recognize in our midst a charming Ms. Gillian Applewhite,. Vice President of the West Indies Jaycees from Barbados. She is visiting here in St. Vincent as one of the territories she has responsibility. And she is also responsible for Dominica and St. Kitts. We welcome you and we are pleased to have you in our midst. Thank you, very much, much obliged to you.

HONOURABLE EDWIN SNAGG: Mr. Speaker, I rise to lend my support to the Appropriation Bill and to this budget as read by the Minister of Finance Mr. Speaker, this budget is one that has kept its focus and has kept the philosophy of the Unity Labour Party and it has also kept Mr. Speaker, the commitment of this party to stick to what is in its manifesto. Mr. Speaker, this is a remarkable budget. The fact that the Minister of Finance under these tight financial constraints can come up with a budget like this one that does not put any profound pressure on the general population is indeed commendable and worthy of praise. Mr. Speaker, this administration as we know it is an administration that is concerned about the poor and the working class. And the budget which has been presented here on Wednesday to this Honourable House is a clear indication that this administration is indeed a Labour administration.

Mr. Speaker, the lame attempt by the opposition to do any critical analysis of this budget is a clear indication of the depth of this budget and about the goodness of this budget. It is quite evident that they have laboured to find any useful criticism to this budget. In fact, Mr. Speaker, they were really like drowning men catching at straws. The Leader of the Opposition for three and one half hours laboured extensively to criticize this budget; he laboured extensively to find any loopholes in this budget, save and except one or two pieces of triviality. Mr. Speaker, a new and effective role that labour is now playing in the development process of this country, is indeed remarkable. And Mr. Speaker, attached to the Prime Minister's office with responsibility for Labour and Grenadines affairs, I feel very heartened that the Ministry of Labour was put under the auspices and care of the Prime Minister, is a very clear indication of the direction this administration is going.

Mr. Speaker, during our very short tenure in office, and I dare say eight months, in the business of government is indeed a very short period. It is actually like infancy in government. Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out one or two of the measures that this administration has taken in the field of labour, and other related matters. Mr. Speaker, there has been the restructuring and the modernization of the Department of Labour and that this administration has enlisted the services of Mr. Goldsteran, a senior industrial specialist of the International Labour Organisation to conduct an exercise in modernization and restructuring of the Department of Labour for it to meet these challenging times. Mr. Speaker, this was done with extensive consultation and with a workshop that lasted two or three days, and we look forward to his reports and this administration is prepared to implement all the things we see are necessary to move the entire process of labour administration forward.

Mr. Speaker, over the years it has been the norm that the Department of Labour was one that was set basically on the back burner only to solve one or two industrial matters, to work out one or two minor cases between some employer and some employee somewhere but labour never played any significant role in the development process of this county. It never played any significant role in the economic

development of this country. Mr. Speaker, because of our new vision and our new and fresh approach we recognize the role that labour must play in the development process. Mr. Speaker, we have gone on to establish five unemployment registration centers throughout this country. We have them in, Mr. Speaker, in Marriagua, Byera, in Barrouallie, Kingstown and one in Union Island. The purpose Mr. Speaker, is to register all unemployed, particularly young people, but all unemployed people, they provide certain data that will be necessary for us to hinge certain policies in terms of the type of training that will be necessary or the type of skills that gives us full information as what sort of talents we have in this country and how it can be best utilized. Mr. Speaker, it is the intension of Ministry of Labour to establish a one stop resource center to which there will be a data bank, and employers can come to this data bank, and employees likewise, future employees can view what jobs are available and what personnel are available. Mr. Speaker, this is being done with the assistance of the US Department of Labour and we hope that this is going to be a success. And we know it is going to be a success based on the work that is being put in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, in this short period of time we said in our 100 Days that will update the labour legislation in this country and we already have draft copies of the protection of employment bill. As a matter of fact, legislation to amend the Protection of Employment Bill and also a question of another bill called the Labour Relations Bill which deals with Industrial matters such as Trade union recognition etcetera, and Mr. Speaker, it is indeed commendable that these bills were done and I must commend here the hard working staff of the Attorney General's Chambers, because there has been wide spread consultation with all the social partners, the trade union movement, government, the business community, the Employers Federation and there has been workshops on more than one occasion, Mr. Speaker, and there have been some very significant comments coming from these social partners. Mr. Speaker, I expect that these bills will be tabled before this Honourable House very early in the New Year. There has also been the establishment of the wages council, and the work of the wages council, Mr. Speaker, is finished and the report, has just been sent before the government and it is important to note that the wages council, Mr. Speaker, worked on the terms and conditions of non unionized workers, or workers not belonging to our bargain union and also in relation to minor salaried workers.

Mr. Speaker, what is interesting, that the trade union movement as a whole, the leadership of the trade union movement after consultation with the Government sat at a meeting, Mr. Speaker and all decided to accept a temporary wage freeze. Mr. Speaker, I think that we seem to down play this event. We fail to recognize here, Mr. Speaker, that the working class, the working people of this country have come to the realization that is necessary for them to work harmoniously with Government in order for us to stem the tide of what is taking place in our economic situation at this time. And I think it is commendable because normally there is a perception of the trade union movement, a very wrong perception indeed, and the perception is that the trade

union is like a bulldog, always ready to roar and to eat up somebody, and to squeeze the neck of employers there and everywhere and to squeeze the neck of Government basically to get wage increases for employees. Mr. Speaker, with the level of industrial relation in this country has indeed risen over the past couple of months. [Applause]. The level of understanding Mr. Speaker, that we have and the relation as I said with the trade union movement is quite unique and is one that I think we ought to do everything in our power to maintain that level of relationship between the Government, the business community and the employers and the trade union movement.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has a particular commitment to the poor and the working class. This Mr. Speaker is evident from this budget. The Leader of the Opposition indicated that he think this budget did not go far enough in the wake of the September 11th affair, and it led me to wonder Mr. Speaker, what did he expect? He found that there were not enough measures put in place, to deal with the September 11th affair, and I got the distinctive impression that if the Leader of the Opposition had to bring this budget after the September 11th affair if he were on this side of the Honourable House, Mr. Speaker, that we would have had a very draconian budget. [Applause]. We would have had a budget with some very stringent measures, Mr. Speaker, quite clear and quite evident, that he would probably place a noose around our necks, but you see, Mr. Speaker, he would have probably acted like 'Frighten Friday' no pun intended here, Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines, but he certainly would have acted in a very timid manner, but Mr. Speaker, we are a people of vision, hope, and optimisms. And most of all we are a people who have a belief and faith in God. And in so doing, Mr. Speaker we look forward with a hope down the road that we, Mr. Speaker, cannot afford to box ourselves in for ourselves despite the fact that what may have happened on September 11th. Mr. Speaker, we believe that we have a budget here that is going t take this country through the year 2002 and applaud the Minister of Finance as I said before that despite all the attempts that some have made to criticize this budget we are in the firm belief that a wonderful job has been done and that poor people would be able to survive for yet another year. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, our commitment is quite evident in terms of the enhancement of the National Insurance benefits, the government thrust in education which is designed to uplift the poor, as education, Mr. Speaker, is the gateway out of poverty. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to elaborate too much in this regard and one of the unique situations is that when I want to speak on matters, or issues that affect the Southern Grenadines I would really have to tread into the domains of some of my colleagues here and their Ministries, because the Grenadines is so unique that every Ministry lives in the Grenadines. But, Mr. Speaker, this Government has shown without a doubt that we are taking this country forward. And that cannot be disputed, and despite what the detractors say they know down in their heart Mr. Speaker, that this government is really a progressive government that is moving in a certain level of proactiveness that

most they can do about it, Mr. Speaker, is sit jealous and gross. But we are moving on.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of building 1000 low cost homes, Mr. Speaker, is something that not only needs to be applauded, you know, but one shudder when one thinks that an administration will attempt to build 1000 low cost homes, Mr. Speaker. These are homes for poor people, we are talking about low cost housing. Mr. Speaker there people who just do not know, who cannot see from which part they could start to build a home. Let us not fool ourselves, we live in a real world and this affords them an opportunity to maybe pay some nominal sums per month and some where down the line own a shelter. Mr. Speaker, there is also the 100% mortgage financing to public servants which will allow them to be able to access, to build a shelter over their heads. You see, Mr. Speaker, it is one thing for us to stand in this Honourable House and to speak about the macroeconomics, the microeconomics, the fiscal policies, all sorts of fiscal measures, we could talk about GDP and what have you, but you know Mr. Speaker the poor man outside there he do not really care nothing much about those terms, you know, Mr. Speaker, his concerns is about some food, a shelter, and some clothing in that order. [Applause]. And his children going to school. Mr. Speaker, the bottom line that is his budget and when he looks at a budget, he does not want to hear anything about deficit and recurrent deficit, these are different kinds of economists, his economics is what takes place on his table, brother, his economics is bread and his butter. His economics is when he gets some sugar. As far as this poor man is concerned if one gets the feed back as to what is happening on the ground, and I supposed that sometimes, you know, a lot of people in this Honourable House, I would not say my colleagues here, but I would respect, that it is nice for you to walk down sometimes and walk across the market square, walk through the market, walk across down the bayside, walk down Bottom Town, and Sister Baptiste, I treading in your corner, walk down Bottom Town and areas like that, and you would hear what people are thinking and what people are saying that, eh, eh, we thought that this would have been a kind of drastic budget, but it did not have anything there to interfere with poor people. And furthermore some are saying, we thought that Ralph would have been a bad man, that he would have lick we up, but they see a certain level of humaneness and understanding, of what is taking place in the society and they marvel, even down to the Opposition and all have to marvel. {Applause}.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to stay to long because I only have 45 minutes so I can't stay too, long, long on these macro issues. I will need to go into my constituency as early as possible, so Mr. Speaker, I as usual I cannot stand here without taking you down to the Grenadines, because for years the Grenadines has not had any level of substantial representation you know. They were figures, of course they were representatives elected by people but they never really articulated the position of the Grenadines people with any effectiveness, because their concern was just to follow into the status quo. Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that the Honourable Prime Minister

and the Unity Labour Party in their joint wisdom decided that Edwin Snagg should be a senator in this Honourable House so that the people in the Northern Grenadines can have another voice, a real voice to speak not only on their behalf Mr. Speaker but also to articulate their dreams, and their woes and their aspirations.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a brief look and a quick look at what is happening in the Grenadines. You see, over the years there has always been a misconception that the Grenadines is like a pie in the sky, in that the Prime Minister of this country for some 16 odd years, was from the Grenadines and so everything would have gone to the Grenadines and the Grenadines benefited tremendously under the NDP but that is not so, you know, there is no question about that, that is not so. You see, it may be in the best interest of the Honourable Member of the Northern Grenadines, he did not say anything like that, you see he has been away for a very long time, you see, Mr. Speaker, it is one thing to ride the back of a political party and get elected and come into the House of Parliament, you understand, but it is another thing, Mr. Speaker, to touch base from the bottom, to shake the very bowels of the grass root, to understand the society from which you come so that you can speak on behalf of a people, understanding all of the circumstances because you are part and parcel of their very existence, because you are part and parcel of their very soul. Mr. Speaker, when I speak about the Grenadines I speak about it with a certain passion, Mr. Speaker, I speak about it from the soul. The Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines, he does not understand that. [Applause]. He has been out for too long, he cannot remember the names of certain places in Bequia, he has lost touch.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to sports, I look at young people in the Grenadines and this goes for both Northern and Southern. And ironically I would want to believe that I would have gotten the support of the Honourable Member from the Northern and Southern Grenadines because I am actually speaking for both of them, I am doing something that they probably have not been able to do. {Applause}. They should have been happy that I am representing you. Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an important thing in the development of any society that we always say that our youths, that our people are the most important assets and that our youths are the most important, and I mean when we look at what is taking place with our young people today, we shudder to think; we look down the road and sometimes we wonder where are they heading.

Mr. Speaker, sports is a vital avenue. It teaches them a certain amount of discipline, a certain amount of self discipline. And Mr. Speaker, there are not any amount of sporting facilities in the Grenadines that are of count or worth. There are one or two basketball courts and each island of the Southern Grenadines. One is in a very bad condition, and I learnt that many thousand of dollars was spent there. It is ironic that somebody is not somewhere in the back of us here, for the amount of thousand that was spent for the facility that we see there. And there is another one, that they say that one is community based and privately owned, I have heard a lot of terms in my life Mr.

Speaker, I have heard a lot of political terms, but it is the first time I hear, that a sporting facility is privately owned, community based. And the ironic thing about it is that the private shareholder is a former member of the House of Parliament, a former representative. Mr. Speaker, certain thing you do not understand. We talk about corruption, Mr. Speaker, we have seen it all you know. I do not believe, Mr. Speaker, that we would ever see corruption to the level of what we have seen in the past 17 years. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, there are lot of people who should be brought to justice for some of the things that they have done in this society, eh. But I do not want to stray from off the focus of the youths. Being part and parcel of this great party, this young but great party, you know sometimes, you can be old but not great, but I am talking about a young, great party, and you can see greatness because greatness is something that one can recognize from a distance. And the Youth Empowerment Service is indeed something that is so remarkable and I believe that every single individual in the Grenadines hail the YES programme. Mr. Speaker, let us look at it from a very objective basis. There is not much work in the Southern Grenadines, you know, Southern or Northern. One either work in the private sector, there are not many Government jobs per se. You either work at the revenue office, you teach. That is basically it. And when from a small constituency like ours, 20 young people can put on their dan, dan and their glad rags in the morning and leave to go the post office and schools, Mr. Speaker that is significant thing. That is something of importance. [Applause]. And the people of the Grenadines they hail this. And the Grenadines, both Northern and Southern there are 40 such people. And when I think in terms of our percentage there is no victimization, because my goodly friends on the other side both the Members for the Northern and Southern Grenadines were all given the opportunity to place ten people in this programme. That is the extent that this great government has gone to, in terms of seeing about its people. That is a classic example of together now. And even though there was some discord among certain supporters, we had to indicate to them that we are taking a new vision. That we are embarking on a new path.

Mr. Speaker let me just talk about health. The health situation in the Grenadines has always been a very pathetic one. Basically because of the distance, but what has happened in Canouan is that a new health center has just been completed in Canouan and the Ministry of Health I believe is on the ball in terms of getting the necessary equipment in place and the necessary staffing and soon the people of Canouan will be happy to know that they do not have to take that long trip in speed boats anymore to come to Union Island for medical attention. Mr. Speaker, that is of great significance. But even more so, Mr. Speaker, the problems that we have in health, is that there is always a shortage of staff, but we understand the implications. We understand that there is shortage of nurses and we know the Government is moving expeditiously to address this and so we could bear with all of this. But the Honourable Minister of

Health stole my thunder away from me a little minute ago, when in his address he indicated that there is now a dental service in the Southern Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, from 1996, I do not believe that not a week did not pass that I did not speak about the absence of a dentist. I do not think Mr. Speaker, that I went on any public platform or any forum Mr. Speaker, without raising the issue of the lack of a dentist in the Southern Grenadines. You see, Mr. Speaker, there are certain circumstances you had to live in the environment in order to understand it and feel it. You see, I have had the privilege of seeing people come from time to time with their jaw swollen and they come to ask me, they want money borrowed, I want to this teeth, or I want to extract it, I am in pain. And they are looking for money for a plane to come to mainland St. Vincent to do an extraction, or sometime they hire a charter a boat, a small piragua or something and braze the seas and go over to Carriacou; understand what I am saying here, Mr. Speaker, in order to find a dentist. Mr. Speaker, how come for 17 years an administration could be in office and look at a people suffering this kind of plight and make no attempt at all to address it, and Mr. Speaker, from early November the dental service began in the Southern Grenadines and every Monday morning there is a dentist at the Dental Clinic at Ashton. For that I thank God. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, in the line of education, the NDP did very little for education in the Southern Grenadines or in the Northern Grenadines, because the schools remained the same. You heard the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines speaking about the School and pleading about the conditions about the school. He was very thankful for the work that was done during the repairs July/August, but he is also pleading for the present situation, and to think the Prime Minister for so many years was your representative and I hope you do not try to take us to task, and stick you hands up in our throats, because for so many years, and I do not think that there is much care that went into the situation in Bequia, you know, save and except there was some roads and one or two jetties, but these are all strategically placed and in terms. They are now being taken care of in the Grenadines. As a matter of fact, the secondary school, the single secondary school that there is in the Southern Grenadines and in Union Island is a secondary school in which the forms are still separated by blackboards. And I had the experience one day of going to visit the school and going to the science teacher, and I am like excuse me sir, can you show me where the lab is; being an old science student myself, can you show me the lab, and he said Mr. Snagg, you are standing in the lab. That just give you an indication of what I am speaking about, and I so relieve to see, Mr. Speaker, that \$250,000.00 appears in this budget for the designed and supervisory work for the construction of a secondary school in Union Island. That is going to be completed for the cost of \$3 million before the tenure of this Government is over. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the question of community library. There is a very small library, the only library that there is in the Southern Grenadines. A very small library; small and tiny. You can barely turn around, so it cannot have many books, so you

understand what is happening there. But a library was built almost two years ago. They refurbished the old teachers house and said that this is going to be a library but it is closed for two years. It closed for so long that the door rotten. It does not have any shelves. It does not have any electricity. Honourable Prime Minister when I hear you talk about the bad hand, in terms of the deficit, they leave some, they did not leave any hand, at all you know. Because hand is not only about ace and jack, hand is about a lot of other things. And they have not left anything much at all, you know.

Mr. Speaker, with the help of a friendly donor, I hope that this community library is going to be opened before Christmas. I want to give them the privilege that people can begin to read because we talk about our students, and we talk about society, and we talk about the young people in secondary schools are not being able to read, so it is important to establish that community library, and for your information, Mr. Speaker, the young lady who is going to be at that library is someone whom we took on, on the YES programme, and I brought her up here to the National Library to have some training so she can carry out that project. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, we have no bananas. I have some sun; I have some sea; I have lot of sand and it is important, Mr. Speaker, that there is restructuring in the banana industry. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition probably feels a little peeved when he heard the banana industry is being restructured seeing that he had his hands in banana all the time. But I do not want to speak about bananas because I am not an authority on bananas. I know very little on banana. I know a little bit more about fish so I will come to that. But Mr. Speaker, you see in the Ministry of Agriculture here, you see we do not have banana talkers but what we have is real flesh and blood farmers in the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Agriculture, men who does plant bananas, who know about bananas.

Mr. Speaker, and as I come to fish, bananas always go with fish. So I am moving straight into fish. I am moving straight into the debacle that took place with the fisheries, in Bequia, Canouan and the one in Union Island. Three of the edifices, total white elephants, and the one at Calliaqua. And all they are doing, Mr. Speaker, the one in Union Island, it only sells ice. All they do is sell ice. The one in Union Island, they do store a little bit of fish there and they have some ice there also, but it is a barracks yard. If you see it, Mr. Speaker, you would not believe, of course, people live there, fishermen, those guys from Northern Grenadines, from Paget Farm and they go to dive in the area of the Tobago Keys for lobster and all of them living in the fisheries. In Canouan, you should go down there on afternoons and after everybody come in and use the plane and see what is really taking place, Mr. Speaker. And you know, ironically, fishing is only other industry in the Grenadines beside tourism, so for many people their livelihood depends on fishing, so many brothers who cannot find anything else to do but could jump in a boat and get a fish gun and go out there and shoot some pounds of fish and sell it to those guys who take fish to Martinique. And you sat on

your hunches for a period of almost two years because I saw letters coming from the European Union, indicating that it is necessary for the Government to fall into certain stipulations, otherwise we may not be able to ship fish to Europe, and they waited and waited and waited until we were blacklisted. What a shame. And knowing fully well that that is the survival of a people. You know how many mouths are fed by those boats taking fish to Martinique?

Mr. Speaker, let me try and move quickly eh. For this administration I noticed that there is \$730,000.00 that is budgeted for the facilities.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You have ten minutes.

HONOURABLE EDWIN SNAGG: Ten minutes. Thank you, much obliged Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition, I hear him speak on tourism promotion, boy, I mean sometimes, there is a term that they use, I do not know if it might be correct to use it in this Honourable House. I do not know if it is an honourable term. I do not want to use it, but you can be real brass face. I mean, the last administration did nothing for tourism. Let us face the reality of it. It is one thing to say that the cruise ship berth is situated in Kingstown; it could have been at a different location, but then again too, when I am lord, I am lord, I survey, I make all decisions, and according to Eric Williams no dog bark. So Mr. Speaker, there is the falls of Baleine. There is La Soufriere. There is Nice Anchorage at Wallillabou. When you want to speak in terms of tourism, there is no question about it, you know. That is the hub of tourist activity in St. Vincent and the Grenadines lies in the Southern Grenadines, and maybe Bequia. There is no two ways about that. That is the reality of it. And nothing was done to enhance tourism. Nothing was done. When he spoke about promotion, I have never seen the promotion of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in any significant way, anywhere. I heard my good friend there from the Northern Grenadines saying he saw a big billboard marked Barbados, etcetera, and St. Kitts, in Trinidad, I have never seen St. Vincent and the Grenadines and I have lived there for years. So they never engaged in any promotion. What sort of promotion did they engage in.

The only reason, Mr. Speaker, why tourism survived in the Southern Grenadines or the Grenadines as a whole is because of the natural and pristine beauty that God has blessed that little place with, and not because of the work of the NDP. [Applause]. There is no two ways about that. Nothing was done. Absolutely nothing. There is the formation of a new tourist board in Union Island and that tourist board, Mr. Speaker God blessed my judgment. I found a gentleman by the name of Mr. Bertie Simmons, and I do not really like to call names, but I really have to do it here today, Mr. Bertie Simmons is a man who works like from 7:00 in the morning until about 8:00 in the night. And you would believe like he is being paid. He works as though it is a man who is employed and paid a salary. And he works for the \$100 and whatever it is the stipend is, for a Chairman, he does not even take that, he plows that back into the

activities, and there are others that go with him, like Sam Debique, and Jah Watcher and Mr. Sam Harvey, you know, I must make mention of these people. Because really there is a certain new and a certain level of civic mindedness that is taking place. The Honourable Minister of Tourism when she spoke about it, how clean Union Island is, how they have moved the vendors, they have gotten park benchers. I forgot Father Andrew Roache and I thank God for the judgment in selecting these kinds of individuals, Mr. Speaker. And there was a tourist board before that never even met. They never met for years. All the Chairman was doing was collecting the stipend. She too, was a Member of Parliament here, for sometime.

Mr. Speaker, the question of the Tobago Cays, I want just briefly make mention, you would recognize that the Government is going to come up with a comprehensive plan for the dealing of Tobago Cays. Well, you knew, nothing about Tobago Cays at all. I do not think that the Leader of the Opposition knew very much of Tobago Cays either, because one of the things the board was saddled with a lot of people who have never even seen the Tobago Cays. They have not been there. Nevertheless, a lot of things took place on the Tobago Cays and it is one of the most beautiful places, every yacht that come in the vicinity of the Southern Grenadines head for the Tobago Cays. Most pristine beaches that you can find. Very, very natural environment. Goldmine if properly harnessed. Mr. Speaker, they did absolutely nothing for years. I think that the administration of the NDP was a disaster to tourism. A real disaster. And to turn now and to watch this government and say much was not been given, eh, when you had the opportunity. You had a golden opportunity. Those days, when you would walk in Union Island and Old Year's Night, natives could not find any place to walk because the streets would be full with visitors. You had to take a side and give them room. You cannot walk in the streets and then a decline took place and on a very continuous basis until it reached almost right down to zero, and you want to talk to us about tourism? Eh?

Mr. Speaker, it is nice to see that there has been some regulations in the yachting field because you would recognize that the yachting sector has continued to hold strong. The issue of garbage collection, Mr. Speaker, garbage collection and disposal in the Grenadines is poor, poor, poor. It was in a very poor, poor state, but I am happy that we have this solid waste management is now going to be responsible for the design of the landfills and I am happy also that they are going to be responsible for implementation of collection.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak for a brief minute on lands at Canouan. I was happy to hear the Honourable Prime Minister at earlier session, at an earlier debate here, indicating that those who bought lands in Canouan at under value, under price, that there is the possibility that it may be acquired for public purpose. And Mr. Speaker, it is indeed very painful because you see, the cost at which these lands were bought by what I would want to say, Ministerial and official squatters, because it is a high way of

squatting in that you saw a piece of land and you really want it and you decide what price you are going to pay for it. So who decide they are going to pay \$1.50. And who decide they are going to pay \$0.80, and who decide they are going to pay 50 cents and who decide they are going to pay 40 cents. They really take it for themselves. And nobody could put them off, because of their level, because of their stature in the society. But if it were the smaller man or the average man had gone there, certainly they he would have been removed. But after you do that you turn around and cut out some lots, and you hand it to poor people in Canouan and it has \$3.00 a square foot on it. That is the price you give, \$3.00 a square foot. That is what they must pay. \$3.00 a square foot, that is what they must pay for lands in Canouan. Poor people, one lot they have. Only one lot and they paying \$3.00 a square foot. The ex Ministers pay 40 cents and 50 cents, and 80 cents per square foot, eh, for acres. Mr. Speaker, gross injustice. Mr. Speaker, but anyhow.

On my desk, Mr. Speaker, and after some discussions with the Honourable Prime Minister I want to take the liberty to say to the people of Canouan that those land that they now have allocated to them, that this administration is seriously considering a reduction of the cost per square foot for that land. Take that for Christmas. [Applause]. And it is a vindication to the 140 people who supported the ULP in Canouan, they could raise their flag and be vindicated, that they have done a very good thing because we are performing some noble acts, indeed. That is the righting of another historic wrong, indeed.

Mr. Speaker, the understanding of the escalation of crime in Canouan they would know that money has been budgeted for a new police station. It is estimated to cost \$1.5 million, comfortable facilities. There will also be a Court House in Canouan. We are looking to locate a building where court could be held. That again is going to eliminate us from having to jump on this small boat to head to Union Island to go to Court, sometimes the witness does not come, sometimes the summons, does not reach. I mean it is a whole fiasco, and we are happy to be able to address this, and certainly in the New Year, this government is going to address that.

Mr. Speaker, also in Union Island I have word that the police station is going to relocated and that the police officers are going to be going into new premises between today and tomorrow. They are going to be living in good style. Because you see, they were living in some very deplorable conditions. And we have people working in some deplorable conditions, and then they cannot function. They cannot work properly. And we know that law and order is important and we know the function of law and order. So we need to make our police officers as comfortable as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak for a brief minute on water. You know that water has been one of the thorny issues in the Grenadines and it has been a very thorny issue for many years. Mr. Speaker, we have had a very crucial dry season. And we have had

cause to ship somewhere in excess of almost 300,000.00 gallons of water to the Grenadines, Mr. Speaker, in 2001. I thank the Honourable Prime Minister for allowing me to advantage the little special vote that he has under his care so that I send water to the Grenadines and I thank also the Rastaman for MV Rita who I would go on the Grenadines wharf in the afternoon and tell him, 'hear na they need some water at the police station, they need water at the school, they do not have any water at the clinic and he would make a trip in the night and carry it to pump it out in the morning. May God bless him. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, but when we think that a boat was bought specifically for the purpose of shipping water to the Grenadines and then the NDP came around and sold that boat one understands, what we are really dealing with. In addition to that Mr. Speaker, this administration has decided to embark on the building of a new reservoir at Clifton, and \$150,000.00 is already in this budget here Mr. Speaker, to begin work on that new reservoir, [Applause], in the first quarter of the year 2002.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question about it; I want to talk in relation to the airport, Mr. Speaker, you would note that there has been an allocation of \$700,000.00 for the purchase of fire and rescue vehicle at the Union Island Airport; in addition to that, and I know the Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines would be extremely grateful to hear this: that he has had an experience quite recently and we always have experiences where whenever there is a case of emergency and we have to get somebody out from the clinic to bring them up here to the Kingstown General Hospital, and especially when it is night there are no lights on the Union Island. And we go and we wake up our brothers and sisters who own vehicles, and we call them up and we line them across the airport and we shine some car lights on the airport and wait for some charter plane to come and to carry who ever the critical individual and to carry them to mainland St. Vincent. Mr. Speaker, this government has budgeted \$100,000.00 for an emergency lighting system for the airport in Union Island. You have a relief, Mr. Speaker. [Applause]. Salvation is on its way. Mr. Speaker, also like the Northern Grenadines also going to be lighted. The lights have not been working for a very long time. The Bequia Airport was also been considered as a white elephant, but because of certain events taking place, and because of Eagle in Canouan and certain personnel, we learn that certain visitors come on the American Eagle in Canouan and is heading for Bequia, that this government has decided to light the airport, or to repair the lights at the airport, so that air traffic can go into Bequia at nights; \$500,000.00. I did not have the figure but the Honourable Prime Minister just indicated the figure there, \$500,000.00.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I have to ask the Honourable Member to wind up.

HONOURABLE EDWIN SNAGG: Mr. Speaker, thank you, very much. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say to my constituents that very early in the New Year there will an elimination

of the need for you to come to mainland St. Vincent for your passport. Discussions with the Minister of National Security is going to eliminate that and also in relation to the birth certificate, I can assure you that, you know. [Applause]. Those who are five years and under you will get your birth certificate. In addition to that Mr. Speaker, security in schools, 36 watchmen are going to be employed to secure the schools, in the Grenadines effective from the 15th of December.

That too is some progress, in line with the community centre following discussions with the Honourable Prime Minister, there is an agreement that we will locate a parcel of land and design will begin for the construction of a community centre in Union Island and we want to give you a good community centre, we do not want to embark on a community centre like a cattle shed. Some just hanging like a bullpen. We want a centre that you could be proud of. A centre that you could use for various purposes, not something you know. The thing about it is that we want to lift your level. We want to lift you; just as how we hold respects for our selves we must have respect for others. And if we want to deliver a community centre for you, I must be able to give you a centre that you will treat with a certain level of respect because of how it is structured and because of the use that it could be put to. You should be able to have your computer classes. You should be able to have your stage for your drama activities, you should be able to not only carry on a little party or something like that, and we need to move from that. So people, of the Southern Grenadines your brother bringing it home. [Applause].

I want to wrap it up, Mr. Speaker, electrification for Mayreau. There is so much to say, I wish that I had more time, Mr. Speaker, but electrification. Mayreau is the political droves of this country, you know. They have supported the NDP over the years to the extent of 100%, and 90% of the votes. And yet still they lived under the worst conditions. The Myreau Jetty is almost finished, the MV Baracuda will be able to back up to the Mayreau Jetty just now Mr. Speaker, that is probably going to happen for Christmas. [Applause]. And we are delivering also electricity for them, sometime in August 2002 as Emancipation gift. And I know that they would want to tell me that they had that already. But they are saying it for years. It is 17 years the people of Mayreau hearing, you getting lights. You getting electricity, you getting wharf. Mr. Speaker, the implementation is a horse of a different colour. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, let me thank you for your indulgence. Let me thank Honourable Members for their patience. I want to thank all the constituents of the Southern Grenadines; I want to thank all those who supported me and even those who did not support me. You know that I got 45 point something percent of the vote and I hope that after this delivery here and this presentation I expect that I would have the other 5% plus one. [Applause].

I want to wish you Mr. Speaker, all the best, you and your family; Honourable Members on this side. I would like to wish my friend on the Opposition bench; I want to wish you and yours a very happy Christmas. The staff here, my friend there, the Sergeant-at-Arm, because I like to drink plenty water when I am here, I want to thank you for refilling my glass so every often. So I want to thank the Sergeant-at-Arms. I want to offer my sincere and best wishes to the Nation as a whole and May God bless you, all, Mr. Speaker, I am much obliged.

HONOURABLE TERRENCE OLLIVIERRE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members I humbly rise as the Representative of the Southern Grenadines in this Honourable House to make my contribution to the 2002 budget debate. As my first debate, I have listened attentively and carefully to the presentations of Honourable Members on both sides of this House.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Pounds his gravel.] Let us give him a chance. He has been listening to you very carefully. Just give him a chance.

HONOURABLE TERRENCE OLLIVIERRE: ... And not wanting to sound monotonous I must nevertheless lay my concerns and perceptions of the 2002 budget. But before that just want to clear up some matters that were said before. Mr. Speaker, for years it has been said that everything has been going to the Grenadines, that all the former Prime Minister was concerned about is the Grenadines. Now we are hearing that the Grenadines was being marginalized. Mr. Speaker, you cannot have it both ways, Mr. Speaker. Make up your mind, is either everything was going to the Grenadines or we were being marginalized. Mr. Speaker, I know what it is to have lived in the Grenadines as a small boy growing up, under certain social condition. And I can say that because of the New Democratic Party, the Government that was in power 16 and half years in this Government we were transferred virtually from darkest to light. Mr. Speaker, I know what it is to be as a little boy studying there with candle and kerosene lamp, because long time my grandmother used to send me in the shop to buy the kerosene when the boat come down there, they had to throw the drum into the sea, and let it wash ashore. Whether it go far down the road you had to go for it and get a donkey cart to pull it to the shop. I know about life in the Southern Grenadines. So anybody wants to talk about life in the Southern Grenadines, you first have to talk to me, I lived there for all these years. Mr. Speaker, I know what it is to go down on the mail boat, you could not even dress up in those days, because when you reach you had to take a small boat to go shore and you are getting wet up to your knee, especially if it rough, that make it worst. All those situations are long gone and I must thank the former Prime Minister and the New Democratic Party for improving the social conditions, for improving the standard of living for the people in the Southern Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard the words bellowing in this House that this is a poor people's budget. That it is a budget for the poor. I indeed hope that the people of this country would indeed benefit from small capital programme. And I hope that no one would have to use the analogy of the lemon tree, which states, the lemon tree is pretty, the lemon flower sweet, but the fruits of the lemon is unbearable to eat, to describe the 2002 budget which on first glance, Mr. Speaker, looks sensible, it looks very sensible but on further examination it is not sustainable.

Mr. Speaker, you know a lot of noise, you know I said I do not want to be monotonous but I have to go into it, I have been talking about the barrels, free barrels, you know we have seen the results out of it is just empty promises, which reminds me, you know, of the same, empty barrels makes the most noise. So we can see why all the noise is being made about the barrels, because it not free, so I warning people of this country, when you are going for your barrels, remember to walk with your \$15 and your \$25; and I must join the Member of the Northern Grenadines to ask that the you stick to your promise and that the fee must be zero.

Mr. Speaker, undoubtedly throughout the world education is seen as the major force for human betterment. Indeed the human resource is the most valuable resource, in a country, because it is the human resource that possesses the skills and the knowledge to develop a country, to raise the standard of living and this inevitably leads to a better quality of life. I agree with the Prime Minister that major emphasis must be place on the education sector because it is the only way by which a country can move forward. And, Mr. Speaker, the education system in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is no exception. If we want education to move forward in this country then we must be bold enough to invest in education, both at the micro level and at the macro level. At the Ministry of Education level and at the school levels. Our education system, it must meet the motivational needs of our people, it must meet the expectancy needs so that our people would be able to function more adequately in a technological world, Mr. Speaker. If we look at the Ministry of Education Mission and if I could read it for a while:

“To provide all of the state especially youths with opportunities appropriate to their developmental needs. Through the provision of quality education, academic, technical and vocational, moral and physical. And also to provide sports which will equipped them with the values, attitudes and skills necessary for creating and maintaining productive, innovative and harmonious society.”

Mr. Speaker, I am cognizant of our financial resources and our political constraint, but there is no doubt that if we want to move forward as I said, that we must adequately finance our education sector, so that we will be able to implement bold and innovative initiative to take this country through the 21st century. Mr. Speaker, if we fail to that we

will be left with a society, with a country that lacks the people with the skills, with the technological ability and the competence to effectuate national development.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at a practical example, we had comparative study that was done between Trinidad and Tobago and Singapore, by Dr. Parmer Deane of Economics faculty. At the University of Harvard. And what he found Mr. Speaker, is that although Trinidad and Tobago and Singapore were relatively economic equals in 1977, that by 1996, Singapore a country that has virtually no natural resources their economy leaped ahead by great deals of Trinidad and Tobago because of the investment that they place on education and that is why I say, Mr. Speaker, that if we want to move this country ahead, I agree with the Prime Minister that we must put major priority on the education sector to equip our people with the knowledge and the skill and the competence that they will need to develop the standard of living, thereby creating a better quality of life for all of us in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Some may say that it is significant in the 2002 budget as reported by the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance a couple days ago that approximately 18% was spent on the recurrent expenditure; 21.5% on the capital expenditure and a total of 39.5; 28 percent around there is geared towards the improvement of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. But, Mr. Speaker, after all the talk I heard about improving the education system. And making the education the number one priority in this country. I am somewhat disappointed because when I look at figures and when I look at what is projected in the budget I think that more could have been done to significantly impact on this country's economic status and the education system in order to take this county forward; especially in this changing times. Though I realize that it is important, it is very important that we have conducive environment, I know, I heard the Prime Minister said that they have received letters of congratulations about the school improvement project, that is good, maybe there are complaints, and maybe they have not reached to you yet. We still have leaking roofs, we still have broken windows and we still have some problems with floors and all of this, and I think a careful and meticulous evaluation of the project will reveal those and soon or later I think some of these problems will come to your attention, Honourable Prime Minister. However, I expected even though much could have been spent on the management and functioning of the schools, of the Ministry of education on redesigning of the curriculum to meet our current needs in taking us somewhere into the future. You know, we cannot just look at numbers, we also have to look at what happen in the past; we also have to look at the present and we also have to look at the future in order to chart the course forward in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that in order to have an efficient education system that we must have an environment that is conducive to teacher productivity and we have to look at the positive outcome of students and once we are doing this we must go at the core of the matter. My grandmother had always thought me once you want to get rid of a

problem you have to go to the root, you cannot chop down the trunk of the tree, it will grow back, you have to dig out the whole tree, you have to get at the root, Mr. Speaker. And that is why I have here I have some recommendations or something that I thought would have been articulated in the budget. For one, I think what is needed, Mr. Speaker, I know we have training of head teachers, we have training of teachers but what is needed on a large scale is that we have training of school administrators in order to improve the function and quality of our schools, then and only then we can say we are embarking on quality education. We must ensure that we improve the management structure and these are some of the basic things we have to look at. We have to equip our headteachers with the tools and the knowledge to manage our schools effectively. And once we have effective schools we going to have a productive society, productive country, and we going to have one built on stability.

The Prime Minister said that he paid the university \$2 million, but I think we can go a step further. If we want to have a significant impact on improving quality education in this country, Mr. Speaker, what we have to do since we are in connection with the University of West Indies, we have our UWI centre up there, negotiations can be made with the university, if on an on going basis, if every year we have the certificate in educational administration. Some funds can be put forward and may be whether it is 20 head teachers a year or 15 or 30 or whatever that will go a long way to improving our educational system because we will insure that the management, the people who are in charge of our schools have the capability and the know how to take this country forward.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If my friend would give way, please indicate to him. The University of the West Indies senior management team on two separate occasions came this year to see me and also the Ministry of Education and one of the items that was on the agenda was the expansion of the UWIDITE programme and we are awaiting from the University their own proposals and we are hoping to get those proposals early next year, and we have agreed to collaborate on expansion of the programme; but we do not know the details yet what the university provided.

Similarly, not only there, but we would like to see at the Community College an associate degree programme being offered and the University of the West Indies I have indicated them that we cannot wait on them that we may go else where, but they have asked us if we may wait on them until the academic year begins in 2002 and as Caribbean people we will wait on them and see what they can do for us by 2002, so that in addition to the UWIDITE programme they will be offering associate degrees in other areas, in addition to on going specialties which particular teachers may have. So I just want to assure you that those are in training.

HONOURABLE TERENCE OLLIVIERRE: Thank you, Honourable Prime Minister. You know, I believe that our educational system, it requires our imagination, our creativity,

our commitment in order to cope with the challenges ahead. And I have been talking to different University lecturers and I know that they are very much interested in helping each of the islands of the Eastern Caribbean to improve the management structure; to improve the efficiency of schools. To help them to implement school improvement programmes that will help us in the Caribbean to achieve quality education.

Mr. Speaker, I also think that it is important for us to review the management structure both at the Ministry of Education and at the school level. You know, the system right now is highly bureaucratic and I think we need to move to a system that is more flexible and that is more participatory in nature, so that we will have the commitment from our teachers, from those who work in that sector, and that they would tend to be more efficacious in the execution of their duty, and this all goes well, Mr. Speaker, for the improvement of students outcome. I also think that, you know, every year this country spends a lot of money to finance people at the University of the West Indies and other universities in North America and England and other places and sometimes at the summer time we depend only on OCAD for the summer workshops and things like that, but these same people when they come back to give service, what they do? Do we only let them go to schools to improve that one particular school? What I think can be done, Mr. Speaker, is that we can use these same people to help improve the education system. Maybe some funds can be set aside so that the people with the university training can embark on summer work shops, so that. Sometimes we do not have to depend on people outside, we have to use the in the words of Jimmy Cliff, we have to use what we have to get what we need. And we have in this country, Mr. Speaker, an abundance of human resources with the skills and knowledge more than capable of helping to train some of our teachers. In helping to impart that knowledge that summer work shop and different times; not only at summer workshop but perhaps development programmes can go at schools maybe at Friday evenings at other times.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: If my friend again. I just want to say this, and it is an excellent idea, and we are on the way with it, in this way. We have held discussions with the Teachers' Union and indeed at the discussions when we had over the wage freeze. I suggested to them that something we can do from the Government side along with them, whilst they are having the wage freeze here is that during this year we can beef up their own capacity, because we were identifying that a sizeable number of teachers needed retooling, in a number of different subject areas and that we will have, -- in fact I wanted to have them over the Easter and summer and have them done with the university and have accreditation for them, but they said that the Easter will be difficult because they would want to, some of them preparing the students for Common Entrance and some for O' Levels and so forth. But that is a project which again we are working on. And that is why I am so very happy to hear that you are echoing these very innovating ideas and that is why I believe you are misplaced where you are. You know the ideas you are coming with ducktail very much with what we have been presenting.

HONOURABLE TERRENCE OLLIVIERRE: Mr. Speaker, the people of the Southern Grenadines elected me to be on this side. Mr. Speaker, some of these things will help alleviate some of the problems that we are facing in our education system, we can raise the literacy level, we can get rid of some of the reading problems because I said, Mr. Speaker, we have the human resources to get rid of some of these problems. Having the resources and using the resources is quite a different matter. I think we need to embark on major school improvement projects, we need to look at the way other countries have been able to give quality education to their citizens. We need to look at some of the measures that they have adopted and maybe we can take some of these measures with some modifications, Mr. Speaker, to fit our needs then we can say that we are truly on the way to providing quality education. And there are other things that I can recommend but I know time is limited, but I will be willing and more than happy to make some of these recommendations, anytime the request is made.

Mr. Speaker, branch libraries provide a valuable service in the rural communities. And I would like to see the development of these libraries. When I look at the library at Canouan, at Union Island, the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines have also told me about the library in Bequia we realize much more can be done. I think that the sum that is allocated to the improvement of these libraries is inadequate. I think much more can be done. If we truly want to raise the level of education in the rural areas, we want to provide, we want to provide better educational opportunities for our people then we need to invest more in branch libraries, Mr. Speaker. I think suitable training for our people in these libraries and then we can also computerize them. You know, in some of these communities the citizens cannot afford to buy a computer Mr. Speaker, and by computerizing these libraries you have the poor people would be able to go to these libraries, talk to the librarian who have the knowledge and the skills, and they will be able to use the computer to get further information, that will assist them in the growth and their development and I think that is what. If we are talking about poor people budget, and we have the poor people of this country at hand, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the things we need to look at to improve the social condition of the people throughout this country. Bring the Internet to the people. Make it possible. Make the wealth of information – we are now living in a term of global village and education, information should be for all, we should give each and everyone of our citizens, the same educational opportunity. They may not be able to afford it but can assist them in reaching that point.

Mr. Speaker, another point in question is the book loan scheme. Parents throughout this country there is no doubt, some of them especially the poor have benefited from this programme that was implemented by the former NDP administration to the tune of over \$2 million. The sum that I see there for the maintenance of that programme \$6,000.00. Mr. Speaker, think about the poor. If you think about the poor are we serious. Is this money enough to maintain such a programme for the entire, when we look at poor people throughout this country? Remember this is a poor people's

budget, so we must bring the budget closer to the people. And talking about equality and equity in the education system and the book loan scheme, brings me to the point of something that occurred at the Community College, Mr. Speaker. I think it was decided that the students of parents whose incomes are \$2,000 and below would have been granted a special concession in getting these books, but what you find is that the whole thing was disregarded, and you found that whether you are poor or rich, or whatever bracket you fall into that everybody had to pay the same price to get the books. Mr. Speaker, do we have equity in the education system? If we are truly helping the poor then we must go ahead. If we talk the talk then we should not be afraid to walk it.

Mr. Speaker, our educational system as I said before must meet the motivational and expectancy level. And I am glad to say that this Government is continuing on one of the sound educational policy that was implemented by the former government. In that they are continuing to further computerize the schools. And I think that thanks must be given to the Republic of China on Taiwan and you know I am indeed grateful for the support and co-operation that they have given to this country so far. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Prime Minister in his presentation talked about the building of the new library. Indeed this is important to our education sector. And after all the fanfare of the ground breaking ceremony I really thought that the project would have been completed somewhere in 2002, latest 2003. From what I see is that the project will not be completed until the year 2005. And I think that is very important. Because I say that the Ministry of Education has as one of its objective to increase the pass rate and national examination, whether it be Common Entrance, School Leaving, O' levels. And I know that with construction of this library it will be able to provide information, it would be able to provide resources that our students need in order to move forward at a quick pace.

Mr. Speaker, I now come to my constituency. My constituency that is dear to my heart. I look at the roads throughout the Grenadines, Northern and Southern. The former Government have provided good infrastructure but they need to be improved upon. We have the road, we have the good roads, we have the good foundation roads but what needs to happen there these roads need to be paved with asphalt, in order to protect them from cracking, from corrosion, and these things, because when they are cracked up, Mr. Speaker, it is hard to fix them. What are we going to do, dig up the whole road or are we going to patch it by paving with the asphalt that will go a long way to making it smoother. When it is damaged, you either patch or you scrape off the asphalt and you pitch it again. And also, Mr. Speaker, I think the taxi drivers, not only the taxi drivers but the private owners of vehicles in the Southern Grenadines and the Northern Grenadines will welcome this, because it is will save them a bundle in tyres.

Mr. Speaker, we in the Southern Grenadines especially in Canouan. We are at a disadvantage in terms of Government services. The previous administration had in mind to build a government building to help provide some of these services and quarters for Government workers. I have seen no provision in the Estimates for this and my question to the Honourable Minister of Finance, we want to know whether we will be able to get some improvement in Governmental services in the Southern Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, the cemetery in Canouan. It has served us well, but now it is full. I have already spoken to the Honourable Minister of Finance on this matter and he had assured me that sometime August, or September that the surveyor would have been there to survey the land. Nothing has been done as yet; but we have already chosen the site. We have already spoken to some people in Canouan about the matter. We have located an old cemetery, part of it can be extended and we are looking forward to that improvement in that service, very soon.

The primary health care in the Southern Grenadines, Mr. Speaker, I was at the Clifton Harbour gone day, it was raining seas were rough and my heart really went out to one of the residents of Mayreau who came over in a speed boat with an infant because of some emergency to go to the health centre in Union Island and my question is how soon will we see an eradication of this problem in Mayreau when will the health centre be staffed, fully equipped and running to provide primary health care. The building has already been provided for that purpose and I hope that I will be addressed soon and very quickly. The people of Mayreau are very concerned about this service, and I think it should be given number one priority. Because it is expensive and certain dangers that they face in getting to Union Island. [Speaker pounds gravel].

Mr. Speaker, I have been there all these years, living in these islands and the water situation has been critical to us especially during the dry season. At Canouan the cisterns, the tanks, they are run down they need repairs, they need cleaning. Because of the development that has been going on there you find that the services in these islands are burdened. We never had that amount of people living in Canouan at one time. And what you find going on presently that some people even go on top of these cisterns and they bathe, so you know the water become contaminated. They need to be cleaned, they need to be repaired in order to provide a cleaner water for the people. What I would also add is that the large hotels, the other people there, we cannot keep on surviving on the cistern that was built, back then it suited our needs, but now because of the development that is going on there the situation and the condition has to be improved. So I am asking if the CWSA cannot embark on a project of providing, I know they have the service to put in a desalination plant throughout the Grenadines, Bequia, Canouan and Union, in order to help the hotels. The Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines was saying we have the hotels here we have visitors every year we cannot put up notice saying use water sparingly. We provide a service, there

is no doubt that we have a thriving tourist industry in the Grenadines and we need to provide the infrastructure suitable to those development, Mr. Speaker.

The electrification of Mayreau for years the New Democratic Party has been working to improve the service to provide electricity to people not only in rural area but also to people in the Southern Grenadines and Mr. Speaker, if you would permit me to read a letter from the Ministry of Communications and Works 27th June, 2000, and it was written to the Chairman the Board of Directors of the St. Vincent Electricity Services Limited. And it reads, the head, the topic:

MAYREAU ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT.

I refer to recent discussion on the above caption project and which to advise as follows: The proposed power station that should be located at site (a) please have cadastral and topographical survey of the 9.3 acres site approved as a matter of urgency. The government undertaken to acquire the site for the specific purpose of providing electric services to the inhabitants of the island. The access road to the site as well as the landing jetty would be constructed by the Government. Except for the cost of the access road and the landing jetty it has been estimated that the cost of the project would be EC \$2.2 million. The Government wishes that VINLEC advance the sum of money for the execution of this project.

But, Mr. Speaker what is happening, to read, if I should cut it short is that as you no doubt are aware the electrification of our rural communities and small island communities of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has never been considered to be an economic venture. The Government through its policy pronouncements and publication has always considered it to be its political and social responsibility and duty to bring all the essential services to all citizens within its boards at reasonable and affordable cost.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the New Democratic Party have all along implemented and was in the process to providing this valuable service to the people of Mayreau. We are well aware that this service, that this service will help improve the tourism industry on this island. It will help alleviate some of the problems, in some of the restaurants, and guesthouse operators in Mayreau faced, in terms of broken generators, from all the expense they have to pay sometimes to bring somebody to the island to fix these generators or to transport it to mainland St. Vincent, or sometimes even the part alone for it is very costly. So I am glad that project is well on the way, and the people will receive their electricity and somewhere along the line that politics will not play part but that the people will be given what they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, on the choosing of that site in a meeting with the people of Mayreau they told me that the consultants were there, that they did the necessary evaluation of all sites possible and after that the consultants in a meeting told them what was the most appropriate site. What they were disgruntled about, Mr. Speaker, is that the removal of the site and no one told them that it would. And that was the burning issue of the people of Mayreau that they were not consulted. Only they saw a piece of land was cleared away and they did not know for what purpose and they were told after but I have here the report that was done from the consultants, and even the present site where it is now going to be was one of the areas that was condemned and best chosen site was chosen by the consultant and the people were well aware of that. But all that is important right now, Mr. Speaker, is that is that they get the electricity that NDP started. The NDP promised them and they will get it.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: The member has ten minutes

Mr. Speaker, garbage disposal, in the Southern Grenadines. I was at a meeting with the developers, members from the Ministry of Health, in conjunction with the issue and I know that they have put forward certain points in order to help improve the problem of the site at Canouan. But I know also to a certain extent the developers are always willing to help but they are willing to pass over the responsibility of the garbage to the government and I hope that some time soon, very soon, because you see most of the garbage site especially the one at Canouan is right at the airport. And it is an eye sore it needs to be properly managed, in order to keep things under control, a clean and healthy environment is very important for a thriving tourist industry and we need to get that Mr. Speaker.

I also wish that the interim measure that was mentioned by the Prime Minister that it would bring some comfort and elevation to the people of the Southern Grenadines and I wonder if the project currently the road to a new dump site, Miss Irene in Ashton Union Island, I hope that that site is still well on the way. We are talking about the future, but I hope the future comes soon. This is really a problem to many people in the Clifton area, we know sometimes you have to wait but we cannot wait forever.

Mr. Speaker, I also think that top priority should be given to the completion of the coast guard base at Union island. I have heard of the tourist police at Union Island and that is very commendable of the Honourable Minister and I hope that we can go a step further in completing the base, because it is at a strategic point for the yachting industry in the Southern Grenadines. That base will help deter people from tourist harassment, will help deter them from theft and other things. I am glad to see that some funds have been allocated to the completion of this project that was started by the New Democratic Party and I hope that it will be given top priority in order to help alleviate some of the problems that we face in the Southern Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, in the Southern Grenadines we are well aware that we are, especially in Union Island, we are the hub of the tourist industry and we are indeed grateful to see this industry develop to the fullest and hopefully all the basic structures would be put in place to help raise the services that are being offered in these islands.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the people of the Southern Grenadines for electing me as their parliamentary representative. And I intend Mr. Speaker, to do my best to serve them to make sure that in the Southern Grenadines we are on par with any constituency in this nation, just as we were under the New Democratic Party government. I would like to extend joyous holiday greetings to the people of the Southern Grenadines. Supporters of the ULP, and supporters of the NDP and the supporters of the PPM, although they were a few. I would also wish to extend season greetings to the Honourable Speaker of this House and his family, not forgetting the staff, the Clerk, the assistant and the staff in this House who have been doing a wonderful job. I would also like to extend greetings to the members on the — I almost said Opposition side referring to the other side. [Laughter]. I would like to say season greetings to the Members of the Government, hope you enjoy the season and all the best for the future, but I cannot forget my colleagues. And I would like to wish them Merry Christmas and all the best for 2002 and if I could make one compliment you know, it was good to come in today and when I look across the other side, I saw the ladies on the government side looking radiantly, they put me in the season of Christmas. [Laughter]. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Any further debate on bill? Any further debate? I think we are going until 5:30 p.m. as was said. Mr. Prime Minister there seemed to be no further debate.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it does appear as though the person whom the NDP has selected to be the long stop behind the wicket keeper does not want to speak this evening. And I believe, the difficulty is that if one of the Ministers were to speak we would go beyond the time, and that is the problem which we have. Accordingly I think it is the proper thing to move the suspension of the House until Monday morning at 9:00 a.m. Mr. Speaker for persons who are late in listening would know we are doing this in deference to members of the House whose Sabbath it is on Friday evening and who are prepared to — who very much take their Sabbath seriously. What is very interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that the Opposition was prepared to sacrifice the long stop. They were prepared to sacrifice the long stop. I therefore move Mr. Speaker, the suspension of this House until Monday morning at 9 a.m.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIRE LEACOCK: I second the motion, Mr. Speaker. {Laughter}.

***Question put and agreed to.
House suspended at 4:40 p.m.***