

No. 1

TUESDAY

Second Session

4th December, 2001

Seventh Parliament

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

THE

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

ADVANCE COPY

OFFICIAL REPORT

CONTENTS

Tuesday 4th December, 2001

Prayers	6
Minutes	6
Motion	6
Congratulatory Remarks	6
Appropriation Bill, 2001 (Continuation of Debate)	8
Honourable Vincent Beache	8

Dr. The Honourable Ralph Gonsalves	23
Resolution	66
The Consumption Tax (Common External Tariff) (Amendment) Resolution, 2001	66
Appointment of Public Accounts Committee	71
Announcements by the Speaker	71
Congratulatory Remarks	72
Adjournment	76

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.

SIXTH SITTING

4th December, 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 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

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE

Honourable Arnhim Eustace	Member for East Kingstown/ Leader of the Opposition
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

ABSENT

Minister of Telecommunications, Science Technology and Industry Honourable Dr. Jerrol Thompson	Member for North Leeward
Honourable Edwin Snagg	Government Senator, Parliamentary Prime Minister's Office, Special Responsibility for Labour and Grenadines Affairs
Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday	Member for Northern Grenadines

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 4TH DECEMBER 2001

PRAYERS

The Honourable Speaker of the House read the prayers.

MINUTES

Minutes of Sittings held on the 28th, 29th, and 30th of November 2001 copies of which, had been previously circulated, and were taken as read and confirmed.

MOTION

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, though I anticipate that today may well be a short day, out of an abundance of caution, because there are two resolutions after the Appropriation Bill, I do not know if there would be any substantial debate, so I would like to be on the safe side, and therefore, I beg to move that the proceedings of today's sitting be exempted from the provisions of the Standing Order Hours' of sitting.

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

Question put and agreed.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, may I crave your indulgence to extend the heartiest congratulations to the St. Lucia Labour Party for its resounding triumph at the polls yesterday. [Applause]. As is well known the St. Lucia Labour Party and the Unity Labour Party, are fraternal parties, like peas in the same pod. And it would be recalled that during the last elections Mr. Speaker, every attempt was made by the then government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines when it was campaigning, the NDP to denigrate the achievements of the St. Lucia Labour Party, and they were saying that people had never had it so bad, in St. Lucia, well, they were seeking that Labour in St. Lucia has been a failure and Labour in St. Vincent and the Grenadines will be a failure. Well, the people of St. Lucia, they know it, they feel it and they have just returned the St. Lucia Labour Party in triumph. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, before they went to the polls, the St. Lucia Labour Party had 16 of the 17 seats; they now have 14 of the 17 seats. But it was expected that they would lose the other micoud seat, which is really John Compton's stomping ground, they had won one narrowly the last occasion and it was expected that they would lose that in addition to the other won which was lost. They lost the seat in Dennery Mr. Speaker, due to some very localized circumstance, concerning the candidate, and that is also a lesson to those of us on this side of the House, that it does not matter how well the government is doing that in the final analysis all politics is local and the candidates must keep their noses to the grind stone and their feet to the ground. [Applause]. So Dennery is a standing example for the Unity Labour Party as to what not to do. It was expected according to the pundits, that former Prime Minister Vaughn Lewis would beat Sarah Flood. He went down again in defeat, to Sarah Flood in Castries.

And George Odlum, Labour's renegade, lost his seat. It is another lesson to be drawn that traitors, and renegades to the cause of labour invariably bite the dust. And once you are a labour man, you are always a labour man or a labour woman, and when you leave, the only way you can come back is having taken the long sojourn in purgatory, as George Odlum had done hitherto. But he again acted traitorously in relation to labour, I do not know whether he is going to get a second chance in purgatory. As the Deputy Prime Minister always says, when you leave labour after time in purgatory you may return to the fold, but you have to come with a candle and you sing a sanckie. So I want to congratulate Prime Minister Anthony, the leader of the St. Lucia Labour Party for his outstanding leadership in the first term of office. [Applause]. And St. Lucia remains in the Labour fold and very progressively as that.

As is well known Mr. Speaker, I was involved in the campaign at the very outset because I was there at the immediate pre independence rally, I spoke at the convention, I was the guest speaker; and I had volunteered to campaign, but the word coming out of St. Lucia, concentrate on your budget, do your things at home, we are sailing sweetly to victory, so there is really no need for anybody to come from any other of the territories to assist us, and of course, that prediction has been borne out by the election results. The OECS is strengthened by the return of labour in St. Lucia. CARICOM is strengthened by the return of labour in St. Lucia. And Mr. Speaker, if I may dare say, those who are saying, the same things here about this ULP Government, their political kin have been saying the same thing in St. Lucia, just after the first six months, and eight months, and a year and two years, of the St. Lucia Labour Party and the same way in which Labour has been resoundedly

returned in St. Lucia, they will be resoundingly returned here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines when the appropriate time comes. [Applause]. About that there is no doubt.

I want again to congratulate them. I am quite sure that the Leader of the Opposition would join me in congratulating the Labour Party in St. Lucia though he may not join me in some of the sentiments I have expressed about labour. But I do not think he would be churlish in not – I do not think he would be churlish that despite his close affinity to the United Workers' Party, so called Workers' Party of St. Lucia, very close affinity, between the New Democratic Party and that party, I do not think he will be churlish and deny the voice of the electorate a certain congratulations. And I think in that respect, though he may speak himself on the matter at some time, in that respect I want to say that the Opposition joins the government in congratulating the St. Lucian Labour Party on their resounding victory, though it may be fair to say that some of the other comments that I have made would not be shared by the Opposition. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

APPROPRIATION BILL 2001- CONTINUATION OF DEBATE

HONOURABLE VINCENT BEACHE: Mr. speaker, Honourable Members, this is my 27th budget appearance. [Applause]. Eleven in government, excluding this one, making it twelve, and the rest in Opposition, so I have been there. During the hard times and during the good times. But I can say one thing Mr. Speaker, that in all of the 27 times that I have stood in this Honourable House to debate budgetary proposals that taking into consideration the situation that exists at present that this, I say so with no apology, is the best budget that has come to this House, in all of my 30 years being in this House. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, it is said, that the budget is ambitious, but unsustainable, I am a little bit not confounded, but, concerned about this, because I could understand it if it was said the budget is ambitious but unachievable, to say that it is unsustainable, I am not quite sure what this means. If it is unachievable you are telling us that during this coming year, we would not achieve the proposals that are embodied in the budget. But I think, Mr. Speaker that those who criticize the budget do so, because very often we tend to judge others by the way we judge ourselves. I say this, Mr. Speaker, with no ill feeling but I say this to bring out a point, that the Honourable Senator spoke about the increase in the consumption taxes, of course there are increases in the consumption taxes; but I think what has confounded the Opposition in Parliament and the opposition outside of Parliament is

that they expected, there would have been draconian measures brought in this budget.

There is no doubt that this is a poor people's budget. There are some 62 headings in the consumption taxes, that were increased, the majority by 5% and I asked the member, the Honourable Senator Shallow, the most he could say is that the consumption tax went up, to this percent and to that percent, and he could not tell us by what margin the consumption taxes were increased.

I have here, Mr. Speaker, a 1986 bound volume, 1986, budgetary measures that were brought out in 1985, it is in the consumption tax bound volume 1985, but in the Financial Regulations 1986; No. 2 of 1986, every item in 1985 was subjected to an increase, in the consumption tax rate, every item. And I would give you an example to that Mr. Speaker. In 1983, 1984, because at that time, the financial year did not run from January to December, I think it was July to the end of June, but the estimated consumption tax in 1983, 1984 under the then Labour government was to the tune of \$9 million, with the imposition of the heavy increases in taxes for the 1985, \$26,449,310.00 was estimated to be collected from consumption taxes, nearly 300%, increase. So I believe it was felt that with the strained circumstances that we are going through and with the first budget and with all the promises that we had made, which we would fulfill, and we have fulfilled quite a lot of them, in our Manifesto, in the 100 Days, that some people felt there had to be massive increase in fiscal measures.

But that is not all, you know, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the consumption taxes were increased nearly 300%, at that same budget, there were 11 other schedules of increases. They are right here. The custom duties were increased, and if you go through the schedules Mr. Speaker, Custom was the second schedule. The third schedule was amendment to the Caribbean Community and Common Market Origin System; the fourth schedule was the amendment of the Entertainment Act. The sixth was the amendment of the liquor license Act. The seventh was motor vehicles and road traffic. The eighth Queens' warehouse rules; the ninth, savings and deposit banks. The tenth, the Stamp Act, the eleventh, weights and measures regulations and the 12th the Yacht License Act and all of these were amended to increase the charges. Twelve. I just wanted to bring this historical data so that people can understand what has been happening. It was soon after that when I spoke for three days, that Rules were amended. [Interjection] Maybe they wanted the people to go back to the diapers. It is here, tariff No. 48(21-1) sanitary napkins, pads, and tampons, went up to 35%. So, that Mr. Speaker,

\$750,000 is estimated to be collected in the increase of the consumption tax, compare that to \$17 million in 1985. I have not worked out the percentage.

Certain persons get annoyed Mr. Speaker, when we say that we have been given a bad hand. I think that we have been given more than a bad hand. Mr. Speaker, we were given a hand to play with the situation in the prisons when we took office that was not only a bad hand, it was a dirty hand. We had to contend with that and bring that area under control. We created the prisons, after 17 years; we created it? The break down in law and order, which we have not quite completely controlled but we would, another bad hand. The increase in narcotic trafficking. And it is well known, a former Minister of Government said here that he knew that there were members of the police that were involved.

Do you remember the former Commissioner of Police Randolph Toussaint who said we never had cocaine here. And a little later he said he knew who all the drug dealers were but he did nothing to arrest any of them. This was another bad hand we were given to play. The payment of debts, I think the Prime Minister spoke about that, I am not going to reiterate this. The cost overrun of the cruise ship pier, in excess of \$15 million dollars. Do you remember we borrowed \$39 million from the Kuwaiti fund, and I think the EIB, I am not quite sure anyhow, but the Kuwaiti fund was one of them. And part of the condition was that they were not going to finance any cost overruns. Special warrants were brought into this House here, for a \$15 million overrun on the cruise ship pier, up there, we had to contend with that, because you are leaving the Port.

Then we got nothing from Hurricane Lenny from the damage that was left here, do you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because the former Minister of Communications and Works Glenford Stewart said that we had minor damages. St. Lucia got from the World Bank grants because of Hurricane Lenny, St. Kitts got, Grenada got, we did not get a cent because of pride, because when we were saying that the proper area to put the cruise ship berth was not there, but Sir James Mitchell knew it all, what he wanted he got. It had to be there, he said or no way else and so they did not want to be proven wrong. Mr. Glenford Stewart said that we had minor damages. We had houses washed away in Layou, Dark View, Richmond Beach. The cruise ship pier which was not insured, they said it would cost \$5 million. I understand it is over \$11 million now, and are you telling me that that is not a bad hand? Are you saying that that is not a bad hand? Monies that we could have had as grant because of pride we did not get a cent.

Mr. Speaker, the National Commercial Bank is writing under the authority that comes under my portfolio to come up with the money that they have to pay for the debt that they guaranteed and you are saying that that is not a bad hand. We are talking about some \$5 million or something like that. I am not even going to deal with Ottley Hall you know, that is a matter on its own.

The Diamond Dairy that we had to settle, find money to pay the severance pay to the workers there. The severance payment to the workers there. The severance payments to the estate workers, all those are hands that we were left to play, I think it was Minister Francis who said, without even a face card. But that is not all, Mr. Speaker, we had to deal and restructure the banana industry. We paid, Mr. Speaker when we bought out GEEST, £22.1 million, in profits for GEEST over what they were worth, these are not my words these are GEEST'S. This is from GEEST, a little white angel had given it to me. This is what GEEST'S Chairman sent to the shareholders. Let me read this so you can understand what he says.

It says, here Mr. Speaker:

“After taking account of estimated transaction cost of \$4.6 million the sale is estimated to give rise to a 22.1 million increase in GEEST's performing net assets to \$93.9 million dollars, reflecting the premium to be received over the net assets of the banana division. This generates a Performa exceptional profit.” [These are GEEST's words, you know, not mine] ‘of £21.5 million pounds.

Exceptional, because we bade, and bade for GEEST. But that is not all. We borrowed the money for the equity, which we have not finished paying back for yet. So the state that the banana industry is in, is to a large extent blamable on the NDP administration. When the Prime Minister went down to a meeting and said that the banana was Humpty Dumpty; Prime Minister Mitchell, well, all of us know what Humpty Dumpty rhyme says. That he sat on a wall and he had a fall, and all the king's horses and the king's men could not put Humpty Dumpty together again. Well if you say that banana is like that, what you are telling the farmers, -- and I got out then I can tell you, because I knew all the king's horses and the men could not put Humpty Dumpty back I am not staying there, I gave out my lands to the workers, and I said all you do what you want with it, plant bananas if you want, I am not going any more, because I could have seen what that government, what that administration meant. They did not encourage confidence in the industry.

We had to restructure this again, that was another bad hand. I am not going on further because it is a history. But that is another bad hand. The \$11 million advanced to Valdetario for the Union Island project, which I believed that the bank, the NCB, had to write off, meaning that, there would be less profits, dividends to go to the consolidated fund. That is also is another bad hand.

Mr. Speaker, well maybe the worst hand that we had was the social indicators. I have here from the CARICOM Prospective June 2000; they give you Mr. Speaker, some selective poverty social indicators for the OECS, CARICOM, but I am dealing with the OECS; let me give you what St. Vincent was like, and it got worst from 2000 to now, let me give you. Population in poverty, Antigua was 12%, Dominica was 33%, Grenada was 20%. St. Kitts/Nevis was 15%, St. Lucia was 25%. St. Vincent and the Grenadines 37%. We had the highest. These are not my figures. That is population in poverty.

Mr. Speaker, let us take unemployment rate, and we know that it is higher than they say. The unemployment rate remembers this is 2000 and it got worst between then. The unemployment rate in Antigua and Barbuda was 7%, %, Dominica 10%, Grenada 16%. St. Kitts/Nevis 12%, St. Lucia was 18%. St. Vincent and the Grenadines 20%. We are still the highest. After 16 years in office, that is what this State was reduced to. And you tell us we were not given a bad hand to play. I would go on further Mr. Speaker, the Gross Domestic Product per capita, 1998 Antigua and Barbuda in US dollars \$US8,300, remember this is per capita; Dominica \$US3,010, Grenada \$US3,170. St. Kitts/Nevis US\$6,170, St. Lucia was US\$3,410. St. Vincent and the Grenadines \$US2,420. The lowest. And when we come Mr. Speaker to the human development rating the only OECS state that was worst than us was St. Lucia who had a ranking of 81 and St. Vincent had a ranking of 75. Now the Human Development Index really take into consideration things like per capita, telephones per capita, televisions, water, et cetera. So in the OECS we were second to last. All this is what has been left us and yet people get mad when we say we have been left a bad hand to play.

Mr. Speaker, we had to find over \$1 million to finish the Central Market, after I do not know how many cost overruns. And you tell me it was not a bad hand left for us to play. In some of the statutory bodies, Mr. Speaker, they knew that they were going to lose the elections, so you know what they did Mr. Speaker, election was held on March 28th, we had an agreement signed here on March 23rd, five days before giving the manager of a certain statutory corporation, let me tell you what it says here Mr. Speaker; in two paragraphs:

“The employee being disastrous of proceeding on an early retirement sought the approval of the board of the authority and the Honourable Minister of Health and the Environment. And in this regard approval was duly granted for the employee to proceed on an early retirement from the effective date, of early retirement, at a reduced pension and on payment of the approved gratuity services.”

This is fine, I do not have any problem with that, if a man wants early retirement, he goes on early retirement. But the next paragraph says now, right below it.

“The authorities desirous of retaining the services of the employee on contract for a period of three years in the first instance.”

The same man who wants to go on early retirement, you know! You just said you gone on early retirement but you take his contract the same time, not a minute gone, ‘to perform the functions of manager of authority and for the consideration and under the terms and conditions agreed between the parties and as are herewith set forth. What are you telling me, Mr. Speaker, and you are telling me that we did not get a bad hand? We did not get a bad hand to play? I am not saying whether this gentleman is worth it or not, you know, that is not my concern. My concern is how it was done. Where you knew that you were leaving, therefore, so you said let me make it very difficult for those who are coming in. Any reasonable person will say, well man, five days to an election, we do not know what is going to happen, let us hold it. Any reasonable person would do that, but no. But that is not all. Let me give you another one, Mr. Speaker. Another one.

I looked; we just got the National Insurance financial statements for the year December 31st 2000; and when I looked at it Mr. Speaker, I noticed an increase in salaries and wages from \$1,089,071.00 to \$1,214,615.00 an increase of \$125,544.00 all in one year. They did not take on any extra staff. Let me tell you, because we are transparent you know, who vex, vex, it has always been my way, I am too old to change it now. To say black is black. There was increase given to staff, 5% over a three-year period, 15%, well when you compound it. But, Mr. Speaker, the Financial Controller, Deputy Director, just in March as well, in March, had an increase of 20.3% from \$70,000.00 to \$85,000.00; and the executive Director had an increase of \$82,800.00 to \$114,000.00. But this was not spread over three years; it was given all at once, for three years. Do you understand what I am saying? But

that is not all. That is not all. There is traveling of \$575.00 and housing of \$400.00, no problem with those, and entertainment of \$500.00, but there is another \$1800.00 per month called 'other' and I do not know what that 'other' is. for the Executive Director. Poor people's money. Our money we put in there. And you tell me that it is right and we were not given a bad hand to play. And I understand now, that Ministers get US\$60.00 subsistence, the gentleman is asking for US\$250.00 plus another US\$60.00 when he travels. I am not saying that the man does not worth it, may be he worth more than that. But is what it is done and how it is done. And the secrecy in which all of these matters were kept.

Mr. Speaker, I have a list of the diplomatic passports, I am not going to read it out, I do not want to embarrass anybody. People would be surprised, who got diplomatic passports, I am not complaining. In 1984, Randolph Toussaint, three weeks after sent for my diplomatic passport, I had no problem, I sent it to him. It did not bother me, because I had hardly used it when I traveled. And I was still a member and Leader of the Opposition, but Cato was but when he left, of this House, they took it away. I had no problem with that. I am telling you. Just before, in February, March of this year, just before the elections, over 100 licenses were issued to all and sundry for firearm. Well, I am dealing with that. Most of them .38 specials, police .38 specials; guns that you do not give to civilians from the last Commissioner of Police and you tell us that we were not given a bad hand to play. Eh, are you saying that we were not given a bad hand to play?

Mr. Speaker, I got it here, you go down the line, .38 special, .38, all of them, out of that 100 and something we have one that is a .32, one that is a .25, another .32, all the others are .38 specials and one 9 millimeter. I remember Mr. Speaker, coming into this House pleading, Parnel Campbell was Attorney General at the time, and after that Carlyle Dougan, I said you cannot leave such an important matter, such as the issuing of fire arm license into the hand of one man. It is subject to corruption. And we know, that certain former Commissioner of Police took bribe, I said it in this House before, what I am saying here is nothing new, and I remember Parnel Campbell, I spoke to him in confidence and gave him, and he said he was going to investigate it, he never did anything. Because Mr. Speaker, for a liquor license and I made the point, if I apply for a liquor license, I have to go before a board of assessors, including a Magistrate, the police has to come and inspect my house, magistrate plus maybe two other assessors, to get a liquor license. I pointed out all of that, but to get a firearm that can turn on you and me, you leave it to one man to issue and to revoke. And when I spoke to Carlyle Dougan as Attorney General then he agreed with me and said that he is going to support

it. When he came to this House here he said he changed his mind. I said fine. But we will deal with this. And we are dealing with it.

Mr. Speaker, the question, of merging, the Development Bank with the Commercial Bank was raised. I am no banker but it makes sense to me. It makes sense to me that the Commercial Banks were forced during the years to carry out the functions of Development banks. In the United States where they had very narrow areas that Commercial Banks can operate, they could not even go from state to state, they had to repeal the legislations that was there and brought in new legislation to allow their international commercial banks, or other commercial banks to merge and go into different types of business. What do we have Mr. Speaker, the development banks Mr. Speaker, are supposed to go into residential mortgages for instance, they are not supposed to collect deposits, so they get their monies from grants, soft loans or whatever it is. And they are supposed to take up these things where there is a high risk factor, but no one is telling me, the indigenous commercial banks came about you know because of the way in which the international commercial banks were behaving. And all of them in St. Vincent and St. Lucia, as a matter of fact the one in St. Lucia have merged. In Trinidad and in Jamaica, you name it. The indigenous commercial banks and even the international commercial banks and even the international commercial banks, they are forced, for them to exist and to make profits, to broaden their scope of operations. So they are going to areas, that truly if you should separate them, that the development banks should go into. But if I wanted to be convinced, Mr. Speaker, I have here an article from banker, I will lay it on the table, that tells you that the international banks have to broaden and make more inclusive the reach and scope of their activities. They had to do it to exist. Do you note in the United States the big merges that are going on now? They are not doing it because they want to do it. Mellon Bank and Chase and Jayrod and whatever it is, and so on. In our own situation here we have with CIBC and Barclays, they suppose to form a merger. And all the arguments that are put forward against the merger of the development banks to international banks, I say all of it cannot stand the light of day. And they gave all the advantages to certain extent the disadvantages, at merging of these two entities.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman says that the merger, as a matter of fact, facilitates the regulatory process of these banks and he should. Because the person who wrote this, Mr. Speaker, is a gentleman by the name of Mario St. Rose he is the Vice President of the Caribbean Development Bank which is the CDB, and he is now on loan to St. Lucia and is manager of the St. Lucia National Commercial Bank of which our own bank, under the NDP, and I am

not saying this was bad have bought shares in that same combined National Commercial Bank in St. Lucia. But here is a gentleman, Vice President of a development bank, Caribbean Development Bank, that what it is, saying that there is much to gain, and that is the way that we should go. And when we start looking to the merger, we did not have anything from Mr. St. Rose but basic common sense would tell you that you would not have to duplicate and our own National Commercial Bank using NIS money, is into a lot of mortgage, financing for residences et cetera. What are you saying, should we keep them separate and distinct? And stop them doing this and let everything go to the development bank.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. St. Rose had this to say,

‘in the Caribbean Commercial banks and other financial institutions have been following the trend toward broad banking pragmatism in seizing opportunities and imperative to respond to domestic and an international competition and necessity to cost effective in service delivery has caused many commercial banks to broad their services offerings either directly or through subsidiaries. That they are issuing long term securities and lending long.’

In short, Mr. Speaker, there is hardly any difference now between development banks and commercial banks; they are all fighting for the one pot of gold. I just wanted to highlight this Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, can you tell me when I have a half an hour.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You have 31 minutes.

HONOURABLE VINCENT BEACHE: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I know my watch is a little bit slow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We heard a lot, about New Bank and Nano, and we let Nano go, and we this, and we that, and the Proceeds of Crime, had certain things where we could have arrested this and so on. It happened, Mr. Speaker, that I was acting Prime Minister at the time, I am not a lawyer, and I take advise from those who are supposed to be or those who are, not supposed, because I do not want to say that the eminent Attorney General is supposed to be, but those who are versed, and knowledgeable in these things, and I seek advice. And I was told that I want to look stupid to act, under warrant, because under the Fugitive Offenders Act, Money Laundering was not an extraditable offence and the only offence for Money Laundering then, was if the funds were drug related. But, Mr. Speaker,

comparisons were made between Marc Vaughn and Thierry Nano. Thierry Nano is a citizen of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; we did not give him citizenship. He was given citizenship under the NDP administration, and as a citizen is or was entitled to all the rights and benefits of a citizen. If my son does something wrong and he falls foul of the law, I will lock him up. Because my son should know that he must not embarrass me by doing something wrong where I have to lock him up; so if he does it I will lock him up, plain and simple I have no problem with that. None at all. [Interjection]. Is he there, well I hope he is there and he knows that he must not do something wrong.

If you go back, Mr. Speaker, through the records, 1974 you would see noted there in the file, that there were consideration, or maybe stronger than that given to words 'not renewing the license for Owens Bank'. Look up the records. You see I have been here long enough to remember all of these you know that is why you see they are afraid of me. Apart from my little white angel, I also remember a lot of things. But, some people would do anything and go through any lengths to win elections. I have been offered drug money when I was Leader of the Opposition and I said I prefer to lose the elections than use drug money, because I know apart from it being tarnished, then you cannot control your decisions. Which brings me, Mr. Speaker, to something that is called state capture. New term. Because it is stated that the greatest of corruption is state capture. And that is Mr. Speaker, where you have commercial enterprises that control the economy to such an extent that they control government.

We had a case in Belize with Ashcroft who was telling the Belizean Government, you do this, you do that or else, I close down this, I create massive unemployment and I create instability in the country. We have had it here in St. Vincent, maybe not to the same extent as in Belize. The Offshore legislation that created the problem with Owens and New Bank was made to satisfy some of those requirements and we can come closer back home, where the Greaves were sold Mt. Bentick Distillery to get back their money from Carib Express and the CPCP. It is a form of state capture. [Interjection] Why would any Government want to sell an enterprise that is making a hefty profit, when you did not need the money for any emergency or anything like that, which can contribute tremendously to the Consolidated Fund. Why would you want to sell it? Why would you want to get rid of something that is profitable? Privatizing, yes, part of the policy, okay. Part of the policy. So that is a form of state capture.

Mr. Speaker, the definition of State capture is that, it is the efforts of firms to shape the laws, policies and regulations of the State to their own advantage by providing illicit private gains to public officials. Well, we know what happened to a former Attorney General here in this House, illicit public gains; it is here. And that is what we have to be concerned with Mr. Speaker. You know when it is like that, the influence is so much that it blocks any policy reforms that you might have. So that you fashion it to suit their interest. That is why when the ULP says, you have to get contributions, we do not have any problem with that but we are not taking any contributions with strings attached. You want to give it, fine, no strings attached, once it is clean money.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell you what they say here further. This is the Finance and Development, magazine, September 2001, World Bank Magazine, World Bank IMF. It is felt that state capture, some people feel that their only powerful oligarchs, these mega firms, but this is not so, they pick on governments with very good social reforms programmes, and they throw in money to start with and you feel that they are benefactors that are good, because my old grandmother used to say, that there is always something in the mortar beside the pestle. Mr. Speaker, I know I do not have very much time. I would like to go on. But, you have to go back and deal with. How much more time, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Twenty-one more minutes.

HONOURABLE VINCENT BEACHE: Twenty-one minutes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Ministry of National Security, Public Service and Ports. It is a new Ministry, hived off from other ministries, and therefore it is relatively new. But I must say, although we are few, Permanent Secretaries and assistant PS, Executive Officers, two Junior Clerks, not including the PMDS section, that they are very hard working. They are very committed. And have been doing a tremendous job. The PS has been in Audit for years and therefore he knows the Civil Service like the back of his hand, more or less. We are very fortunate to get somebody like this.

Mr. Speaker, for years, the NDP administration spoke about building a prison; they were supposed to build it at Diamond that went by the board. After the prison riot which the Honourable Senator Shallow says we are responsible for, because we were in Government then, after the prison riot we had a commission of inquiry, we did not need it really, we had two before that, and

all this one said was to regurgitate what was said in the former two. We knew we need a prison, no doubt about that, but it looked good and you waste time, but I can tell you Mr. Speaker, early next year we are going to start to build a prison. Take it from me. And I am expecting that within 9 months, around September or so, construction would start in actual prison. It is of paramount importance, if we are to maintain security.

You see those gentlemen over there, they are there already, you know, they have nothing to lose. They are in prison already. And we have to ensure that we are able to control and maintain law and order at the prisons. I am sending out one more warning, to those persons who go in Paul's Lot and throw over things over the prison, desist. We do not know if it is a bomb you are throwing over there you know, so if you get shot, do not blame anybody. Because when you throw something over there I do not know what it is. It could be a grenade, could be cigarettes. But I am not taking any chances. If you continue to do it be prepared to pay the penalty. That is all I have to say. Because we have 320 something inmates there now, and I am not, once I have the authority and the corporation going to jeopardize 109,500 persons for the sake of 320 persons who were not paragons of virtue, that is why they are in prison, so I am issuing a warning to that effect. Do not throw anything over the prison wall. If you big, bold and you bad, go ahead.

Mr. Speaker, there was a \$5.00 increase in the airport service charge. It was necessary to do this, we were forced to do this, we did not want to do it, because since September 11th and we will incur a lot of expenses for security measures. We have to buy scanners, x-ray machines, not only for the carry on luggage but also for the luggage that goes through in the hole of the aircraft. And once we were proud, and still are proud of having, I think Sir James said maybe something like five maybe, I think Sir James said like five airports. The most in the Caribbean, those five airports are costing us a packet now, because it means that we have to put in security measures, scanners and all of that in every airport. And those are only one part of the expense. They sent a whole long list of security arrangements that we have to have. Cameras, secure better the air traffic control areas, et cetera. If we had that Mr. Campbell would not be able to go up there.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Fifteen minutes.

HONOURABLE VINCENT BEACHE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we are still I am told the cheapest in the Caribbean, exit tax; so it is a reasonable tax.

Mr. Speaker, we are looking into merging air and seaports. We are going ahead with the hubs in St. Lucia and Barbados and try to make travel less worrisome, as hassle free as we can make it. The boat boys, Mr. Speaker, we are going to license, we would bring legislation to that effect. And you see those person who running up and down Back street here and so on, as if they are crazy and on a race track, we have some radar guns, left there by the last administration, that we would amend the legislation to put them into effect. And do you see all those boom boxes they have in their vehicles that you cannot think, we will take care of that as well.

Mr. Speaker, these are just some of the measures. We are looking into the possibility of how we recruit police, coast guards and prison officers. Legislation would be coming to this house, sometime next year to amend or repeal the existing Police and Prison Acts and to bring into existence new Police and Prison Acts. We have not been sitting idly by, Mr. Speaker. We have done quite a lot. We have to stop this rapid turn over in the police force, because it takes quite a lot to train a policeman, and after three, four years he leaves that mean you have to train more. We are looking into this to see what are the causes and why.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank the people of South Windward [Applause] for the confidence that they have placed in me for electing me three times now, and every time with an increased majority. [Applause]. The people of South Windward Mr. Speaker, they are beautiful people. [Applause]. They are not subject to bribes as in some other areas. And certainly, there are certain measures that I am working very hard on, my colleagues, to try to make their lives more comfortable. We need a cemetery and a playing field in Calder. People in Calder either have to travel to Belmont or down to Stubbs or Biabou. We have seen a piece of land that might do it, but the owners are away we are trying to contract the persons to see whether they are prepared to sell. It is flat enough, it is not ideal but it is flat enough where you can have a playing field. For years the community centre at Calder was there just a shell, I am glad to say, under the last administration that they did do some work not quite completely finished, a little more work need to be done and that would be done so that it can be put into proper use.

Mr. Speaker, we have done some labour intensive work. Some started, I think the Grummer Road was started by the NDP administration, but the Calder Estate Road and the one from Yambou coming over to Argyle, French Chapel Road I think it is called. Not quite complete. But they are there are we and now repairing the main road to Calder. In Cedars, we are looking into the Massy Road and that Jones' to Ollivierre by pass road. We have done some

work in Choice village at Bridgetown. But there is a part in the valley road there that is cutting away that I have spoken to Transport and Works about.

Mr. Speaker, the hard court in Biabou is being reconstructed. We have had the fencing of the schoolyard. The community centre needs to be finished. And Mr. Speaker, we have to take some decision, whilst we like to assist with the community centre in Biabou was being used as a church, but it cannot be continued to use as a church ad infinitum, it is over two maybe three years now. You allow. It has to revert to what it was originally built for, a community centre. This is not to say that you are anti religion or anti church. But certainly if you allow persons to use the building for a certain time they must understand that after a certain time they have to get out and use their own building.

Mr. Speaker, the dangers and the troubles we had at Argyle, we have controlled that and we are going further where we are putting street lights all along the Argyle route to further reduce the incidents of people going there and maybe relax maybe without molestation. This might not suit quite a few people, people even come and tell me that you must put switch on the lights so that they can turn it off at a certain time, but that is for VINLEC that is not for me.

Mr. Speaker, we have a whole lot of roads and footpaths that need to be done. In Simon the road above the Adelphie Secondary School. The Simon main road and there are some streetlights that we need to finish off that area. But we have only been there for eight months. Our first budget, and we will continue to assist the poor people in whatever way we can because nobody can tell us that this is not a poor people's budget.

Mr. Speaker, in Peruvian Vale we have a little road we called Deane road to be done. We asked GESCO to send equip there, but GESCO does not have the equipment. Maybe we have to rent the equipment to get that road finish off. A gentleman went there for bananas and nearly turned over. The road really needs to be done. The piece of road that the NDP administration did in Yambou, I think it was Global that did it, and they stopped it right at the Adventist Church. Do you know why, Mr. Speaker, because the people who live behind the Adventist Church the Bullocks and some others did not support the NDP, we intend to finish off that piece of road, so that people at least can get in and out of their premises easily.

Mr. Speaker, the Argyle/Akers/Mt. Pleasant road, that is that circular road, there is work that is being done maybe three quarters of it is finished. That is

the one that goes down to Rawacou, it is a circular road, it is one of the few areas in the North that we have recreational facilities, well in the middle actually, my dream is, and I have discussed it with my colleagues is that we should maybe buy that property, make a beautiful Salt Pond there and into a good and good and beautiful recreational park. I do not know how much it is going to cost but we certainly open negotiations to that effect.

Mr. Speaker, Stubbs hard court, has to be lit. When they were going to light Carapan, it is in my own constituency, I said I would much prefer to have Stubbs lit, because there is where all the action is. More than that they take care of the hard court there, I said if you light Carapan it is not going to last for anytime. I am here; it is my constituency. I know. They said no, they spent; I do not know how many thousand of dollars. We lit Carapan. We built a hard court at Carapan, within four months the fence was down, the lights were down, and nothing is working. Waste of money. I have already spoken and I am hoping that the Stubbs league netball and basketball and so on are increasing every year, so that we can get that Stubbs hard court lit. There is a community centre at Stubbs as well that needs to be refurbished. I know that the Ministry of Social Development is doing that. There are some areas where we do need electricity, in Diamond and water, they are getting water now, but there is still some problems with electricity which would be sorted out in the coming months, hopefully.

Mr. Speaker, how many more minutes do I have?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: It is time for you to give your greetings now.

HONOURABLE VINCENT BEACHE: Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend greetings to you, to your family, to the very hard working staff of the House of Assembly. [Applause]. Who worked under very strenuous conditions hopefully, maybe before I leave this House we would have a new Parliament building. We extend greetings to the members of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition, to the Prime Minister, who with the sheer brilliance in which this budget was conceptualized and presented, the sheer simplicity, that as I said in my 27 budget appearances, it is far the best that I had to debate. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues here over on this side. I also wish them all the best that the yuletide can bring, I know that some of us will drink some Pepsis over the season. [Laughter]. But all I am asking them is not to go over board. Mr. Speaker, to my constituents. I am not going to name the villages because

I do not want to leave out any. They embraced me, when I leave North Central Windward, in many more ways than one, according to my colleague, the Minister of Education. I have embraced them. And I say so with all sincerity that I love them, that anything that I can do, I will do for them.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your patience. I extend Merry Christmas to the country as a whole and hope that the barrels and the reduction in the barrels would be used to good purpose. We also have the reach out and touch. And we would reach out and touch somebody. Mr. Speaker, I support whole heartedly the budget proposals and really cannot see that any right thinking person, even though grudgingly would not support measures in this budget that can only enhance the comfort and happiness and well being of the State as a whole. I thank you. [Applause].

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, before the Prime Minister winds up this budget which is the next step. I am going to invoke section 12 (6) for the convenience of members because I would really like to see members settle down, than moving around as you have been for the morning. You have moved around quite a bit this morning. So this section is suspended for 5 minutes.

House suspended at 10:55 a.m. (Break)
House resumed at 11:00 a.m.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members first I would like thank to all members of the House who have made their contributions to this debate. As in any debate, the quality would be uneven. And during the course of my winding up address I would no doubt make some reference to the unevenness of the quality of the presentations, not in their stylist aspects but in their content. A number of very useful suggestions have emerged during the course of the debate, and new ideas have arisen which will contribute to the storehouse of knowledge, which can be utilized with greater efficacies to improve the conduct of public policy in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, I would like us to begin today with our immediate environment in the House. I think it is important for the public to realize the transformed physical circumstances in this House because they are symbolic of the seriousness of this government in every material respect. [Applause]. Hitherto, this august body was shabby; today we are in physical surroundings which are a tribute to our civilization. The floor is clean, there are beautiful drapes, the Heads of State since independence and our first native Governor, I

do not want to use the word native because it sounds very British, the way in which they spoke about African peoples and colonial peoples but that categorization has entered the language, so I used the formation advisedly. And they decorate the walls beautifully and with majesty. The former Speaker of this Honourable House, Nowlyn Mc Dowall, is the artist of these wonderful paintings. Indeed he had done them on his own while they were in power. But they would not purchase them. One does not expect Philistinism to appreciate these matters. One of their own did wonderful work and he was rejected.

And then Mr. Speaker, outside these immediate physical boundaries the lawns of the Court House and chamber of the House of Assembly are beautifully kept. You can actually walk on properly paved roads so that you do not stump your toe and fall down and bruise your hand or your forehead, as is often has happened in the past. When you saw the House prior to this Government taking House, we were all ashamed as a people. But yet our collective shame was unable to move the then government to improve the physical circumstances. I think that tribute must be paid to a number of persons, to a committee known as the 'Beautification Committee', to the Minister of Works, to persons in the Prime Minister's Office, and to members of the Office of the Clerk of the House of Assembly. [Applause]. We take these little things for granted but they reflect a larger whole.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we take now for granted live broadcast on several radio stations, in fact the only inhibiting factor for any radio station, is whether they can get a sponsor, because all are welcomed. And indeed I believe the proceedings of the House are now broadcast on two or three radio stations simultaneously. This is a measure of good governance. [Applause].

Then Mr. Speaker, the openness has been enlarged further for the first time in the history of this country, there is live television coverage for all speeches, the very first time in the history of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, the only person who spoke who did not have live coverage was the Prime Minister when he delivered his budget address on Wednesday last, because the facility had some technical problems. And I did not say because my speech was not broadcast live, that there must be equality and that the Leader of the Opposition must not have his speech broadcast live on televisions. No. I want the public to hear what he has to say, because I am sure when they hear what he has to say, they would give even more support to the budget which was presented. [Applause]. This is another measure of good governance, and do not think that the world is not looking on, the missions are reporting what is happening in St. Vincent and the Grenadines that they

can turn on channel 45 and see and hear everyone debating in this House. It is remarkable.

A few months ago Glen Jackson on 'Shake Up' had to play cat and mouse. They had to do a relay system, had somebody tape the speeches, then run with the tape and when the then Speaker, found out, the NDP said, they panicked and said no, they closed down that operation, it is unauthorized but they were like little boys putting their fingers in the dike trying to stop the on rushing flood of ideas. They want to stop Glen Jackson broadcasting on WE FM when the whole world can get all kinds of information on the Internet. It is the perspective of the totalitarian that which found favour with Brezhnev in the Soviet Union that is the perspective, and it is the sort of mind set that manifest itself in the closed minds in the Talibans and Elkader. That is the reality and we must not forget these matters because they are of profound importance.

Mr. Speaker, it is not an accident that the United Kingdom Government, after five months when we are in office, delivered unto me, as the Prime Minister, in London, in the office of the Secretary of State for the Department of International Development, Clare Short herself delivered to me a letter granting debt relief which we had applied for shortly after we got into office, and one of the reasons why we were granted debt relief, the first phase \$2.2 million, of \$13.5 million, one of the fundamental reasons was because we practiced good governance. And the imprimatur of the British Government was based not only on one factor but on a tripod of factors, that we practise good governance and do so healthily that we have been bearing down on corruption, official corruption and that we have had a focused approach to the alleviation of poverty.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members two years before the then Minister of Finance, now the Leader of the Opposition applied for debt relief, the same debt relief and the British Government took nearly eight months to respond to him and when they replied they said, 'we are afraid that we cannot give you debt relief because you do not have a focused approach to dealing with poverty alleviation, that you are not practicing good governance and that you are not weighing down sufficiently or at all on official corruption.' The British Government wrote the NDP government a stinging rebuke, they said to the Minister of Finance then, now Leader of the Opposition that perhaps you may apply next year, a sort of a unceremonial brush off, in diplomatic language it was a curse word. That is the equivalent. So we have had the imprimatur of the British Government, on the issue of democracy.

Mr. Speaker, that has been given also by the US Government. Our commitment to democracy and justice. The Acting Commander in Chief of the US Southern Command from the Department of Defense wrote to me on the 26th of October on the occasion of our nation's celebration of independence, but listen to two paragraphs of the letter.

“On this auspicious occasion it is fitting to recognize the many impressive achievements of your administration.
[Applause].

This is in October, just seven months after we had taken office. ‘many impressive achievements of your administration.’ And the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines in promoting democracy and justice. So the US government also acknowledging our efforts, our impressive achievements, of this administration, not the NDP's you know, this one. And they went on further,

“May you enjoy continued success as you guide St. Vincent and the Grenadines on the path of liberty, prosperity and stability.”

Notice the formulation. They are wishing that this administration, continues to have the successes of these many impressive achievements as ‘I’ Prime Minister guide St. Vincent and the Grenadines on ‘the path of liberty, prosperity and stability.’ [Applause]. It is not ‘I’ who say so, they are here, you can read them for yourselves. As part of the openness I will give you copies of the letter.

Mr. Speaker, this government has been so recognized in its work that the President of S.U.N.Y., the State University of New York, and Plattsburgh, sent two emissaries and they have offered 200 scholarships, over five years. Two hundred university scholarships. [Applause]. And as a mark of respect to the leader of this government, the President himself of SUNY has said that there will be a special scholarship offered as from September called ‘the Prime Minister's Scholarship to SUNY’. [Applause]. Yet, we have mischief-makers and those who cannot yet become accustomed to the fact that they have lost office, are prattling up and down this country a lot of perverse nonsense.

Mr. Speaker, permit me to speak on two of the portfolios which I hold in addition to those of Ministry of Finance, Economic Development, Labour and Grenadines Affairs. I shall address Labor and Grenadines Affairs a little later. But it appears appropriate at this juncture to advert to the Ministry of

Information. The Agency for Public Information has come alive. The Government Information Service has been transformed. There is a developmental programme especially for API which we will be implementing in the new year.

And Mr. Speaker, a lot of these things do not cost a lot of money you know, they simply require creativity, thought, reflection, discussion on matters as a team; for example in the Ministry of Finance and Planning through the excellent staff in that ministry, acknowledged, the important democratic principle that policy emanates, in the final analysis and is determined through prism of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Parliament if necessary, that though there is that recognition we work as a team, we sit together, we eat together, we talk about all sorts of subjects, which sensible and enlightened Caribbean men and women would discuss. And out of that milieu ideas emerge, sparkling ideas, ideas of creativity to ground public policy.

At Radio 705 the position is let all ideas contend and let a thousand flowers bloom, we do not close out anyone's voice. In fact, on many newscasts, the Leader of the Opposition would be the headline story, not the Prime Minister; sometimes the Prime Minister would be second or third. I have never called the News Room, or the editorial staff at 705, or the Manager or the Chairman to discuss the content of their newscasts or their editorial policies and judgments. But you know, that never used to be the case. Parnel Campbell, had institutionalized a decree of interference which continued throughout the NDP 17 years, that prompted one of the classic calypsos in the history of calypso making in the Caribbean Poosah's classic 'Mouth in ah me Mumah'. They believe that people forget these things. The excellence of the governance is so palpable that people take it now for granted after eight months. Isn't this remarkable? You take it for granted as easily as you take motherhood. That is tremendous progress and recognition for St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Speaker, two months ago a special warrant of \$200,000 was signed by me and put to the improvement of the facilities at 705. And in the New Year I have been informed that the 'Beatification Committee' will be taking on the actual building as a project to help to redesign the space inside and to beatify the surroundings. Again a magnificent indication of the ongoing collaborative effort between civil society and the state administration.

And Mr. Speaker, next year we will pass in this House a freedom of Information Act [Applause]. This government does not have any secrecy. We are not hiding things. Occasionally where there are matters of sensitive national security it would be expected that it would be kept to a small number

of persons because you impose on us an obligation and a constitutional duty to protect the nation. And consequently in such protection you would have to trust us in not declaring everything at one time. That is normal in all democratic societies.

In the Ministry of Legal Affairs, the Attorney General's Chambers had been transformed. The CARICOM Legal came here to discuss matters relating to the Caribbean Court of Justice and they came to my office, and they asked a simple question 'Prime Minister how have you been able to transform the Attorney General's Chambers in eight short months into such a productive professional office?' And I told them that there is no magic. There is no magic, just creative thinking, purposeful application of thought and integrity in carrying out what particular plans that you have in place. It is often forgotten, and again people take these things for granted.

The Office of the Attorney General is one of the most important pivots around which any democratic state administration hinges and revolves. Because a democracy is a government of laws and not of men. It is only a capricious totalitarianism or dictatorship, even if elected would down play the importance of the Attorney General's Chambers. And during the life of the NDP administration, the Office of the Attorney General was blighted. And it was blighted because caprice infused the sinews of the office.

Today, we have a high quality woman as Attorney General. [Applause]. When we came to office there was a Solicitor General who almost 70 years old, and who by his own admission was getting a trifle tired. Today, we have a sprightly highly talented Solicitor General. There was too, a Parliamentary advice who had gone passed the age of retirement and I believe was on a month to month contract. She has been replaced by an excellent Parliamentary Counsel whom we have poached from the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, a Vincentian lady.

There was in this country an itinerant Director of Public Prosecutions. The Office of the Public Prosecutor is one of the most powerful offices in the land. It is an independent office. It is responsible for all criminal prosecutions. It can institute criminal prosecution, it can take over private criminal prosecutions and it can discontinue. The power of the Director of Public Prosecutions is awesome. And it is an independent office. The founding fathers of the Constitution made it sure that this is the case. There is an itinerant Director of Public Prosecutions. Who carried on his private practice in St. Kitts and Nevis and who came here, to do the criminal assizes but carried the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and he was paid for a

criminal assizes nearly twice what the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions carries in the Estimates. Clearly the independence of such an itinerant personage would be compromised. You do not have to be a rocket scientist to come to that conclusion.

Today, we have an excellent Director of Public Prosecutions; he was number two in Trinidad and Tobago, in charge of the South of Trinidad. You know one of the reasons when he paid a courtesy call on me, what he told me why he came; he said he is hearing good things about St. Vincent and the Grenadines. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, the High Court is functioning now with the new rules of the Supreme Court. The Gem software system has been put in place at the cost of US\$47,000.00. Mr. Speaker, we are trying on an on going basis to improve the quality in the Magistracy. We have recruited a senior magistrate who has had experience in the Caribbean. He is English born and when the recruitment, when he was about to come and I told him the joke myself, one official said to me, Prime Minister do you know he is a white man from England? I said I know he is an Englishman, I enquire not of his colour. Because the Constitution of this country calls on us not to discriminate against anyone on the basis of his race, sex or political opinion. And from all reports he is doing a very good job.

Mr. Speaker, it has been reported to me on a radio programme hosted by someone who is the real leader of the New Democratic Party whom the current leader of the Opposition follows slavishly on all matters fundamental. The Leader of the Opposition provides the public relation gloss to the vulgarity and the malice and the hatred which emanate forth from that programme. The host of that programme has committed many, many criminal offences on the programme, and it is a measure of the tolerance of this administration that there have been no prosecutions.

But, Mr. Speaker, the host of the programme himself a convicted felon and that must not be forgotten, he is a convicted felon and the nature of his crime was as such, if there were a rehabilitation of Offenders Act, he would not have been qualified to any reasonable system of rehabilitation because of the gross nature of his felony. And the public must never forget that. I am not saying that a man has made a mistake once that you should not give him a second chance. But you do not give him a second chance by being your principal mouthpiece and de facto leader of a mass party. It is reported to me that he said, that I wrote a magistrate, the Magistrate James in the Colonaire District, he alleges that Magistrate James said so at the Colonaire court. That I wrote

Magistrate James, instructing Magistrate James to free someone from South Rivers who was charged with a criminal offence. Well, I do not know if Magistrate James said so, because I am still trying to find out, because if indeed that it is the case it is a very serious matter. But in any case the Prime Minister of this country is accused of interfering in the judiciary. That itself is a criminal libel not just a civil libel, a criminal libel that carries a term of imprisonment. Because I have never, ever written to Magistrate James or spoken to him about any matter whatsoever since I became Prime Minister. I never commented on this matter before, but I wanted to wait until this occasion until I had the nation's attention to inform them about the infamy and the crime, which has been committed on this radio station.

Yet when the Leader of the Opposition walked out unjustifiably at the time of the Estimate I said here that he would be leaving immediately to report to his de facto leader and so said so done. [Applause]. He has to report to his master, I thought that Sir James was his only political master, but evidently Mr. Lynch exercise a hold over him, almost like the way Rasputin did over the Zarina just before the Russian revolution in 1917. Party capture.

Mr. Speaker, I want to clear the air on that matter. There is this conceptual problem under which both the Leader of the Opposition and Senator Leacock laboured. They say when the NDP was in office I said that there was a crisis but now that there is a crisis I do not want to admit that there is a crisis. Well, I know that the Leader of the Opposition has a greater profundity of thought than that simplistic assertion would indicate. I do not say the same thing about Senator Leacock.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, in 1998 after the elections of June, the Leader of the ULP then the Honourable Vincent Beache characterized at that time the political situation as one being a crisis of governance. A crisis of governance, and he identified the elements of that crisis of governance. Among other things there were the following. 1. That the NDP was determined to rule in the old way, but the people were not prepared to allow the exercise of an overruled in that old way. And there was this clash with the NDP's determination to rule in the old way and the people's insistence on the new path that created a framework for the crisis of governance. And that crisis became magnified that the NDP government did not possess the consent of the governed because they only got 45% of the vote against the ULP 55%; never mind that the quirk in the electoral system gave them one more seat.

And thirdly, the NDP was demonstrating incapacity to tackle even the most mundane of problems, like for instance, repairing the schools, taking care of

the difficulties at the Prison and so on and so forth. And the conclusion of the then leader of the ULP was that this crisis of governance was not only a political issue, it was an economic question of the first order. And that is where in the political economy the link emerged between the political crisis of governance and the economic crisis.

Now what we have had since the ULP has come to power is an end to the crisis of governance. The people spoke overwhelmingly on March 28th, and the ULP has acted fulsomely in accordance with that mandate and has made good governance a critical policy plank for which it has been commended by Governments throughout the world including the British and the American governments.

Then having solved the crisis of governance we set about a programme of economic stabilization, economic recovery and renewal and that is why we are where we are today, despite all the difficulties, that the situation does not constitute a crisis. There are difficult circumstances, brought about by the economic situation prior to when we came to Office in the domestic context. The slow down in the international economy, the four month drought which devastated agriculture, in particular bananas, the worst drought in 40 years and then September 11th. Despite all those things we have been able to consolidate and stabilize the economy and set us on a path to economic recovery and renewal. It is a remarkable performance and no one can deny it. I repeat, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, there is only a crisis when the principals are innocent of the extent of condition of the difficulties and have no idea, no focused approach as to how to get out of those difficulties. But we the principals, we are not innocent of the extent of the condition. We have detailed the difficulties with honesty and openness. And we have put forward a plan, a programme, and an economic framework of how to get out of the difficulties. And that is why the SVG TV poll, the man on the street poll, reported on Thursday, that 99% of the people questioned on the streets of Kingstown said it was an excellent budget. [Applause]. And just a month before a poll was done by a company out of Barbados which reported that only 21% of the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines are dissatisfied with the ULP government and that 79% were either satisfied or more than satisfied. Seventy-nine percent.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, 49% of the population was more than satisfied, 30% satisfied and 21 dissatisfied. It is that knee-jerk core group of NDP persons to whom the real leader of the NDP appeals and to which group the de jure and the formal leader appeals, and hopes to maintain some level of sycophancy. Well, now you can do that but they will come away, because in the markets

and in the villages it has been reported to me by the security forces of this country because they give intelligent reports, by ordinary people who just tell me, but tell other folk, 'that how they say that Ralph Gonsalves is a bad man and he doing so many good things?' Ordinary people who have supported the NDP find the posed, it is problematic. They pose an important philosophical problematic, how could they say that this man Ralph Gonsalves is so bad and he doing so many things so good. Now, and naturally having posed the problem in those terms there come inexorably to the answer that those who say that he is a bad man are telling lies and the truth will always emerge triumphant.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is no economic crisis in this country. There are difficulties. The Leader of the Opposition quotes that Prime Minister Arthur said that September 11th was a catastrophe for Barbados and the region. Owen Arthur has now down played the formulation catastrophe and said that things are not as bad as he first thought. He prefers to accept the assessment of Owen Arthur, and not the rich dialectic reflections, which emanates from the Ministry of Finance of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. But he did not quote the said part, you know. That Owen Arthur is now saying the initial assessment was one sided, mechanistic and not sufficiently dialectical and holistic. He is smiling because he knows what I am saying is the truth. Mr. Speaker, I want to quote the concluding mission statement, and I would make it a document of the House, because this is a transparent government. The St. Vincent and the Grenadines 2001 Article 4 Consultations by the International Monetary Fund. The normal consultation, October the 18th to 31st 2001. the first sentence,

'On the 22nd Anniversary of Independence, St. Vincent and the Grenadines is facing a daunting economic challenge. [Notice not a crisis, economic challenge which is daunting. Even prior to September 11th terrorist attack in the United States, growth was slowing due to the impact on agriculture of the drought, happily now ended, and fewer tourists.

And then the IMF went on to speak about HIV/AIDS and the terrorist attack exacerbating the trends, fall in remittances, and so forth. Then this is what they want to say, 'the new government has reacted with commendable speed and determination to this daunting challenge'. Those are not my words you know, let me read them again, so that the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; the first sentence of the first paragraph that on 22nd anniversary of Independence, 'St. Vincent and the Grenadines is facing a daunting economic challenge and they described the nature of that challenge in that

first paragraph.

The first sentence in the second paragraph: 'the new government has reacted with commendable speed and determination, to this challenge, Prime Minister Gonsalves speech of October 11th 2001 on economic stabilization, consolidation, Recovery and Renewal in a New Period, provides the framework of the government's immediate policy response. The degree of civil society consultation in preparation of these policies is particularly note worthy. Here this, the IMF Mission finds this policy framework, comprehensive and overall in the right direction. I did not say all these things you know.

Third paragraph: the new government inherited a weakening fiscal position with overall public sector savings decline in by around 2 percentage point of GDP to 6% of GDP in 2000. When I say that I inherited a bad hand with a weakening fiscal position, the Leader of the Opposition said that I am telling untruths. And he has his real leader echoing him and providing the vulgarity to this untruth, and in deed the criminality to this untruth. But here what the IMF says, first sentence in the third paragraph, I will read it again, 'the new government inherited a weakening fiscal position with overall public sector savings declining around by two percentage points of GDP to 6% of GDP in 2000. And then when Senator Shallow spoke yesterday evening in total lack of comprehension of the estimates, he appeared to be looking at the document as if it was written in up side down Chinese; not upstanding things like these and that is when I pleaded with him to go to some night classes to the Leader of the Opposition in role as a professional economist, because when the Leader of the Opposition starts to talk like a politician he forgets economics and he sounds as though he is unknowing of this science. And I will come to that, because he hid a lot behind the brilliance of the Ministry of Finance and Planning, you know, the officials there, but now that mask is removed the real person is emerging and the public will make the judgments, as we go along in this five years, if he survive that long.

Mr. Speaker, the document goes on, 'this primarily rising current expenditures, central government savings are projected to remain broadly unchanged in 2001 allowing for the moratorium on interest payments in the Ottley Hall related debt in the second half of the year. Given the projected decline in economic activity for the year, this an achievement. [Applause]. Let me repeat that, Central Government savings are projected to remain broadly unchanged in 2001, even making allowance for the Ottley Hall relieve. Here the sentence, given the projected decline in economic activity for the year this is an achievement, it is not me who said so, it is the International Monetary

Fund. Of course, during the election campaign, when you heard them speak about Ralph Gonsalves, you would believe that hardly left Colonaire Primary School. I do not understand anything about these things, he is a country lawyer, he could do curse case, and one or two drug cases. They even reached the stage of trying to rewrite history and doubted my scholarship and it is there in the libraries of University of the West Indies. I do not know why people like to belittle others like that.

Mr. Speaker, the Mission Statement continued by detailing what is our broad fiscal strategy which is explained here when we address the matter in the budget and all the various economic sectors, there addressed, but the report is an excellent report, for the ULP government this year. And I will put it here. You never gave me that courtesy, no never gave me the courtesy in two years. [Interjection] The point about it is this, I have never received anything like this. I never received. The IMF can send it out if authorization is given by the Government. Authorization, and that authorization were not given by you. That authorization was not given by you because there was confusion as to whether they should put it on the Internet. Do you want me to bring the letters. Man, you see.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition posed the question on Ottley Hall whether in fact, the subordinated loan, whether by not paying the principal loan that it means that the subordinated loan would be triggered in and it would be paid. The answer is no. Because of discussions with Sache, West LB is of no moment to West LB. Because Sache is the second guarantor of the loan. And Sache has agreed to pay the installment and in fact pay the installment in June and they have agreed to pay the installment in December and that we will continue to speak on the matter.

In fact, after this budget we have to see, discuss it with the officials in the Ministry of Finance and planning whether we can get the Sache and the West LB people to come down here before the end of the year if not early in the new year. But it must not be forgotten that Ottley Hall cost, St. Vincent and the Grenadines US\$84 million. The interest payments alone per year is close to \$8 million. We are not talking about when the principal kick in, in three years time. It is a millstone around our necks and at arms length, the assets is only \$5 million US, and I have made the point plain to all the authorities to whom I have spoken, including the British government, the Italian government, at the highest levels with Prime Minister Burlestony. I have spoken about the IMF about it, so that we cannot be blind sided and we are not defaulting. We are only deferring the payment of the debt until an appropriate solution is worked out. Meanwhile, other efforts are being taken for us to get to the bottom of

what is Ottley Hall. Because all that is required for us to do, is to find the evidence of fraud, because it is impossible for an asset to worth only \$5 million US and \$84 million US has been expended on the exercise. Impossible. Somebody had to thief somewhere. You don't have to be rocket scientist to come to that conclusion.

At the moment I do not have admissible evidence to go to a court of law, but I am working at it, and steps are being taken, which I am not going to publicize. But I want to assure the public that I am interested how taxpayers money went in that business and where tax payers money going to pay all this debt. The NDP government, for that alone should not see government again and those who know in their hearts that they have been involved in corruption there, unless they repent they will not see the face of God. Because one of the Commandments is 'Thou shall not steal.' And you break one, you break all and you have to go on your knees and repent. You must repent. The project was designed to fail. Because it is only in its failure money could have been made by the participants. That is the reality. As the lawyers would say, it was a scamp abinecio, from the beginning.

Then what about the debts which we have been left, \$640 million, the Leader of the Opposition then Prime Minister has left for me, \$640 million national debt, including the Ottley Hall debt which will be about \$140 million with the subordinated loan. That is what is left you know. And in addition to that we have been left other house keeping debts in excess of \$25 million. I heard Senator Shallow said why are you paying the \$1.9 million owed on the market, he said that he thought that we were going to invest that on the market, until he made the comment, 'payment for consultancy fees and retention fees, well if he did not understand what those words meant in the comment he should have asked the Leader of the Opposition. He would have explained, that retention fees mean, monies retained by the government on the contract to see whether the work is done properly and for the architect, the consulting architect on the project will give a certificate of completion works either fully or in part.

Apparently, Senator Shallow thinks you build these things and you make the arrangements like when you building a house up in Richland Park on a Sunday. You come and mark it out, and you bring two bottle of strong rum, and the women them come and cook, and you dig the foundation and you start to run up the 6 inch blocks, it does not happen like that, you have consulting architects, and when people are out of their depths they must speak only of those matters, about which they are competent. I have always been careful on that subject matter. If I do not know something I ask

questions. I do not speak authoritatively on the subject, in that way I will learn, but when you speak authoritatively about subject which you know not, nobody is going to take time out to teach because they 'stupes' their teeth, and say that he pretends he is a know all but he does not know anything. And I only say that as a piece of advice to the Honourable Senator. So we must not pay Joachim but we must pay Ottley Hall.

And then they left us the debt of \$7 million, I just got a letter last week there from Craffie, from Kuwait that is what is remaining owing on the cruise ship berth. I finally told the staff in the Ministry of Finance to put the \$7 million in the budget will pay him next year. You do not want us to pay Mr. Joachim. You do not want us to pay the consultant in Trinidad. You do not want us to pay the Kuwaiti. You want us to be an international brigand. You want us to be an international outcast like how some people who run companies of all kinds do not pay their debt and their cheque bounce. I am not in that. But I am not paying the Ottley Hall debt until something is worked out properly because I have good reasons to believe that fraud was involved. So I am perusing that. And that is the discriminating judgment which I am bring to bear.

So the Leader of the Opposition when he was in Government, the Officials pleaded with him not to pay the Ottley Hall debt, he said, no, no, I would have to pay it; I would have to pay it. But he does not want to pay the debt at the University of the West Indies, nor the UN. The officials pleaded with you not to pay the Ottley Hall debt and I am not telling you what official, I am just telling you, I am speaking from the position of knowledge. But you see, you had trumpeted, you are the person who claimed, I have cleaned up Ottley Hall, I have fixed it up. I come and I have cleaned it up, and having left that there, I have moved on to ECGC and I would clean that up too. You also said that. ECGC, the thing with the fellow who in charge of PPM, I cannot remember the fellow's name.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to make an announcement, because I want to use the rounding up, both to reply to many issues and to make an announcement. Concerning, a project which may well run to the figure of \$1 billion US. I have had discussions involving the Canouan Developers and a vice president of the Trump Organization. Business plan would be concluded sometime by May, and houses, ranging between \$2 and \$5 million US would be pre sold. It would involve the Trump Organization institutional investors and the Canouan Developers. It is a project that is revolutionary in its scope. It is planned to have components, of Mustique type houses, a particular exquisite type hotel, fishing village, spa and the like.

But, to do that Mr. Speaker, will require a new structure and system of governance at Canouan and we have to bring aboard the people of Canouan. Not what happened the last time, an imposition. And we have Mr. Speaker, to have a thorough development of the village in Canouan. Because you cannot leave the airport and come through an area, which is looking run down? The landscaping, and the education, and the policing, the garbage collection, all those things have to be of a top quality. Because it would be a village, attached, part of, connected with, integral to, a development of monumental proportions. Just figure the amount of employment which would be generated for people from the whole of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. A project of up to \$1 billion US.

And in that exercise I want to involve the Opposition fully, and more particularly the representative for the Southern Grenadines. Not that I am going to seek to poach him. It is not that I am seeking to poach him. It is that I respect him as someone who must be integrally involved in this exercise. We must set up a separate structure, on Friday of this week. I have already asked the Director General of Finance and Planning to get all the persons involved in government touching on this exercise; the planners, the environmentalists, the people in finance, electricity, water, the Commissioner of Police. It is an exercise, this preliminary meeting of great importance, and we will have to go when we have more information on all its features to put them to the people of Canouan.

But Mr. Speaker, if we intend to do proper land planning in Canouan as a prelude to this investment, we have to sort out the title to lands in Canouan. We do things here scientifically, you know. I have here a memorandum from the Acting Chief Surveyor dated, the 26th of November, and I do not mind giving you a copy, you know, Member for Southern Grenadines, because you know this government is open, and transparent. In this document it gives the name of every single person who has lands, in Canouan, what is the size of the land, the purchase price, the amount paid, and the final date for payment. In addition to that the Government has about 220 acres of unallocated lands. I have told you already, you should be part of the exercise of trying to allocate the lands. I am not seeking to poach you, but in the spirit of the openness. You are frightened about what two or three supporters who are down there who have some hold over you would say. But I am speaking about it openly, so that your constituents will tell you get involved. And if you do not get involved, you would be left behind. You would be left behind, I give you that fair warning publicly.

[Interjection] Well he won only by a slim margin and when we distribute these lands in Canouan and we nice up Canouan and we build the jetty in Mayreau, and we get electricity in Mayreau as an Emancipation gift next year, crapaud smoke your pipe. The train is leaving for San Fernando, jump on, you better do that, the last train. You know what I am talking about is true. And that is why you gave support to the budget in a particular kind of a way. You had to talk with a little bit of water in your mouth, and make a little, as the Deputy Prime Minister said you talk with a little bit of crochet talk, with some holes in it and so on, but you come back on the other hand and you praise this, you try to bat on both sides of the wicket, eh? Are you trying to bat on both sides of the wicket? [Laughter]. But, I will help you along, if you are afraid, I am an old hand at this thing. I will help you along, I will nurse you along. Do not be afraid of a few people who would run their mouth on you, do not bother on that at all.

Mr. Speaker, so that is the issue of Canouan in so far as the development goes. The gross domestic product, nominally for St. Vincent and the Grenadines is about \$900 and something million dollars, EC. Think of an investment up to \$1 billion, over a period up to five to seven years. Do you see why I tell you it is revolutionary? I know when I said revolutionary the Leader of the Opposition watched me and he is saying in his mind is that an old Marxist there who is talking about capital being revolutionary, but if he understands historical dialectics he will know that capital has a revolutionary potential. [Interjection]. When I saw you smiling I picked you up you know, I am an old hand at this business. Capital possesses a revolutionary potential. And what we have to do is to make sure that revolutionary potential is harnessed within the interest of the people's own humanization. And that is the approach of the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines at this juncture in our history.

Mr. Speaker, I like to make a couple of other announcements. As you know we have set up a Belize Disaster Fund, and monies are being collected. As of yesterday, at the bank the funds stood at \$4,910.00 and students are being asked to contribute and other persons. Belize is a sister CARICOM country. And Mr. Speaker, there was a St. Lucia Disaster Fund where the money were never paid over, it has \$1,380.00 in it and I spoke to Prime Minister Anthony and secured his approval for the transference of that money to the Belize Fund which will give us \$6,290.00 at the present time. And Zolla Elis-Browne who is the Honorary Counsel for Belize in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, I have asked her to head the particular committee. So I made this announcement so that the public would know what is happening. We have a long way to go. And Belize is important in this particular regard not only

because they are a CARICOM country, but because St. Vincent and the Grenadines is seen as the ancestral home of the Garifuna people who reside in Belize. And the area in which they reside was devastated.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make an announcement concerning Cuba. You know it is funny, sometimes journalists do not ask us anything and they presume that nothing is happening. On Friday, a container load of rice and bakers flour will set sail for Cuba. [Applause]. It's cost is about \$40,000 EC, CIF. And ECGC is making all the arrangement. Two hundred and fifty one pound bag of bakers flour and 250 100-pound bags of rice. And I have indicated to the Cuban authorities that this would be the first of two, or three, or four shipments if they wish to have as many from us, we have what we can provide and we will provide rice and flour. So that how could anybody believe that a government like this one would stand askance when Cuba is need. I mean anybody who has that view really belittle us. Maybe you can blame us for not making public before hand what are doing. But if I make public before hand what we are doing and it was not done yet, they would say how is it taking so long, you cannot even send a container load of rice and flour to Cuba? They are going on the seventh and we come to you with information on a timely basis so I hope my partner Bassy who wrote about it last week would write next week and say well, -- he might even say well the Comrade listened to me and fix it up. Well, you know Bassy all ready. Because when I reduced the barrels from four categories to two, because Auntie Laura spoke to me, put it to \$15 and \$25, Lynch claimed he is Auntie Laura. A convicted felon could be Auntie Laura? Eh? A convicted felon could be Auntie Laura? Must not come and abuse good people like that.

So, Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members I am quite sure that all persons in St. Vincent and the Grenadines would give support, to what I have announced in Cuba. I have already spoken to the Cuban Mission in Barbados and the ECGC has the right away, and of course before I make formal announcements in the House on a matter like this, I informed the Director General of Finance and Planning. I do not have to tell him, but that is how we operated as a team with courtesy, because I am not Caesar or Verson Geterics.

Mr. Speaker, as I make this announcement about Cuba, do you know what is going to be said on some talk shows and some people who believe that Newsweek and Time are the only authoritative journals in the world on every subject under the Sun and what they lack in Newsweek and Time they go to Readers Digest and that is the fulsomeness of their intellectual fountain. They would say, well America does not like Cuba, St. Vincent giving Cuba flour and rice, I bet they do not get any more assistance from America. I beg they are

going to stop giving Vincentians Visa because Ralph who is a communist sent flour and rice to Cuba. You are going to get that on those stations you know. As God is my witness you are going to get it. They are going to pander to the lowest common denominators and the most backwardness in this land. And the Leader of the Opposition will come here and he would give support to the measure formally, but he will not rebuke his de facto leader, his real leader when he begins to talk that nonsense. He will go on the programme and when interviewed and being asked about it, he would say [well, I do not quite see it that way, you know, Cuba gave us something but I do not see anything quite so wrong with that. But the thing I really want to talk about,] and he moves to another subject as though, like brushing aside he gives consent to the convicted felon.

The Leader of the Opposition, mark my words; what I just say here you are going to see it happen. They are going to have call in programmes with that. You are going to have talk show hosts to talk it, other than the convicted felon, you know. Some who believe that we are not a civilization, that if America say jump the only thing you must say is how high, not even the elementary question, well why should I jump, rather than skip or walk, or move for that matter. And what they do not realize it is that the Americans and the great President Bush, because he is a great President and he has led his nation very wisely in this period of international terrorism. President Bush has read this book, "The politics of our Caribbean, Essays and Speeches" and he has told our Ambassador to Washington that he understand fully the thinking of his Prime Minister, and he applauds his ideas about the Caribbean Civilization and about its nobility. People of quality will respect you if you stand up for certain basic things you believe, you do not want a slave. President Brush does not want a slave, he wants a partner who has an independent mind, who can think and help. [Applause]

The Leader of the Opposition has made four general assessments about the budget. These assessments by him are either contradictory and or false. He said that the budget as presented is fundamentally flawed in certain material particulars, yet he failed to present one piece of evidence to show the flaw. Not one. And the reason why he has not been able to is that the assertion that the budget flawed, is itself a false proposition. Secondly, he said that the budget has not gone far enough but its thrust generally is in the right direction, well if the budget is in the right direction how could it be flawed? If it is generally in the right direction, it is not flawed in material particulars, because material particulars means the base, the general base, the fundamental base; unless he is using language in a humpty dumpty sense and ascribed meanings to words which he alone understand those meanings.

So he is saying on the one hand that the budget is fundamentally flawed and on the other hand he says it is in the right direction. How can you square those two things?

Then the Leader of the Opposition says there is nothing new in the budget. Let me just identify a few things that are new in the budget. We will come to the revenue measures shortly, which are very creative, and a programme on WE FM on Sunday morning all the panelists came to the conclusion that the fiscal measures were very creative. So the bundle of fiscal measures they are creative then I point to some things in the budget which are new and real; the refurbishing and reallocation of the Printery \$490,000.000.

The Printery is critical for the administration of governance. If you do not have a Printery we would have to send out things to private tender and that may well be an option. And that may well be when we analyze all the issues. But for the time being we cannot have the dump that is there with some people trying to burn it down every other month. I want to tell you just some things that are new; so that the public would know what was talking was not the Minister of Finance but the political surrogate of the convicted felon on his paid radio programme. In fact if I may say this parenthetically, the Leader of the Opposition is so much so a surrogate of the paid convicted felon, because that is what he is, that he raises the issues only which the convicted felon raises and he forgot to speak about his constituency. Because he now feels, his mindset, his mind frame is that his authority to speak flows not from his constituents but from the paid convicted felon.

New, in real terms the St. Vincent Emergency Recovery and Disaster management project, \$1 million out of a programme of \$16.2 million. I want to comment on this. When we came into office, within a month or thereabouts, I met with the World Bank people, and they said that they are discontinuing the offer. That is what they came to tell me that they have taken a decision to discontinue the offer of \$6 million US in soft loans on this Disaster management and emergency Recovery Project. They said that the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines had done nothing, absolutely nothing in relation to this and that they were going to withdraw \$6 million US, I told her, that you cannot, I said I just came in, you cannot blame me for the sins of my fathers, and those that have gone before me. She said as a Greek Orthodox she understands the Christian principles. And she said do certain things immediately; I will give you a reprieve first to see how you do certain things in six weeks. We did certain things in six weeks.

We came to the House in July and one of the things that was required, that we had a National Disaster Coordinator, Grade 10 minimum. We put that in the Supplementary Estimates. When you saw that there, it was not there for joke because you are planning, because you have your eye on the \$6 million US. Then you would have seen in the Gazette that disaster preparedness was taken away from Sister Girlyn Miguel, the Minister of Social Development and Local Government, when my critics saw that it was now attached to the Office of the Prime Minister they say he see he wants to do everything, he took away Disaster Management and Disaster Preparedness from Girlyn. That is how they said it on the talk show you know. They did not know that was part of the deal with the World Bank.

I had to present a Gazette to show them that it is in the Office of the Prime Minister because they had come to the conclusion it is only if it is in the Office of the Prime Minister it will get done, because that is what happened in St. Kitts, and it was using that as the example, and Dominica, they had spent their money too. Dominica which does not have our administrative capacity, had gotten their money and had already spent it. You go to Dominica driving from the airport to Roseau, do you see all the sea works, all the works by the sea, the sea defenses, that is the World Bank money. But we with the great economist as Prime Minister, the World Bank took away their money.

Mr. Speaker, we have had to do the plans for the building, the emergency office building for this project, it is going to be upstairs where the Housing and Land Development Corporation is, we have to do the plans for that. And then all the elements of the project we have had to do all the costings, all the particulars, despite the lack of capacity the Ministry of Works had to do it, I personally went down there to see Al Campbell and I jokingly said to him, as sometimes I have to joke and make fun to get the staff to do work because they are so pressured, and I thanked him for the work he has done in this regard. I said Al I have a deadline. I told him the deadline to submit certain things to the World Bank, I say if you do not do it for me by then I sending you to Balliceaux without water. And that is how we have to get things done.

We have now a final deadline for everything for January 15th, you would have seen advertisement for the national disaster coordinator in the newspaper. You would have seen advertisement for an accountant for the project, all those are things which we had to put in place. While cleaning up the mess we had to do all that you know. And they say there is nothing new in the budget, we did not get a bad hand.

Mr. Speaker, now \$2.9 million in equity in LIAT. Detached bathrooms \$222,000.00, the Minister of Social Development spoke about that, poverty alleviation. We started it with our own money of quarter million dollars to raise \$10 million from the \$3.5 million Euros extra from STABEX. I have already held discussions with ambassador Calagurou. On the subject matter, so that you have to put your house in order. We need, Mr. Speaker, for our public servants to be working now, on fine-tuning our poverty alleviation programme leading to the strategic objective of poverty eradication. That is why that is there, agricultural diversification fund, \$3 million. You know, I explained in the budget address that we set up that fund, and part of the specific monies for that fund is the \$750,000.00 which we intend to raise from the consumption duties and that would help the farmers.

Senator Shallow tried to make fun of the consumption duties; I want to explain something to him and members on the Opposition and for those persons who are insufficiently reflective on these matters. And it gives you an insight into how creative policy making emerges in the Government. I went to St. Lucia to address a Labour Party Conference about a month ago. Barbados I went the Monday morning to the opening of CARTA, a new technical and research agency, considerably founded by CIDA. And I have the Director General of Finance on my mind. I am at the hotel; he called me there. I have him on my mind, he called me, and it was an amazing telepathy. He told me about something, and I said Sketch, boy I had something on my mind, I could not sleep last night, it was turning over in my head, I said for the budget. I said we have to see how we can help agriculture, while at the same time, tweaking the nose of the World Trade Organization at the margin. He said what is it now Prime Minister. I said I am thinking about a levy specifically on certain products, or raising the consumption duties. I went through with him the idea and together we fine-tuned it. What we have done is to take a list of products, which are imported mainly from outside of the Caribbean, because if Senator Shallow knows this at Customs they have the documentation as to those commodities, which come mainly from outside of the Caribbean. Though some of those very commodities you may have some imports from the region, but a lesser amount.

So we set about with the imports from outside the region commodity by commodity. When I came back he and I and two senior custom officers, a whole Saturday; -- nothing is more numbing than going through commodity by commodity to see which one you could increase a little bit here, from outside of the region, you know, which are importing, until we put on these very marginal increases on these commodities from outside of the region to get the \$750,000 to contribute towards the \$3 million to set up the agricultural

diversification fund. That is what you call creativity. You must learn the basics first and then apply your mind creatively. Nobody could begrudge the farmers this money under the agricultural diversification fund. And the Ministry of Agricultural now, has a responsibility to come up with sound and proper detailed programmes as to how we are going to apply the Agricultural Diversification Fund. That is also new, Mr. Speaker, and it is new because of a creative impulse. It did not come out like manna from heaven. God give you the grey matter and you used it within the condition of St. Vincent and the Grenadines knowing the people's needs and their concerns.

Peace Memorial Hall which gone to the dogs, it is new we start to repair it already and it would be completed next year. The National Public Library, and I called it the National Public Library rather than the New Public Library because what used to happen the NDP everything they do they call it new, to tie it in with the New Democratic Party, that is not going on with the government. It is not a new public library; it is a national public library. Although it is there in the Estimates, new, it is there by error. Just how I take out the word key on the key results, and put in, instead of that, result indicators, nobody is going to use language to bamboozle people after 17 years. No key result, it is result indicator and it is not a new library, it is a national public library. Mr. Speaker, I could have called it star results you know, I could have called it that, but I do not want to politicize the budget process in that way. The National Public Library we have already \$3 million dollars put aside to kick off, Mr. Speaker, we maybe spend only \$500,000 next year. [I want somebody to stand up with me, I want to show the Parliament, and the AG can help me.]/*Prime Minister points out map*. This is the site layout, this is Murray Road here, that house I pointed to is Fred Dare house, this is the entrance coming in here, this is the library, this is a restaurant here, lot of trees around, beautifully laid out, behind here is the amphitheater. And I want to tell you that the Ministry of Works did this, you know. This is the ground floor layout. The entrance, Internet, computers, copying room, public telephones, children lending, children reference, multipurpose area. Reference, seating, West Indian reading room, St. Vincent and the Grenadines reading room, audio visual, juvenile reading, adult lending, and adult reading room. We have to put something there, they left out in the design and something has to be arranged there, there is special room for the Chinese civilization, because that is where we are getting the money. Initially, and we have to show our respect for the Chinese civilization. Loading bay, garage, other facilities there. This is the first floor layout, for the top, upstairs at the library. All the offices, conference room, kitchenette, all ancillary facilities for a modern library, under the most up to date in the world we will be having. This is the layout of the floor space, for the lecture theater, for the

amphitheater. The stage, the orchestra pit, prop storage, female and male dressing rooms, ticket booths, all the ancillary facilities there. Seating for 600 hundred, I told them that I want 750, they will find the space at the back. Media conferencing room, lighting controlling room that is what we have and the Ministry of Transport and Works of St. Vincent and the Grenadines they are designing it. They are the ones. It did not cost us one penny, other than their labour, which they get paid for already. [Applause]. Bringing pride back to the people, the professionals. This is the restaurant layout and elevation, first floor restaurant, ground floor restaurant and the one in the middle and that is the front there, beautiful. They said nothing new, well there is not New Democratic Party.

There is the National Stadium, we have already \$4 million from the Libyan Government; do you remember when I was supposed to go to Cuba, I must not go to Cuba for the time is wrong. You should not go there at all, stay home and watch CNN and see what is happening there, September 11th it is wrong, timing wrong, it is not bad to go to Cuba but timing wrong. He did not say when it is the right time. Came back with capacity. Cuba does not have dollars but they have capacity, trained people; engineers. When I went to Libya, he said why are you going to Libya, the Americans will get vex with you they would not talk to you, they would take away your visa. I mean that is the level backwardness, with all due respect, in this new and modern period. The only people who can talk like that are those who do not believe that we have 50 years of democracy in this country, that the foundation of our foreign policy rests on our democracy, rests on our openness and transparency and good governance. That the leadership of this country collectively is no less endowed, no less mature, no less democratic, no less sophisticated than the leadership of any country, whatever its size anywhere in the world. [Applause]. We are an independent authentic civilization with nobility and we act in that manner, and the Americans understand it, and appreciate it. And right now they are singing the praises in Washington of the ULP Government and its Prime Minister; right now.

There is the cross country road, last time the NDP put \$70,000.00 in it as an afterthought. Prime Minister Mitchell got up and he stapes his teeth and he said where are they going with that. Anybody is going to give you money to build road, given the environmental problems and so on; stapes his teeth. Before they put in the budget the airport they have that on hold, he criticized the budget last year you know, the Senior Minister then. I tell you, the confusion amidst them. We have from the Chinese put aside \$20 million out of the \$26 million US, for the cross-country road. It may not even take all that, or it may take a little more, because they are going through certain

financing discussions. There is a committee on it. We have \$750,000. Out of that in next year's to do preliminary work. But let me say this, when we open our new library, our national library for people to go their and read and study, and we drive on our cross country road, and we bring in our footballers to play at the national stadium, and maybe even bring in the gospel singers, or Berris and then I declare the elections in the national stadium, all you will get wash away. [Applause]. The NDP will get washed away. Washed away. Wait and see, you scrape through by 40 votes by the skin of your teeth. Forty votes. Barely, you hang on by the skin of your teeth, yes, you just barely. You see the problem you know, when you going to election next election, if you manage to keep off those who challenge you for leadership, like Senator Leacock when the next election comes if you happen to be there, the problem which you face is this, you have to scamp around and you would be stuck inside of your constituency, while the people of North Central would chase me and say Comrade don't come campaign here, because it is 80 something percent I got already. And anybody who comes next time they are not getting 18 percent, they are going below their deposit. You can put your pot on the fire and expect that.

They say there is nothing new, there is the YES programme, the forensic lab, the prisons, and there some repeats, but realistic now, the Windward Highway and the Windward Water Project. You know they had put the Windward Water project in their budget for last year, they had not signed any agreement, nothing had been done; in relation to the Windward Highway, you know the consultant had not submitted his report yet. As the IMF said, they said the new government is insistent and they agree with it, not to put a wish list in the capital estimate.

Mr. Speaker, when we came to Office, we met undoubtedly a bad hand. The IMF is saying that the position had worsened by the time we had arrived. Yet the Leader of the Opposition in a fourth assessment said that the budget is unsustainable, that many ideas in it are good but the implementation is bad. That I have to find \$29 million in additional tax revenues, I do not know where I am going to find it from, well he knows, that inbuilt in the recurrent expenditure, there is a savings between eight to 10 percent. He knows that. It is not a question that you cutting back, there is an inbuilt savings. So in addition to the efficacies of the measures they combined with the savings means that you would meet your target. He knows that, it is an elementary point. But he was making a point of that political nature because he feared that if he did not make it he would have been lynched. He asked what's new in the budget; I gave the capital projects. Then the methodology is new. He wants. [Interjection] You see the point, you were talking about PPBS and you

had individualized it about people's individual performance, and my critique is that you had to set up a structure within which individuals must function. A programmatic structure. You had to set up an implementation framework and you had to have the requisite leadership for you. A methodology is a mechanistic structure, not a living dynamic one. You should have spoken to Senator Leacock, he will tell you about his Leacockian synergies. Now, we had our 100 Days implementation programme with time lines, reportage, everybody working together, we link that with our manifesto, the October 11th speech by October 27th speech on Independence Day, the corporate plans which were absent from your framework. The estimates, the budget, and enough time before the end of the year to put the work plans in place so that we kick off next year. That is an integrated coordinated methodological framework. You cannot talk to me about methodology I am a student of philosophy of methodology. [Applause]. I can talk to you about comparative methodologies from Toucededies right up to Joseph Stiglist of the World Bank. You cannot talk to me about methodologies, man, not you. Somebody else. I used to teach this, you know, and you must learn.

Mr. Speaker, new inside of the budget is the \$205 million for the first phase of the low-income housing programme, which will be all over this country, including East Kingstown. Including down at Malla and Roseau where you believe you have votes, wait, when I done with you. [Interjection]. Well, this time I am in Government and I am going with my housing programme for them. Just like how the teachers, the public servants, -- \$2.5 million in the first year for the first phase of the housing project, low income. The creativity of the 100% mortgage programme for public servants, there are many public servants inside the gathering there listening and many outside who already gone to the National Commercial Bank to make their arrangements to build their homes. Thirty years no down payment, 7-³/₄ %. [Applause]. Well, when the ULP finishes, any public servant, teacher, nurse, policeman, policewoman who does not build a house is because they do not want to build one. And the low-income houses we are fixing that up.

We are on target with Constitutional reform and Local Government and when we came to office you had us on the FATF black list, for the offshore industry, we slowly coming off that. There is a treasure trove of information which is there with the US authorities now, and it is there because of the work of the ULP administration. You see the point about it is this, no information left there because it was under surveillance. And we made all the arrangements. Mr. Speaker, they believe how we work this, we met a ramshackle legal infrastructure. You could not arrest and begin extradition proceedings in relation to a citizen, because all you gave Nano citizenship, not me. You could

not extradite him under the Fugitive Offenders Act, which you all passed in 1989, which did not have money laundering as an extraditable offence. The day after I returned from Rome, we set that right here in the Parliament. Then immediately we set about dealing with the search warrant, begin to ask the FBI to come in because we want to negotiate with them with a seven-man team, who will come in and do the work. And once we had the negotiations in place this was sent to the American Government. Let me read it for you,

“The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Commerce and Trade of St. Vincent and the Grenadines presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America and has the honour to refer to the Warrant of Arrest issued by the United States District Court of Southern Florida in respect of Thierry Nano. In this regard, the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines is seeking urgent technical assistance for the relevant United States Authorities to support the Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force in the execution of a search warrant on certain premises and properties belonging to Mr. Thierry Nano. Specifically assistance is being sought in the following areas.

1. For US special services personnel to accompany local police in the execution of the Search Warrant.
2. Assist the local police in the examination of all relevant materials.
3. Assisting the removal of any material including electronic devices, document et cetera.
4. Assisting and analyzing of these materials, equipment whether in St. Vincent and the Grenadines or overseas.
5. To do any other act necessary to effect a full and proper forensic examination of any or all material and equipment recovered, which may relate to any particular crime committed or being investigated.

The Ministry looks forward to receiving an immediate response given the urgency of the matter. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Trade of St. Vincent and the Grenadines avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the embassy of the United States the assurances of the highest consideration.

[Interjection]. How do you mean so? The US government today, you see the point about it is this; you are listening too much to Lynch. The point about it is this, I repeat, you could not have arrested him, well, you may not accept it, you see you may not accept that there is something called Newton's Law of Gravity and if you go on top of this building and you jump, you are capable of celestial ascent. But jump nah, you will fall. Because Newton's Law of Gravity is a reflection of the reality in the material world. [Interjection] Yes, he has not accepted March 28th either, there are many things you do not accept. The fact is this, this is a government of laws, and the Americans fully understand. I am telling you this and the nation, that the Americans fully understand that the legal apparatus was not in place and they are very happy with the speed with which we have moved, and they are singing the praises of this government in Washington. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have been getting so much praise that the matter of how we have acted swiftly in cooperating with the US Government that it has been reported to me that the Attorney General John Ashcroft of the United States has asked that I be communicated with an expression of thanks, of the US Government and I have already received a telephone conversation to that effect. [Applause].

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Could I remind you that you are in your final hour?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am obliged.

Mr. Speaker, they think that the US has not acknowledged the work that we have done. Right as I speak, we are cooperating with the US Government on several other matters in the security area, and let me say this you know, do not believe that it is somebody in the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave the Leader of the Opposition the provisional warrant of Mr. Nano's arrest. I will tell you how they got it; because when he got it I was concerned whether there was a breach of security within the State Administration. I am happy to report that there was no such breach. That an unauthorized person, who has a personal relationship with Sir James from the US Embassy faxed a copy to Sir James, and he gave it to the Leader of the Opposition. I am telling you that is how it came about. I could tell you that 100% factual. You see, the point about it is this, one of the things about this Prime Minister, well all you said in the elections that I am an obeah man I do not sleep, that I turning rounce, all you say, you see me one moment in Canouan at 10:00 in the night and 7:30 the next morning, that I am in Fancy, they say that I am a rounce; well I just got this yesterday evening from the US Embassy, from a very special section, I would not say which section. I would not say which section. Comment, these are the facts to me.

Mr. Prime Minister, it was a pleasure to speak to you this morning, pursuant to our conversation I will have I will have our new assist forfeiture specialist begin his tenure by offering his services to your investigative and prosecutorial teams. I expect the incumbent to arrive at post early in the New Year. I will also work with Mr. Williams, [that is Colin Williams at the Offshore Authority] to ensure the timely arrival of the furnishings and the information systems required by new financial intelligence unit.

I asked them to give me all the technology for financial intelligence Unit, they said yes. So when the Leader of the Opposition said, you have nothing here on the Capital budget for the FIU, I know where it is coming from. Just yesterday I got this, and I will tell you I showed it to him. Because there is some other sensitive security matters on it. I showed him, on which they required our cooperation, he would have never extended to me that courtesy. Never. Mr. Speaker, there was the FATF blacklist and we are dealing with that. There was the impending blacklist from the International Maritime Organization. Our work here in the Parliament and with the regulations in Cabinet, within six weeks we cleared ourselves off the blacklist. There was the impending blacklist by ICCAT, the International Committee on the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna. And we are working from the Office of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Fisheries and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to get ourselves off that impending blacklist. All of that we were handed.

And then Mr. Speaker, honorary citizenship; if the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines had reelected the NDP, what has been announced, or will be announced today, I believe which is taking effect from midnight Saturday night, Vincentians would not have been able to go to Canada without visa. Because they had economic citizenship programme, an honorary citizenship programme on the books. We took it off, you know we campaigned against that, and we brought the law here to take it off, do you know what is happening now, Dominica it has been reported to me, that they have said that they are restructuring theirs, and putting a halt, it happened that they went and they did 86 passports as of midnight, Dominicans going to Canada will require visa. As of midnight it has been reported to me, midnight Saturday. Because Grenada just had suspended their programme, not abolished it, they have suspended it after September 11th, they themselves are going to require visas to go to Canada. Do you see what the ULP government saved Vincentians? [Applause]. We are moving in a way, as Sister Girlyn said, it is not the human hand and mind which is guiding us, Almighty God is leading

this nation. [Applause]. And leading it through men and women.

Mr. Speaker, we have cleaned up the city and the nation. There is a lot of opportunism by persons on the opposite side. I must say in this regard, not the Leader of the Opposition, about the cleaning up of the city and the street vending, because he was in the hot seat and he knows its consequences, Senators Shallow and Leacock can play demagoguery in this regard. And I really do not want to speak really about anyone in his absence; the Member for the Northern Grenadines. But the fact is this, we have to keep the streets clean in Kingstown and make sure that you do not have chaos with street vending on the streets. Nobody can lecture us about people having to make a dollar. No, it is not an easy problem to deal with, but we are handling it firmly but nevertheless with sensitivity. From Fancy to Fitzhuges and everywhere in between, solid waste disposal, collecting the garbage, the ice cream sounds coming early on mornings to wake you, and it is collecting your garbage. The Leader of the Opposition, credit to him, through his de facto leader leads the charge on this, followed by members on his side, questioning the \$5.00 user fee.

Mr. Speaker, the \$5.00 is not sufficient to take care of the cost, it cost at least \$20.00 per household per month for the collection of solid waste and the disposal of solid waste. Mr. Speaker, we have made every effort to ensure that this measure does not impact adversely on the poor. So the first thing we did is to put this charge not on the electricity bill as in Grenada but on the water bill here. We could have put it on the electricity bill and have it transferred from the electricity bill to the solid waste management unit, but we took the decision not to do so, do you know why? On the water list you have 23,000 households. For electricity on the mainland you have close to 30,000 households. So by putting it on the water we have exempted automatically about 7,000 households, the vast majority, 99% of them are poor people who do not have water connection. But those poor people who do not have water connection will still have their garbage collected. But we wanted to ease those 7,000. That is the first thing. This is a poor people's government. The second thing we did, we said the households who have water connection among them are some elderly poor, we have taken off the \$10.00 water meter for over 400 elderly poor, and I believe when the exercise is completed it may go to 500 and they themselves are exempted from the \$5.00 solid waste user fee. Now tell me something, a taxi man met me and told me, he said look, you could not ease us up on that. I asked how many members are in your family? He said there are four. I said it is \$5.00 a month for the household, that is just over a dollar a person, a month, that is just over 25 cents a person a week. Who can you get to pick up your garbage and dispose of it in a hygienic way for 25

cents per week per person? Ponder on that, do not come to me with opportunism. The same way in which the people of Marriacqua rejected Senator Shallow, for his shallowness on the platform, they will do so again for this opportunism.

Mr. Speaker, I want to encourage the users of this facility to listen to the days when the vehicles are coming, read the newspapers, listen on the radio there are lots of advertisement and put out your garbage on time and on the day when the garbage trucks are coming, because if you do not do that you are only going to nasty up your village, you put it out too early, the dogs will go with the garbage and nasty up the place and it is your place getting nasty up, not mine, because in my village in Frenches, I tell all my neighbours put our your garbage on the day. And they are doing that.

Mr. Speaker, there are some people, small minority, they are terrible. And we have to isolate them and educate them to respond properly to this garbage collection. And there are some other persons who are fantastic. Do you know what is happening in South Rivers, a gentleman; I understand he does not even have his own birth certificate. I do not know if he has an ID card. Some people say he is not so right all up there. But he did something which showed me that he is right all up there. When the CWSA trucks went around saying that people must clean their gutters and their drains and so on, he went on a one man clean up campaign in South Rivers and when I heard about that, -- I only knew him by his nickname, I got his correct name and I have given instructions that he be paid \$300.00 so that he would be getting a claim for Christmas for \$300.00 for cleaning up, and to make sure that he gets the money because he is a fellow who might not come town, I give instructions to put a JP name, a Justice of the Peace name, who could come and draw it and give him, \$300.00 nobody was going to pay him, he did it as a good citizen and for somebody like that I think he deserve to get a little piece of change for Christmas. Reach out and touch. [Applause]. So that if Lenford Lampkin is listening to me, and if Lenford Lampkin is not listening to me and Ainsworth Andrews hear what I am saying the money is going to be at the Treasury for Christmas for him for Lenford.

Mr. Speaker, for the elderly, we are addressing what we put out on page 34 of our manifesto. We are not forgetting our manifesto. \$2 million for estate workers in severance pay, most of them elderly, righting a historic wrong. \$10.00 off the water metre monthly for the elderly poor. Exemption for the elderly poor of the \$5.00 solid waste user fee. Basic electricity charge rebate of \$2.65 monthly, to 1,200 mainly indigent persons. Increase of the non

contributory age pension to \$25.00 a week from \$20.00, \$80.00 a month to \$100.00 from the 10th of June, next year. Increase in the funeral grant for those persons, from \$3,000.00 to \$3,600 and for dependents by 20% from the same time next year. Increase in pensions awarded prior to January 1st 2000 to be increased by 3% up to a maximum increase of 6% to take effect in July next year. Increase in minimum NIS pension from \$50 to \$55. Increase in minimum pension for survivors by \$10.00 effective July the first 2002. All those things are for old people, you know. And poor people too.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say something about the service men. I want to announce here in Parliament that as from this month here, December, and I have already given instructions here on this, the month pensions for ex soldiers who fought to save us from Fascism. Who struggled to maintain democracy worldwide, they will get their pension increased from \$100.00 to \$150.00 from this December; reach out and touch. For the first time the widows of ex soldiers will receive half the pension \$75 from December 2001 before that they got nothing. [Applause]. Next year we are commencing the construction of a day care centre for the elderly through a grant to ASCOVAG, the old people's organization, of \$500,000.00 provided by the NIS. We have instituted home care for the elderly, with the YES volunteers. We have given more building materials for the elderly poor. And the police are under strict instructions to protect the elderly. If I may say this, it is not the elderly only, there is a young punk who thought that he can go and molest our female students out at the Community Centre. Walking down, two girls, and this young punk called them, and they did not pay attention, he went and assaulted one put a knife to the throat, when I heard that I called and find out what is the police doing. He was arrested, so let them blame me. The court has just charged them \$1,000 for the offense and \$400.00 compensation for the person. Let the punks complain about what I am doing. I know that decent, law abiding citizens, are rising up in the same way that they are reacting to the malice and the spite and the mischief that is coming from the convicted felon, and those talk show hosts who believe that because they have a mouthpiece that they could talk all sort of foolishness and coming from a level of culture and understanding which is low and want to drag us to the lowest denominator. No way, not this party, not this leader, not this party.

Youth, Sports and Culture, goodwill ambassadors, YES SVG, and national youth policy; emphasis on education, we have a sports policy, jobs and scholarships for sports men and women. For those who have played nationally for St. Vincent we have already gotten jobs for 30 of them, the national stadium, up-grade of existing sporting facilities, training of sports men and women, culture for carnival, the best carnival ever. Peace Memorial

Hall, the amphitheater that I have just shown you, cultural policy, Starlift. I say this, I want to tell the people of this country, Starlift was going to Grenada to a Caribbean pan festival. [Interjection]. They went, I want to start from the first when they were going. About six weeks ago I went to an event they were there, they asked very timidly whether they could get some money. I said sure. So when I said it so easy, it was like at first they did not believe so they asked me again. I said listened do you want me to do the Lombardo in the nude? I tell you yes, man you are going to get the money. They got \$30,000, \$10,000 from my ministry and \$20,000 from the National Lottery from my instruction. And they represented our country well. I am not talking about whether they placed or did not place. And I want to say this, I want Starlift to put the name of St. Vincent so that when the next one is being held two years time we will host it here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. We will host pan. Further to that, I had given my word to Starlift; I told them sort out their land problem out up there, the Government will give them assistance in building their pan yard. This government, when the former representative for West Kingstown heard all that was happening, with Starlift and the Government, he went up there before they left with two cases of Guinness I do not even know if the Minister of Culture and Tourism knows about this, they chase him, they said Guinness, Comrade gave \$30,000, where are you going with two cases of Guinness. [Applause].

Workers and their trade unions: let me list them, severance pay for estate workers, emancipation gift in 2001. Settlement of outstanding industrial relation issues. Proposed new, Protection of Employment Act; 1100 jobs on the school repair programme. Four hundred workers at the Call Centre out at Arnos Vale. Another 240 at Georgetown, 600 for Ottley Hall in the new year. Right now, over 5,000 workers are employed at this moment on the roads and on government projects; over 5,000. Before, when the Leader of the Opposition was Minister of Finance and Prime Minister the most used to be spent at Christmas time, although they said they had things going well you know, is \$200,000; we are spending five times that amount. We put aside \$1 million. Well, the point is this, I was corrected, I understand that \$300,000 was the most that ever voted, but that you spent \$200,000, do you hear? I used my verbs correctly you know. I said the most you have ever spent is \$200,000. I did not take off one; the most you ever voted was \$300,000. But the facts are there, do you want-- I do not want to leave it there at \$300,000 because you only spent \$200,000. They voted \$300,000 but they could not even spend \$300,000. That is to tell you how they are not concerned about poor people. And we are doing this thing early, and I gave notice to the public servants who are hard working, all who have anything to do with this, I do not want the day before Christmas, two days before Christmas to see our people

line up outside of the Treasury herded like cattle, with police with bull pestle trying to beat them back from getting inside the Treasury; no, we are a dignified civilization of nobility and our workers must be treated with respect. [Applause]. That is why we do this business early. Do you know how many persons on the \$1 million project, 3,468, and I told the Minister of Works that the number is over 3,500 because he does not know that I put on a little extra in North Central Windward. I mean after all they starved us for a long time, and North Central Windward has to get a little bit of the gravy. [Interjection]. He said he does not blame me for that. Praise God! He does not blame me for that.

Mr. Speaker, then you have 1200 workers working on various projects across the country, the quarterly projects. Then you have the Byera School, the Sandy Bay School. For instance the workers working on the project at South Rivers. You have 68 persons working on the road here at Murray's Village. You have 13 pieces of labour intensive road, each of those pieces of roads having six contractors. And each contractor, is carrying 12 workers at different times along the road. All those over 5,000 workers, right now being employed. Then we talk about the jobs in the manufacturing industry. Allan's Bakery; two more furniture manufacturers, the medical kit manufacturer. Job creation which will come from the new investment in Canouan. The 100% mortgages for workers. For public servants. I am talking about what workers and trade unions get you know. Forty-nine Qualified Teachers appointed. Eighty-three public servants granted study leave awards, economic costs, financial costs assistance this year. The union involvement in the national economic and social development council and the tripartite committee. The workers at Diamond Dairy been taken care of, we paid their severance pay and offered education and financial assistance. The Port Workers for the BGA and WIBDECO are being protected and the Union knows that. Sanitation workers were saved from dismissals. And we put the gravy on top of that, not only did we save them from dismissal, after Carnival, for the first time in the history of this country, we held a cocktail party for sanitation workers. Respect your workers. We have been saving jobs at ECGC. ECGC can tell you how I had to contact Prime Minister Panday, Prime Minister Bird, and Prime Minister Douglas, in St. Kitts, Prime Minister Anthony to make sure that Article 56 of the CARICOM Treaty is not abrogated so that our flour can go through the OECS market and not get the competition unfairly from the Trinidad dumping. I saved hundreds of jobs down there, quietly. I have not said anything about it before, because I do not want once I solve the problem, I do not want to talk about which Prime Minister is doing something which I think is wrong, because I have to work with them on OECS unity. So sometimes I do not talk about certain things but I give you enough to have an

insight.

The Unemployment Registration Centres, this government is not, I emphasize not, guilty of any political victimization, the one poll extension for workers and other Vincentians, and we have to thank the workers, in the light of all that we have done. They have decided to take a wage freeze. The NDP government could have never gotten a wage freeze, because they are not a poor people's government, they are not a working people's government. The people know, the working people know that this is their government. I just want to appeal to them to have improved working attitudes. And that is a matter upon which unions and management have to instill in them. Business, private sector, they have tax concessions in May and June, tax concessions for hoteliers and manufacturers in this budget, electricity concessions for hoteliers. Concessions for airlines fees and charges at the airport. The business accompanied the Prime Minister to OECS Heads of Government meeting to Lybia and Cuba. Business organizations in the NESDC and the tripartite committee and this year coming, business opportunities will be exploded in the Caribbean, USA and Europe. And I will be with the business people seeking to get those business opportunities. For the farmers we have restructured the banana industry and every week we are giving a subsidy. It was this Prime Minister, this government which stopped WIBDECO from reducing the price a month ago from 10 cents a pound. It is this government, which is going to implement work programmes on the road next year, both recurrent and capital in excess of \$15 million. We are revamping the produced section of the Marketing Corporation. Non-banana agriculture is on the move, arrowroot, coconuts, fruits, and vegetables. We are dealing with praedial larceny. The agricultural diversification fund has been set up. Three hundred banana farmers are being put on the non-contributory age pension, through the NIS. There is a social recovery programme for the farmers of \$500,000.

Then the Minister of Social Development spoke about women, family and children what we are doing. You notice I take the budget now from all the categories and bring them down to real flesh and blood people, worker, businessmen and hoteliers, farmers, women, family and the children.

Airport development: we have improvements in the budget \$2 million out of \$20 million for the ET Joshua Airport. \$500,000 for lighting at the JF Mitchell Airport, and I want to warn some people in the Moon hole area when we put these lights in don't take your shotgun and shoot out the lights, because there will be trouble for you. I want to give that warning to you. I want to give that warning. We are not making joke. Emergency lighting for

Union Island, \$100,000. Safety and security equipment for \$533,000. The hubs at Hewanorra and Barbados and for further discussions going on for a number of different entities on the possibilities of an international airport.

Mr. Speaker, we have dealt with matters like tourism and information, offshore finance, and something that struck me Mr. Speaker, do you recall, and the country would recall, about corporation with the US. Do you remember the Lucky Star affair? For 9 days, the NDP government refused to incorporate with the US Government to allow them to board the Lucky Star. That caused a breach with the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I want to remind people of that.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, on the economic recovery package which I spoke about from the World Bank, I got a letter here from the country director for Caribbean country management unit, Latin America and the Caribbean Osalia Kalanzopolos, my Greek sister, to her I am Ralph. And I call her Osalia, in fact, I even called her a play name, I call her 'Ok', because her initials. The person who typed letter put 'Dear Mr. Prime Minister' she scratched out Prime Minister and put 'Dear Ralph'.

"Dear Ralph,

Thank you for your letter of November 12th 2001 and for the time and effort that you and your staff provided in support of the missions that traveled to the Eastern Caribbean this past October and early November. As you know the purpose of these missions was to work with the ECCB and officials in the OECS member states to assess the impact of September 11th events particularly on the tourism industry and to identify the most appropriate mechanisms for supporting recovery efforts." [I would not read every part of the letter]. She goes on "September 11th attacks and underscore in a very dramatic way the importance of security and safety in the travel industry and this has resulted in the new emphasis on upgrading security arrangements at air and sea ports as well as postal operations. This is particularly significant for Caribbean countries as they seek to position themselves as safe and secure tourist destinations.

On this basis we proposed to proceed with a package of support for our OECS borrowing members to finance equipment and training necessary to put in place new security measures and technical assistance as necessary. The financial package

would also include where feasible a component for finance of critical import on a fast disbursing basis. The overall size of the package which could go up to US \$40 million will depend inter alia on the costing of the security related investments. It may be best structured as an adaptable programme lending as was done for the HIV/AIDS prevention and control and disaster management programmes. We believe that these modifications to our early proposal are best suited to the emerging needs to the OECS. In preparing this overall package the World Bank is collaborating closely with the Caribbean Development Bank and the other Developing partners active in the sub region to ensure that our assistance provided in a coordinated fashion.

In order advance quickly along these lines we would now need to focus on the appraisal of the specific security related equipment training and technical needs, we proposed to field the technical mission to the sub region during the first two weeks of December to assess these need and framework for implementation. [That means the Public Servants listening to me we have to start to make these assessment of these needs. No rest for the weary, because they are coming here now.] She went on, "I would appreciate if you would confirm at your earliest convenience whether you are interested in this package of support. [Of course, I have told her that I am interested] Please do not hesitate to call me if you need further clarification, our team stands ready to discuss the next step with you and your team."

When I said it in my speech, again the naysayers, oh, talk about World Bank, give money way, but I have it here now. For the countries in the OECS they are not addressing, Antigua/Barbuda and Dominica in this particular programme. So you are dealing with St. Kitts/Nevis, St. Lucia, Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, up to \$40 million dollars. In the aggregate for the four of us. We may end up, I do not know, depending upon the thing; we may end up with \$5 million, \$6 million, whatever.

Mr. Speaker, we have addressed already issues relating to the National Commercial Bank and education and health, and poverty alleviation. I want to turn here briefly to our reach out and touch programme, as I wind down on this debate. Reach out and touch, barrels free of consumption duty and import duty, as Tantie Laura told me just \$15.00 and \$25.00. they are

singing my praises up at the port everyday. If you want to hear anything go up there. The old the young, the strong the weak, thank God for Comrade Ralph, that is what they are saying up by the port. \$1 million in Christmas work for over 3,500 workers. The Ministry of Social Development will be taking from their budget to organize food parcels from, in conjunction with non-governmental organizations, civil society and the private sector and individuals; food parcels for the poor, especially the elderly poor. Then the Ministry of Culture as part of this reach out and touch is making arrangement with Joseph Niles and gospel singers from St. Vincent and the Grenadines for a massive reach out and touch Christmas concert right in front of the Central Market on the 23rd of December. So I am giving you early notice, set your bread so that when you done Joseph Niles you can go back and bake. The lighting up campaign would be bigger and better than last year. I must announce, at the Kingstown Hospital tomorrow morning, between 5:30 and 6:00 p.m. the lights would go on. Ken Ash in Lowmans on Thursday at 5:30. The Nine Mornings will be bigger and better. And then there is post office workers more of them coming on, temporary. The CWSA on mainland St. Vincent providing employment for 26 workers for a two-week period, young people, and over this period we have to ask our churches to inculcate the Christian ethics.

Mr. Speaker, I want to turn to my constituency. His Excellency the Governor General had dealt with the OECS programme and foreign policy in his Throne Speech. In North Central Windward, the labour intensive road maintenance programme at the moment, Klunnis road, half mile, \$476,000. Byera Valley road, well we are going to do more than half mile there, but only half mile is here for \$410,000. Mt. William road \$492,000, point six of one mile. In South Rivers the road has been completed from South Rivers right down to bridge by Bora, passed down Old Road, \$500,000. All the schools are repaired. The Park Hill Community Centre has been repaired. The cleaning of drains and roads as you have never seen in North Central ever before. The hard court in South Rivers yard; the streetlights at particular places. In the budget and those are only some things. In the budget there is the Georgetown Vegetable Market we will be spending some money there. We will be purchasing lands up at Park Hill for a playing field. I want them to hear that. We are buying the land for the playing field, going up Valley road. We are finalizing the construction of the Byera Primary School. There will be designed for the construction of the Georgetown Revenue Office. Then there are whole set of feeder roads that would be done in the constituency. BNTF roads, community centre repairs, the rehabilitation of the Windward Highway, the Windward water project.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk to the people specifically of Village, Dunno Hole, Fire Bun and Doctor Smith. They had to get up fore day morning to catch water, after 17 years by the NDP, when Honourable Minister for National Security was the Parliamentary Representative for the area in 1984, he organized a whole sets of pipes to carry the water there from Perseverance, and that would have happened had he been re-elected into government but the NDP took the pipes and carried it somewhere else. So the people of Park Hill village, Dunno Hole, Fire Bun, Doctor Smith, before NDP came to power they had problem with water, the village has grown and NDP has not given them any water supply. In 17 years. They gave me 92% of their votes and when they gave me 92% of their votes and I tell you that work start on your water project within one year, of coming to office, I will keep my word. The Windward water project is taking three years; the people in Park Hill are not going to wait three years. No. I asked the Central Water and Sewage Authority to do a study and they came up with four options and the most expensive option is option four, but option four dove tails well with the new programme which is coming so we are going for option four. What we will be doing with option four is that we will be building a 5,000 gallon tank near to the playing field in south rivers, down near to the ball ground, we will run the pipes right up to the top of Doctor Smith where we will have a 50,000 gallon tank and we will connect from that tank. The capital cost is \$669,000 and arrangements have already been made for the financing and it will be costing to operate, \$4,000 a month because we would have to pump the water up by electricity from the 5,000 gallon tank, \$48,000 a year for the operation. But that is the Prime Minister constituency, that is 92% vote, and I promised them and I am delivering it because I am in a position so to do. [Applause]. Because when James Mitchell was nicing up Bequia nobody was complaining. When you have as the constituency representative your Prime Minister you fully expect that certain long standing grievances such as water, a basic thing and the people will get their water. So Mother Butler where you are higher up Doctor Smith you are going to get your water; and I will try and get your telephone too. And Joejoe and Cindy over Village and the rest of the warriors over in Dunno Hole you are getting your water do not worry about that, it is coming. NDP did not give you for 17 years.

Then there is the Library and Centre and Meeting Hall at South Rivers, Mr. Speaker so that there is no mistake what we are building there is a library and computer centre on land purchased by me for \$16,000. The project there is \$540,000, I say it is a meeting hall, it is not a community centre, South Rivers has to get within this five-year period, it community centre, that is why I am not, when the financial people put it inside of the Estimate as a multipurpose centre, I told them no, it is a library and a computer centre with a meeting

hall. It is not a community centre, we will get a community centre in South Rivers. [Interjection] Well, the one down Questelles you cannot find that. We will be fixing the playing field at South Rivers, the community centre at Colonaire will start. The Chinese are giving US\$100,000 towards that. The people in North Central will get their fair share of the housing programme. Spanish teaching in primary schools. Improvement in all the sporting facilities, and rural electrification.

Mr. Speaker, I have? Ten more minutes? I am obliged.

In the Grenadines, I have responsibility for the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, in the budget you never seen it like this. And you would have noticed that there is a lot in the Southern Grenadines. The Member for the Northern Grenadines he is not here and you are not going to hear too many for him. But I mention some. We have in the budget the reservoir improvement at Clifton Union Island, \$150,000; improvements at the JF Mitchell airport with the lights \$500,000; emergency lights at Union Island airport \$100,000. Canouan Police Station we will start it. We will do the design for the Union Island Police Station. Marine conservation in the Grenadines, \$200,000. Improvement to the Fisheries centres. The Mayreau Jetty, Mayreau electrification. Equipping the Canouan health centre. Housing. We will have a Magistrate's Court in Canouan. We will be developing the Tobago Keys, solid waste disposal; up grading the Canouan playing field. Up grading the teachers houses in the Grenadines. Union Island Secondary school, \$250,000 out of \$3 million for designs and other supervisory work. Bequia Secondary school, \$700,000 out of \$1.68 million to construct a new science lab. Developing branch libraries. Mr. Speaker, do you hear what we have for the Grenadines. I know some people on the mainland would be saying well Comrade you are giving Grenadines more than you are giving us. You have to take care of the people of the Grenadines, this is one nation, together now. [Applause]. Right at this moment you have six gangs working in Bequia. Two checkers, 10 jobers, two truckers. In the Southern Grenadines because there are more islands, you have 10 gangs of 123 persons, nine checkers, 30 jobers, two truckers; 164 persons there.

In East Kingstown the Leader of the Opposition did not speak about his constituency. You have 176 persons working there right now out of the \$1 million road work, 10 gangs of 100 persons, six time checkers, 67 jobers, and three truckers. We are taking care of East Kingstown, because your 40 votes going home. In the budget in East Kingstown the big ones taking place in East Kingstown this year, Peace Memorial Hall, the National Library, Murray's Road. You say Murray's Road; you say Murray's Road is an old project; you

did not leave any money to do it. And do you know what they did, they subverted the tendering process and when you heard that that a decision was made by their Cabinet to subvert the process, I ordered through another Cabinet decision that the Cabinet decision on Order by the Cabinet decision that the tenders' board look at the order again, deal with it dispassionately. [Interjection] Hah, do you hear? What happen is this, the officials and the Tenders Board under the NDP had said that Franco who did the first phase should do the other phases. They said no, it went out to tender and the tenders' board, Dipcon who was the lowest bidder was an unsustainable bid, because what happened with the Dipcon bid, is that they were bidding below cost, and they knew, the professionals in the Ministry including Glenford Stewart knew that Dipcon's bid was unsustainable. The facts are there on the file. I can bring them. And then when you all said to Dipcon, well Franco could only get one and you all get the other one, Dipcon say well, the price, I was not going to call Dipcon's name you know, it is you who called it. I do not to make a political football of anything, Dipcon said the price which we quoted was if we were getting both. But since it is only one we are getting, we have to charge a higher price. Those are the facts. And I said this government, is not getting involved in that confusion. Let the tenders' board under the distinguished Director of Finance and Planning who is impeccable in his integrity, they made their determination. In my eight months in office, I can say before man and God, that I never, on one single occasion, have I ever spoken to the Director General of Finance and Planning about any matter coming to him at the tenders' board. I specifically do not ask him for the minutes of the meeting. That is to show how good governance is functioning. [Applause]. And he can substantiate that; any journalist can ask him. He is here in the audience. Do you think this Prime Minister behaves with the worthlessness that some other people behaved with. No, I am not getting involved in that, not at all. Yes, so the Murray's village, you getting a whole set of roads, and a lot of the housing you are going to get as I have indicated before.

Mr. Speaker, it is only fair that I just run down to take less than two minutes, the legislative programme for next year. Do you know, a lot of people do not know this, we brought to this House over 100 pieces of substantive legislation since we came to office. Because this Parliament meets very frequently, before it met with the frequency of the Soviet under Brezhner. Some of the important pieces of legislation next year; The Carriage of Goods by Sea Act; amendment of the Customs and Management Act. Integrity legislation, Legal Professions Act, Labour legislation, such as the new Protection of Employment Act. Labour Relations Act, Copyright Trade Mark Patent, overhaul of the legislation so that we can register our trademarks locally. Consumer Protection

Registration CARICOM. Antiterrorism legislation, such as putting into domestic legislation the international convention for the suppression of the financing of terrorism; legislation in respect of internationally protected persons and hostage taking; the Insurance Act, a new Postal Corporations Act; National Parks Act, Carnival Development Corporation, Estate and Succession Duties Amendment Act; Amendment to the International Banks Act to allow the Central Bank to regulate the Offshore Banks in conjunction with the Offshore Finance Authority. New police legislation, prison legislation, road traffic legislation, because the mini bus operators, not the operators, some of the drivers who behaving like hooligans, some, a lot of the drivers are very good, the majority, but you have a handful of hooligans in the buses; they cannot be allowed to behaving like how they are behaving on the road, no. [Applause]. But we are bringing education first, because we are not a heavy-handed government. A new Act for immigration, you know one of the things happening here, a lot of people from the Middle East, some coming from Africa, some coming from all about, they come here for two days, and they pay for a wife, to get citizenship, well, right now what I am doing, when I feel that they paid for a wife, I asked for a security report from the police and if the police tells me it is a marriage of convenience, I am not signing on for their citizenship. They have to go to court if they want to get that but I bring law here to make sure that you cannot come to St. Vincent to buy a wife. Legislation to deal with boat boys; the Town and Country Planning law, will be revised, amendments to the Banks Acts as it applies to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Amendments to Offshore Legislation, National Heroes Day Act, Yacht License Amendment Act, Freedom of Information Act; National Lotteries. Do you see legislative programmes we have ahead?

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members I tell you, the Opposition is listening, well one is pretending to be sleeping, though he is really listening, and the others are listening and they are absolutely amazed about the nature and the character and the extent of this poor people's budget. Its magnificence is overpowering. As the eldest Statesman in this Nation, the Minister for National Security has said that he has been in this House for 27s budget and this is the best budget ever. [Applause]. And this is not a gentleman given to such praises lightly.

Mr. Speaker, I want first to thank Members of the public service who have obtain very hard over the last eight months. [Applause]. I apologized to them publicly for on occasions I have driven them beyond certain bounds but I know that they are patriots and I know they have worked well; quality professionals and they have delivered. And I want to thank them on behalf of the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines most profoundly. [Applause].

Naturally, pride of place in my heart goes to the public officials who are in my ministries and in the case of the budget, to the public servants in the Ministry of Finance and Planning who are like my brothers and my sisters, who are like my nieces and my nephews. They are simply wonderful, and I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

I want Mr. Speaker, to extend thanks to my constituents, without them I would not be here and I want to thank them very much for keeping faith with me during the many years that I have been in the wilderness. They got propaganda against me, they were bribed, they did not bother with that, they refused the bribes. They kept their independent mind as a proud people. It is from them that I get my strength and my inspiration. I love them dearly, and just as I spend Saturday and Sunday with them when I return from Caracas on the 14th, I will only just visit my office in the Financial complex to sign what I am supposed to sign, but I intend to spend seven days on the road with people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I know that they will give me, a dove pork, I am sorry to say this in the presence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, they will give me a lot of curry goat. They will give me a lot of cake and ginger beer and a lot of mauby and sorrel, and I want to ask them please that occasionally when I say no, it is because I am obeying my wife's injunction not to get fatter.

I want to thank the Members of the House of Assembly, the Clerk of the House, Mrs. Theresa Adams, she is going on pre-retirement leave on the first of January, and she has been excellent as a Clerk of the House. I am sure that whoever is her successor that he or she would have an occasion on more than one occasion in the future to call on her for her advice and for guidance. The police who are here. Members of the press, my colleagues, members of the Opposition, including the Leader of the Opposition whom I respect greatly, as an honest, patriotic Vincentian. Someone whom when we won I made it plain that he must not be abused in the streets, he must not be cursed, they must be no such excessive in relation to him. He went to the polls, the people in a democratic verdict decided that he was not the person whom they wish to have lead them at this political point in time, that is the nature of democracy. I know sometimes it is difficult to accept the verdict of the people but we have to do so as mature persons. I want to thank my colleagues here, on this side who have given unstinting support. This is a Cabinet of tremendous talent. A government side with ability, which is just remarkable. The discussions which take place at the Cabinet are like advance post graduate university seminars of the highest quality. Of course, as I have said on more than one occasion government is not a university seminar and decisions have to be taken and at the end of these very inspiring discussions we have to take decisions.

I want to thank civil society all of them for helping this government through a very difficult period and helping themselves and the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I want to thank. I do not like to do this publicly despite I am a public person certain aspects of me I am very private and since other members who have gone before me and have done it I do not feel too badly doing it. I want to thank my wife for being there for assisting me. Last night she called me three separate times. She said Ralph you are not coming home; I left my office at mid night when I left here, because I had work to do. When I left Parliament yesterday evening I went back to the Office and I want to apologize to my children for not being there as much as I should, but I think they are getting to understand, but I will have to try and correct that as a parent because it does not make sense that I be a good Prime Minister and a bad parent. [Applause]. And Mr. Speaker, of all I want to thank you for your wise and mature presiding over this august assembly. I conclude by thanking Almighty God, praising him for giving me the strength, the endurance and the wisdom to carry on St. Vincent and the Grenadines and our Caribbean civilization. I am obliged. [Applause.]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members I beg to move that this House now resolve itself in committee of supply, which is really a committee of the whole House but dealing with the matter of the supply.

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

House went into committee.

House resumed.

Bill passed committee stage.

Government –Yeas

Opposition –Nays

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, normally I would have suggest that we go through until we conclude the business today. But the Republic of China is awaiting Members of Parliament for the handing over of two vehicles, the two ambulances and I am asking therefore if we can suspend the luncheon period for an hour and half and come back 4 o'clock to conclude matters. I so move.

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

Question put and agreed to
House suspended for lunch. 2:00 p.m.
House resumed: 4: p.m.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members I have indicated to the Leader of the Opposition and also to the Clerk that in relation to bills 2 to 6 we will put them over to the next meeting of the House. And I would like to proceed with the two resolutions. The first one:

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House do authorized the Minister of Finance to borrow by means of fluctuating overdraft or otherwise from Barclays Bank PLC, or the Caribbean Banking Corporation Ltd, or the CIBC Caribbean Ltd, or the Bank of Nova Scotia or the National Commercial Bank money to the amount not exceeding in the aggregate of \$25 million during the period January 1st 2002 to the 31st December, 2002 for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the government.

HONOURABLE LOUS STRAKER: Mr. Speaker, second the resolution.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, this is really an annual resolution, I do not think that there is anything controversial about it for the purpose of carrying on the business of government. It really tied the government when you have fluctuations of revenue and there is any urgent matter which the government has to address and that is on going. I do not see any controversy here, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No further discussions?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Well, Mr. Speaker, the resolution having been moved and seconded I think it is a matter of putting it to the vote,

Question put and agreed to.
Resolution adopted.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move the **Consumption Tax Common External Tariff (Amendment) Resolution 2001.**

WHEREAS by section 5 of the Consumption Tax Act in this resolution referred to as the principal Act, the House of Assembly of St. Vincent and the Grenadines may from time to time by resolution, reduce, increase or alter the rates and taxes set out in the first schedule.

AND WHEREAS it is necessary to reduce the tax on certain items contained in the First Schedule.

AND NOW THEREFORE be it resolved by the House of Assembly of St. Vincent and the Grenadines as follows:

1. The resolution may be cited as the consumption tax common external tariff, commitment No. 2 resolution 1993 and shall be read and construed as one with the Common External tariff resolution 1991 in this resolution here referred to as the principal resolution and shall come into operation on the first day of January 2002.
2. The First Schedule of the principal Act is amended by deleting the rates appearing opposite the heading numbers, a description of goods, in the schedule listed, in the schedule to this resolution and substituting the provisions and rates in the schedule to this resolution in their proper numerical sequence.

And I so move Mr. Speaker.

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

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, this resolution has had debate from a few members of this Honourable House. The measures in this schedule, the schedule to the resolution for the increase of consumption tax on certain items, they constitute part of the fiscal measures and I explained in the winding up presentation Mr. Speaker, that they would be bringing an estimated sum of \$750,000 and it is intended that these monies will be applied, earmarked for the agricultural diversification fund.

Mr. Speaker, most of these items are sourced outside of the region. Or let me put it another way the bulk of the importation of these items comes from outside of the region, though there are some that come from inside of the region. And they have been relatively small increases. I believe Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Members who have debated it already would have done so because it was circulated during the course of this sitting. Unfortunately, when the Leader of the Opposition spoke, the document was not in circulation. I believe one or two other members of the Opposition and I think certainly the Minister of National Security had addressed the issue.

Mr. Speaker, these items are increased basically, most of them by five percentage points. Some of them were not increased in the list but also by five

percentage points, so that where for instance the issue of women's, -- one which was quoted by Senator Shallow, beauty and make-up preparations where it is there 35% it was 30% before, so it is a five percentage point mark up. On page 13 of the schedule. I used that, so the increased are basically of that magnitude and we have sought to keep them on particular, kinds of commodities. And you would notice that where in the case of, say carrots, where the importation the price is gone up from 10% to 15%, and cucumbers from 10% to 15%, that in part will hopefully encourage local production of carrots and cucumbers. The same thing where you have potatoes where there has been some increase, or nuts, where increase has gone up by 5%, say from 15 to 20%. Hopefully, that we will have more nuts, ground for instance being provided locally.

So that the measures are not taken out of the hat so to speak. There was a logic to the way in which we proceeded and I do not think that it could be said at all that these measures would bring any undue hardship to the people of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, on the contrary they form part of the overall budget which is designed to assist the nation as a whole and the poor in particular. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Any further debate?

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members. I am aware Mr. Speaker, that we have had a very long four or five days in this Honourable House, debating Appropriation Bill and before that the Estimates. Mr. Speaker, I am aware that Members of this House are tired and I will limit my comments because of that very fact Mr. Speaker, but I believe it is very important Mr. Speaker, that I explain clearly what the position of the Opposition is on this Schedule. The Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, in his presentation throughout, has made much of this being a poor people's budget and I understand his need to say that. Mr. Speaker, this schedule has some 275 items on which they have been an increase in consumption taxes either by 5% or in one or two cases by 10%. And the yield expected, Mr. Speaker, from this measure is three quarters of a million dollars. Mr. Speaker, as I understand it, the proceeds from this measure will be put as initial capital in the diversification fund; but Mr. Speaker, there is something about consumption taxes which is different from just increases in duty. First of all I want to point out that over the last few years, St. Vincent and the Grenadines is the only OECS country that implemented all the reductions of the common external tariff. And that was so Mr. Speaker, because of our commitment to a regional integration moment and the creation of a single market and economy for our region. And of course, Mr. Speaker, this was also designed as part of

the whole process of improving the competitiveness of our economy. And Mr. Speaker, I think we all know that in the case of consumption taxes they are applied on a base that is higher than that of import duty. If I could use just a simple example Mr. Speaker, any good that lands here let say \$100 CIF, if it attracted an import duty of 50% that would be an additional \$50 for the consumer would have to meet. But in the case of the consumption tax Mr. Speaker, the consumption tax is applied on the base which is used both the CIF and the duty. So a 33% increase in consumption tax, or a consumption tax of 33% will yield the same \$50 in duty in the example that I just used. So it has a compounding effect, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, our problem is not with the schedule per say, when Senator Shallow made his presentation last night he did in fact identify specific items on the schedule. He did not speak on condemnation of the schedule, but he spoke in the context in which the Prime Minister presented his budget as a poor people's budget, and he was saying that there are certain items there which could have been left out of this schedule. That is the gist Mr. Speaker of his presentation. Because there are in fact 275 items on the schedule and he referred to 15 or 16 of those 275 items. But the response he got was if he was saying something that was very foolish. All he was saying that if you have a poor people's budget and you bring a list of items here and there are items there which could be considered items that we used by the poor they should be removed from that schedule, not that the schedule should be removed, Mr. Speaker, which is a completely different matter. Mr. Speaker, he referred to items like mince meat. He referred to shoulder ham, he referred to liver, he referred to potatoes, onions, lettuce, I hear the Prime Minister, referring to this an import substitute measure, as if a five percentage point increase in consumption tax can in fact be an import substitute measure. We all know better than that, Mr. Speaker. He referred to carrot, Mr. Speaker, he referred to margarine Mr. Speaker, all these are items, which the poor have to use. Mr. Speaker, lard, sardine, biscuit, ketchup, power, and I think one of those he referred to was shampoo. But, Mr. Speaker, these are so small in relation to the total that I could not under the condemnation that he received because he made that kind of presentation.

I would have thought Mr. Speaker, that in light of the presentation by the Prime Minister and the constant references to this as a poor people's budget it would have been useful, Mr. Speaker, to look at those items which could have been removed from that schedule. They do not add a great deal and certainly Mr. Speaker, a five-percentage point increase does not provide for any import substitution. The lack in much more than that Mr. Speaker. And I believe that rather than condemning Senator Shallow for his presentation he should

have looked, Mr. Speaker, at what he in fact was saying, and it is simply this, out of 275 items on a schedule there are about 15 or so which would impact negatively in the context of a society where we would have just have to freeze wages and salaries, it would have been useful to examine those items which will impact on the poor. There is nothing wrong with that. I think in fact he was right in the point that he was making. And I believe Mr. Speaker, that it is my duty as leader on this side of the House to point to this very fact. It is not consistent Mr. Speaker, to be called, or the description of the budget as a poor people's budget. The similar argument can be extended in some respects to the five dollars on the waste, not everybody is going to be involved. And the Prime Minister did not say in his presentation Mr. Speaker that he would be exempting certain people. He did not say that, and these comments are made in the context of a presentation where you are on the one hand saying it is a poor people's budget on the other hand there are items in here will impact negatively on the poor.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard many descriptions of this budget, many descriptions of the measures, about the extent of the creativity, Mr. Speaker, of the measures that have been proposed. Mr. Speaker, I do not know what is creative about raising fees at the Registry for forms, or what is creative about changing the price of a birth certificate from \$5 to \$10. There is nothing creative about that. That is standard measures that one used from time to time to get revenue. There is nothing creative about adding a charge to the water bill, and certainly, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing creative about increasing consumption taxes. There have been increase in this House. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing creative in reducing corporation tax, and surely the provision for incentives in terms of exports for the manufacturing sector is not something that is new in this country. So when we talk about all this creativity I am not sure what it is we are referring to, but I simply want to make the point Mr. Speaker, that well I understand the necessity for presenting yourselves, those on that other side of the House, Mr. Speaker, the government, presenting yourselves in the best light to this society and to the community. I think also Mr. Speaker, it is my duty to point out that there is a certain inconsistency when one makes the kind of presentation you make and the measures which follow are not entirely consistent with that presentation. Mr. Speaker, that is all I would wish to say on this particular measure, much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Any further debate?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the general support which the Leader of the Opposition has given to this

resolution. I acknowledge the opposition, which he has mounted in relation as he says 15 or 16 items. On this side of the House we do not share the view that those items are items which form the bulk of the basket of goods upon which monies are spent by the poor of this country. And in the totality of the budget and the purpose for which this increase is being put its reasonable. Mr. Speaker, you have on the list from which we would have extracted thousands of commodities. thousands and we have particularly targeted commodities which by and large, indeed all the commodities listed here, Mr. Speaker, the imports come from countries external to the Caribbean predominantly. There would be a few items which also would be Caribbean source, but the bulk of them are extra regional items, the bulk of the imports and that is how this list was made up. And I am grateful for the general support on the measure but my judgment is not on the same wavelength and that of the government as that advocated by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in this regard. And this measure does not impact in any negative way on the poor and the overall thrust of the budget remains in every material particular a poor people's budget. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I would like the resolution to be put, it having moved and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members on the last occasion in April when this committee was appointed five were named from the Government side, and two from the opposition. The Leader of the Opposition by convention is the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. It is a committee to examine the accounts of the government and to submit the requisite reports to Parliament and I will on this side of the House name the same five persons. The Honourable Minister of National Security, the Honourable Minister of Telecommunications, the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Culture, the Honourable Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, and the Honourable Minister of Transport, Works and Housing.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, on this side of House Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadine, Dr. Godwin Friday, and myself as Leader of the Opposition.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay, before you move the adjournment, I guess these have been adopted, right.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I think that these are accepted Mr. Speaker. Seven members.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Before you move the adjournment Madam Clerk, I too would like to express my own greetings. And first of all I want to thank Almighty God for his sustaining grace for bringing me thus far. I want to thank all Members of Parliament and particularly those of you who have helped in affecting my election to this high Office. I want to thank you very much for the opportunity that you have given me to serve my country at this level. I want to thank you also for the way in which you have cooperated with me during these periods in this House, I must say that you have been so cooperative that you have not allowed me to compromise my Christian ethics, virtues and principles. And this I am very much thankful for. I want to thank my employers because I am otherwise employed for the opportunity that they given me to serve at this level in this noble task.

The Clerk and members of the House of Assembly; staff, I also want to express my thanks to you, quite cooperative, very hard working, and to you Madam Clerk I wish you a very peaceful and God fulfilling and enriching retirement. I want to thank my family and my friends and all those who have been so tolerant with me at this particular time and even in this period when I have to be absent away from them for one reason or the other.

I want to wish each of us a very Blessed Christmas and trust that we would find also a fulfilling 2002 and that God would prosperous in all our ways. Thank you very much. [Applause].

HONOURABLE LOUIS STRAKER: Mr. Speaker, I am forced to crave your indulgence just to say a few words on the behalf of the Clerk of the House, Mrs. Theresa Adams. I have worked here for the past almost eight years, with Mrs. Adams and although the Prime Minister has made mention of her retirement and wished her well and you too, Mr. Speaker, I do not think we should let her off the hook so easily. [Applause].

Mr. Speaker, I do not wish my remarks to be misunderstood but Mrs. Adams, the Clerk of the House, is a lady to whom I am instinctively drawn, [laughter] it may be her physical attributes or it may be that she has adorned her self with such a spirit, a quiet dignity and grace, [Applause]. There is charm and warmth in her smiles and it is always a pleasure to meet her whether in the streets, in the public places or in the House. Mr. Speaker, I am not canvassing for a wife, because everybody knows I am happily married, but if I were not, [laughter]. I know of one young lady who if she would have

consented to sign me up on her 'YES Programme' [laughter], and graciously accepted my invitation, I would have been more than pleased to make me my application. [Laughter].

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Adams have been in the public service for the past 29 and half years, I think she started as Administrative Cadet in 1972 in the Ministry of Communications and Works, then she moved on to the Ministry of Education and Youth in 1975, until 1986 when she was transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade and Industry, she worked there until 1989, when she was transferred or took up this appointment as Clerk of the House. I have always admired her diplomacy. It is very difficult to know which political party she supports, because she has done it with such diplomacy and impartiality, she has handled her job with such professionalism and efficiency. To many of us she is an institution in the House and she would be greatly missed. [Applause]. She retires at the end of December and probably barring any unforeseen circumstance this is the last day for her in the House, it is only fitting for me to say thanks to Mrs. Adams for her years of service in the House and in the country at large. To thank her for everything she has done to facilitate our work here. Times when we have lost some of the material that has been sent to us, when we were late in getting the questions in when we were in the Opposition, I have never seen her express any anger, she has never expressed her frustration even though at times she probably was frustrated, but she has kept her equanimity; she has been unflappable, she has been gracious, she has been kind and these are virtues that I always admire in a woman. And so as she goes out, I want to wish her well. It was very difficult for me to imagine that she has even approached the age of retirement. So well she has kept herself. And by keeping herself so well, she has kept my admiration.

Mrs. Adams we want to wish you all the best, we hope that the good Lord will preserve you in good health and that you would have many years of enjoyment, good health, longevity in your retirement, I want to wish you all the best and once again, thanks for everything. [Applause].

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members for a moment I thought I was a Roman Catholic Priest listening to a confession. [Laughter] But it is said Mr. Speaker, that confession is good for the soul. But seriously, Mr. Speaker, I wish on behalf of members on this side of the House to associate myself with the remarks of the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister and representative for Central Leeward. It is true that Mrs. Adams has displayed a very quiet dignity in all her dealings with members on both sides of this Honourable House. I believe she has earned and deservedly so,

Mr. Speaker, the respect of both sides of this House. [Applause]. She has always been very cooperative, she also at times makes sure that you get the proper advise as to how certain things should proceed and I have no difficulty whatsoever with that Mr. Speaker. It is always a sense a bittersweet moment when someone has to leave office. Not many people Mr. Speaker, deal with that transition very easily, some people are unable Mr. Speaker to let go, but I believe that the character of Mrs. Adams is one such that she would not have that difficulty. We will miss her Mr. Speaker in this Honourable House and whoever fills her shoes I hope would perform at the same level. As the Honourable Member of Central Leeward indicated you could not accuse her of any party partisanship. And that is the hallmark of someone who understands the role and function that they have to perform, especially in her particular position.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to join with the former speaker in wishing Mrs. Adams all that is good, and a very happy retirement. I believe she would retire from this House, but I do not think she would be retiring from life and I look forward to seeing her from time to time. I known her very long time being a public officer myself for many year and I sincerely hope that she gets all that is best. She deserves it. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker. [Applause].

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members I think in addition to what has been said I should put at this stage formally my own congratulations to Mrs. Adams on record though I made my comments during the general debate. She has been simply wonderful as a Clerk. A lot of people do not recognize that the Office of the Clerk of the House is a critical office in parliamentary democracy. It is the office through which matters come to the House. If the Speaker, is the Chairman of the Board, the Clerk is the Chief Executive Officer. She is the one who actually gets the knots and blots going. And I could have sworn that when the Honourable Deputy Prime Minister was waxing lyrical and quite unashamedly quoting Mrs. Adams that her father, the former Governor General, the late Excellency David Jack was looking askance from his Methodist perch wondering if your intensions were indeed honourable. I saw him looking at you a little strangely. In fact, I do not think he has changed his look. It is of course, Theresa Adams is a historic figure in that she is the only Clerk of this House whose father was a Minister of Government and also Governor General and whose late husband was also a member of this House, Minister of Government and indeed Speaker of the House of Assembly so that Theresa Adams has had House of Assembly in her blood. And we are very sorry to see her go but that's life.

I think Mr. Speaker, you would permit me to say I have known Theresa when we were at school in the sixth form and she really has not changed. She looks the same as then when she was in the sixth form. Very, very beautiful. That is one of the peculiar things about the rules, politicians go on for as long as you elect them and public servants have to leave at a particular age. Through the change in demographics, that is an issue which this House has to grapple with in years to come and in the not too distant future; the question of retirement ages, the questions of pensions and retiring benefits in general. It is a major question. And Theresa this is your last meeting formally of the House because I think perhaps in having one just after Christmas but I know you would not forgive me. [Laughter]. I know you would not forgive me so, [Interjection] The Leader of the Opposition, I suspect I would face the rebellion on the Government side too. [Laughter]. I suppose, there would have been a rebellion on this side of the House. We are very, very pleased to know you in this job and you have done magnificently well and the country is proud of you and we thank you very much and may God Bless you.

HONOURABLE VINCENT BEACHE: Mr. Speaker, as longest serving member [Applause], and as one whom Mrs. Adams met in this House I think it would be a little remiss of me if I did not say a few words, although I think my colleague on my left has stolen my thunder. I remember when the former Clerk retired Mr. Noel and in the House we were told that Mrs. Adams would be the new Clerk, there were some of us who may be had doubts maybe this frail looking lady, and I say frail looking, not frail would have been able to perform this arduous task of Clerk especially so in surroundings that are not really conducive to hard work. Most of us we go out into the lobby and we go out into the Office of the Clerk and to other main office there and we can see how cramped, congested these offices are, but as the Deputy Prime Minister said I have never yet one day see Mrs. Adams frown. She has always been of a cheerful disposition, always ready to help and very apologetic if she had to call at any time you are at your home for whatever reason. I think we are going to miss her. At least I would miss her very much and I know that whoever is going to take over is going to have a very hard act to follow.

The duties of the Clerk have been increasing tremendously over the years. We are having more meetings. The debates are longer and a lot more work to do. Cataloguing the operations of what goes on in Parliament is going to take some time and I am hoping that we might still be able to use the services and experiences of Mrs. Adams, if she would so consent to assist in some of these things. No doubt I wish her all the best, long life and I am sure that I would call on her every now and then for advice on certain matters. Madam, I wish you all the best and may God bless you, keep you and may you have long life.

[Applause].

ADJOURNMENT

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members I beg to move the adjournment of this Honourable House until Thursday 10th January at 10:00 a.m.

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

***Question put and agreed to.
House adjourned accordingly at 4:55 p.m.***