

No. 5

Thursday

First Session

11th August, 2011

Ninth Parliament

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

ADVANCE COPY

OFFICIAL REPORT

CONTENTS

Thursday 11th August 2011

Prayers	6
Obituaries	6
Congratulatory Remarks	10
Minutes	13
Announcements by the Speaker	13
Statement by Ministers	14
Reports from Select Committee	22

Petitions	23
Questions for Oral Answers	23
Orders of the Day	71
Private Bills	110
Adjournment	112

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

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

ELEVENTH SITTING

11TH AUGUST 2011

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

The Honourable House of Assembly met at 10:10 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,
Economic Planning, National Security,
Grenadines and Legal Affairs
Dr. the Honourable Ralph Gonsalves

Member for North Central Windward

Attorney General
Honourable Judith Jones-Morgan

Minister of Education/ Deputy
Prime Minister
Honourable Girlyn Miguel

Member for Marriacqua

Minister of Housing, Informal
Human Settlements, Physical Planning,
Lands and Surveys
Honourable Clayton Burgin

Member for East St. George

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry
and Fisheries and Rural Transformation
Honourable Montgomery Daniel

Member for North Windward

Minister of Tourism and Industry
Honourable Saboto Caesar

Member for South Central Windward

Minister of Health, Wellness and
The Environment
Honourable Cecil McKie

Member for West St. George

Minister of National Reconciliation
Labour, Information and Ecclesiastical Affairs
Honourable Maxwell Charles

Member for Central Leeward

Minister of National Mobilisation,
Social Development, the Family,
Persons with Disabilities, Youths,
Sports and Culture
Honourable Frederick Stephenson

Member for South Windward

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade
And Consumer Affairs
Honourable Dr. Douglas Slater

Government Senator

Minister of Transport and Works, Urban
Development and Local Government
Honourable Julian Francis

Government Senator

Parliamentary Secretary in the Office
Of the Prime Minister
Honourable Elvis Charles

Government Senator

Honourable David Browne

Government Senator/ Deputy Speaker

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE

Honourable Arnhim Eustace
Leader of the Opposition

Member for East Kingstown

Honourable Terrance Ollivierre	Member for Southern Grenadines
Honourable St. Claire Leacock	Member for Central Kingstown
Honourable Daniel Cummings	Member for West Kingstown
Honourable Roland Matthews	Member for North Leeward
Honourable Nigel Stephenson	Member for South Leeward
Honourable Vynnette Frederick	Opposition Senator
Honourable Anesia Baptiste	Opposition Senator

ABSENT

Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday	Member for Northern Grenadines
----------------------------------	--------------------------------

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY 11TH AUGUST, 2011

PRAYERS

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Hendrick Alexander read the prayers of the House.

OBITUARIES

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Honourable Members, it is with, great sadness that I rise to... well maybe announce as we have just recently learned of the passing of an outstanding citizen of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. Junior Bacchus. I am certain that, my expressions here shared by all members in this Honourable House. Dr. Bacchus, was a physician who gave patriotic service to this country when many chose to go to greener pastures, I always admire those who return home to contribute. This news came to, I believe all of us as a shock, even though we should not be really shocked about death, when members, when persons who are a contemporary and I know there are at least three of us here in this Honourable House, the Honourable Daniel Cummings and the Honourable St. Clair Leacock, no at least four and the Honourable Julian Francis, we were all... *five*...uh uh uh am seeing more and more, the Honourable Maxwell Charles who were all contemporaries in Grammar School with Dr. Bacchus... *urm* we learn of his passing which occurred earlier this morning, I have been trying to get unto his dear wife, but I understandably that line was very busy, *urm*, we don't have all the details but what is important is that he has left us. I'm certain that we all share in sympathizing with the family. It is not the most pleasant way to start the day but *c'est la vie c'est le mort*. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, Honourable members, it would really be remiss of me if I didn't stand to offer sincerest condolences to Mrs. Bacchus and Melissa and the rest of the family on the passing of Dr. Bacchus. I remember working very closely with him, when I was Principal at the Kingstown Preparatory School and Melissa was one of our students there. I remember vividly, that he never withheld anything that was good for the children that we ask him to help. Death, cruel death, will knock on every door, but I want to let Mrs. Bacchus, who was one of the members of staff at the Ministry of Education, want to let her know that, the one who made us and gave us life, the Great God of heaven and earth will see her through at this time and I pray that Junior will find rest eternal. Am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE ROLAND MATTHEWS: [Inaudible]...Yes, I wish to join Honourable members, on expressing my sympathies to the family of Dr. Junior Bacchus. As members of this house would know that he is a former resident of North Leeward, born in Rose Bank where he still has family and it came to me as a shock when I heard Dr. the Honourable Slater inform this Honourable House of the passing . I am indeed shocked but my sympathies and condolences go out to his family and all who would greatly miss him. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I join with colleagues before me on commenting on this sad passing of Dr. Junior Bacchus. Ironically, Mr. Speaker, yesterday, someone asked me for assistance to visit his office this morning and I instructed the person that I had parliament but I would call in to the office and make arrangement for them to have that visitation and it is something that I have done on a few occasion and he would see those patients. The person obviously got to the office and called me and say “Mr. Leacock, the doctor who you make the appointment for me this morning dead,” I say “you at the right place?” and I asked that about three or four times and am describing where his office is to make sure that they know what they were talking about and even so I did not accept that they had given me the correct information. So I called home and they said “why you calling here for him? He is dead.” I said, “that is why I called to get that confirmation.” Of course, I was in a deep state of shock. Dr. Bacchus and myself are contemporaries; a North Leeward man but he lived much of his lives in Montrose, the Walker Piece area to be exact. He is also a Miller House man and Dr. Bacchus and myself opened the batting for the Miller House in Grammar School and so very often when I go there he would refer to me as “youth” even though he is a year or two younger than me but that’s one of his expressions he loves to refer to people as “youth” and we would have the usual discourse. He was my personal physician... *urm* something I take very seriously because of the travails my own father has with his own eye sight and I tend to follow all that my father suffered with and pay attention to glaucoma and all these other things that may affect us you never know and he is always advising me on my eye pressure and my treatment so on and so forth, so is one I would miss very, very much. I therefore join with others in expressing condolences to his family and on his passing. Of course for sometime his wife... its Grammar School we meet and have thought together and we visited there in our young age in exchange of our children. Speaker, the other person with whom I want to express condolences is the passing of Rodway Fraser of Mckies Hill. Clearly my senior, but Rodway Fraser I had the opportunity to work when he represented Cable & Wireless on the Chamber of Industry and Commerce and I also had contacts with him from time to time with his association with cricket. As a young man [in] junior school in Grammar School I recall the days when cricket was played at the Victoria Park days of Dorrie & company and when he bowled down I think it was in St. Lucia, some people said he shyed them down but I cannot use that expression now, but it was a lot of wickets he got that day at the park and bowled down that whole team. Those days if you did not have cricket at the park you had cricket in town I mean the whole..., I think Wednesdays used to be our half day in those days in the city; but in as much as Lennox John and John Horne paid him a wonderful eulogy at his funeral I also remember Rodway Fraser and I said this to his wife in Pauls Lot a few days ago he is a very strong matinee man as well cause in those days if you are a young man growing up in town, when Sunday evening came, you had three choices; you either went too Sunday School and decide if you would throw the collection or if you use the collection to go to park and somehow your parents would find out if you went to church or if you went to the park and if you were brave enough you may also try to go to matinee. Now [Laughter] this is being described as a confession [Laughter]... to church Sunday School, to park or matinee and what you do with the collection...,

the collection was crucial too these decisions, Mr. Speaker, but Rodway was one of those guys, when you see him go to matinee with his girlfriend and he could stretch out he hand and hug she up you have aspiration for the day when you could be able to do that in matinee as well [Laughter} cause he was very faithful and very strong family man and he grew that way you know and so today, Mr. Speaker, I remember him fondly he's really a good gentleman and I only can join in with others in expressing deepest condolences to him and his family, may he, Mr. Speaker, rest in peace and continue to be a shinning example for others who may come. Am much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. We have the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and I think that would be followed by... well the Prime Minister has indicated now that he will follow you...I'll have you after them and then the Honourable Daniel Cummings after. So, Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to join with my other colleagues here in expressing condolences at the passing of Dr. Bacchus. I really was very shocked this morning when I received the phone call just after, sometime just after eight, indicating that he had he had passed on and well speaking to a person in the area in which he lived and they indicated to me that they had seen him putting out the garbage this morning and therefore, they were extremely shocked when a few..., not too long after they learned that he had died. It really was a sudden passing. I know of his contribution to this country, his dedication and his profession and his services to the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and I know that many will miss him and may our Lord have mercy on his soul. Mr. Speaker, I also wish to recognise at this time the passing of Turdy James who as you know was a banana farmer in this country from the Marriaqua area and also one who participated as a candidate for the elections in the Marriaqua constituency many years ago against Levi Latham. He was a dedicated member of the New Democratic Party, a stalwart I would call him because of the strength of his commitment and his hard work on behalf of his party. I want to say to his family, that we offer our deepest condolences at his passing. Much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Prime Minister, then would have Honourable Member for Southern Grenadines and Member for West Kingstown.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I would likely very much to acknowledge the passing of Dr. Junior Bacchus and Rodway Fraser and Turdy James and to extend to their immediate family our sympathy, our profound condolences. Junior was my friend; he is married to a relative of mine, Debbie Defreitas and the daughter of Kevin who is a Colonarie man and Junior is someone..., we spoke quite a lot with each other from time to time and he is really an extraordinary human being, good family man, very concerned for his wife and children and his community. He hails from Rose Bank this is why I believe my colleague, the Honourable member from North Leeward was quiet correct in recognising him and his contribution. Within recent times Junior has been play... or was playing an important role in the Indian Association in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, very concerned about the importance of Indian Culture to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the influence of the Indian Civilisation in our multi-cultural and very cosmopolitan society. He..., the very first pair of glasses that I ever got is Junior gave them to me free, so that would be an indication so that would be an indication as how I..., I feel real terrible about his death... am... it..., it..., I feel it..., I really really feel it and..., but..., is life. You know sometimes, times like these, one has to reflect the opening chapters of the book of Ecclesiastes the importance of life, yet its meaninglessness; we got to do what we have to do, enjoy the work

that we are doing, make our contribution over the large haul, as Job said we are just like a flower and sometimes we fight about things and we are really not supposed to fight about them. Love one another a little bit more. Rodway Fraser, he... he... he was a couple of forms ahead of me at Grammar School. He..., for a man who was so short he generated immense pace as a fast bowler, which led some, in my view mistakenly to say that as it used to be said in those days he use to pelt. I... I... I never..., I never shared that view because..., not just because one does not speak ill of the dead but... but... but... but... for all the years in Fraser Nettles Cricket Senior Competition in the Grammar School, he played Windward Islands Cricket, to the best of my knowledge nobody has ever “no balled” him for throwing... so... but he was so short but his hands were long and he... he... he... he jumped high and he had a springy action. Uton Dowe of Jamaica was very short and who generated immense pace, Malcolm Marshall was not a particularly tall feller, just a little taller than..., urm..., Rodway and we know the pace he generated and he did not throw the ball. Rodway has come... Rodway comes from a family which has made an immense contribution to this country, tremendous, all walks of life and he, of course chose to work in the Telecommunication Sector with Cable & Wireless and I extend too to his family our deepest condolences. Turdy James though he... though he was a ULP man, I really liked him... and... urm... when we met, of course we used to meet much more earlier, then later when he... he got a little ill and if I see him I would always shout him...I... I... I... I always thought he was a patriot and very concerned about his country and of course very much a farmer. I... am sure that his family... he has had a full life... his family would be... would thank Almighty God for the years that he has been with them and we all hope that all three of them are in the hands of the Lord and hopefully when the second coming arrives he would be there with Elijah and the saints. Am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines.

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVIERRE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to join with other members of this Honourable House to offer my condolences to Dr. Bacchus... the family of Dr. Bacchus; a man who has given so much services to this country as a matter of fact, as a teacher at the Saint Vincent Teacher’s College, a student then..., and you know during the long hours of studies and developing eye problems, it was Dr. Bacchus who got me through that period and as the Prime Minister said my first glasses then came through him, so I would just... you know... and over the years he from time to time I would visit that office and would be able to... he would be able to make sure that all my problems were solved. So I would just like to offer my condolences to his family and would also like to recognise the passing of Ms...Mrs. Jeannie Inna Stewart-Douglas, who sometime last year in September I had the privilege of congratulating having reach the milestone of one hundred years and she had to her family continually said to her family that she would not reach one hundred and one and so on the July 2nd, she passed on the great beyond. Having been born on the 27th September 1911 so she missed another milestone just by a couple months. She was a hard working woman, a teacher in her early years when it was said that education in those days belonged to the church and private institutions and she was a woman who was well noted in her community for working hard and for taking care of her family. So I would like recognise her passing in this Honourable House, much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable member for West Kingstown.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Honourable member, the subject of obituaries is not one that I have commented on while in this house. In fact the record would show it is the second time that I have... I am

speaking. Mr. Speaker, when I heard of the passing... this very sudden passing of my schoolmate, classmate, long time friend and personal eye doctor, I was indeed saddened. His dear wife is also a schoolmate and classmate. Mr. Speaker there are not many occasions that one meets a more humble and gentle and jovial individual. The late Dr. Junior Bacchus was a person of note, whose commitment to this country is unquestioned and I wish to say to his family and friends the personal condolence of my dear wife and I and to pray that his soul rest in peace. I thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Central Leeward you...ok. We would make this the last one on this particular issue please.

HONOURABLE MAXWELL CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I too want to add my condolences Dr. Bacchus's wife Debbie who was my classmate. Uh... the Bible describes death as an enemy but it also says that death would be the last enemy to be destroyed and we look forward to that day. Dr. Bacchus was a year ahead of me in terms of our forms in Grammar School and I would like to remember him as a... when I heard of his passing this morning as one who helped. I could well remember one morning I had a problem with a chemistry problem just could not make and he was hurriedly going to his class and I asked his help he could not help at the time, he said I just cannot work this thing out and he left but fifteen minutes after he came back with the solution and I think this act of his then, describes his life even after that. Um he was...he used to attend to my mum very well I think for twenty years he was a doctor and I so I had many chats him about her health until her passing in 2009. So this morning I want to add my condolences. I would also like to mention the passing of one of my constituents, Malcolm Cunningham. A very dear friend of mine, he was always at the bus stop in Barrouallie he also was a great family man too and had the honour and privilege of nurturing many persons... many famous persons in Barrouallie for example his nephew, past member for this house are there... past member Parnel Campbell, Q.C. may they all rest in peace and much obliged, Mr. Speaker, thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Ok, that brings us to the end of the obituaries and uhm as we move to congratulatory remarks I hope that we can you know make these a little brief some what. Uhm since a long a very long day it seems in front of us. So who is going to make the first...? Honourable Member for South Central...

CONGRATULATORY REMARKS

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate, young Trevenette Johnson of New Grounds at the New Grounds Primary School. She participated recently, Mr. Speaker, in the annual FCCA-Florida Caribbean Cruise Association Foundation Children's Essay Contest. Last week, Mr. Speaker, I received a letter from the foundation and it reads "on behalf of the member lines of the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association, we are pleased to announce the winners of the 2011 FCCA essay contest. The theme of the contest was '*what does sustainable tourism mean to your destination.*' This year's winners are as follows: in the junior section, Trevenette Johnson of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, First... [Applause] second place went to Trinidad and third place to Saint Lucia. This year's essay contest attracted entries from nineteen nations and the

letter states as you can imagine it was difficult to choose the overall person to win in each age category, as all the essays we received exemplified Caribbean excellence. The student would receive US \$3000, the school would also receive US \$3000 and the student would go to Puerto Rico in the month of September to read the... the essay. I have with me this morning a copy of the essay and I would make it available to any member who wishes to have a read. I want to congratulate her especially because she is a member and a constituent of South Central Windward. [Applause]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Further remarks... uhm... Honourable member for Southern Grenadines I... you had indicated you had wanted to make... alright... fine... fine...

HONOURABLE TERRANCE OLLIVERRE: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to congratulate the various winners of the components of Carnival and also to congratulate the Mayreau Regatta Committee for having staged a well organised carnival in Mayreau this year and also the Club Nuevo, cause we know at the end of all the rural carnival all carnival ends in Canouan so over the August Regatta weekend, Club Nuevo organised...the organizers a the festival in Canouan... we had uhm... also Ms. Rural Saint Vincent and the Grenadines which was won by South Leeward's participant this year, I think her name is Jovonne John; we wish to congratulate her all the other various winners of the local soca monarchs and other events in Canouan. So I would just like congratulate these various organisations, Club Nuevo and the Mayreau Regatta Committee and of course all the various winners of the components in Carnival in SVG. Thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for South Windward.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Mr. Speaker, Honourable members. I rise to offer congratulations to the board of the Carnival Development Corporation in hosting Carnival 2011 under the theme "The Hottest Carnival in the Caribbean." I want to say this year was a good year for our carnival; lots of persons came into Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and participated in the various activities. I want to compliment the winners: Maxwell "Tajo" Francis for winning the Calypso Monarch this year. He is from the village of Fancy in North Windward... [Interruption]...eh leave dah fo Gomery? And eh... soca... soca... uhm Road March Champion, Gao, who returned after a ten year absence singing..., the Ragga Soca Monarch Shurnelle "Skarpyon" Williams, the Soca Monarch winner Fireman Hooper... uhm also to congratulate Ms. SVG 2011 Ms. Aviar Charles, all the other winners, all the sponsors and everyone who participated in Carnival 2011. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Alright. Honourable Member for North Windward... why you all not sitting down?

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I stand elated I am very, very happy this morning Mr. Speaker...

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Yes man yes...

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: [inaudible] because Carnival is a national festival here in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and for a number of years, we would have had a number of individuals from the constituency of North Windward participating in a number of competitions of different kinds and I know that

for many years, individuals would have been disappointed in terms of the result of those competitions. But this year, Mr. Speaker, the constituency of North Windward is flying high. The constituency is celebrating two grand prizes; that is the Calypso King and that of the Road March King [Applause] I personally want to congratulate Maxwell “Tajo” Francis of Fancy for winning the Calypso King Competition and Godwin Augustus Oliver of Langley Park, for winning the Road March King Competition. Mr. Speaker, the constituency has been celebrating and will continue to celebrate this weekend; there is a scheduled activity this weekend where we are moving from Langley Park to Fancy, you are invited, Mr. Speaker, and so... the band, New Sensation, would be giving music and so you are invited, the Parliament is invited and all of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are invited to celebrate in this grand occasion in the North Windward Constituency, am much obliged, Mr. Speaker, thank you. [Applause]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Senator Baptiste.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make the following congratulatory remarks. I would like to start with two outstanding women leaders in politics in the region. In June 2011, 28th to 30th of June to be exact, the Honourable Prime Minister of Trinidad & Tobago, Honourable Kamla Persad-Bissessar hosted the first ever Caribbean Regional Colloquium of Women Leaders as agents of change and I would like to congratulate her for this important bringing together of female parliamentarians and leaders in politics around the region [Applause] I had the privilege of attending by virtue of her initiation. I would also like to make available to this Honourable House a document which was issued coming out of the colloquium called the Port of Spain Consensus on Transformational Leadership for Gender Equality to make it available to the members of the house. I wish to also congratulate Ms. Sheena Roseau of Antigua & Barbuda. Ms. Roseau is the head of the Gender Directorate in Antigua & Barbuda and while at the colloquium she was celebrated too because she won a hero award from US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton for her fight against human trafficking in Antigua & Barbuda. Ms. Roseau was instrumental in getting her parliament to pass the Trafficking in Persons Prevention Act, 2010 and in doing great public awareness against that ill [in] her society, I congratulate her. I move on to congratulate young Nick Francis, the President of the New Democratic Party’s Young Democrats. Mr. Nick Francis successfully completed an OAS Certificate online course in building capacities of young political leaders in the Caribbean and his performance was described by the OAS Virtual Campus as quote “outstanding” end of quote, as result of which he was invited to be a member of their alumni forum which...uhm... is the body of network of experts that develop the programs and encourage... uh... the development of the democracy in the Americas. Congratulations to Mr. Francis [Applause] and finally Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate Vincentians home and abroad who sacrificed and put their means towards the rebuilding of a home Ms Rhoda Daniel of Caratal, Georgetown. Over a year ago, due to unfortunate circumstances of the burning of her home by accident, Ms. Daniel lost her house, it was burned to the ground and neighbours appealed to me for some sort of assistance but I could not do it alone I appealed to the general public at large and I am happy to say that it was great to see our fellowmen coming together, putting their means to ensure that Ms. Daniel now has a new home after about a year and five months of living in the mountain area with her differently able sons in what really was inhumane conditions, so congrats to all Vincentians who helped and made it possible for her to have a home again. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Uhm... now that we have come to the end of congratulatory remarks and obituaries. I would like to state again reiterate, that uhm I wish members would indicate to me when they want to speak, prior to this... to the beginning of this meeting when they want to speak on these topics. We know that they... it is important that you do for proper scheduling of the uhm... the meetings and so on and procedure. So please indicate to me before... uhm... those of you intenders is being done obviously by most of the... uhm all of the right by at lease all of the uhm senior members so far of this Honourable House. Thank you.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

The Minutes of the sitting held on Tuesday 24th May, 2011, copies of which had been previously circulated were taken as read and confirmed without amendments.

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: This one is in conjunction of a Minute held on the 24th January, 2011...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: uhmmm...

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: ... Where on page two on Suspension where it states the Honourable Mike Browne seconded the motion moved by the Honourable Prime Minister... so I know the Honourable Mike Browne is not a member of the Honourable House I want to presume that it is probably... was just going through back my old Minutes and saw this one so I probably think it is David Browne...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: So the Honourable David Browne most likely would have been the person... we... we will pay a note to that uhm... observation and we will make the necessary corrections. Ok?

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I wish to make just two brief announcements: One, that the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines is out of state and therefore would not be in attendance at Parliament today; and the second announcement is somewhat contingent on the Honourable Members present or absent or not being present here today it has to do with the reporting on the Legal Opinion that I would have received which I was waiting on for some while in relation to the election of the Speaker of the House of Assembly and the voting by the Attorney General. I have this morning received an executive summary on that report and the...uhm... the full report is to be followed I was given that assurance and I think I would rather wait on that full report and then make it available to members. I will not read the executive summary since I just received it this morning and...uhm... therefore I would rather have myself look at it then wait...await for the full report which I would give to members on that issue. Thank you.

STATEMENT BY MINISTERS

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, as I have been doing frequently in this Honourable House and other in forum in this country and across the region both in my capacity of Prime Minister of this country and as Chair of the Sub-Committee of the Monetary Council on Insurance. I have been reporting on the British American CLICO issue and always we have development and...I... I know that the policy holders would like to know what is happening. Let me, Mr. Speaker, if you may afford me the indulgence simply in a nutshell to re-cap strategically where we are. First, of all, we have sold the property insurance to another insurance company- the property insurance of British American; we have made that point over and over. Secondly, we have set up a medical insurance fund valued at \$5 million EC and I had a press conference on that, I reported it to parliament and we had full details presented in newspapers across the sub-region. I want to state again that, that fund is available for persons who have had medical insurance with British American. It is NOT a fund to pay medical bills for persons who have other instruments like for instance; the annuities and who have a medical problem. The third component of the portfolio is what we call the Traditional Life and the fourth component has to do with the annuities. As I had indicated repeatedly we are capitalizing as the governments of the currency union, the Traditional Life by about \$38 million of thereabout which would take care of just over twenty-two thousand policy holders. I should indicate that the numbers for Saint Vincent is... just round it off four thousand one hundred. Within the next two week, hopefully next week. We are going to put in the newspapers advert... advertisements in respect of the sale of this Traditional Life and seeking insurance company's life insurance companies or companies with life insurance portfolios to prequalify, we want to be very open and transparent about this.

This work is at a very critical stage we have done a lot of preparatory technical work as one can imagine, the data collection and the technical work by the technical committee which advises me which headed by a Grenadian Timothy Antoine, an excellent regional public servant. The \$38 million or thereabout, like the \$5 million... US\$38 million like the EC\$5 million for the medical fund, those monies are drawn from the US\$50 million which I had secured form the Manning administration in Trinidad and Tobago and which had been placed at the central bank. That money came from the Petroleum Facility and usually we would have drawn each of the six independent countries of the OECS would have drawn about \$8 million each for various projects; poverty reductions, national security and the like but we had all agreed that given the threat to the financial system the systemic risk which presented we wouldn't use those monies for anything other than the assistance in stabilisation of the financial sector...the financial system more particularly insurance British American. Now this leaves the issue of the annuities and in this it is a work in progress and I would outline where we are. Honourable members may recall that on behalf of the currency union I had articulated four principles, four core elements of the public policy because you cannot go blind you have to have certain core elements of a public policy to guide you on a matter which is as complex as this. First, that it is a regional problem requiring a regional solution; secondly, that we need to avoid the insurance difficulties metamorphosing into a systemic risk to the financial system; thirdly, as far as it is practicable we would seek to protect the financial interests of the policyholders; and fourthly, this is a critical element, to keep British

American going as an ongoing enterprise in a form to be determined; and the first structure which we had canvassed and which the Manning administration had agreed upon in principle was for us to capitalise the new entity called the Newco... new company with a sum approaching \$400 million in that regard we would have put the \$50 million which we are using otherwise now as part of the capitalization. Trinidad & Tobago would have put \$100 million, Barbados had said..., and am using US figures... \$10 million and the six countries in the OECS independent countries would have put \$75 million and as Honourable members would know those who were here in the parliament at the time, I had specifically earmarked a Special Drawing Rights which we were holding at the IMF for the purpose of capitalizing. To put our contribution, because the contribution would have been pirated in accordance with your..., the liabilities and as we know the liabilities which the Judicial Manager has determined..., this about \$190 million in our context. In June last year 2010, shortly after the election of the new administration in Trinidad & Tobago, I spoke to the Prime Minister and who had advised that I speak on this matter on detailed ways and keep in communication with Finance Minister Dookeran and it took them several months to determine that that option was not...they were not going down that option..., they not embracing that option. So we had to go in a sense to plan B which involved the various elements which I have described before involving the medical fund and the question of the Traditional Life and I have written several letters on this matter to the authority in Trinidad & Tobago, I had read one here for... which I had sent to Dookeran...Minister of Finance Dr. Dookeran in June last year but that has been followed by several others I have don't have to refer to all of them. On November the 9th I wrote Mr. Dookeran again, on March the 9th this year, November the 9th last year I wrote Finance Minister Dookeran, on 9th of March, I wrote the Prime Minister of Trinidad & Tobago, on May the 16th, I wrote her two letters, one in relation to the Health Insurance Support Fund to bring her up to date with that since I want to make sure that she is in the loop with all the data and I wrote her a very extensive letter with a brief on the same day the subject matter being on May the 16th The British American Insurance Company Limited BAICO & CLICO International Life Insurance Company and she kindly replied to that letter of May the 16th just over a month later on June the 27th. I don't want to read my letter for the simple reason that her response indicates the nature of the letter, don't want to take too much of that time because I want to come to some other announcements. In addition to the one that I have made that in the next two weeks we are going to see some action in respect of the sale of the Life... the Traditional Life and this is the letter of June 27th to me,

"Dear Prime Minister..."

(and the subject being The British American Insurance Company Limited BAICO & CLICO International Life Insurance Company...)

"I gratefully acknowledge your letter of May 16th, 2011 in which you highlight your concerns with respect to the two companies at captioned. While underscoring the need for the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union Governments and the Government of the Republic of Trinidad & Tobago to collaborate in finding a regional solution to the challenges that has arisen. In this regard, I wish to advise, that matters of this nature and in particular all matters relating to CLICO are all under review... under active review by the Minister of Finance who is working assiduously to address the many concerns that have arisen in this regard. While cognizant of the pressing concerns of stakeholders and investors here in Trinidad & Tobago and across the CARICOM region, I ask your further indulgence in this matter as we seek to address the fine points of each issue, which

you have been kind enough to present in meticulous detail within the shortest possible time. Please accept, Prime Minister the continued assurances of my highest esteem.

Kamla Persad-Bissessar”

I had written her as I had indicated this letter May the 7th...May the 16th with a detailed brief with chapter and verse on everything concerning this matter. She has asked now for further indulgence and she wants to... they want to address each of the matters and they would wish to do so in the shortest possible time frame. In the meanwhile, in June, the final report of the Regional Technical Committee which included the technical committee which is advising me from the Currency Union and CDB and Trinidad technical persons which we had brought together to look for a solution in relation to the BAICO issue and of course for CLICO and this final report has been sent to Foreign... Finance Minister Dookeran. The ... I do not want as yet to speak about all the details of the proposals but it is a proposal which Dr. Dookeran, himself had accepted in principle which involves the CDB and the Government of Trinidad & Tobago with some resources from the CBD for a solution. I should point out that the solution would have involved... the solutions involved a hair cut, which is the euphemistic language used for persons who wouldn't get the actual coupon value... the actual value of their own investment. Now, the last time I had indicated to you that in light of the... that plan A not being on the books and having studied very carefully all the dimensions of the reports from the Judicial Manager I had indicated that the time will come when some form of litigation would commence while we are pursuing the plan B with the other Eastern Caribbean Currency Union Governments and Trinidad & Tobago and the Caribbean Development Bank.

I want to draw attention, I had indicated then that I had asked two persons from the technical committee including the acting Solicitor General in Antigua & Barbuda to go to Trinidad to meet lawyers...to meet Senior Counsels in Trinidad with the possibility of hiring to mount certain kinds of legal action in Trinidad & Tobago itself and possibly elsewhere. In the meantime, of course and those would be in relation to the regional matters, in the meanwhile, there are certain matters germane to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Judicial Manager, Mr. Brian Glasgow of KPMG and the Supervisor of Insurance, the Insurance Regulator, Mr. Maurice Edwards have given instructions to bring legal action a commercial bank, I will not name the commercial bank, save and except to say it is not the commercial...the Bank of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in relation to a matter of \$140.547 million. This commercial bank from 2000... sorry from 1996 had accepted to act as trustee of certain asset of British American to satisfy the statutory requirements in relation to the statutory fund. I hear a lot of discussion on the radio and I advise persons if they can just read the Insurance Act or perhaps be advised by someone who has read the Insurance Act because there is often cross purposes discussion on the statutory fund and on the insurance deposit, it is two different things. The deposit relates to the..., the insurance being registered in good standing, the statutory fund is an obligation in relation to the... for the covering of the liabilities and there are a number of letters in 2006 May, 2007 April, and a very important letter on the 16th of April 2009. The commercial bank was to provide the following services:

a. Reporting to the register of insurers all assets of British American Insurance Company (St. Vincent) held in trust;

Now this is important, British American Insurance Company (St. Vincent), so that any monies successfully recovered from an action which is about to take place, there is a pre-action letter I have been advised which would be issued shortly. We have received an opinion... a legal opinion and that is why the requisite instructions have been given. The..., I want to emphasis in relation to St. Vincent, so that anything recovered the persons who have their policies from St. Vincent would be able to go to this judgment as distinct other resources which are more of a regional kind and which their have been... we are talking now about the legal obligation of the commercial bank in relation to:

a. Reporting to the register of insurers...

(That is the Supervisor of insurance...)

a. ... all assets of British American Insurance Company (St. Vincent) held in trust;

b. The safe keeping of security items of assets held and;

c. Monitoring and updating records on the release and the renewal of the assets.

Honourable members would recall that it was in December 2008 that there was... there were the first signs of the unraveling of CL Financial, the parent company of British American and CLICO, CLICO (Trinidad) and CLICO International which is out of Barbados and by early 2009 the unraveling had commenced, but not yet in full flowering. So on the 16th of April, 2009, as a consequence of the interaction between the Insurance Supervisor in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines acting responsibly, sought to have an update of the list of assets and this company... this commercial bank wrote to the Supervisor of Insurance enclosing an updated list of assets to be placed in trusted, totaling \$140 547 665.57 roughly you can say \$140.5 million which were to be held in trust in fulfillment of British American's Statutory Fund obligations and the opinion suggested a number of causes of actions, possible ones, including the breach of statutory duty, the breach of fiduciary duties, misrepresentation, negligence for negligent misstatements because it has turned out that the... what has been held out to have been held in trust by this commercial bank. I don't want to compromise what may happen in the court that the response has been such, to occasion the need for the legal action, cause I want to be very careful, cause everything which I say here may well become involved in any legal actions but I have to be very careful and I want to say I have been advised as to how far I can go but I need nevertheless, to tell the parliament and the people of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines what we are doing. Incidentally, I have also spoken to the Chair of the Technical Committee, Mr. Antoine.

Mr. Speaker, I want to advert additionally to a matter which all members of the House can go to the court, anybody from the country... anybody from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and look for a suit 251 of 2009 and this particular application made... filed on the 29th of June, this year, in the matter of British American Insurance Company Limited and in the matter of the Insurance Act No. 43 of 2003 of the Laws of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines between Maurice Edwards, Supervisor of Insurance (Petitioner), and British American Insurance Company Limited on the Judicial Management (Respondent). This suit covers... it is numbered 251 of 2009 because it relates from the time the appointment of Judicial Manager and the applications are made under the suit so that even though...

where you have the petitioner, as lawyers would know where you have subsequent actions by applicants is not necessarily the petitioner, the petitioner was in the original suit. In this particular case... this particular application on the 29th of June the respondent, British American Insurance Company Limited on the Judicial Management was the applicant and there is an affidavit by Mr. Brian Glasgow of KPMG and I would advert to it very shortly it is an affidavit which is most interesting, but the Order which was made was a Consent Order; Mr. Graham Bollers, for the applicant, British American Insurance Company Limited acting through its Judicial Manager, Brian Glasgow and Ms. Charlene Douglas, Crown Counsel of the Attorney General's Chambers for Mr. Maurice Edwards and the Order of the Court. Upon reading the Notice of Application filed here in on the 29th of June, 2011 and upon reading the affidavit in support thereof also filed herein on the said date and upon hearing counsel for the applicant and for the petitioner it is hereby ordered as follows:

“That leave is granted to the Applicant...”

(That is to the Judicial Manager of British American...)

“...to commence proceeding in United States of America against the following parties namely, Green Islands Holdings LLC and its associated entities and principles;

b. Coban Partners LLC and its associated entities and principles;

c. The former directors of British American Insurance Company including Mrs. Robert Fullerton, Vishnu Ramlogan, Brian Branker, Ramcharan Ramnarine, and Lawrence Duprey.

d. Mr. Charles Pratt and;

e. Mr. Shiva Ramberran.

From the affidavit you will gather the information as the pose to that Mr. Pratt is a US resident believed to be a member or manager of Green Islands Holdings LLC and Mr. Shiva Ramberran is a US resident believed to be a member or manager of Coban Partners LLC. Now, this particular action relates to six thousand acres of land...smf! Permit me Mr. Speaker to read paragraphs 11 to 15, because though persons can get it I think, the public would like to hear since we are broadcasting and we have a lot of important things to do here today Mr. Speaker but, as important as all of the items on the agenda are, this one clearly, is of critical importance to the people of the sub-region, including Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Paragraph 11:

“In April 2007, Shiva Ramberran of Coban Partners and certain partners of both BAICO and BVI...

(BVI is the shortened name for a company known as British American Isle of Venice (BVI) Limited, known as BVI in this document, it is a subsidiary of BAICO whose directors were a subset of BAICO's board of directors so...)

“In April 2007, Shiva Ramberran of Coban Partners and certain partners of both BAICO and BVI...”

(The company which I have just explained about)

“...entered into discussions concerning the opportunity to purchase real estate in Osceola County Florida for a price of approximately US\$ 295 million through the purchase of an option for \$6 million from the owners of the land, the Partin family known hereafter as the “Partins””

Twelve

“In July 2007, Mr. Pratt’s company Voyager...

(It does not have anything to do with Voyager here)

“...entered into an agreement with BAICO and British American Management Services Inc. known as “BAMSI” to purchase the shares of Green Island Ventures LLC for approximately \$295 million. BAICO agreed that it would not talk to the Partins or any party related to them and that it would not do any on sight due diligence without the prior consent of Mr. Pratt.”

Paragraph thirteen I want you to listen very carefully

“In December 2007, the attorneys for BAICO warned the directors that the land appraisal value was significantly below the proposed purchased prize for the land and that considerable further due diligence would be required to determine the feasibility of the proposed development programme at the same time the directors confirmed US\$75 million of the purchase price of 295 was in fact a fee to be paid to Mr. Pratt.”

Fourteen

“Notwithstanding the three warning communications and the acknowledgements of Mr. Pratt’s fee, another amendment was executed on the 24th of December 2007, which replaced Voyager with GIH; GIH is Green Islands Holdings. It also reflected a mortgage in favour of the Partins family of US\$ 159 million and that GIH would finance approximately \$57 million of the transactions”

Fifteen Para fifteen

“In January 2008, the Partins sold the 6000 acres to a subsidiary of Green Island... subsidiary of GIH sorry which is known as Green Island Ventures now GIV...

(If you can follow this as it is meandering itself. Repeat.

“In January 2008, the Partins sold the 6000 acres to a subsidiary of GIH that subsidiary being Green Island Ventures (GIV) for a price of approximately US\$220 million...

(Remember it was 295, remember the story of 75)

“The Partins took back a purchase money mortgage in the amount of approximately \$159 million in addition to approximately \$61 million in cash funded by BAICO...

(Funded by all of us who have anything with BAICO... I see the Leader of the Opposition scratching his forehead (chuckle) I tell you, this is why we have to be so careful and make sure we have everything in order.)

“On the same day, in January 2008, GIH which is the Green Islands Holding sold to GIV, on the same day GIH sold to GIV to BVI for approximately \$295 million with the additional approximately \$75 million being payable partly in cash and the balance with the purchase money mortgage in amount of approximately \$57 million. The funds used to close the transactions came from BAICO. Moreover, BAICO guaranteed BVI’s loan obligation to GIH...”

(So you see the leveraging)

“The net result was that GIH sold to GIV, whose only asset was the 6000 acres for approximately \$75 million more than what it paid for it on the very same day”

Of course and the story goes on but I am only giving you what is the gravamen of what our Judicial Manager has unearthed. Now there may well be other subject matters for the cause of actions against these persons, but there is this one. Mr. Speaker, I have spent on this insurance matter over the last two and a half years an extraordinary amount of time, this matter is on my head daily, because of the number of persons who have invested, as policyholders in British American and who are suffering and I know the suffering and the pain I get the letters, they come to see me and I have to go over for them the story all the time and tell them what I am trying to do, what we are trying to do in the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union.

Mr. Speaker, in so far as CLICO International (Barbados) is concerned, you know a Judicial Manager was finally appointed and we have received a Preliminary Report, we have not gotten a final report yet; and we have in our possession undertakings which had been given, in writing, which had been given also personally at meetings by the former Prime Minister of Barbados, that any liability of policyholders in the Eastern Caribbean which cannot be met from the assets of CLICO Life International would be met by the Government of Barbados. That position has been re-emphasized by the current Prime Minister of Barbados, whether when the original undertaking was given that they were fully aware of the extent of the liability. I have to await the final report of the Judicial Manager before I can properly address this matter with Honourable Members. In relation to CLICO (Trinidad) the position of the Government of Trinidad & Tobago of Mr. Manning and the position of the Government of... the current Government in Trinidad & Tobago as articulated at a meeting which I attended with the CDB cause I raised this specifically, indeed this matter which was sent in a communication to us by the Insurance Regulator, the Governor of the Central Bank, Dr. Williams... this is why I also had to keep writing Dr. Williams, Ewart Williams. That though from the Statutory Fund of Trinidad & Tobago, according to their law, only policy holders ordinarily resident in Trinidad & Tobago could claim any liability of CLICO (Trinidad) from the Statutory Fund but they took the policy decision that even if you are not ordinarily resident in Trinidad & Tobago they will still cover persons who are policyholders, annuitants in respect of CLICO (Trinidad) from the Statutory Fund in the same manner in which the Government of Trinidad & Tobago has dealt with those who are ordinarily resident in Trinidad & Tobago which means the question of the TT\$75,000, US\$12,000 or \$32,400 Eastern Caribbean and the balance over a twenty year period but that is only in relation to CLICO (Trinidad) not BAICO, not CLICO International, BAICO we are dealing with Trinidad but CLICO International we dealing with Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, as you would see I have spoken on this matter factually without a wholly prepared script so that colleagues would also see and the public would see that is an issue in which I have immersed myself because of

the importance. Let me say this, the aggregate liabilities from BAICO and the two CLICO (Trinidad) and CLICO International or call it for short CLICO (Barbados) is 15.3% of the combined GDP of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union, that is what it is, that is an enormous challenge that is the size of the problem. I have heard some people, Mr. Speaker, say “but look what the Americans have done, when their banks have to Lehman Brothers in September 2008 that financial union I mean institution collapsed and the banks collapsed. Why don’t they do like the American Government? They give a certain amount of money; remember they have the TARP program.” I just want to remind everyone that the money for TARP was less than 1% of the GDP of the United States of America. If we had a 1% of GDP problem, it was a problem but not the enormity of what we have of over 15% of GDP and that is part of the context in which we have to work with our economy, only part. Am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of the Opposition, raise on the matter.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr Speaker, I am aware of your ruling in respect to...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Statements

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Ministerial statements. Given the importance of this...this matter and the presentation just made by the Prime Minister. I just want to clarify three or four matters which he raised that I have a very clear understanding of what is involved if that is possible. Mr. Speaker, the first one relates to the Traditional Life Portfolio of British American. The Prime Minister has indicated that it is being re-capitalized with about \$38 million coming from the Petroleum Fund and some other monies for some twenty-two thousand policy holders about four thousand one hundred of them being from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and in a week or two insurance companies who may be interested in the purchase... a process of prequalification will commence. I just wish to find out whether there is any timeframe set in relation to prequalification and what... what is the best, I know it cannot be exact, but what is the best feeling one can have in terms of when this can become a reality that is the first one. Second one, Mr. Speaker relates to the legal action to be taken against a commercial bank and maybe the Prime Minister was speaking a bit fast at the time; I want to clarify whether in fact he said that a statement or report was sent to the supervisor or regulatory body here in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines indicating that they were as trustees had assets up to the level of \$140 million in relation to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines that...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes that is...

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: [Inaudible] and the third issue, Mr. Speaker, relates to action taken or about to be taken against those persons involved in the United States, we heard a very detailed presentation on that and does that also have some sort of timeframe for starting and finally, Mr. Speaker, I assume we can also get a copy of the document just presented to the Parliament.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister you have...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes. In relation to the last matter I can... I can get the affidavit of the Judicial Manager which in the Parliament I would get a copy... my office would get a copy for you and the Order Made which is the one which I quoted from extensively I think that is the one will refer to. In

relation to the action to the USA which the Judicial Manager... well BICO under the Judicial Management would take they are going to move with expedition. One of the reasons I have been advised why they sought to get leave here was to forestall any preliminary point that you need to get leave from your own jurisdiction to come here so we take care of that up front. The issue about the 140 million I would emphasize again the commercial bank wrote the Supervisor of Insurance saying we have...we are holding these assets in trust for instance...Mr. Speaker, they...if I would get... in 2007 they had written to the Supervisor of Insurance saying they were holding 140.38 million, in April 2009 they wrote say they were holding 140.547 million but I want to say that the... from the outset it was...relating to the assets of British American Insurance Company (St. Vincent) held in trust that is different from... say the American action where the streams of all kind of monies came in now this is im..., these actions are important for all the other discussions which we had taken place with all sorts of entities because those of us who are lawyers would know when you are talking sometimes it is good to have something filed in the court when you are moving with to exercise some leverage, not only with companies but with other entities. I don't have to say more about that but you can imagine given the history which we have had in dealing with certain entities. The time frame in relation to the Traditional Life we want to move again expeditiously the...Mr. Antoine, when I spoke to him today I... he told me that he would send for me a written document with all the details in those... in that document we will get some specific timelines but he...I had raised the same question with him they would wish to proceed from a technical standpoint with this batch, in fact, in relation to the lawyers...urm... the person for some other work, I have been sub... several names have been submitted to me which I want to give some final clearance on, am talking for some regional work now...uhm...Karen Defreitas of Antigua is now in Australia so I told them that I am in Parliament today, tomorrow is 22nd wedding anniversary I told them that they can call me tomorrow night..., it doesn't really matter me that I will answer the phone on my wedding anniversary all the way from Australia because of this matter..., I mean am not..., disturb me it doesn't matter [interruption] [laughter] you may come to a conclusion why it doesn't matter it is not a conclusion which knowing you would not be favourable to me [laughter] but we would talk about that privately [laughter] so [laughter] Mr. Speaker, those are the answers to the queries of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Laughter] ok, all right move on.

REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, the Select Committee on the Representation of the People Amendment Bill, met yesterday and the committee was adjourned sine die. On the occasion before that at the Select Committee stakeholders had raised the question as to whether we ought not to consider in addition to the provisions in this Bill..., in this Amendment Bill and other amendments to the Representation of the People Act and is perfectly in order with the Government, but of course because I am steeped in good governance, Mr. Speaker, I told them my personal view yes, but because the Cabinet had taken a decision on those two..., on that particular bill and it had come to Parliament, I could not myself tell them that

we will proceed in that manner I had to come back to the Cabinet to get the decision of the Cabinet. As I say that some people may have a history individually of one man on making a Cabinet decision, I do not do that.

In the interim I spoke to the Commonwealth Secretary General in person and made a request for a draftsman to review the Representation of the Peoples Act 1982 and we are proceeding with that. The Cabinet Secretary has been in touch with the Commonwealth Secretariat and I am hopeful that we can have the appointment of such a person soon. In the meantime of course the Bill remains on the Order Paper because we may well have something done before the House is prorogued before the presentation of the Estimates. So that is the report on our Select Committee of the RPA.

I am sorry, I am reminded by Madam Clerk, the Finance Committee in respect of the three Supplementary Estimates and the three Supplementary Appropriation Bills met on Tuesday 9th August which Supplementary Estimates and Supplementary Appropriation Bills are before this Honourable House and I beg to lay before the House the minutes which I believe have been circulated in draft. I am obliged.

PETITIONS

HONOURABLE MAXWELL CHARLES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay the humble petition of the Trustees of the Berean Baptiste Church in this House of Assembly seeking incorporation. I wish to lay it before the House, Mr. Speaker. I am much obliged.

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL ANSWERS

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no. 1.

1. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition), asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Information, Lands, Legal and Grenadines Affairs:*

At a previous Parliamentary sitting the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance had confirmed that the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines had been paying the costs for the Cuban workers at the Argyle International Airport site at the level of \$360,000 per month and that such costs will be reimbursed by the Government of Venezuela.

Can the Honourable Prime Minister please indicate;

- a. how much money has so far been reimbursed by the Government of Venezuela; and if not*
- b. what is the amount outstanding as at June 30th 2011; and*
- c. what is the current monthly cost.*

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, the Government of Venezuela has not yet reimbursed any monies paid for the wages, stipend or upkeep of the Cuban workers on the Argyle International Airport Project. The amount spent on the Cuban workers from July 2008 to the end of July 2011 is \$8.78 million that is over the three year period. The current monthly cost is on an average \$368,572.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out as I have state then, we have been permitted by the Government of Venezuela to borrow monies in respect of..., for the Argyle International Airport from the Petro-Caribe Fund and \$27 million so far has been borrowed on which we have paid back \$2 million. We fully anticipate that by the end of the project all necessary reconciliations will make.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say this, that we must remember that the Cuban workers they are volunteers with a stipend. For the time being they are paid by the IADC. The amount they receive directly or paid to Cuba on their behalf is only a fraction of what they would normally command if they were hired as workers in the open job market. In fact, many of the junior engineers employed by IADC are being paid more than two times what we pay for an experienced Cuban engineer. Similarly the amount we pay under contract for engineers from CESSY Engineering Consultants, an overseas engineering construction company is more than four times what we are currently paying for a similarly trained and qualified Cuban engineer.

On Sunday at the ground breaking ceremony for the Argyle International Airport for the terminal building, I made the point that the contribution of Cuba and Venezuela on the airport project is immense. I pointed out then that 2/3s of the earthworks having being completed means that the value of the earthworks done so far is valued at EC\$118 million. However, over the same period IADC has expended \$28 million that is expenditure excluding interest costs mainly on the earthworks. This expenditure includes administration, wages, materials, supplies, and fuels and spares. Therefore, if one relates the value of the work done to the expenditure, one would see that for every dollar spent on the earthworks IADC has created value of EC\$6.67 on the project. The cost of value ratio helps us understand better the real contribution made by our friendly partners, Cuba, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, Iran, Libya, Austria, and Mexico, all of which have contributed in cash or kind towards the earthworks for the airport project. As a result of these grants what you would find is that though the earthworks have a price tag of \$279 million, we do not expect to spend that because of the in kind contribution including that of the Cubans.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister to indicate the source of funding for this three hundred and sixty add thousand per month.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, last year we provided from the \$42 million that we received for the 51 percent of the NCB, we provided \$20 million I think it was in November. We have provided monies also, approximately \$7 million from National Properties for the sale of the building at Reigate which National Properties developed and which [interruption] yes, the not say figure, and then of course we have borrowed monies from the Petro-Caribe Fund.

What actually happens with the Petro-Caribe Fund persons would appreciate. VINLEC buys the fuel, VINLEC pays the 100 percent, then the Petro-Caribe entity pays the 60 percent within the 90-day period and then the 40 percent is put in a fund which as you knows it is 2 percent interest for 25 years. So it is extremely soft money practically a gift and that is, we have used some of the Petro-Caribe funds as we have reflected in the budget for other projects including poverty reduction and you know we have to try to be creative to finance this airport.

So those..., let me say this, in the earlier period, Mr. Speaker, we had gotten..., we sold twenty something million dollars in land because you may remember we borrowed \$30 million from the First Caribbean Bank that is to be repaid finally by July next year. We have \$6 million remaining; we have paid \$24 million. We got that money so that we can pay people lands while we sell other lands. Because of the international economic downturn within 2009/2010 we have not sold a lot of lands and that is why in 2010 for the first time we have put in our estimates a subvention to the IADC when for instance we got the first tranche of \$20 million from the ALBA loan, we put a \$54 million. If I make an error here I can always correct it, I think we give them EC\$16 or EC\$18 million dollars, out of that.

This year..., last year we give them monies from as I said from the bank, the sale of the bank the 51 percent of the shares and we have money in the estimates this year. In fact, when we sell..., we have sold the 9 percent of the shares to NIS and the workers at the same 823 a share as we sold the St Lucian bank, but because we are going on the market, we have gotten a..., we are getting a valuation, KPMG is suppose to provide us with that very shortly. I checked yesterday, it had not been submitted as yet, but should be submitted shortly and then we will go on the securities exchange, we will go on the stock market and sell that. I anticipate that we will get more than 823 a share and I am hoping that we will get that money by the end of October, November if we do all the processes in time and we will then give a trunk of that again to the international airport project. That is how we are proceeding. I am not hiding how we are doing it and I think we are doing it in quite a creative manner.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no. 2 Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

2. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition), asked the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Information, Lands, Legal and Grenadines Affairs:*

Could the Honourable Prime Minister please indicate the fiscal outturn for the period to June 30th 2011 as compared with the period to June 30th 2010.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I have often when questions like this have been asked, if I have the data for a later month I will give it. So I will give the data as at July 31st. The total revenue and grants 2011, \$284.128 million; 2010, \$289.9 million; current revenue, \$255.4 million as against \$284.1 million; total expenditure, \$318.42 million as against \$310.23 million; recurrent expenditure, \$294.53 million as against \$280.24 million; the capital expenditure, \$23.88 million as against \$29.9 million; the current balance is negative \$37.1 million as against a surplus of \$3.8; the overall balance, \$34.2 million as against \$20.3 deficit.

Mr. Speaker, I should point out in the month of July, because persons who have not worked in the Ministry of Finance or persons who have not been the Minister of Finance know that I get the cumulative, but I also get the monthly's and the monthly for July was promising. Of course one swallow does not a summer make in these difficult situations externally, for instance, you take the current balance, the current balance is a surplus of half a million dollars \$504,000 and the overall balance is a surplus of \$11.57 million. In fact, the overall balance at the end of July is better than the July in 2010 where it was just about \$400,000. So that is where we are.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, just one supplementary question. Despite what the Prime Minister said with respect to July the fact remains that the current balance is negative to the extent of some \$40.8 million for as compared with this same period in 2010. This...

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No, \$37.1

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: \$37 and you said it is a surplus it was \$3.8 in 2010 and minus \$37

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: So the difference is just about \$40 million..., this would suggest Mr. Speaker that there is need for some action. We cannot have the balance...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Is there any action proposed?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, we have taken a series of actions which I have spoken about repeatedly and in the budget. I want to point out that we had budgeted for a \$27 million current account deficit for this year.

Mr. Speaker, and I want persons to understand, you take for instance; we deliberately spent an extra \$4 million for persons who are on public assistance. Some 2000 students from poor families and 4000 other persons largely elderly indigent or persons who have incapacities.

Mr. Speaker, in January I mean from last year, I knew for example that this year given the international situation, I have to read and study it and I have to be properly advised by other people and when I read and study I realised that 2011 was going to be another challenging year and I know the poor would have been..., those on public assistance would be adversely affected. I did not have to give them the \$4 million for the year, but I it because I know that we are going to have an increase in fuel price, an increase in gas, the cooking gas, an increase in flour, sugar, rice, none of those things had anything to do with the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. But I have to try and protect the poor and to protect certain kinds of programmes and I have to

manoeuvre through the enormous difficulties that exist from the international and we are being very careful in our spending. I can assure that, but I cannot really make the poor, somebody who I helped to take out of poverty, I cannot see them go back into poverty. I have to keep the cushion; I have to keep the safety net [applause].

Mr. Speaker, this is the great debate which is taking place in Europe, this is the great debate in the United States of America, this is the great debate and I am prepared at any time to debate anyone on this matter.

Let me say this, Mr. Speaker, and that is only one example, there are several others. Mr. Speaker, persons tend to forget that..., it happens and people forget it, we have lost about \$250 million in productive capacity and in the infrastructure because of Tomas last year and the floods of April. I cannot ignore that. Not because the event happens, monies which I have to divert, monies I have to borrow from somewhere, I have to do the things; I cannot just leave the bridge at basin Hole not done and say I do not have any money. I fold my hands or because I am going to be a prisoner of the books [laughter] no, I am not going to do that, but I am going to be prudent at the same time as being enterprising. That is how I have to do it [applause] and that is where the debate is.

Mr. Speaker, we are about..., we have commenced now the cycle in this month for the discussions on the next budget and on Saturday I am having the Ministry of Finance personnel and I am having the big spending Ministers and other Ministers, it is not their Sabbath, would be there, because I want to prepare the frame and in another two weeks or so I am hoping to craft a speech to deliver at the Methodist Church Hall to the stakeholders in this country, to say, "Look, here is where we are, these are our challenges, this honestly is the position and this is how the Government is going to craft the way forward." I did that in October after September 9/11 and you see Mr. Speaker, I really..., across this region I just talked about 15 percent of GDP with British America and CLICO. I mean that is an immense blow. I have to deal with that, but I cannot deal with it with my head in the sand. I have to deal with it creatively.

Mr. Speaker, Antigua is on the IMF, St. Kitts has gone on a stand-by arrangement with the IMF, Grenada is on an IMF programme and we are holding the fort [applause]. It is not easy, but when persons go about and say that I am going to cut salaries by 10 percent, I mean, let us really..., and the Leader of the Opposition Mr. Speaker, knows that that is not true.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: I never said that.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Ah, you would not say that, but you would allow other people in your presence and on your radio station to say it and let it run on Facebook without even responsibly issuing a demurrer.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable P.M...,

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Leader asked and I outline the framework. I notice that when I did so he is smiling sheepishly because he knows that I have stuck the dagger in the heart of his right wing tea party, economic philosophy [applause] [laughter].

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no. 3 Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

3. *The Honourable Arnhim Eustace (Leader of the Opposition), asked the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Industry:*

The CEO of the Tourism Authority in response to a question I asked about a payment of \$75,000 made by the Authority to a Management Company, indicated that the payment was for the production of a music video aimed at promoting St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The Management Company has confirmed that they were only paid US\$15,000.00 (EC\$40,000.00).

Could the Honourable Minister please state to whom the other \$35,000.00 was paid for what purpose.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Mr. Speaker, just as a matter of correction. The CEO did not state in his press conference that the sum of \$75,000 was paid to anyone. Mr. Speaker, I am going to place this issue to rest finally. A payment of a sum of \$75,000 was made to some company in Barbados was actually the statement of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, the nation has waited patiently for an answer and there are three pieces of evidence that I must share with this Honourable House. Mr. Speaker, firstly, I have an invoice from the Pyramid Entertainment Management Inc requesting the payment of US\$15,000 I have it here and I would make it available for the Leader of the Opposition. Secondly, I have a copy of a cheque payment voucher showing that the sum of US\$15,000 was paid. This is the copy of the document US\$15,000 and Mr. Speaker, the final piece of evidence that I have it is duly noted in the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Tourism Authority Management Report December 1st to December 31st 2009 that the sum of \$40,000 was paid for the music video [interruption] equivalent to \$15,000. Mr. Speaker, the sum of \$75,000 is purely imaginative. The only how I could justify this, if you look very hard at 15; you may see 75. I am obliged. [applause]

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, in response to the question as to whether \$75,000 was paid by the authority, the CEO in his response....,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just a minute, just a minute, just a minute, question, you are going to ask the question, you cannot make any statements in the questions.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: His response is important.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes, but you have to ask the question, just ask the question.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: But I have to quote his response, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: What is the question on this issue?

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: I have to be able to quote his response which led to my question in the first case.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: What is the question? Just ask the question for me please.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, I have to quote the response to ask the question.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Could we then move on to question no. 4 if you are not going to ask the question?

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You see, we have to be very careful on these...

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You said that you are asking a supplementary question.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: The CEO give an answer to the question that I raised in which he give no indication whatsoever, right, no indication whatsoever as to why he said that the cost when I mentioned \$75,000 was used to do the video. If it was known that \$40,000 then say, no, we never spend \$40,000; we never spend \$75,000 we only spend \$40,000. But he did not say so. He said the money was used for, when I asked the question about \$75,000; he said, the money was used for.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: So what is the question?

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: The question was where the other \$35,000 went to?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Good, fine, all right, I thought I heard the answer; there was never a \$75,000.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, may I say this, if you may permit me, Mr. Speaker, if he may give me the indulgence. Mr. Speaker, the verb used by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in the question was not that Glen Beache stated, he said, indicated. It is a very interesting verb, because he knows that Mr. Beache did not state it. So he got the indication...

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: No, I was going to quote.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: He got the indication that is why he used the word “indicate.”

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: No.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Could we move on to question no.4 please?

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Anyhow, we will deal with this otherwise.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Oh yes, the Honourable Member for Northern Grenadines is absent and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition will deal with the questions. I must remind him though in this case he cannot ask supplementary questions.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Yes, I am aware of that, Mr. Speaker.

4. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday (Northern Grenadines), asked the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs:*

Now that the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) has agreed to the free movement of its nationals among member countries, will the Honourable Minister please explain:

- a. *how have the travel procedures among the OECS countries changed for OECS nationals; and further*
- b. *what checks and balances are in place to ensure security.*

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, first let me thank the Ambassador John and his staff for providing me with some of the details for this answer. In the Revised Treaty of Basseterre establishing the OECS Economic Union, Article 12(1) of its protocol states that freedom of movement for citizens of protocol Member States shall be secured within the Economic Union area. It further states in Article 12(2) that such freedom of movement shall entail the abolition of any discrimination based on nationality between citizens of the protocol Member States as regards employment, remuneration and other conditions of work and employment.

Although the Revised Treaty of Basseterre established in the OECS Economic Union came into force as you may recall on the 23rd January 2011, when at least four Member States deposited with the Secretariat instruments of ratification, a decision was taken by the authority not to make operational the free movement provision until the 1st August 2011 allowing for certain actions:

1. That was the passage of domestic law into domestic law of the Revised Treaty through an act of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that this act was completed in St. Vincent and the Grenadines at the sitting of Parliament on the 24th May 2011. Mr. Speaker, this question would not have been relevant or necessary had the Honourable Members of the Opposition did the work of the people by attending this Parliament [applause] because they should have been here, they missed an opportunity to debate this very, very important legislation [applause] and now they have to be asking question. But Mr. Speaker, much more this Government though the unit and I wish to acknowledge the presence here of Ambassador John. On several occasions, you see we spend time listening to ourselves and to other nonsense instead of listening to information that will inform us in Parliament and the people of this country on important issues such as this.

Mr. Speaker, to complete the administrative arrangement for the implementation of the free movement regime in a process leading up to the ratification of the Revised Treaty of Basseterre the OECS Authority mandated the establishment of various working groups to develop the procedural arrangement for the regime. Mr. Speaker, I am going to give the details because all this information is available, anyone of us here can read it online, anyone of us and everyone of us in Parliament should know this information if we are responsible Parliamentarians. It should not be a question here in the House, but I will give the information.

Mr. Speaker, one such working group is the OECS working group on free movement which has held seven meetings via videoconferencing since January 23rd, our participation in those meetings has been coordinated by the Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit (RIDU) in the office of the Prime Minister and included the participation of our local free movement committee which comprises the Ministry of National Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade etc, Department of Labour, Ministry of National Mobilisation, Ministry of Education, Immigration Department and the National Accreditation Board and the Chamber of Industry & Commerce.

I will go into some details regarding the procedure at point of entry. All OECS citizens travelling within the union should enter the special immigration line designated for CARICOM and OECS nationals. OECS citizens travelling within the union must produce the following documents to the immigration officials at point of entry:

1. A valid passport or valid photo ID card that bears the nationality of the holder. The traveller must present a completed immigration entry and departure form (that is the form that you usually filled out when you travel). The immigration official having satisfied himself or herself that all security (and I think this addresses the second part) and other reasonable precautions are taken shall grant entry for an indefinite period, this is important, this is where the main difference lies. Previously your normal any OECS or CARICOM Member will be given like six months, the difference now is that it will be indefinite. The bottom of the form which asks for information regarding length of stay will therefore be stamp indefinite entry. In the absence of a new stamp (which we do not yet have) Member States agree to use in the interim the existing stamp use for CARICOM Single Market arrangements by crossing and amending where necessary, mindful of the fact that the security of the stamp must not be jeopardised.

So Mr. Speaker, I think thus far I have given sufficient information to respond to this question. But Mr. Speaker, we must all be aware that what we are doing here is one of the steps towards regional integration. Mr.

Speaker, this Government has repeatedly expressed its regionalism and you know, Mr. Speaker, there are persons who give lip service to this whole thing of regionalism and sometimes it really boggles my mind when I hear some of the arguments out there, because freedom of movement is just one part of regional integration. But when we move forward by integrating our economies by having St. Lucian Companies investing in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, there are those who say that St. Lucia is buying us out. But you know, Mr. Speaker, this has to do with the in my opinion, this has to do with the narrow thinking and the colonialist thinking of some people [applause], because, Mr. Speaker, I know if it were a TESCO or some WALMART or some other American or English company that had done this, you would have heard nothing, but here we have a fellow Caribbean, an OECS company and oh, we are selling out to St. Lucia. Well I do not mind selling out to St. Lucia in the interest of regional integration. I prefer much more to sell out as you say than to an extra-regional company.

Mr. Speaker, you know, Mr. Speaker, we have to understand the difference..., you know, Mr. Speaker, because we are talking about regional integration here, I will like to give a little analogy, you know people have to understand the economies of scale, you know there are those who prefer you know the little mangoes you call “bimbim” there are those who prefer to hold on to a little “bimbim” than to get a half of a like a imperial grafted or ceylon, you know those big mangoes. It is better to have a half of a big mango than to hold on to the “bimbim”.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain that everybody here listening understand what I am talking about. So Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I will advise those who are asking these questions to be careful about the xenophobia that they are trying to create and to express their true regional integration spirit.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Oh yes, you see there are simple minds sometimes that do not understand the simplicity of their questions.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just kindly...,

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Because these questions go much deeper.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Forget the side remarks and deal with the questions.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Well, Mr. Speaker, yes I was glad for the opportunity to these questions. Mr. Speaker, I think I have said enough.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: And I hope that in the future when they are making these questions, first there are many opportunities to get this information according to the rules. You must study the

rules. We did not have to answer this, you could have gotten the answer elsewhere, but we take the opportunity to let you know that you must do your homework. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no. 5 Honourable Leader of the Opposition. You will ask question no. 5.

5. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday (Northern Grenadines), asked the Honourable Minister of Education:*

The main building and surroundings of the Bequia Anglican Community High School have been in a deplorable condition for several years and this needs urgent attention. Will the Honourable Minister please state;

- a. whether the Minister is aware of the deplorable condition of the school building and the need to fence the school compound;*
- b. what will be done to improve these conditions and to ensure better security of the compound; and in particular*
- c. whether the property will be fenced soon.*

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, this question begs me to remind the Honourable Member that in coming into Government the ULP had to make right an historic wrong in Bequia [applause]. The NDP had taken away the Bequia Anglican High School from the Anglicans; the ULP returned it to them [applause]. The building was strong, the Ministry of Education saw the need to have the compound fenced to lessen interruptions, an assessment was done and the technical team saw the need for retaining walls for proper completion of the fencing. On August 30th 2010 I informed this Honourable House that the Ministry of Education had already procured some fencing wire and poles, BRAGSA had since reassessed all our schools that need to be upgraded and among those that need to be upgraded was the Bequia Anglican High School. Even as we speak at this session, BRAGSA has a team in Bequia, they are replacing the ceilings in specified areas, they are doing repairs to the roof, windows and doors, they are repainting interior and exterior walls, they are replacing and repairing electrical fixtures and fittings, they are doing repairs to the washroom and kitchen areas, they are repairing broken furniture and the Ministry of Education has since sent in new furniture to the school.

Mr. Speaker, the Bequia Anglican High School has been re-vested absolutely to the Anglican Trustees. Following discussions held between the Trustees and the Ministry of Education the Right Reverend C. Leopold Friday, Bishop of the Windward Islands has informed the Ministry that the church has nominated several persons to serve as Board Members. The Anglicans have decided that the best way forward would be to conduct a study along with consultations in Bequia to determine the best approach to managing the school. After the consultations and careful study the Ministry of Education and the Anglican Trustees will continue dialogue aimed at moving forward with the development of the school. The first consultation is scheduled for August 18th 2011 in Bequia. The Ministry of Education continues to use the participatory approach to

management, administration and governments of the Education Sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no. 6.

6. *Dr. the Honourable Godwin Friday (Northern Grenadines), asked the Honourable Minister of Education:*

- a. *Which financial institution now holds and administers the existing student loans that were issued by the former National Commercial Bank;*
- b. *how are these loans performing; and*
- c. *are students able to access loans currently as previously accessed through the former National Commercial Bank.*

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, at the sitting of October 30th 2010 I would have answered very similar questions posted by the Honourable Member for the Northern Grenadines, but I would now give some details for the benefit of the general public.

The National Student Loan Programme continues to be administered by the National Student Loan Committee which we have used applications received under two modalities. Modality 1 is the regular programme. Applications are received at the Ministry of Education that is the Secretariat section, after insuring that all applications lodged have been correctly completed and contain all relevant documentation, the applications are then forwarded to the financial institution of choice indicated on the application form. Applications are so forwarded do not obligate financial institutions to the approval of loans, rather negotiations are undertaken between the applicant and the financial institution and the outcome determined via this process.

Secondly, I would now speak of the economically disadvantaged programme as in the case of the regular programme applications are received at the Ministry of Education and again at the Secretariat section. However, there are specific guidelines governing the eligibility of the applicants who attempt to access loans under this programme. Similar to the regular scheme applications received are reviewed by the Ministry of Education for completeness, but are then forwarded to the national student loan committee for review assessment and conducting of interviews as deemed necessary.

Recommendations made by the committee are then forwarded for review and approval by the Honourable Minister of Finance as the awards made under this facet of the student loan programme are guaranteed by Central Government. Approved applications are then forwarded to the financial institution indicated on the application form provided that the institution participates in the economically disadvantaged programme. Since 1998 approximately 459 students were able to pursue tertiary level education under the regular student loan programme at an approximate cost of \$34 million.

Mr. Speaker, since 2003 when the economically disadvantaged programme came on stream approximately 510 students were able to pursue their dreams which would otherwise not have been possible due to their economic circumstances at an approximate cost of \$38 million. Mr. Speaker, our focus in education is that no child be left behind and we must focus on the children of the poor. Students are able to access loans currently as previously access through the Bank of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. I am obliged [applause].

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no. 7 Member for the Southern Grenadines.

7. *The Honourable Terrance Ollivierre (Southern Grenadines), asked the Honourable Minister of Education:*

In light of the recent Common Entrance Examinations just over half of the children who took the exams passed and while some schools performed well in that they exceeded the national average in terms of passes, others performed dismally with fewer than 1/3 of the students passing the exam. In light of this, will the Honourable Minister please state;

- a. *whether the Ministry is satisfied with the results of those exams;*
- b. *whether she accepts that the failing schools can improve to meet or exceed the national average; and*
- c. *what is being done to ensure that the failing schools improve quickly so as to benefit students currently attending them.*

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it is not always the best approach to compare percentage pass rates from year to year as conditions each year do not remain static. Different test papers and a different cohort of students can make all the difference. The Ministry of Education can never be truly satisfied with Common Entrance Results until the pass rate for the exam shows that the majority of students have demonstrated competence in all areas of the test papers. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, it is good for us to remind ourselves at this juncture that there is always room for improvement in the business of education.

The schools whose performance fell below the national standard have the same resources as schools with excellent pass rates, so their students should be able to reach the required standard by the end of grade 6, careful monitoring by the Principal is vital to any school's improvement. In educational psychology we say as a principal goes so goes his or her school.

Mr. Speaker, analysis of this year's test papers is currently being undertaken so that weak areas in Language Arts, Maths and the various areas covered by the general paper can be identified. For example, the Music Department has already recognised that schools that students performed poorly on the music section of the general paper are those schools which do not send teachers for music workshops, displays students at a serious disadvantage on that section. In Math the weakest areas were geometry and measurement, in Language Arts although reading has improved in terms of decoding, the areas of composition and comprehension were in general below standard for many of our grade 6 students.

The Literacy Officers at the Curriculum Development Unit have made plans already for additional workshops to trained or retrained teachers in the skills needed for composition and the comprehension. The Maths officer has conducted and will conduct additional workshops and training sessions for teachers to help to reinforce the Mathematical concepts required for Grade 6 particularly in Geometry and Measurement. The Ministry of Education is currently engaged in the rigorous inspection and supervision of schools with a focus on teaching and learning. Inspected schools will be provided with close monitoring and support for the teaching and learning processes for quality outcomes.

Close monitoring and supervision by the officers of the Curriculum Development Unit as well as Lecturers of the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College Division of Teacher Education to foster teachers ongoing professional development is one of the Ministry's strategic plans aimed at obtaining improved output and educational outcomes. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no. 8 Member for the Southern Grenadines.

8. *The Honourable Terrance Ollivierre (Southern Grenadines), asked the Honourable Minister of Education:*

With reference to the Book Loan Scheme;

- a. *the names of persons/business houses with whom contracts were signed and the value of each contract between 2005 and 2010; and*
- b. *whether or not the Ministry can state if all books were received and distributed in accordance with all contracts signed.*

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the list of firms that have been supplying the book loan scheme for the past seven years are as follows and I have put them in alphabetical order. Clara's Enterprise, Davy's Gifts, Gaymes Book Centre, Highway Book Store, Jujube, Nightingale Company Limited, Reliance Stationery, Ross Book Shop, SVGT Cooperative Credit Union Book Shop. Mr. Speaker, I have got some figures here and I would like to say that in 2005 the total amount spent was \$1,340,402.90; in 2006 \$1,641,552.67; in 2007 \$1,798,559.83; in 2008 \$1,542,413.82; in 2009 \$1,383,620.13; in 2010 \$850,840.66; and in 2011 \$877,145.13.

Usually, Mr. Speaker, books are received and accounted for at the time of receipt, they are distributed to schools based on request submitted by the schools to the Ministry of Education in the period January to April of each year. The schools usually submit these requests for books based on their projections of requirements for the upcoming academic year which incorporates information on damaged or destroyed books. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no. 9 Member for the Southern Grenadines.

9. *The Honourable Terrance Ollivierre (Southern Grenadines), asked the Honourable Minister of Education:*

Can you please state;

- a. *whether the Primary Program for teachers at the Teachers College for the academic year 2011 – 2012 has been cancelled;*
- b. *if in the affirmative, what is the reason;*
- c. *when will the program be offered.*

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College will not offer the Associate Degree in primary education in the upcoming 2011/2012 academic year, but the programme has not been cancelled from the college's agenda. The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College will offer the Associate Degree in Secondary Education as well as in Early Childhood Education in the upcoming academic year. The rationale is that the lecturers at that division of the college will be engaged in activities which are aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning. The lecturers will, using the model of the teaching practicum, monitor, supervise and provide support to teachers in the classroom as part of teachers' ongoing professional development.

In addition, the lecturers who will begin training in ICT integration on August 15th 2011 will support schools in the integration of ICT into the curriculum. The decision not to offer the usual Associate Degree in primary education allows the college to oversee and guide the in-service training of teachers and to ensure that the process of integrating ICT into the curriculum runs effectively. Furthermore, since it is recognised that quality early childhood education is vital to the cognitive and psycho-social development of students, the college has taken the decision to offer the Associate Degree in early childhood education so as to improve the practice of teachers in this sector which encompasses children up to grade 3 in the Primary School. Therefore, in a broad sense there is still an opportunity for training in the primary sector. The Associate Degree in primary education will be offered in the 2012/2013 academic year and onwards. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no. 9 Member for West Kingstown.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, I note you have invited the Honourable Member for West Kingstown, but I know you have been a stickler for protocol, it might well be that future events overshadow circumstances, but you have recognised me previously as being senior to the Honourable Member for West Kingstown, unlike now. I am inquiring of you whether it is just your wish or you ...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I was just going in the order that the questions were [interruption] well he prefers to give way to you? It is all right.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: No, I am seeking your protocol.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I was just going in the order the questions was stated.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: But I would have thought that you would have looked them over and see that they were out of order Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I also think that the Honourable Minister might welcome a break so I will probably go to Central Kingstown then. I have no problem with that.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: That will be question no. 13

13. Honourable St. Clair Leacock (Central Kingstown), asked the Honourable Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Planning, Grenadines and Legal Affairs:

Will the Honourable Prime Minister please explain the Balance Sheet effect on National Properties Ltd consequent upon the sale of the former National Commercial Bank to what is now Bank of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, we are not aware of any effect on the Balance Sheet of National Properties Limited from the sale of the National Commercial Bank. I do not know what the Honourable Member is alluding to, we had..., the Reigate property was going to be rented to the National Commercial Bank, but the Bank of St. Vincent decide that they are going to buy it and National Properties has sold it, so instead of getting rent you get the actual purchase price, but that does not really have anything to do..., I do know the issue..., the only other issue tangentially we have taken over from the Central Government some debts in the hundred million from the National Properties..., the hundred million from CDB sorry, some debts of National Properties. The liabilities are no longer there but we have not yet determined whether we are going to give them as a subvention for our own internal purposes, yes, or whether we are going to give them as loan, so that means I must tell you this I asked an official, public official, to provide an answer, but I would not read the answer because I thought that they were out to have some fun. So I just answer you in this way. There is really..., we do not know of any..., I do not know what specific issue my Honourable friend is getting at, but that is the way I answer you.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Supplementary to the Honourable Prime Minister. As I understand it or we understand it, Mr. Prime Minister, previously assets owned by the bank that is National Commercial Bank had been vested into National Properties including the property right across here the bank, they are no longer on the books of National Properties, it is now on the books of Bank of St. Vincent [interruption] at what stage Mr. Prime Minister?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker that is why I was not sure. I mean you could have asked the question in...,

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Well that is the question.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No, no, no, you could have asked it in a very specific way and I would have answered you. The properties which were transferred to the National Commercial Bank in the sale agreement, which we have made public since last year, specifically said that these properties are returned and have been returned to National Properties. Similarly, [interruption] because they were from National..., [interruption] no, these properties which were owned by National properties which were provided to the National Commercial Bank in respect of National Properties indebtedness, but they have come back to National Properties that was part of the agreement of the sale. Similarly the monies which may come to us from CLICO/ British American not going to the Bank of St. Vincent will come to the Government. So those things were dealt with in the sale agreement, they are not with the Bank of St. Vincent, emphatically not. Okay?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no. 14 please.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, the rules of the House does not allow for the clarification, we shall proceed.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable, Honourable, Honourable...,

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: I will proceed.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member no.14

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: I will proceed.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is being facetious.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: No, I am not being facetious, I will proceed.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: ..., if I came over too loud, I respect his honourableness [laughter].

14. *Honourable St. Clair Leacock (Central Kingstown), asked the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works, Urban Development and Local Government:*

Like so many other parts of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, our roads are in a deplorable condition, in some cases returning to their dirt state.

Will the Honourable Minister state what programs and timetables, if any, exist for the following roads;

- a. *Back road (in the area of Starliff Pan Yard) in Old Montrose;*
- b. *The road leading into Cauldric Fraser's residence in Green Hill;*

- c. *The Trigger Ridge road just from the junction of Monroe's shop all the way up to Estan DeFrietas' residence;*
- d. *The Largo Heights main road just outside of the area referred to as Big Yard;*
 - e. *The Kingstown Park road starting at Glo Jo's (Stapleton's) business place including the hill between the Cato's residence;*
 - f. *All of the Fenton road and the link road with Belair.*

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, considering the exchange just now and the objection raised by the Honourable Parliamentary Representative for Central Kingstown in regards to seniority, in allocating the resources at the Ministry of Works I should therefore go in seniority and start with East Kingstown and fix the road in East Kingstown and then if there is anything left back then, Northern Grenadines, then Southern Grenadines and then Central Kingstown. I believe that maybe in order to satisfy the Honourable gentleman, the Honourable Parliamentary Representative for Central Kingstown.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I am not involved in the politics of this situation.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I did not..., I try not to involve you in that sir; I was just using and addressing you because we have to speak through you. Mr. Speaker, many of the roads that the Honourable Member has enquired about, last time I got a question from one of the Members on the other side and I was accused of speaking too much. I spoke I believe for about 40 minutes. With the hope...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Spare us.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: What did you say, Mr. Speaker?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Spare us.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Spare us [laughter]. With the hope that I would not get many more of these questions, but they have come. Central Kingstown back road at Starliff, we understand the condition of the road and this is going to be a significant project to get this one fixed. It is unlikely that any meaningful work will be done on this road before the end of the year. The road leading to Cauldric Fraser residence in Green Hill, one of my very dear friends in Green Hill, the road is in terrible condition and I believe the Member raised this when the Honourable former Minister answered in Parliament August last year and did give an answer on that and we have included this road on a priority list that we have and I believe some of this will be done this year. The Trigger Ridge road from the Junction of Monroe's shop all the way up to Estan De Freitas residence, the road is in bad condition not as bad as the others. The first two roads described is terrible, some of this road include concrete and asphalt. We intend to use the in-house patching crew at BRAGSA to do some cold mix patching to the asphalt sections and the concrete would have to be postponed to a later date.

Largo Heights main road just outside the area referred to as Big Yard, relatively speaking, this road is not in a condition of the previous three. It is not really that bad and we will try and do some in-house patching or

patching with the in-house crew. We have established an in-house patching crew at BRAGSA and we will use those to do some patching in this area.

Kingstown Park road again going up by Stapleton between Cato and Stapleton, the road there relatively speaking is not bad. There is a big hole coming down the hill after you leave the Cato's residence and we will do some try to repair drivers comfort that is what I will describe it as. The Fenton road

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: This year?

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I believe, I believe, yes. The Fenton road is in bad shape and has been in bad shape for a long time, [interruption] I know, but work on the Fenton road is expected to commence in 2012. We have just received the approval of a project which is the World Bank has just approved the sum of US\$20.92 million to do various projects regional and local and the Fenton road the two main bridges and five culverts on that road are included in that project and as well as many others. The Arnos Vale drainage basin as we call it heading to the Warrawarrou River is of critical importance and there are substantial sums of US\$2 million included in this project for gabion and reinforced concrete work along the banks of the Warrawarrou River that is the Arnos Vale that runs right under Ace and Aunt Jobe's down that area. That is it, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: I observe the Honourable Member for West St. George nodding his head the second time around since the budget, which means he supports the work on that Fenton, Belair link and I know I have his support. I just want to thank the Minister for his honesty in his responses and I hold responsible...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You just want to...,

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank him for the honesty in his response and I hold him to his word on those repairs.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: If he may, Mr. Speaker, I want to highlight to him because we are doing serious business in the Parliament that the road in the area of the Starliff Pan Yard for the tourist season they intend to try to use the Pan Yard at the site to play pan concerts etc and it would be helpful if we can improve that facility to allow tourists to travel in that area and the pan side to be able to host these pan concerts.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Question no. 15

15. Honourable St. Clair Leacock (Central Kingstown), asked the Honourable Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Planning, Grenadines and Legal Affairs:

Especially now in the rainy season, but generally all year round; those residents of Largo Height who have to cross the Largo Height river at several points to get home, experience great pain, anguish and inconvenience. Some residents have initiated the construction of river crossing using community help.

What material help if any, in the form of cement, blocks, aggregate, steel, or poles can the government provide now or before the end of this budgetary period to relieve these very poor and hard working people of their sufferings.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I think perhaps on reflection my friend the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown..., Mr. Speaker, you know maybe because I have been reading quite a lot the Bible that I seem as a member metaphorically of the committee of Galatians of Colossians you know and he is a Catholic so I mean I prefaced the Honourable, Mr. Speaker, with good friend.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: We will stick to 36(4).

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I said my friend the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown, because I see him as my friend, if he does not see me as friend that is okay.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: The question now.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: That is all right. Mr. Speaker, really this should have been directed to the Minister of Works because it is a question about building a structure over a river, small cutter, river and I noticed the question said that some persons are trying to do some community self-help. What I want to say is this, is that or first of all make it clear that this is not something for a motorable road, you are looking at something which is a footpath and I want to urge the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown to talk with the Minister of Works and get someone under the office of the Chief Engineer to help with the design. It is a dangerous business for persons to be doing self-help. In fact I have the answer from them, I am just précising it. So I think we can provide some technical assistance. I know they are very, very pressed with phenomenal amount of work arising out of Tomas, the floods, all the other projects, we have a \$150 million worth of projects which have to come on-stream by the ending of this month, I mean this year into January, February in four sets of monies, two from World Bank, one from the EU and from CDB. So they are really stretched and they have to provide all the technical work. We are employing some engineering consultants but even so, it is a real challenge.

But I suspect the Minister of Works can get the Chief Engineer to provide someone or somebody to BRAGSA and I am sure that this is a matter which can be..., some assistance can be given in terms of some materials and the like. Not only there, but through NEMO and I think the same thing we can talk about the improvement of the access from Lodge Village to Kingstown Park, Redemption Sharpes [interruption] yes. So I put all in the same mix. But I would advise very strongly in respect of the engineering. I think the Member who is junior to you would advise you so also because he is an engineer. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIR LEACOCK: I thank again the Prime Minister for his honesty and we would in fact top in on the Honourable Minister of Transport, but I just simply want him to impress that this is work in progress and from the material point of view even the assistance of a number of poles from VINLEC, used poles for example will be of great assistance, so let us make haste while the sun shines. We have had a lot of time gone by and people are really being affected especially in this rainy season, so let us see what we can do as soon as possible, Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no. 10, then we are back to that.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am always happy, Mr. Speaker, to give way to my senior colleagues [laughter] [interruption] any day, any day.

10. The Honourable Daniel Cummings (West Kingstown), asked the Hon. Minister of Education:

The Kingstown Government School at Stoney Ground has for some time now been negatively affected by the presence of three small shops attached to the north western corner of the building.

The negative impacts include:

i. The blockage of natural light and of circulating air, thus making some class rooms extremely uncomfortable.

ii. The establishment of dead ends in the limited yard space, creating shelters for undetectable wrong doing from students and undesirable visitors.

iii. Severely limiting the available yard space in the enclosed area for recreational use by the students. This is compounded by the heavy traffic in the adjacent road, which requires the fenced compound to remain closed during school hours.

a. Would the Honourable Minister please state, if and when the Ministry would move to have the units removed from the school compound; and

b. It must be noted that only one of the three shops is used sporadically and the occupants are willing to cooperate.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Representative has indicated that the Kingstown Government School at Stoney Ground had for sometime now been negatively affected by the presence of three shops in the vicinity of the school. Mr. Speaker, as far as I am aware these shops have been at this location for many, many years before this Government came into office, nonetheless, it appears that the occupants of these buildings and others adjacent to the school may not have had all the requisite approvals to occupy the premises. This information is being verified with the relevant agencies and accordingly, in our usual participatory manner of governing the education sector, the Ministry will advance the process. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no. 11.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, there seems to be some confusion on question no.11. My intent was to direct the question to the Honourable Minister of Education because it is..., I do know how the Ministry of Health came in and you will understand in the last paragraph the term her, but I believe it is an error. I do not know where the error came from, it is not from me, but I would like the question to be directed to the Honourable Minister of Education if she can, because it is related, it is similar to the first one. I do not know whether she...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, are you prepared to deal with...,

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Mr. Speaker, I am glad for your indulgence here, I am not so prepared. So I ask maybe another time, because...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: So this question can be resolved.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Yes, thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I hope you appreciate that.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: well yes, Mr. Speaker, because it really has no relevance to the Ministry of Health. I do not know how on earth it ended up being this way and you will see in the final paragraph it speaks of her.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: So I will have to inquire where the error came from.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Oh no, [laughter] no, no, no, no, no, no, not at all. Definitely not.

11. The Honourable Daniel Cummings (West Kingstown), asked the Honourable Minister of Health and the Environment:

The south eastern corner of the Kingstown Government School at Stoney Ground is regularly flooded and hence encourages the breeding of mosquitoes. It also often leads to the younger children falling in pools of mud and filthy water from the wash rooms.

The solution lies in the blasting of some exposed boulders, filling and grading of the space with suitable material and grassing or concreting of the area as deemed suitable.

Several of the parents are prepared to make a contribution to this needed improvement.

Would the Hon. Minister please state if her ministry would sanction this work and assist by providing the materials needed to ensure the many students have an improved environment.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no. 12.

12. The Honourable Daniel Cummings (West Kingstown), asked the Honourable Minister of Housing Information Settlements, Physical Planning, Lands and Surveys:

The residents of Lowman's Bay, Buddy Gutter have been treated very unkindly by a lack of basic amenities, especially access road. Just before the last general election, the Ministry of Housing started the long awaited construction of a road to the area occupied by persons removed from the perimeter of the power plant.

The work thus far was poorly executed and came to a halt very early in the year. The result at this time is the establishment of swamps and high grass making it impassable to anyone and dangerous to kids.

Would the Honourable Minister please state;

- a. is there any intention to continue and finish the road, and if so when will it happen;*
- b. would the children get any relief on this before school reopens;*
- c. would there be a minimum attempt to clear a tract through the high grass that would allow slightly easier passage now.*

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Mr. Speaker, it is a question which surrounds an issue which my staff and I consider to be of extreme importance in our current table of operations. In 2008 in order to facilitate the construction of a fuel storage facility at Lowmans bay, Buddy Gutter 18 households were identified for relocation because of the need to ensure their safety. Cabinet gave approval for these households to be relocated to an area higher up in Lowmans Bay and for each household to be sold a plot at \$1.75 cents per square foot. Cabinet agreed further, Mr. Speaker, as a consequence of the relocation that basic infrastructure inclusive of the road and drains would be install to serve the needs of the people of the community.

And Mr. Speaker, Petro-Caribe made a commitment to cover the cost of the relocation as well as for the installation of the infrastructure and the Housing and Land Development Corporation was so contracted by the Minister of National Security to implement the works. However, Mr. Speaker, there has been some unforeseen snags and these snags have forced my staff to temporarily halt the work which has commenced before as was stated in the question and return to the drawing board to redesign the plans for the proposed development of the area.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen the new designs briefly and in light of what I have been advised by my staff, I am persuaded that the new designs will lend greater efficiency and effectiveness to the implementation of this project and as a consequence assured the sustainability of the proposed works and so Mr. Speaker, because we

remain committed to ensuring the safety of all citizens and given the discomfort which they are currently experiencing, work will commence shortly to create a temporary path to be used by the residence to permit them to move to and from their homes more easily. And of course, Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the challenges posed by the current rainy season. So when this temporary measure is finished, Mr. Speaker, the full project in its current design stage will then recommence. I am much obliged.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, given the experience thus far the conditions have a tremendous amount of not too good clay material and the Ministry of Housing does not seem to have the capability of handling the project. I am wondering whether they have the right level of supervision or whether another agency may wish to be involved. From my own observation, it literally is spinning their top in the mud, it is a very awkward job to complete especially in the rainy season and I would want to suggest that this kind of work should definitely be scheduled for the drier part of the year.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I am not so sure whether you are asking a question.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: ... ,whether the Minister would accept my recommendation.

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: It is not a question, it is a recommendation.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Eh?

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: It is not a question, it is a recommendation.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: That is what I was thinking.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Well is whether he will accept my recommendation.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes, okay, okay.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: It is understood.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Okay. I have not misunderstood anything. I am just playing by the books.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: I hear you, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: We continue then move on to question no. 16 in the name of the Honourable Member for North Leeward.

16. *The Honourable Roland Matthews (North Leeward), to ask the Honourable Minister of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries:*

Will the Honourable Minister please state in relation to the Land Reform Program at the Rabacca Farms in the North Windward Constituency;

- a. the number of farmers who were given leasehold under the program and are still in possession of those leaseholds; and*
- b. the annual volume of production and annual value of such production for bananas, arrowroot and cassava between 2005 and 2010 on the said farm at Rabacca.*

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: Mr. Speaker, prior to 1994 the Orange Hill Estate was owned and operated by the Barnard family and as all of us would recall that this Estate was subsequently sold to the Danes. Mr. Speaker, the Danes continued to operate the Estate giving employment to 450 workers, the coconut plants continue to be operated. You had the juice plants operating, bananas were planted then and some other crops, but the then administration acquired the Estate and send packing 450 workers home empty-handedly, a historic wrong this administration would have put right [applause].

HONOURABLE CLAYTON BURGIN: Correct, correct.

HONOURABLE MONTGOMERY DANIEL: But in 1994 Mr. Speaker, the then administration established what was called a land reformed programme and went as far as changing the name of the Estate to Rabacca Farms. Mr. Speaker, the Estate was sub-divided into 386 lots ranging from 1 to 6 acres; however, Mr. Speaker, the other components of the land reform programme as what I identified which included extension services, tractor services, credit, input support, markets and even training of farmers, Mr. Speaker, other than the sub-division of the lands. No other component of this programme was put in place.

Mr. Speaker, it therefore brought this programme as one would realise as one of land distribution. I believe, Mr. Speaker, this is the programme that the Honourable Member for North Leeward is speaking about. If so Mr. Speaker, the data would have shown that recipients to the so-called land reform programme, or the land distribution, the data would have shown that 164 Estate workers got lots. The data showed 37 persons who were unemployed got lots. The data showed skilled persons which involved contractors, mechanics, 27 persons got land. Drivers and conductors, 19 persons got land; shopkeepers, 20 persons got land; policemen, 16 got land; teachers 15; security other than police got 10; housewives as shown on the application 15; extension officers 6; other civil servants, including community development officers, licensing officers 6; secretaries involving other company secretaries 6; retirees 6; managers and supervisors 6; overseas recipients – people who are overseas 5; other which involve preachers seamstress and things like that others were 5.

Mr. Speaker, in actual fact 23 farmers were beneficiaries of this programme, maybe around 6 percent of the persons who got land on the Orange Hill Estate were farmers. What would you expect of such a programme,

Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, all of the said categories of recipients, Mr. Speaker, was issued leasehold arrangements with the Government with the option to purchase after 5 years.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that from the onset of this programme the selection of the individuals for this land reform programme was wrong and also they were not given any support to that original problem to the original programme, therefore this, Mr. Speaker, was a programme designed to failure. If the objective of this programme, Mr. Speaker, was one of increased production, then certainly the process could not have achieved the desired results. To date, Mr. Speaker, 11 persons have exercised the option to purchase but although 228 persons, Mr. Speaker, have made some form of payments the majority, Mr. Speaker, have since left their farms and have not apart from the initial deposit of the \$720 they have not made any further payments.

Mr. Speaker, a number of farmers have approached the state to transfer their interest to others in accordance with the conditions stated in the agreement. As far as the Ministry is concerned, Mr. Speaker, as far as the Ministry is aware, approximately 75 percent of the initial leaseholders are still in possession of their leases. Equally, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry is aware that several of these leaseholders have allowed others to cultivate their farms on a shared basis.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the second part of the question bananas in 2005, the volume produced on the Orange Hill Estate which is Rabacca Farms amounted to 23,500,000 pounds of bananas giving a value of \$9.2 million; in 2006 the volume of bananas produced 21,686,000 pounds giving a value of \$8.67 million; in 2007 the volume of bananas produced was 18,731,000 pounds with a value of \$7,492,400; in 2008 the volume of bananas produced 14,323,200 pounds of bananas with a value of \$5,729,200; in 2009 the volume of bananas produced 1,352,000 pounds with a value of \$5,408,000 and in 2010 the volume of bananas produced was 6,424,300 pounds bananas with a value of \$2,569,720.

In relation to arrowroot in 2005, the volume of arrowroot produced in terms of rhizomes 465,360 with a value of \$163,926; in 2006 the volume produced was 542,500 pounds with a value of \$189,875; in 2007 the volume produced was 560,273 pounds with a value of \$191,095; in 2008 the volume produced was 648,350 pounds with a value of \$286,922.50; in 2009 a volume of 700,078 pounds with a value of \$270, 051.80 and in 2010 the volume of arrowroot produced was 764,036 pounds with a value of \$292,412.60.

In relation to cassava in the year 2005 the volume of cassava produced was 461,324 pounds with a value of \$276,794; in 2006 the volume produced was 468,242 pounds with a value of \$280,945.20; in 2007 the volume produced was 378,250 pounds, the value of that year for cassava was \$226,950; in 2008 the volume produced was 264,400 pounds with a value of \$158,640; in 2009 the volume produced was 371,240 pounds with a value of \$222,744 and in 2010 the volume produced 341,160 pounds with a value of \$204,696.

Mr. Speaker, that is as the data shows in terms of the production as it relates to Rabacca Farms between 2005 and 2010. I am much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

17. *The Honourable Roland Matthews (North Leeward), asked the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works Urban Development and Local Government:*

The North Leeward Highway especially in the areas of Richmond, Cumberland and Belle Isle is in a very hazardous condition due to the excessive over-hanging of trees, bushes and the blocking of drains. Will the Honourable Minister please indicate;

when work will begin to clear the verges, drains and excessive over-hangings in an effort to create employment for the poor and indigent people of the constituency.

I wish to note, Mr. Speaker, [interjection] the question was asked since last week [interjection] yes and I wish to note, Mr. Speaker, that what I seek to ask, on Wednesday I noticed work has began and I thank the Minister for that. I do not know if the Minister would wish to comment otherwise, but I . . . , the question asked and I see that work is being done. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: He has not withdrawn the question.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, you would observe that the question has not been withdrawn.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes, I noticed that.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: So I will answer the question. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Finance has allocated \$2 million to BRAGSA, \$1 million will be used for continued patching of roads for which some of the roads for the Senior Member, Central Kingstown would be addressed and the other \$1 million [interruption], yes, East Kingstown I meant okay. But remember I fixed up all those roads you know. So there is not much potholes in East Kingstown. I fixed them for you. \$1 million would be used to do cleaning and I am pleased that the parliamentary representative for North Leeward [interruption], do you want the answer to the question or you do not want it? Would you like to give the answer? [Interruption] no you pulled ranks on your member. Maybe because he is wearing a yellow shirt today and you are not, I do not know why. Never seen you pull rank on him before.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, would you please continue the answer if it is necessary.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Because I am being interrupted. So we have gangs, Mr. Speaker, gangs have gone out since the 10th which was yesterday and this programme will bring benefit to about 2100 persons throughout the length and breadth of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The part of it where the Honourable Member talked of the creating employment for the poor and indigent people of the constituency, I am pleased that he differs slightly from his political leader and the Leader of the Opposition, because when the Prime Minister answered the question this morning on the financial situation of the country, I got the distinct

impression from the Leader of the Opposition that we should halt all spending right now, [interruption] because you said..., I said I got the impression from you.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Something wrong with you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Questions on, [laughter] Honourable Members, you know, come on, let us just..., this question thing is not supposed to be a controversial issue.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, fixing roads, cleaning verges, patching potholes require money to be spent and in the answer provided by the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister this morning, the Leader of the Opposition said, this thing is deteriorating and we have to do something.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: And I asked him what proposal he had.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Right. So therefore, from that I drew the conclusion. From that I drew the conclusion, I got the impression and that is my impression that you want him to stop spending money.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, let us go on.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: But we ain't stopping spending money, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: All right, finalise your question.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Because the poor people of this country and those persons who are facing hard times they must be addressed, Mr. Speaker, and this programme will continue and I want to assure the persons who are on the road working now that payments...,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: The fellar say that is his interpretation that is how he understood it.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I do not understand this at all...,

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLEAR LEACOCK: Ask him to withdraw it.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Ask him to withdraw what?

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I am very clear and this...,

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLEAR LEACOCK: Inaudible.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Because I heard you

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Precise in my choice of words you know.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I heard you. But I heard what you were saying.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLEAR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No, I ..., just that my ears are good [laughter].

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I was not finish you know, I was just giving chance because I was being disturbed by.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Yes, I am sorry about that, but I just happened to have overheard the request to have your statement withdrawn, so I intervened.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Oh, well I did not even hear that, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MAJOR ST. CLEAR LEACOCK: ...nolle pros [laughter].

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you please just finish up the question?

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I am amused that he did not ask for the first one to be withdrawn, that is when I said I had fixed all the roads in East Kingstown, he did not want that one withdrawn [interruption] well, I was going on to say, Mr. Speaker, that we will ensure at BRAGSA that the persons who are working on the roads will get there money before school reopens. They will get their money to assist them in getting their expenses covered for..., all 2100 of them, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

18. Honourable Nigel Stephenson (South Leeward), asked the Honourable Minister of National Mobilization, Social Development, the Family, Persons with Disability, Youth, Sports and Culture:

What work has been done on the preparation for the National Stadium given the fact that there is an allocation of \$100,000 for same in the 2011 Estimates.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Go ahead with the question for me please. I just want a side note ..., just go ahead. He asked the question already, that is question no. 18 for the Minister of Sports.

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: It is for the Minister to answer the question.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Right, okay, Honourable Minister.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Much obliged, Mr. Speaker. The Estimates for 2011 shows that some \$100,000 was allocated for the National Stadium, the stadium committee was reactivated,

several site visits were made to their stadium site, but to date no work has been done, Mr. Speaker. Much obliged.

19. *Honourable Nigel Stephenson (South Leeward), asked the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works, Urban Development and Local Government:*

Given the fact that it is impossible to walk on the stretch of dirt road in Campden Park, (Coconut Range) from Keitha Delpeche's to Vin Durham's residence when it rains; will the Honourable Minister please indicate;

- a. *whether or not any work will be done to concrete that road; and*
- b. *if so, when;*
- c. *when will repair work commence on the piece of road above the Brewery in Campden Park.*

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, this piece of road is, it goes through a fairly well populated area, residential area, developed a long time ago in Coconut Range. I believe from knowledge of the area and my information is that I believe the Honourable Member's mother lives in that area close by or just in this vicinity.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Make sure the man mother get...

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: One of her residence. Yes, she is one of the residences in that..., that is what I am saying, she lives in the area. It is a dirt road which has never been developed ever since Coconut Range and Campden Park has come into being, it was never been developed like many other roads that we inherited. There are some engineering challenges on this piece of road and the assessment, I could understand why it is has not been developed which includes ground water and the Honourable Member for West Kingstown I am sure would advise you that this is one particular concern in engineering and the terrain, but [interruption] do not put you in it, [interruption] okay. The construction of this road will cost a tidy sum, a significant sums and it is unlikely that this road will be addressed this year.

When will repair work commence on the piece of road above the Brewery in Campden Park. The road has been identified and assessed and it has been scheduled for some work. I cannot give you a specific time. Basically what is happening now to the road works, we prioritize, like when people speak to me about their roads, I say, I acknowledge the condition of your road, but I am in a position where I compare it with other roads and you would see the beautiful job done on Warner Hill? Now Warner Hill was one of the worse pieces of roads in the entire Arnos Vale area, well in the entire southern quadrant of the country and that has been nicely paved. We have spent a lot of money within recent times patching out potholes on the recently concluded Windward Highway from Kingstown, back out to North Union and like we do with the South Leeward Highway, we treat it in a way right now of temporary patching. It is like a sore on the foot that you change plaster every week, because the major surgery has to be done to it and to keep it to give drivers some comfort and users to not to sprain their ankles and so on, road workers on the road, we try to do patching from time to time on it. The

design for the South Leeward Highway the contract has been awarded and that will come. Unfortunately, between the rainy season we had to use some cold patching and one of the current contractors here in the strangers gallery here today will tell you some of the worse holes on the South Leeward area were patched but with the excessive rainfall within weeks, they were back to create a condition, so that is why we are trying to get the hot mixed asphalt. But there is a problem right now in Trinidad with oil from the lake and we are trying to get that resolved and we should be back in receipt of hot mix in the very, very near future.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

HONOURABLE NIGEL STEPHENSON: Honourable Minister I would just like to ask you a supplementary question with respect to that piece of road from Keitha Delpeche going across to Vin Durham. I recognise the fact that it is going to cost quite a bit of money to have that road done, but would you consider in the interim to have some of the red terrace from Belle Isle throw on, on that particular road? Because when it rains, it is impossible to pass except somebody has a boat that they want to row across. Would you consider that Mr. Minister?

Quite honestly, if you drive around just pass Kelly tire shop you would see deposited on the corner just before pointer Peters a whole set of red dirt from Belle Isle. That was not deposited there; water brought that down from the corner above by Durham there that came around. So red terrace is a thing from Belle Isle it look good, but it is loose [interruption] I know, but I am telling you water turn the best of roads into cutters and when you have loose material on it, it creates a further problem down the road. So that you may be able to walk there on a dry day, but when it washes out and it then accumulates in the drain going down to the school and going down lower down in Coconut Range, it will create problems. My problem is, I am not a trained engineer and I believe so is my Honourable colleague on the other side, he is not a trained engineer, and I leave it to the advice of the engineers. That is my best [applause].

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Question no.20 Honourable Member for South Leeward.

20. *Honourable Nigel Stephenson (South Leeward), asked the Honourable Minister of Transport and Works, Urban Development and Local Government:*

Given the vulnerability of property when it rains heavily in the Pembroke area adjacent to the Buccament River and the poor state of the road. Will the Honourable Minister please indicate,

- a. whether or not the government has any intention of paving the road and constructing appropriate drains; and*
- b. if so, when can residents expect work to commence.*

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, the question is quite vague with regards to specific and clear description of which road he refers. I believe that he is talking of river valley which goes up from Bernard Garage up to Elves and up to Rudy Daize, that piece of road [interruption] yes.

There are more threatening properties by Buccament River than those properties. I have seen Buccament River in flood, in fact I was the victim of the Buccament River where a Senior Officer Delves now deceased had to rescue me and my eight year old daughter out of the Buccament River Waters after my truck, a 330 diesel Bedford Tipper that I used to drive in those days, got flooded out in the river waters. I know how treacherous Buccament River is. I have been living in that area now since the early 1980s. I am not a landowner, a land developer. I have warned about river valley. Very substantial properties have been put into that piece of land. I cannot recall the water going any further up than the first row of houses in that area, but the problem we have there with the road is a problem that continues to plague us in this country. I have spoken about it on numerous occasions, private land developers.

They sell the land, they get the profit out of it and they do not put in the infrastructure. When persons buy the lands, they get it at reduced price, because there is no road, so they negotiate a little twenty five cents per square foot or a little fifty cents per square foot then the burden comes on the taxpayer to put in the infrastructure. We have put in the concrete piece when I was Minister in first term from the main road up to Elves [interruption] yes, yes, yes. I was responsible, I was the Minister responsible and I believe the contractor is right in this parliament today. That was not put down by residents, so we have assisted in getting roads there.

I know the residents are up in arms and I have asked them since my first term as Minister of Works to collectively go to the land developer. He is my good friend, excellent friend, we have been friend for years, but this particular land developer does not put in the kind of infrastructure. But yet gets the right price for the land. One resident had bought higher up on the hill; you talk about road, did not get light and water. Water alone to her house cost her \$35,000 from the main highway. So I understand their predicament of the residents of this valley and we will see what we can do to take the road up in stages. Now it is also a nightmare for an engineer to put a drain inside there. In fact, my recollection is that a drain, a semi-circle drain was built behind Rudy Daize house down under Josette Norris; again, we had that done. In those days we used to have them in all the farming areas with old man beard grass around them and that main drain was dogged there to take the water off of the hillside coming down. It is an engineer's nightmare and we will..., I have said to the residents down there, I have spoken to them individually, collectively, Rudy is my very dear friend and he lives furthest up in the valley. I know all of them personally. I have discussed this matter with them on numerous occasions. We will try to see what we can do from time to time and see how we can alleviate the discomfort in that area. Thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, for the remaining questions on the Order Paper, I will ask the Honourable Deputy Speaker to continue.

HONOURABLE DEPUTY SPEAKER, DAVID BROWNE: Question no. 21.

21. *The Honourable Vynnette Frederick (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Industry:*

The Ministry of Tourism boasted of a website and online applications which would increase visitor arrivals to St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Indeed over 45,000 hits were registered on the site up to August 2nd 2011. Despite generating such interest NOT ONE PERSON who visited the site was able to book and PAY FOR any booking for the thirty-five (35) hotels listed on www.discoversvg.com.

Can the Honourable Minister state when the requisite regulatory framework to allow for online transactions with local tourism companies will be in place.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Mr. Speaker, whilst I appreciate the Honourable Senator's attempt in the question to approximate the number of hits on the site, I am advised that the exact number as of August 2nd is 97,000 some twice times plus the 45,000 outlined in the question by the Honourable Senator.

Mr. Speaker, the implementation of the aspect of the website referred to by the Honourable Senator to deal with online transactions with local tourism companies by using the www.discoversvg.com is dependent on a timetable and several protocols which have to be decided upon through the collaborate efforts of the stakeholders in the private sector on the one hand and the Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Authority on the other hand. I will like to reassure this Honourable House that work is ongoing, especially as we move towards the grand opening of the Argyle International Airport. I am obliged [applause].

HONOURABLE DEPUTY SPEAKER, DAVID BROWNE: Question no.21

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Just a supplementary please Mr. Speaker, I crave your indulgence.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Is the Honourable Minister saying that the actual rolling out of the ability to pay for a booking on line congruent and dependent upon when the Argyle International Airport is completed?

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: It is nice to note that the senator has not asked as to whether or not the Argyle International Airport is going to be completed, because that is established [laughter] that is an established fact, but [interruption] eh, all right, all right, okay.

What I said simply is that we are using the general timetable, but Mr. Speaker, if you go on the website now and I know that my Honourable friend on the other side is quite au-fait with the IT used that you can actually book on line you know, but you cannot book through and pay through that central booking system. But I am saying soon when we are having the bigger jets coming in with more volumes by that time definitely it would be completed. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE DEPUTY SPEAKER, DAVID BROWNE: Question no.22

22. *The Honourable Vynnette Frederick (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Minister of Telecommunication:*

Given the recent finalisation of yet another ICT strategy and action plan. Will the Honourable Minister please detail;

The current human and infrastructure capacity within the government IT Unit to implement this ambitious agenda.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, may I just say first, I am a little disappointed that the Honourable Senator is equivocating or uncertain as to whether I am indeed the Minister of Telecommunications. Just as the Barbadian taxi man would say, for the purposes of edification, the way in which you become a minister for a portfolio is that the Prime Minister assigns it and advises the Governor General to make the appointment and when the appointment is made, it is gazetted and I am sure as a Member of this Honourable House, she reads the gazette and if she does not, she ought to and she would see that I am indeed the Minister of Telecommunications [interruption] that is fine.

Well you know the interesting thing is this, the NDP say they run things [laughter] you understand what I mean. In fact, you say you run things in a particular organisation with fresh legs [laughter] and the chairman says, her man of 60 could have fresh legs [laughter], so you know I have my wits about me, you should not interfere with me [interruption] yes, yes, yes.

Mr. Speaker, also I think for someone so..., someone who is young ought not to be so cynical and lacking in faith and optimism, the formulation, given the recent finalisation of yet another ICT Strategy and Action Plan as though yet another one is somehow pejorative. Why you are doing another one? Why you doing another one, because you have to continue the previous one and put a new one in place that is why it is simple it is not just yet another one. You can say that on some kind of a talk show, you may say it if you are on top of you know introducing beauty show girls and so on, but not in the parliament [laughter].

Mr. Speaker, the national ICT Strategy and Action Plan 2010 to 2015 and I have a hard copy here. I put it in the hard cover so that it is part of my ongoing reading. I do not know if she has one. This is how it should have looked when it was published last year, but I have to keep it in a hard cover, because I am thumbing it. She should probably get one if she does not have one. This was developed with the assistance of the Canadian firm Private Sector Technology Group (PSTG) and its Trinidad subsidiary through the European Union Funding under the SFA 2005. The plan was approved by Cabinet in September 2010 and is posted on the Government website. This follows a hugely successful National Strategy and Action Plan 2002 – 2007 which was extended to 2010.

The new 2010 – 2015 plan is bold ambitious 5-year plan which aims to ensure that SVG is one of the leading Caribbean nations in ICT with a goal of creating a vibrant ICT sector. An implementation and monitoring secretariat has been established to ensure 100 percent implementation of each activity which is inside of this plan. The National Strategy and Action Plan redefine ICT information, communication and technology in a

more functional definition, infrastructure, content, and training. In relation to infrastructure focus on ensuring a robust modern high quality infrastructure, make sure that it is in place through LIME's next generation network which has been launched already, Karib Cable Island Wide Digital Cable triple play, a 125 percent mobile penetration through Digicel and LIME and the Government's own fibre backbone under the streets of Kingstown and soon to be extended to Arnos Vale, Community College, Diamond, Argyle Airport and eventually to the Georgetown Diagnostic Centre with the Milton Cato Memorial Hospital.

The Government web, intranet, email services and data storage infrastructure are all being upgraded, that is infrastructure. So as is content to create the content and applications to run on this infrastructure, the training, the training at every level of our society to utilise effectively the benefits of this infrastructure and content. The plan also adopts the more goal and success oriented definition of ICT as innovation, connectivity and transformation. Where there is a major emphasis on innovation and with the distribution of the netbooks, the laptop in the schools and the internet connection in schools and homes, SVG will become one of the most connected nations in the Caribbean. Each initiative in the plan will be designed, geared to bring about the transformation of our nation into a modern competitive many-sided society and economy.

Mr. Speaker, the question raises the issue of not only the infrastructure capacity, but also the human one and wants to know what all we have to implement. What she rightly refers to as this ambitious agenda. The Opposition says that this is ambitious and it is indeed ambitious [applause].

Let us look at the information first, the Information Technology Services Division (ITSD)

This is the Government central technical division and has a technical staff of 31 persons ranging from ICT technicians to web designers and network administrators. The ITSD is comprised of two main units, an e-government unit and a service and maintenance unit. The technical head is Mr. Andre Bailey who is a competent leader; an ICT adviser who is highly respected in this region.

The Government of Taiwan is providing assistance to ICT by establishing an ICT centre associated with the Ministry and will assist with vital computer equipment and raising the technical capacity with three ICT experts over four years who would develop advanced software applications for several sections of the Government.

Secondly, the National Centre for Technological Innovation (NCTI). Mr. Speaker, this has a permanent staff of 9 persons and 11 part time associated tutors. The NCTI delivers a wide range of accredited ICT courses. The centre of excellent at Diamond which is managed by NCTI will be re-launched at the Caribbean ICT road show on September 12th – 14th. It will deliver a new range of advanced short term and long term accredited ICT courses in software development and place a strong emphasis on building the ICT capacity and e-business capability of the private sector. The centre of excellence would offer 10 ICT and e-business innovation incubators in order to grow an innovative ICT sector.

World Bank Assistance of US\$6 million has been approved for providing additional staff at incubator and the establishment of a venture capital fund to assist ICT entrepreneurs. The Government of India would be

assisting the centre of excellence at Diamond by providing three software engineers to conduct software and mobile application courses in January 2012.

Thirdly, the National Telecoms Regulatory Commission (NTRC), this, Mr. Speaker, including the Universal Service Fund (USF) also has a staff of 10 persons led by another very competent and outstanding telecommunications engineer, Mr. Opolo Knights. Apart from providing the important role of telecommunications regulations under the Telecommunications Act of 2001, the USF resources from 1 percent of the gross revenue for all the major telecommunications providers and this has been used to connect 107 schools, all the LRCs [interruption] you recognise when I get a full task eh? [Laughter] I mean, I could play it straight overhead for six there, but I prefer to go across the line and take it through mid wicket, between mid wicket and fine leg and I going straight over the boundary because the shoulders are strong. I am glad you recognised that. Now this Universal Service Fund has been used to connect 107 schools, all the learning resource centres and many community facilities with high speed wireless broadband at a cost of over \$7 million. LIME won the tender and they are at work on it right now.

Mr. Speaker, for persons who would miss the point, the Universal Service Fund is not the money of the Government, it is under the Act, the Telecoms provider they put certain amount of monies, as I have said, the 1 percent of the gross revenue into this fund and the NTRC naturally in conjunction with other professionals in the Ministry and with the Ministry would say what we are doing with their monies and this is..., so that when we have..., when we put in the laptops all the schools have high speed wireless and indeed, I have been advised that the high speed wireless in the schools would extend to 200 metres in diameter in radius, sorry, around the schools. It is an interesting..., on either side. By the end of September there will be 140 hot spots across the nation providing free high speed wireless broad band between 8 and 20 megabytes of second.

Another USF project will place pay phones at every mile along the Windward and Leeward Highway and 12 tourism sites and beaches. The tourism sites will all have free high speed wireless internet. It is also expected that the wireless connections to all the clinics will be completed by 2012 to facilitate the health information system [applause] which will improve health delivery.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard persons who..., I have heard that they say that they speak for the NDP on matters relating to ICT and I have heard something, I really, I could not quite believe it. They said that they will offer free high speed internet to every citizen at super speeds at 100 megabytes per second, but of course the maximum speed available now is 20. But I do not know how it is going to be fiscally prudent, how that is going to be squared with the view of the Ministry of Finance, because I have asked to tell me how much LIME and Karib Cable will have to pay them to provide free high speed internet to every citizen at 100 megabytes per second. I could not believe the number either \$100 million. Now you can talk things, but they have to be related to reality. So when I heard that I say, well I have to ask the people who are advising me and check out this thing thoroughly. You know, we have to be responsible on these matters.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that VAT has been removed for the internet connections for students with laptops and this will also increase the home connections. Other Ministries, there are 40 other ICT staff, the Ministry of

Education has six and they have, I think, nine YES volunteers working in that area too. The health information system, four ICT staff; BRAGSA two; Treasury four; Inland Revenue six; the ASYCUDA at Customs eight; the Electoral Registry one; Civil Registry two; Land Registry one. Mr. Speaker, I can go on and talk about the regional support and the e-grip project, the Commonwealth Secretariat, Caribbean Telecoms Union, the CKLN – Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network. I mean, all of these, but I see Mr., my friend the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown wants to go home for lunch, so I would not spew another one on that, but those..., I mean really, you get the picture.

I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, hopefully before the end of this year, this parliamentary year, this session, I enquired of the Attorney General, I met the persons who are dealing with the e-grip World Bank project and there are five Bills and I wanted to make sure that the Attorney General is dealing with them so that we can put the legislative framework properly in place to strengthen our developmental programme and she assures me that she has assigned persons to these five Bills, maybe some of these seven young persons who are doing work there during the summer including a young man who has just (he may just stand, you want to stand for me?) I just heard that he is a national scholar, he has gotten a first class honours in law, he is a child of the Education Revolution [applause] and they are all..., I believe some of them would be helping with this, because you know, I do not mind if persons..., I mean, I for instance I am trying to learn and making some progress with this technology, but the younger people are more..., the younger people have a greater facility with it. For instance, my 15½ year old daughter, my 21 year old daughter and I just have to recognise that some people move to it quicker, I think it might be the same thing for my friend the Member from North...., the Honourable Member from North Leeward and so on and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Honourable Senator for asking this question and I want to thank her for her declaration that it is ambitious. I want also, Mr. Speaker, at the same time to suggest that when like we bring out the plans, do not be cynical about it. You are concerned about it, go to the Ministry of Technology, drop by me, say, Prime Minister I want to come to talk to you about something in relation to this.

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Hardly likely, hardly likely.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You see, hardly likely. I will get the technical people to come [interruption] [laughter] you see what I mean? I am always a together now man you know. I follow the teachings of St. Paul in the book of Romans and I am everybody's neighbour which is what my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has said. You know, so when a young person says, "hardly likely",

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Hardly likely, hardly likely.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: well you see, and you just barely wet your foot in politics and a dean in this business [interruption] you see, read Proverbs on humility. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker [applause].

HONOURABLE VYNNETTE FREDERICK: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the answer given by the Honourable Minister of Telecommunications. I am sure it gave him an opportunity to get into an area that he normally would not delve into. Question no. 23 Mr. Speaker, again standing in my name to the Honourable Minister of Education.

23. *The Honourable Vynnette Frederick (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Minister of Education:*

Given the fact that Laptops have been distributed to school children. Can the Honourable Minister please state,

Where can they find and access the updated curriculum modules which streamline ICT in the education learning process for each subject area.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I sat here and I listened to the Honourable Prime Minister and I remember a singer call “Julie Andrews” and some words that she put into music she said, “Nothing comes through nothing, nothing ever could.” And as those words rolled through my head I thought of the Honourable Prime Minister, I am our ministry’s link in this Honourable House and Honourable Prime Minister, with your consent, Mr. Speaker, I want to say thank you on behalf of the Ministry of Education and all the young people. There is a wave of joy going through this country [applause]. You have been the initiator and I want all this to go down in the hansard. Prime Minister, Thank you.

For your answer Honourable Senator, to date the Ministry of Education has contributed netbooks to almost 10,000 students, teachers, education officers and school technology coordinators [applause] in grades 2 – 5 in the primary schools in the state. These were distributed under the Government of Portugal, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines’ one laptop per student project. An additional 850 desktop computers, 350 laptops, 93 printers and 93 scanners were distributed to primary and secondary schools throughout the country under the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines EU improvement of education through the use of information and communications technology project.

The Ministry of Education is in the process of finalising an ICT resource handbook for teachers which will provide guidelines for the integration of ICT into the curriculum. It must be noted that ICT is a tool to enhance the delivery of the existing curriculum. The National Curriculum Assessment Framework and the draft of the ICT resource handbook for teachers are available at the Ministry of Education.

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE(Deputy Speaker): Question no.24.

24. *The Honourable Anesia Baptiste (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Minister of National Mobilisation, Social Development, the Family, Persons with Disabilities, Youth, Sports and Culture:*

At the first ever Caribbean Regional Colloquium of Women Leaders of Agents of Change recently concluded in Trinidad and Tobago. Statistics released by the OAS Inter-American Commission on Women placed St. Vincent

and the Grenadines at the top of a list of most OECS countries in having highest number of reported rapes and recorded female homicides over the last ten (10) years. Will the Honourable Minister please state,

- a. what are the programs actively in place in the Ministry to address these growing ills in our society;*
- b. whether or not the department is committed to the bi-partisan approach and collaboration in addressing the matter of sexual and other violence against women;*
- c. what kind of public awareness drive, if any, does his department have in place to address the loss of values associated with gender equality and the protection of women, so as to work to decrease the incidents of crimes against women in our society.*

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: Thank you very, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2001 when this Unity Labour Party administration took office, there was a paradigm shift from a woman in development approach to a more inclusive one. A gender on development approach which focuses on social, economical, political and cultural development, since then we have been networking with our national, regional and international partners to expand our courage in this area. Remember before the ULP there was only a Woman's Desk.

With reference to the question posed by the Honourable Senator Baptiste, it must be understood that statistics are relentlessly being used by the popular press and others to magnify the presence of social ills in our societies. The statistics presented had to be viewed in the context of the overall evidence of attitudinal changes that are taking place in the lives of Vincentians that is, persons are becoming more aware and are reporting and seeking redress for incidences of abuse. This is the result of the work of the ministry in building awareness at the grassroots level in all communities throughout St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

There are several programmes in place at the ministry to address these growing ills and these programmes include under the social empowerment through community and family based empowerment, we have held during the period January to July 2011 one domestic brochure was designed, at least 500 copies will be produced for distribution, media presentations printed and electronic media and we have the Gender in Focus programme. Twenty-six programmes were broadcasted up to July 26th, 2011 at least 43 programmes are expected to be produced and broadcasted for the rest of the year. Awareness campaign, mainstreaming in gender, the continuation of awareness campaigns on various conventions that were signed by St. Vincent and the Grenadines, for example the Bellem Do Para convention, CEDAW convention, the CIM strategic action plan and Beijing platform for action, collaboration with NGOs, the National Council of Women, partnerships were strengthened with other organisations, the formulation and implementation of programmes were done, these were done in collaboration on month of activities to commemorate International Women's Day 2011. Self empowerment through mobilisation, other family empowerment programmes, five workshops were held, 100 persons were present of which 55 were men. We held health sessions conducted in both men's health targeting men only and cancer awareness programmes targeting both sexes, fathering programmes, role in education, health awareness sessions, five more workshops are to be completed by November 30th this year.

Other programme of male under achievement, three such programmes are to be conducted during Professional Development Week in August 2011 and the schools highlighted are St. Martin Secondary, Sandy Bay Secondary and Bequia Anglican High School. Social empowerment with social protection, we have the programme, the reentry of teen mothers and career education parenting. The parenting workshops were held and conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. Over 100 persons were trained including pre-school teachers. At least two more parenting sessions are expected. A week's programme targeting teen mothers is scheduled to begin in the middle of this month. Social empowerment through management capacity building, data collection, collection of six ... data, template on the collection of crime statistics where the police is developed and is scheduled to be in operation by August 31st this year, social justice through legislative reform, the parliament in St. Vincent and the Grenadines passed the Child Care and Adoption Act on August 30th, 2010, was assented by the Governor General on October 7th, 2010 this Act seeks to tighten protection for children. We also have the commencement of the state accountability project to strengthen community actions for ending gender based violence.

Three workshops were held focusing on gender based violence. We have over 150 men who were exposed to this information. This programme was funded by the United Nations. The necessary components phases of the state accountability projects are ongoing and is slated to end in November 2011 [applause]. We have signed on to, as I have said before, a number of other conventions, a month of activities to commemorate International Women's Day 2011 attention given to the Beijing platform for action that was held in March, child abuse awareness and prevention month, month of activities to celebrate international day to end violence against women to be held in November.

Mr. Speaker, we realise that the effective reduction in these growing ills requires a partnership approach by Government; private sector; non-profit and research groups; the contribution of the United Nations Agencies such as UN women, now referred to as UNIFEM; United Nations Population Fund; ECLAC; CIM; and others cannot be overlooked by the efforts made to fight out and stamp out gender based violence in our society. In response, UNIFEM is implementing in partnership with the association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police a project on strengthening state accountability and community action for ending gender based violence in the Caribbean. This project focuses specifically on reducing violence against women through the strategies of increasing state actual competencies and strengthening accountability. Locally, we have been working with over 30 groups including a national council of women to strengthen community capacity to support and work together to stamp out violence. We have been moving towards gender equality. In general, a reduction in gender based violence is influenced by several factors, socio economic status etc. Presently we are working towards a national action plan and family awareness programme. Training is ongoing with emphasis on domestic violence and we have stakeholders' special programme and activities which seek to assist and build confidence in the administration of justice.

Mr. Speaker, you see that over the month we have been doing quite a lot in trying to alleviate some of the problems in gender based violence here in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker [applause].

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: With respect to the (b) part of my question whether or not the department is committed to the bi-partisan approach and collaboration in addressing the matter of sexual and other violence against women; I understand from the Honourable Member about the cooperation with other organisations in the region and so on, what I was particularly asking about for a commitment from your office when I say bi-partisan approach, I am referring to approach that involves the Opposition and I say this, because it is a concern among the region that these national issues often get affected by the devisive partisan politics that is played in our kind of politics in the Caribbean and I am here actually saying too that I recognise the importance of bi-partisan approach in addressing the issues and so my question is I did not really think you understood perhaps what I was asking in the second part [interruption] I am just clarifying, Mr. Speaker, and therefore I am asking again by elucidating to say that when I say bi-partisan approach I refer also to the Opposition, I am asking again if there is a commitment.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: But I am asking my question on a particular issue.

HONOURABLE FREDERICK STEPHENSON: I cannot answer you that you would have a bi-partisan approach to gender based violence, everybody would be involved, I mean, come on, even the Green Party, the NDP, the ULP, the Green Party and all other interesting persons could be involved in an approach to end gender based violence [applause]. You cannot have a bi-partisan approach, it is...

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE: Question no.25.

25. *The Honourable Anesia Baptiste (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Minister of Tourism and Industry:*

In light of the July 20th press statement made by the Chief Executive Officer of the SVG Tourism Authority in which he answered a question posed by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition's question thus finally, the last question raised by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition concerning the sum of \$75,000.00 to an artist management company in Barbados had to do with the sponsorship of the music video for the "Beast Let Go" performed by Gamal "Skinny Fabulous" Doyle. As many persons here will remember, this cost was disclosed at the launch at this initiative right here in this building. Will the Honourable Minister please indicate;

a. whether, according to Section 23 of SVG Tourism Authority Act 2007, the then Board of Directors of the Tourism Authority ever included in its annual business plan proposal for the Financial year 2010, the use of the "Beast Let Go" video as a promotional tool for the Tourism Authority;

b. *whether, in accordance with Section 24 of the SVG Tourism Authority Act 2007, the then Board of Directors of the Tourism Authority ever approved and implemented the expenditure of EC\$75,000.00 or \$40,000.00 for the sponsorship of the same video;*

c. *whether the sponsorship of the video was implemented without the then Board of Directors' knowledge and approval; and*

d. *whether the then Board of Directors were merely informed of the implementation after the fact.*

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that this question has been addressed to me, but I want to tell the nation that I am indeed sad at the same time. “Skinny Fabulous” Doyle is a man who has attempted to take the Soca Art Form to a different level, a young man, a man who has done his research and to a large extent is making a living from the art form and to see that the Opposition has made over the pass few weeks such heavy weather of this US\$15,000 for a young man, I mean I am not siding whether I am a supporter of “Skinny Fabulous” or if I am a “Fireman Hooper” supporter, but the Opposition is playing politics with this question. Firstly you know, Mr. Speaker, I did not...

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE: State your point of order.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: My point of order, content of speeches order 36, section 5, no member shall impute improper motives to any member of the House. Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I am a part of the Opposition, I have asked a question of the Honourable Member which has been permitted on this Order Paper. In answering his question, he is speaking about the Opposition playing politics with the issue of, Mr. Doyle. I never in my question, if the nature of the question is looked at, play politics, I simply asked specific questions with respect to law that has been passed in this parliament and therefore I consider the member ranting, imputing improper motives to me as a member of the Opposition and I will appreciate your ruling on it sir.

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE: I realised that this question would have been one that would create a stir in the House, noting it mentioned itself twice, part of it in the House [laughter]. So I sat back here earlier and you realise somewhere along the line I missed the question I jumped straight to 26 because I realised it was question no. 3 was answered similarly, but let us be fair, usually before a question is answered someone tends to get into a little bit of introduction prior to the question and we have to be real in the House today. It is happening all the time. I cannot see that we are getting into a petty argument on this particular question and we all will know that the House is not made up of footballers, it is politicians on both sides, so whether the Honourable Member would have state or Minister would have state or playing politics or whether he would have state that it is the NDP we are discussing the Government and we are dealing with politics and we have to

get rid of this thin skinned attitude. I will ask the Honourable Minister to continue answering the question please.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Mr. Speaker, the truth sometimes really hurts you know, but I must before answering the question, make the correction in (b) that the issue of \$75,000 is a non-issue. We dealt with that already and I thought that the Honourable Senator in her asking of the question would have made the correction, but she did not. Therefore I have to make the correction again. I have the receipts here you know, I have the receipts here for the US\$15,000 only in somebody's mind and imagination they saw \$75,000. Unless the leader of the Opposition can present...

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE: Order, order in the House. Excuse me Honourable Member, order please. Now Honourable Member, sit please. If you wish to make a statement obviously, you would know the protocol of the House [interruption] right, so then I expect, not because I am [interruption] Honourable Member, Honourable Member, I am on the floor, I would expect if Honourable Member that if this is the case that you should respect the protocol. If you know the protocol, respect the protocol. If you want to make a ruling, or if you want to say something you know what the Standing Orders says about that. [Interruption] yes, I can hear you [laughter].

HONOURABLE ST. CLAIRE LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, this House has the obligation to be truthful and to be factual when questions are being asked, is this question..., [inaudible]..., the reference by the gentleman at the time \$75,000 is not guessing, she is quoting him, so the Minister cannot ignore that such a remark was made in respect to \$75,000 he wants us to ignore and gives the impression that it is a figment of our imagination that \$75,000 came from somewhere. That is an exact quotation, he said \$75,000 was spent and all that is being asked by the nation, in fact, this is not just a parliamentary concern, the nation has been asking this, where is the other \$30,000 that is the question.

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE: Now, Honourable Member, let me hear you Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, just to get back to my question, I just want to clarify in response to the Honourable Minister's statement, we have to remember that these questions are sent at least 10 days in advance. I could not have known previously that the Honourable Member was going to answer in his first question to say that the figure was \$75,000 and not \$40,000. In my question, Mr. Speaker, which was sent previously, I asked of \$75,000 or \$40,000 based on what was playing around and furthermore, Mr. Speaker, my specific question is whether in accordance with section 24 of the Tourism Authority Act of 2007 the Authority ever approved and implemented the expenditure.

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE: All right, okay, yes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: My I crave your indulgence? Mr. Speaker, I was really impressed with the wisdom of your position about politicians and there have to be some give and take, because when the Honourable Senator Baptiste was making her objection about what she thought was an improper

motive, imputing improper motive, I do not know if anybody can impute an improper motive in relation to an active politician that they are playing politics. But Mr. Speaker, please, please, please, please, please, please, but in the very self righteous manner in which she was speaking, you accused him of delivering a rant, a rant, because you cannot say, a Member is answering you and you called it a rant. I could have risen on objected, but that is part and to give and take. He was answering your question as an Honourable Member, he had not cursed anybody, you are calling it a rant, please, be a little less self righteous.

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE: Okay, let us put an end to this question. Honourable Member could you continue please.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Mr. Speaker, the question has to whether or not the sum was included in the annual business plan, the business plan for the financial year 2010 made provision for marketing and promotion. The video must all times be seen as a promotional tool. If I may just give an example, few weeks ago I was in North London; I received a call from a general manager in the Grenadines telling me about a criminal activity which has taken place affecting some guest. I cut my vacation a bit short, came home, the Honourable Member for the Southern Grenadines was at a meeting that I attended the Sunday. Now you cannot find in any business plan or any budgetary tool anywhere that a ticket is to be bought for the Minister to travel to the Grenadines to attend this function. What you see is the general rubric of travelling, because at the time when the budgets were done, the persons who were affected in the Grenadines may not have even thought of coming on a vacation. So the Honourable Member has a very narrow view of what of the contents of a business plan, so to answer the Honourable Member, the business plan for the financial year 2010 makes provision for marketing and promotion. This video must at all times be seen as a promotional tool.

Mr. Speaker, what is important here is that the board raised a flag on what it considered to be procedures followed which were unclear. The board acknowledged that the Minister has certain powers pursuant to section 12 and 23 in what the board referred to as the Ministerial Prerogative quote unquote, however, the board noted that in the future that certain procedural protocols should be put in place for payments. What is more though, Mr. Speaker, is that, the board did not raise a flag to say that there was evidence of fraud, malfeasants, or embezzlement. There is absolutely no evidence of fraud or deception. The board understood the issues very well and the requisite protocols have been put in place for future reference. This is not a case like what happened with *Bienvenido Bensocome-Adames*. I am obliged [applause].

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Mr. Speaker, in light of the answer given by the Honourable Member to the questions which I consider to be limited or lacking, but in light of the answer I want to ask the Honourable Member, if indeed the board did give approval for the use of the video for promotional purposes as in harmony with their business plan and according to the act, is the Honourable Member aware of the fact that three months after the launch of the initiative in the minutes of the Tourism Authority one Board Member by the name of John West asked the Chairman about approval of the funds. It is minuted in the minutes and the answer to the question was such that the Chairman of the very board could not answer, he had to indicate that

they had to await the Press Conference of the Minister who was absent who was on vacation. So is he aware, I am asking, is he aware that three months after this initiative was launched, the very board could not answer the question concerning approval of the funds without the Minister's present. I am asking.

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE: Now before you stand, we are not going to take the entire day with this question eh, but we must understand that everyone will want to make sure that clarity is made. From my understanding from the Honourable Minister from what he just read, I think he was clearing a point pertaining to where the Minister has certain authority over the board, if I am clear. I will ask the Minister to make that clear please.

HONOURABLE SABOTO CAESAR: Mr. Speaker, the question is asked in several parts. I noted clearly, and this is in answering the supplementary question that whilst the Honourable Member is asking the question as to whether an approval was granted or not, the board stated clearly that there is not any evidence of any embezzlement, or malfeasants and that certain protocols should be followed in the future that is it. [Interruption] so you are going to sit here and argue for \$35,000 that is going to "Skinny Fabulous?"

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE: Question no. 26.

26. *Honourable Anesia Baptiste (Opposition Senator), to ask the Honourable Minister of Finance, Economic Development, Planning, Grenadines and Legal Affairs:*

In view of the fact that the Kuwait-fund site on the world wide web records St. Vincent & the Grenadines as having one active loan project with them, namely the ET Joshua Airport, whose project description states: "To improve the existing airport to be capable of handling an annual traffic of 360,000 passengers, by increasing the area of the passengers terminal, constructing a cargo terminal, to improve the air-side facilities, and to procure modern nav-aid equipment." And considering that the site's update on the project's status indicates that a consultant was appointed but contractors were not appointed, and seeing that the expected completion dates on the Kuwait-fund's site is December 2006, would the Honorable Minister of Finance please tell Vincentians:

- a. *Whether contractors have been appointed for the project and if not when will they be appointed;*
- b. *whether any of the above mentioned objectives listed in the project description have been achieved and if not when will they be achieved;*
- c. *how much money has been drawn down so far from the Kuwait-loan for this project and what aspects, if any, of the project, have been completed using it; and*
 - d. *what is the new expected completion date of the project.*

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, if I answer the specific a, b, c, and d I think it is important for Honourable Members to understand the context and to how we have moved with the strategic development of airport. So I will address the text, but the text cannot be properly understood unless the context is explained.

During the NDP administration, there was a big debate as there was indeed in the whole country, there was a debate in that Government..., indeed the evidence of that debate is very much present in the autobiography of Sir James Mitchell who was then the Prime Minister in his book, his autobiography *Beyond the Islands* and he was very trenchant in his criticism of his successor. In fact, he questioned very much his lack of wisdom on the issue of airport development and thought that the plans which he was putting forward and he said, "The saddest thing is that he never had even a jet airport for St. Vincent and the Grenadines in all this seventeen years and that some plans he had had foundered in the Taiwan straits." That is the very colourful expression which was used. I think the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is familiar with that part of Sir James autobiography [interruption] you are very familiar with it, yes [laughter].

There was three options in relation to airport development by a Canadian Consultant who had been hired by the NDP, they reported in 1997 or thereabout, 1998 perhaps, Marshall, Macklin and Monaghan. The three options were to do what Sir James had dismissed as cosmetic work on the airport, the aprons, putting a little more space for the departure lounge, cargo space, and the like as described from the website. That was estimated to cost US\$15,000. That was the only one of the three options which was deemed to be financially viable within itself, not dealing with the economic considerations. It was not going to address the length of the runway.

A second option was to put a jet airport at Arnos Vale, but the consultants argued very..., they recommended strongly against that. It was going to cost without the land acquisition over US\$100 million [interruption] yes, but the jet airport would not have been able to accommodate planes any larger than the A320s which carries about 120 to 150 passengers or a similar kind of aircraft by Mc Donald Douglas. They said that because lengthening the runway a little would not solve the problem of the takeoff. The only way you could take off that is to say, take off going over the sea you had to take off in ten months of the year with only 50 percent..., between 50 to 60 percent of the payload which meant about 60 passengers. The dash-8 is 50 passengers, the turbo prop dash-8 which LIAT uses, the 300 series, not the 100 series which carries 37; the 300 series, the consultants recommended against it. The only reason..., there is only one plane which is of a similar size a 737, but a cargo plane and it is because it is a cargo plane and not a passenger plan while it has been given a special dispensation to land at E. T. Joshua and it takes off into the mountain. It is not able..., a plane of that size to take off over the sea even though you extend the runway. The runway cannot change the wind. These are the basic facts.

So we met a proposal in being from my honourable friend the Leader of the Opposition to do this quote unquote cosmetic thing. It was going to cost US\$15 million \$40 million plus EC that was the only thing which was financially viable, but it was not going to change anything at all in terms of the types of planes which could land.

We came to office and we thought that we will continue with this for a short while since the negotiation has commenced with the Kuwaiti fund and I went to Kuwait in February 2002 to finalise the negotiation on that loan and signed it. If I may just say this, in order to sign it, I had to pay \$7 million which was not paid to the Kuwaiti fund on the project at the cruise ship \$7 million after it had been affected by some storm damage and

they would not give you another loan if on this particular loan of \$7 million additional, you were not paying your arrears that was left in arrears for me. I paid it in December so that I can go to conclude this agreement.

But taking into account that this would only be a stopgap measure, the processes took a while as often with these things to advertise for consultants etc, etc, the whole processes and by that time, by 2004 – 2005 we had a clear road map as to how we are going to go with the International Airport. So the question arose, should we continue with a loan from the Kuwaiti fund for Arab Economic Development for something which very shortly was not going to be in existence because we were going to move from Argyle and Arnos Vale and use it to develop a city so that the original design for the reconfiguration of the terminal building and so forth, we asked that it be done over to see if we build it, it could become like a shopping mall. The terminal building could be converted easily into a shopping mall. Those were the ideas. Given the length of time, it became touch and go when they finally came and said yes, and they will do the design, they did the design, we were faced with the problem by then we are 2007 or thereabout. So the Government took the decision not to proceed with this what Sir James called “The cosmetic development of E. T. Joshua,” but useful nevertheless, because that is why I was attracted to its utility though I was aware of its limited nature in regard to airport development.

So this loan was in the sum of \$2.5 million Kuwaiti Dinars. In 2002 I believe if we were to check it, the exchange rate to the EC currency was EC\$8.80 to the Kuwaiti Dinar. Now it is..., today it is \$9.86 this morning, and one of the reasons for it is because in the last two or three years the US dollar to which we are tied has fallen 1/5 by 20 percent in relation to other currencies. You can check that. All of these things which if you want to be in Government and run country you have to know you know and you have to follow them and you have to understand all these questions. So that, Mr. Speaker, having provided the context, answer my Honourable friend in this way, Sypher Mueller International Corporation was awarded the contract after the tendering process for the preparation of the designs and the supervision of the works.

To date \$99,061 Kuwaiti Dinars have been disbursed to make payments to the consultants. Due to the commencement of the Argyle International Airport Project as I have said, we have to..., we took the decision not to proceed with this and we are looking for monies from all about, so on the 8th September 2010 we made a request to the Kuwaiti Fund for Arab Economic Development to transfer the balance of the money to fund identical type of work that is to say, airport development at the Argyle International Airport. The request was not accommodated on the 19th October 2010 because the Kuwaiti Fund said that their guidelines quote, “do not permit the transfer of the unutilised balance of a loan to finance a new project.” We intend to go back to the Kuwaiti Fund to see if we can get some other monies and that is what happened.

The balance amongst to \$2,400,938 Kuwaiti Dinars that is..., and if you multiply it you would see. But let me just add by the time we had come from when the Honourable Leader of the Opposition was Prime Minister, well even before that as Minister of Finance, and they had the idea that they will do this quote unquote cosmetic project, it had increased in costs beyond what we were to get from the Kuwaiti. It was to cost..., the idea was that we did not have to do it US\$15 million like the consultant said, but it was going to cost thirty little bit million, but we were not getting that from the Kuwaiti Fund, so we would have had to find another source of money to do something which in the overall strategic sense we considered that it was not practicable, it did not

make good sense and that is why we are there my dear Honourable Senator Baptiste. I do not know if there is anything else you want me to facilitate with. I can facilitate.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Thank you, Honourable Member, I just would like to understand in light of all you have explained, I am concerned about what appears on the site, because it is informing worldwide of what our situation is in terms of our status. So I am wondering if in light of the fact that the Government has decided not to continue with that particular project and that we are going to source funding to do a similar thing at Argyle, what really is the communication in terms of the reflection publicly on the Kuwaiti Fund that is off that website.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Well I do not control the Kuwaiti Fund website, but what we have done, what I can tell you on 8th September 2010 on my instructions the Chief Engineer Mr. Brent Bailey wrote the Kuwaiti Fund and among other things, he said, in light of the fact the Government's write to withdraw from the loans number 647 which expired on July 31st 2007, would your organisation give favourable consideration to transferring the balance of the loan funds towards the Argyle International Airport Development Project. We asked that and they replied, there are several other communications, but I only want to deal with those which are germane.

The Kuwaiti Fund replied in a document which we received on the 7th March, 2011 that is they had informed earlier, but this is another one, no sorry that is not the one, please, this one was on the 19th October, 2010, it says, they restated the issue of our request and they say, "In reply, we kindly inform your good selves that our guidelines do not permit the transfer of the unutilised balance of a loan to finance a new project." Now I do not know whether the persons in the Ministry of Works have checked the website and perhaps the Minister may say to them, it is still up on the website, find out why is it they still have it on the website.

You know there are a number of things. For instance, we are off the blacklist since 2002, the Financial Services, there are several websites up to 2011 still have us on the blacklist you know, they ain't get around to the fact yet, because it is not on ours and we have to constantly go at them and Invest SVG, you know how it is. After all I mean, we are a small country you know 150,000 square miles, 110,000 people and that is why we got to work better together. We got to work better together. I am obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE DAVID BROWNE: Now I just want to say this, I observe that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition was mumbling a while ago about questions placed in the House and maybe he feel a bit unfair as to how questions are being presented [laughter] now when you are bringing questions in the House it is clear in the Standing Order how questions are being placed. Section 20 gives the contents of questions. It definitely would not be right to bring a question in the House that violates section 20(g)(4) that says, "The answer to which can be found by reference to available official publications. Now there are questions here and the Honourable Dr. Slater mentioned it earlier, he said "Look, I did not have to answer this question". And there are questions that are inside our Statements today. There are questions that are here that should never pass the

Speaker, so what actually happens and everybody screamed about the Speaker but he actually accommodates questions that should have never even pass him.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, may I please invoke Standing Order 12(5): I beg to move that the proceedings of today's sitting be exempted from the provisions of the Standing Order hours of sitting in accordance with Standing Order 12(5).

Question put and agreed to

Mr. Speaker, it is now 3:30 p.m. I think we should take a shorter lunch today; an hour and a half. Accordingly, I beg to move that this Honourable House do stand suspended for the luncheon period until 5:00 p.m.

**Question put and agreed to
House suspended at 3:30 p.m.
House resumed at 5:05 p.m.**

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Pray be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Motions

1. 2011 Supplementary Estimates for St Vincent and the Grenadines.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I wish first of all to indicate that as is required by the Standing Orders of this Honourable House: Standing Order 61 these: Supplementary Estimates and Supplementary Appropriation Bills like Estimates and Appropriation Bills have to be taken to the Finance Committee. There was a Finance Committee Meeting and the Meeting, I submitted the Minutes of that meeting today. Mr. Speaker, it has been the practice, the convention from time immemorial that in relation to Supplementary Appropriation Bills and the Supplementary Estimates we do them in an omnibus fashion; so there are three of them. And of course if there is a Motion to do otherwise but I think that we have been doing them successfully in an omnibus fashion, as distinct from the Estimates where we do the Estimates first, and having passed them we go on another day and do the Appropriation Bill; because the debates for the Supplementary Estimates and the Appropriation Bill are identical really.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, on that particular point raised by Honourable Prime Minister, last night I was looking again at section 25 of the Finance Administration Act and I will just read it. It relates to authorisation of expenditure Supplementary Estimates and Supplementary Appropriation Bills and it says:-

“If in respect of any financial year it is found that the amount appropriated by the Appropriation Act for any purpose is insufficient or that a need has arisen for expenditure for a

purpose to which no amount has been appropriated by that Act a Supplementary Estimate showing the sums required shall be laid before the House of Assembly. And when the Supplementary Estimate has been approved by the House, a Supplementary Appropriation Bill should be introduced”.

I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that we have in fact been approaching these matters in an omnibus fashion and I do not have a problem with that for today's sitting what I would wish to see, however, Mr. Speaker, in the light of section 25 is that in fact the question be put in relation to the Estimates themselves, even though we do have a debate that is omnibus and include.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: You prefer we do that?

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Yes, but we do not put the questions separately for the Estimates?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: We vote on the Appropriation?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No. May I just say, we will pass the Estimates first, and then we will pass the Supplementary Appropriation Bills.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: The Estimates are there?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes the Estimates are there, the Resolution is there.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: [Inaudible] Resolution?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes, I have to move the Resolution in relation to the Estimates. I have to move the Resolution first with the Estimates, speak on the Estimates but also introduce seriatim the Appropriation Bills but when we come to vote we first of all vote for the Estimates. This provision in section 25 here actually is an almost verbatim reading of the Constitution under section 70.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: I understand I just want to ensure that we [inaudible] vote on the Estimates.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No, we pass the Estimates then we do the Bill; must. I should draw to Honourable Members attention that the three Supplementary Estimates which are here two of them fourteen and fifteen and I say this by way of introduction; fourteen and fifteen deal with Special Warrants and section 28 of the Finance Administration Act governs the Special Warrant in the same way in which the provisions under the Finance and Audit Act which this law has replaced; this 2004 Act. But there is one Supplementary Estimate, which does not relate to Supplementary; does not relate to Special Warrants, sorry, it is a Supplementary Estimate in its own right because we had passed a resolution here that the maximum limit ... I do not know if the Honourable Members remember is \$25 million in respect of any issuance of Special Warrants in the aggregate, and that one is 45 so that comes ... that does not have any Special Warrant that is a straight Bill and a straight Supplementary Estimate. I draw that for Honourable Members attention, who probably did not pick that up. I know sometimes these things they sound esoteric.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, with the understanding that we do have I beg to move the Motion standing in my name 2011 Supplementary Estimates for St Vincent and the Grenadines:-

WHEREAS Section 70(3) of the Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines provides for the laying of supplementary estimates before the House, if in respect of any financial year it is found that the amount appropriated by the appropriation law to any purpose is insufficient or that a need has arisen for expenditure for a purpose to which no amount has been appropriated by that law, or that moneys have been extended for any purpose in excess of the amount appropriated to that purpose by the Appropriation Law or for a purpose to which no amount has been appropriated by that law;

AND WHEREAS Supplementary Estimates Nos. 14 to 16 inclusive of 2011 have been prepared, and laid in the House of Assembly;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House do approve the Supplementary Estimates Nos. 14 to 16 of 2011.

I so move this Motion.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: I second it.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Motion having been moved and seconded is now opened for debate.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, given what we have been doing on these Supplementary Estimates and Appropriation Bill, I beg to move and with leave, Mr. Speaker, of you to move seriatim each of the three Supplementary Appropriation Bills.

Accordingly I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to sanction payment from the Consolidated Fund upon certain services in excess of the Appropriation Act 2008 relating to the year ending on the 31st day of December, 2009. This is Supplementary Appropriation Bill No. 14 of 2001; I beg to move the first reading of this Bill.

**Question put and agreed to
Supplementary Bill No. 14, 2011
Read the first time**

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move the Bill for an Act to sanction payment from the Consolidated Fund upon certain services in excess of the Appropriation Act 2010 relating to the year ending on the 31st day of December, 2010 Supplementary Appropriation Bill No. 15 of 2011. I so move the first reading.

**Question put and agreed to
Supplementary Appropriation Bill No. 15, 2011
Read the first time**

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to sanction payment from the Consolidated Fund upon certain services in excess of the

Appropriation Act 2010 relating to the year ending on the 31st day of December, 2010 be read the first time; this is Supplementary Appropriation Bill No. 16 of 2011. I accordingly move for the first reading.

**Question put and agreed to
Supplementary Appropriation Bill No. 16, 2011
Read the first time**

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move under Standing Order 48(2) that the respective Supplementary Appropriation Bills 14, 15 and 16 be read at today's sitting and passed.

**Question put and agreed to
Supplementary Appropriation Bills 14, 15, 16
Read and passed**

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that each of these Supplementary Appropriation Bills 14, 15 and 16 of 2011 be read a second time seriatim.

**Question put and agreed to
Supplementary Bills 14, 15 and 16, 2011
Read a second time seriatim and passed**

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I begin first with the Supplementary Estimates 14, 15 and 16 and then I will proceed to the Supplementary Appropriation Bills 14, 15 and 16.

Mr. Speaker in relation to Supplementary Estimates 14 and 15 in accordance with Section 28 of the Finance Administration Act, which has shortened the timeframe for the bringing of Supplementary Estimates here; based on Special Warrants is six months. Mr. Speaker, there has been ongoing challenge not for those of us who are Ministers of Finance but for public servants to be getting these to us on a timely basis. They have made their arrangements as I have said this before to make sure that we get them in order. You will notice that 14 and 15 the Supplementary Warrants have been approved late in 2010; well we have gone passed the six months period. Now the period is really the lawyers would say, its directory and not mandatory but we must seek as far as we possibly can to meet these deadlines. It is an important point of good governance because what happens, a member of the Executive, that is to say the Minister of Finance is empowered to approve Special Warrants in particular circumstances but these have to come to be approved subsequently after the expenditure has taken place.

So, it is important that they come as soon as possible. And I would say broadly speaking, and I had agreed when we were doing this Bill this Finance Administration Act to cut the time from one year to six months. Actually, it used to be six months under the Finance and Audit Act; it was amended during the time of Sir James's administration to a year or some other formulation which would even take it longer. I feel we should try and keep it tighter and this is what we have done. Mr. Speaker, I want also to draw attention of Honourable Members to something: you take for instance Supplementary Estimate No. 15; you see a column after date approved without any heading there: that is really the money spent and that is really what constitutes the Supplementary Estimate. And just in case there is any colleague who may raise the issue in a manner and say well if you approve the Special Warrants, why it does not relate to the whole of the Special Warrant? The point is this: is that 28(3) in the Finance Administration Act, says:-

“If in respect of any financial year it is found that any money has been expended for any purpose in excess of the amount appropriated for that purpose by the Appropriation Act or for a purpose to which no amount has been appropriated by that Act; a Supplementary Estimate showing the sums spent shall be laid before the House of Assembly. And when the Supplementary Estimate has been approved by the House of Assembly, a Supplementary Appropriation Bill shall be introduced in the House providing for the issue of such funds from the Consolidated Fund and appropriating them to the purpose specified therein”.

So, it has to relate to the monies spent, because you may get a Special Warrant but it may not be spent and there are all sorts of reasons why the money may not be spent. That at the time they issued it, when they demanded it and made all the case for it and I approved it that when the circumstances arose there was really no necessity for it to be spent. Or you may find that the monies are spent in another year from another source. For example, you will see on one of these ... I will raise it ... you look at 15 account No. 47 - to provide additional funds to make payment to LIME for the Opposition Leader's communication account. There was a Special Warrant which I approved in the sum of \$17,000 but it was not spent before the end of 2010, it was spent in 2011 but it was spent from the account of the Clerk of the House of Assembly, for communication expenses. If of course the Clerk is short by that amount for this year, she would no doubt ask for a Special Warrant and part of the case she would make is that that money had come from, what should have gone from the Leader of the Opposition account was taken from hers.

I give ... there may be all sorts of reasons administratively; I do not want to go through all of them because frankly it is not necessary but just to give a broad indication. There are some items which I would just like to address also. You take 15 again, 15 of 2011 has 62 items listed but there were not actual 62 Special Warrants listed because some items there are more than one item in a Special Warrant coming from the same Ministry and the same source. You take for instance, let us look at 57 to 61 the numbers, you say they are from ... or to 60, you see project number No. 704 Ministry Head 70; the source of funds 37501. Now, I have been advised by the officials that this is the last time that they are going to do that, that the preferred way I have been advised is that they will put them together but they will identify the numbers in the column and aggregate everything.

So, if you were to take 15 for the Recurrent there were actually 49 Special Warrants though you have 62 items listed. I do not know if any Honourable Member would wish me to go over that to explain; I believe I have done it with some clarity. Now, I would like to identify some items, they are by and large self explanatory. In the

case of 14 there is not a lot in the Supplementary Estimate on the Recurrent side, just \$527,574 and the bulk is \$3.358 million for Capital, which as you noticed they really had to be brought into account to be journalised. The way this happens and for persons who may find sometimes this strange, you will see when we come with an Estimate, and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition knows this, you may have a source of funds say a European Union Grant or a World Bank Loan, the money is there and ready but you may think that you would not be able to spend more than a certain amount. But it really does not matter fundamentally because even though it is not there in the Estimates the funds are available from an external source and you do the Special Warrant, you do the payment and you do the spending and this is now really to journalise the sums which you have spent.

So those monies are really you do not have queries about that because those are monies which are available as Loans or Grants. Now, you may say, "well, why don't you put the full sum? Well, you may put the full sum and all you do is just simply inflate the Budget and you may not spend the full sum. So, one way you try and do it as practicable as you can but it may go over; but if it goes over the funds are there and you continue to spend because the funding agency knows our financial laws that is in our budget and will facilitate it by a Special Warrant and then bring the Supplementary Estimate and Supplementary Appropriation Bill for the purpose of the journalising.

Now, I turn to 15, I will try and touch on one and two of the big ones. You take items 11 and 15 \$540,000; you may recall that we got something like two point something million dollars US from the Catastrophic Risk Insurance in relation to Hurricane Tomas. This is a World Bank sponsored insurance arrangement. That money would be for the premiums. You see 15, 39761, those are payments of professional fees relating to the Boundaries Commission, the information is there. There is 183759 at 16, to provide funds to make payments to Astafan, Bollers and Arthur Williams. This concerns the Chatham Bay Case, so I want to provide that information there for you. In the Chatham Bay Case you may know that we the previous government in the late 1980's had granted an Alien Landholding Licence for 100 acres of land at Chatham Bay. They were supposed to do certain things within a period of time, spend EC\$15 million for tourism development and they did absolutely nothing.

And when I happened to get the information, interestingly I did not get the information through the state administration; we set about to apply to the High Court for the forfeiture of the 100 acres because under the Alien Landholdings Act of 1922 you could do that. It says, "Forfeiture" but we have interpreted that as mean liable to forfeiture, so we went to the court and the High Court gave an order for the forfeiture. The owners - those are the people who went PSV and some other Americans, they went to the Court of Appeal, the Court of Appeal, the three judges ruled in our favour is now before the Privy Council. Now, we got cost in the High Court and in the Court of Appeal; but as every lawyer in this country knows cost which you get in a case particularly when the state is involved is no where near the cost which you actually pay your lawyers. That happens to be a fact of life in the courts. Now, this 100 acres of land prime beach front property and we are currently involved with some French investors, the property is now in the name of the state but that is the case. There are very small ones there on that same page.

In relation to item 35-40, where you see, sorry 36-40, 36-39 sorry: to meet additional expenditure, they relate to facilitating a number of sums outstanding for suppliers and so on and so forth. 368706 we give ten bursaries to

Vincentians to Trinity, so that 44 is 368707; 49: \$208,233 that is additional funds for students, it is a subsidy for the buses that carry the students; \$292,355 is additional monies for social welfare payment. The big one on the list there 56: \$1.3 million where it says to provide additional funds to make payment for the remainder of the year that is to pay pensions. So, we come really to \$6.977 there. And the Capital they are self explanatory except No. 11 on the Capital for No. 15 that is related to a project which had to be brought in. And then of course we see some significant ones there for bananas, like \$2.2 million.

If there is any which Honourable Members would like to raise and want any explanations I believe that I tried as best as I can and I know it is a lot of stuff to remember what every single one is about, but I am with you and I have the responsibility and I have to try and answer you.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to No. 16 the Supplementary Estimates; this is not a Supplementary Appropriation, sorry this is not a Special Warrant, these relate to the monies which the government in relation to the Caribbean Development Bank as part of the arrangement for the take over of the Public Sector loans at the National Commercial Bank. And that for instance I answered this morning to the Honourable St Clair Leacock in relation to the question he had asked about National Properties, and I had said to him; “well you know we hadn’t yet determine whether we are going to simply leave that as a subvention or whether it is going to be a loan to National Properties; but it is entered for our internal purposes as a subvention for the purpose of getting this thing neatly done”.

The two biggest ones there, Port Authority that was really to buy the crane down at Campden Park and Honourable Members may recall that I made reference to this in my budget address where we reduced the extend of the fees charged by the Port Authority to business people because they no longer pay the interest payments on the loan, it is now the government. So that was passed on to the business people and hopefully to the consumers. The one for Housing and Land Development Corporation that is in relation to low income housing developments because you know that there were subsidies in terms of the infrastructure and you see Cricket World Cup, okay.

Mr. Speaker, those are the comments which I have made, if there are any queries I will note them and do my best in trying to provide answers to Honourable Members. So, I come now to the Supplementary Appropriation Bill No. 14, having given the explanations you will then note that in this Bill, there are \$527,574 Recurrent and \$3, 358.946 for the Capital, the total being \$3,886,520 which is on the face of clause 2 of the Bill. In clause 15 we turn to the Schedule and you see \$6,977,190, Bill No. 15 sorry, and total Capital Expenditure \$4,274,281 giving a total of \$11,251,471. And 16, is \$45,299,208. You will notice that in the Estimates if you look at 16, you will notice that it is \$45,298,208, so you see it is all there. Now, what I need to do now is at the appropriate time having, Mr. Speaker, where all other Members who is to contribute, I will do my response and then we will pass the Supplementary Estimates and then we will proceed in the Committee of the whole House to address the three Bills together and then when they come out back I will move the third reading. I am obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, I have had a look at the Supplementary Estimates, Nos. 14, 15 and 16 and they total about \$60 million, \$45 million of which relates in Estimates No. 16 to the loan

from the Caribbean Development Bank, which is used to retire payments due to that Bank by state enterprises and some other government accounts or loans. Mr. Speaker, I want to look at a few items on Estimate No. 14 and I think to some extent some aspects of it have been addressed by the Prime Minister in his presentation in which he said that in the future some of these items which occur and listed like Nos. 13, 14 and 15 all under Special Warrant 95 of 2009 will be brought together and presented as a single item. I agree with that because I found the presentation quite frankly sloppy and I am pleased to hear that in fact in the future such presentations will take into account that.

One of the things, Mr. Speaker, that I find a bit bothersome in these items and it probably relates to the whole way that we have addressed questions of Estimates over the years, it is very difficult for me to bring into a Minister of Finance an item of \$346

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: When?

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: To bring an item for \$346 in the Special Warrant, we are not running a mauby shop.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: It should really be a higher memoir.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Exactly, we are not running a mauby shop.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Okay.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: And here on items, those items we have one items is \$346, the second one is \$346, the third one is \$347 and they all relate to the same thing: “To journalise expenditure incurred at the New York Tourist Office in 2008 for communication services”. All three of them say the same thing and in total they just amount to over \$1,000. I think of a village shop when I see estimates presented in this manner and I am grateful to the fact that in future I may not be seeing it presented in this form. I recognised in the preparation of the Special Warrant one may want a detail for the Minister of Finance’s benefit exactly what you dealing with: but to present Supplementary Estimates for \$346 is really a joke.

Mr. Speaker, I am particularly concerned that out of I think 23 items I think, two of which deals with bringing into account or calling into account the EU Tourism Funding Project and another EU Project for training all the items relate to the New York Office and the Toronto Tourism Offices. What is it these institutions are not functioning? What kind of budget did they have? What kind of estimates did they have? Because all of the items from items No. 2 which went to the Ministry of Transport and Works, all the other items down to items 21 relate only to those two offices: New York Tourism Office and the Toronto Tourism Office. That to me is a red flag. What is so wrong and then I look back and see that some of these things relate to journalising expenses that occurred in 2003 and 2004 and being approved in 2010. It tells me something about these two particular offices. What is it, I mean the Minister of Tourism can say?

I am looking at this particular exercise here now where these things are being called to account at this stage as being a cleaning up exercise and in terms of presentation for the future and the governance issues that Prime Minister raised for we would not be seeing that again in this Honourable House. It really looks bad to bring into account journalising expenses seven and eight years after they had been incurred. So, I look forward, Mr.

Speaker, in the future that we do not have that either and all in the interest of good governance, but I believe that the Minister responsible will be looking at this matter.

Mr. Prime Minister, when you reply, I would also want you to comment on item No. 21 an amount to retire advance warrant. That 379/80 does not refer to 1980?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: On which one of them?

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Estimates No. 14.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No. 14?

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Yes, I am not so sure I grasp it initially because it says No. 379/80: that is not 1980. Is this the correct number? Maybe you could just look at that but it is something that caught my eye and it is an advance warrant.

In item, Supplementary Estimates No. 15, Mr. Speaker, again we have a number of Special Warrants that have been approved some of them to the Electoral Office and I believe these relate to the rental of the office opposite the Anglican Church, which would not have been provided for in the Annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year in question. So, I have no difficulty whatsoever where that is concerned. But Mr. Speaker, when we have to provide a Special Warrant as is the case of No. 9 under Estimate No. 15: "To provide funds to pay salary for April", which is only four months in the financial year, it makes me wonder about the Annual Estimates. That is very early in the year to be having to provide funding by way of Special Warrant for personal emoluments, very early in the year indeed, because one should take into account all of that in the Annual Estimates, including the provision for preretirement leave for Road Supervisors, which all had to be covered by a Special Warrant as early as April in the financial year.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the day and I am pleased that in fact the timeframe has been reduced to six months it is not always easy to get it within six months but I think it provides a framework and an impetuous in relation to the Public Service which will improve governance in our country. We are in a situation now Mr. Speaker, when the question of governance and the question of financial administration given the current situation worldwide and in our own region in particular; it is very, very important that we have a very clear view of what is happening and the mechanisms needed to ensure that our fiscal situation is one with which we can live without having to resort to other institutions. I am very serious with that particular comment, I heard some comments this morning and some people were trying to play a little politics with me this morning, somebody who I beat already [laughter] in elections in East Kingstown. [Interruption]

Well, he must leave me alone. [Laughter] [Interruption] I heard you though do not worry. [Laughter] but Mr. Speaker, we have to take this question; we have to take the question of deficits in our budget extremely seriously. I understand you know that you are trying and that is the science if you one to call it a science, some people say it is not. I may even say it is not myself: but you are trying to allocate resources between competing needs but there are some standards which one is expected to follow as a government in this international and interdependent world in which we live. There are standards in relation to GDP, debt to GDP ratios, which I am sure the Prime Minister would be concerned about. There are standards in relation to debt or payments, debt

payments as a percentage of revenue. There are standards that we have to meet in relation to the Central Bank and while we slip into more and more deficits it is very easy to say, “well you know I have to look after the poor”, but there comes a time when you have to account for the deficit. There comes a time when it is no longer sustainable and at that time we meet the IMF.

It therefore behooves us Mr. Speaker, to be fiscally prudent despite our need to allocate resources among competing needs. You must meet priorities as you see them as a government no problem with that but you have to do it within a framework which is acceptable internationally because as I have said time and time again, Mr. Speaker, the same IMF has on its Board all of the countries to whom we go to seek assistance and when they take a decision, Mr. Speaker, on matters pertaining to our country that decision normally has the support of its members. So, they do not expect you to be running to the members of their Board who already approved some conditionality for you because you would not get them easily handled. So, I am saying while we do our business and we have our priorities we must remember that there are standards internationally if we do not follow them as we see in the case of Greece and other countries much larger than ourselves today they are going to come down on you.

You can call it doom and gloom whatever you want to call it; the reality is it will come down to the point where you have to pay, and I am saying that today we are moving in a direction that can be irreversible if we continue that leads us to the stand-by arrangement or structural adjustment programme and I do not think anyone of us wants that for St Vincent and the Grenadines. So, we can laugh and we can joke, Mr. Speaker, but that is the reality that we will face. So, when I made the statement this morning about the need to look at the direction in which we are going and I say that we need to have proposals to deal with it that is a joke for many people.

You know the story of the crapaud and the school children [laughter], okay. Mr. Speaker, I do not mind the laughter you know, because I know that the time is not far away when we have to give account. The Prime Minister knows it too, he knows it also you know, and we can laugh and talk. We are Caribbean people you know, we joke about a lot of things and that is good for your psychological profile [laughter] but there is another profile where you have to give account: you have to give account. And the people of this country we have to come out and say what the truth is because they will face the truth at the appropriate time.

Mr. Speaker, I looked at some of these Special Warrants, I understand the need for some of them and some of them are big and I see this is something that I do not know whether St Vincent is particularly good at this; but I see for the case the Prime Minister mentioned about Chatham Bay and for the one between myself and the Attorney General that legal fees are running close to \$600,000 for Mr. Astaphan, Bollers, Authur Williams and Kenny Anthony. All these are expenses and all of us have priorities. Mr. Speaker, I do not take this matter lightly at all. You know some years ago, some years ago, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity, indeed the privilege to meet as part of the management of the Caribbean Development Bank to assess the situation and advise the government of Barbados when it was in some difficulty of the type that we are heading to, you know. I remember Prime Minister Sandiford who was the Prime Minister at that time being very concerned that if he did not do something that he would be faced with the devaluation of the Barbadian dollars, and that required him to reflect on his fiscal situation, but he did not have the flexibility.

The financial institutions and the rating agencies and you have heard a lot about them these days in relation to the United States. The financial institutions and the rating agencies were on his back and in the end what he had to do; whatever talk he wanted to give in the end he cut 8% of the salaries of the civil service of Barbados. He was doing very well prior to that but a certain amount of circumstances came down on him and he did not have a choice. He was no colony of the IMF but he did not have a choice. I remember, Mr. Speaker, being part of a mission like that going to Belize some years ago while I was at the Bank to examine the [inaudible] of the bank: the fiscal situation of Belize which is an economy of about the size of our own here in St Vincent and the Grenadines. When I looked at the figures, a lot of deficits and what happened? Recommendations made to change certain things if we didn't do it we would have gotten into trouble. One year later 1,200 civil servants were sent home. None of us want that for St Vincent and the Grenadines, Mr. Speaker, not one of us because we know what that means.

So, when I speak about these things, Mr. Speaker, it is from a certain level of experience in these matters. And there has been the same exercise in Grenada before that as far back as the Bishop's regime. So, I have some experience in these matters some knowledge about them and whether you want to call it doom and gloom I do not care that is the reality of the condition that we face.

I want to move, Mr. Speaker, to the Supplementary Estimates No 16. Mr. Speaker, a statement was made here this morning that I believe was directed at myself and others on this side of the House in relation to the sale to St Lucia of a number of properties, businesses here in St Vincent and the Grenadines. I want to say that we gone on record to indicate that St Lucia is not a foreign country it is part of our single market and economy. My concern about the sales has nothing to do with whether it comes from Britain or St Lucia and indeed I prefer St Lucia to Britain, it has to do with why they had been sold? What is it that had suddenly trigger the sale of some of our businesses to St Lucia and big businesses too why? What? That is what I am concerned about. We have sold the National Commercial Bank which is a source of pride to people in this country and the amount we got for the institution was not much. You say you got the assets minus the liabilities and that amount to \$42 million, true but what that means? Why was it sold? That is the question. And why was it sold at the time when it was doing badly? When you sell at that time what you have is a fire sale, you do not get the best price that is the reality, why? When you sell at that time you get less and the benefits accruing in terms of profit to our country is less, and invariably, Mr. Speaker, they lead to layoffs because some people will be retained and some will be sent home as people seek efficiencies at a difficult economic time.

So, my concern is why? Why now? Why are these sales taking place at this time one after the other? Why? So, I do not really care whether it is St Lucia or Trinidad or England. I would have liked to see them retain Vincentian ownership.

This list that we have here in Estimate No. 16 is a reflection of why, it is because a number of our statutory state owned enterprise have failed and could not pay their debt and led to the sale of the National Commercial Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines. That is the reality that we are dealing with and now we come here today to take \$45 million of that \$100 million to find a mechanism to deal with it through Supplementary Estimates. I do not have any problem with the mechanism, treating them as subventions, which were not provided for in the budget and that is understandable a good way to deal with it. So I have no problem but when I look at it I am reminded that if we had operated our bank differently this would not have happened.

Food City why was it sold? It was not doing well, and what did you get for it? I heard the talk about investments to control the Greaves and the others of price control and all of that. Bringing money, bringing management and now you sell it for next for nothing. And you gone now to some private sector businesses also being sold, not making enough money maybe it is because of the state of the economy. You don't know what the reasons are but certainly some of them are relatively new but they have gone under and had to be sold. And again there will be lost of jobs in this economy. So, what are we talking about? What are we talking about?

There comes a time when we have to give account and giving account is reflected in certain ways, Mr. Speaker, in various ways it is reflected in a sale at prices which are not the best. Look at the list here and I agree with the explanation, Mr. Speaker, the explanation given towards the Supplementary Estimates No. 16 of 2011 is as follows and I want to quote it, because you know I remember saying to people that this loan would not be repaid by the bank, it would be repaid by the taxpayers of this country and some people said I was lying. But I have the proof here now. They say Mr. Speaker:-

“As part of the divestment ...

And that is a big word for sale.

of the National Commercial Bank, the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines was required to reduce its indebtedness to the National Commercial Bank.

The Government of St Vincent and the Grenadines was required to reduce its indebtedness”: the Government, to the National Commercial Bank.

“In this regard the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines secured a loan from the CDB to finance the debt reduction plan. Accordingly, Cabinet approved the liquidation of the loans of the state owned enterprises.”

That means our statutory bodies and the amounts that are listed here for the purposes of getting them into the Estimates they are treated as subventions to those institutions. I have no problem with that mechanism as a basis for introduction as these things from Special Warrants which we dealt with in No. 14 and No. 15, but No. 16 is the reflection of our failure in this country. A failure which has forced government to have to take \$100 million loan on the backs of the taxpayers of this country: \$100 million in order to clear the debt owing to the NCB by state owned enterprises and some Central Government institutions.

You have National Fisheries you had to clear \$580,000; St Vincent and the Grenadines Postal Corporation you had to pay off \$1.1 million; Kingstown Board \$4,025 million; National Broadcasting Corporation \$43,887; Housing and land Development Corporation \$11,871,158; St Vincent Port Authority \$10, 496,334; Arrow Root Industry Association, \$658,842,00. [Interjection] I know I missed something here, Cricket World Cup, I think it is \$658 ... [Interjection] which one of them?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Go ahead.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: You are encouraging me on. [Laughs] Anyhow \$6,550,093: even the Carnival Development Corporation \$588,395,000 and National Properties Limited \$9, 384,899.

We had to use, borrow money; used taxpayer's money to pay these debts which were putting the NCB in trouble: draining the liquidity of the institution therefore preventing it from being able to provide loans to the citizens of this country. And this does not include another nearly \$55,000 [interjection] yes \$55 million. I do not know, Mr. Prime Minister, perhaps when you speak and you round up you could explain how the other \$55 million is to be treated, I have some concerns in that regard.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Central Government; Central Government.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: I know they are to Central Government. I do not know how they are going to be reflected. But Mr. Speaker, we in St Vincent and the Grenadines have felt the impact of International crises, we have felt the impact of storms and so forth and those things have damaged us, but at the same time, Mr. Speaker, we have to be tight and close with our management. We have to have a fiscal regime which recognises that reality and a fiscal regime which finds general acceptability internationally. We must be seen to be taking steps to refloat our economy, reduce our deficits and refloating the economy requires of course more and better project implementation. But to be able to get the money to finance the projects we have to show that we can pay our loans and therefore those ratios become very important Debt to GDP that should be nothing more than 3.5% of GDP. We have to show that we are capable of achieving those ratios, Mr. Speaker, and that puts us in a better position. It will also give more confidence to our private sector who have now become a net lender of the tune from the last budget of \$30, million to the Central Government. A net lender to the Central Government for services that they have provided for government have not been paid for and for which they will get no interest, while their overdrafts will be there to be paid for at the level you get for overdraft interest which is very high.

So, we can laugh you know, we can laugh at these same issues if we want but we want the same private sector to be able to put forward investments to help refloat our economy. What are we doing? What are we really doing?

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few words I will give my support to the Bills that are before us. Much obliged.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you; further debate? Honourable Prime Minister there seems to be no further debate. Oh!

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my brief contribution to this debate and consistent with the presentation the wonderful presentation, if I may add Mr. Speaker that we heard just a while ago by the Honourable Member for East Kingstown, the Leader of the Opposition is worthy of support for more reasons than one. Mr. Speaker, all of us in this Honourable House come here most of us by way of election others by nomination but ultimately to serve the interest of the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines. And very often Mr. Speaker, I say to myself, and sometimes within our own internal forum the point is made, that it is very easy for us to get on to political platforms, on talk show radio and other avenues for expression and make all sorts of statements but ultimately especially when you form a government you have a country to run and that is in fact a horse of a different colour. And so I do not envy the Honourable Prime Minister, many of us perhaps can understand his own difficulties when we examine our own domestic situation and that of friends and neighbours in determining how hard it is simply to manage our own domestic affairs.

And so when we multiply that many times over to that of a country you can appreciate easily the sleeplessness nights and difficulties especially against the background of the international downturn of the economy. And therefore it is not only that one is prepared to lend support to these Supplementary Estimates and raise concerns quite legitimately where they have to be raised. But I think that the Honourable Member for East Kingstown the Leader of the Opposition was quite right in establishing a distinction between those Supplementary Estimates and the Supplementary Appropriation No. 16 of 2011, which in the end amounts to provisions for subvention to a number of state enterprises. Because the circumstances are completely different the Supplementary case generally speaking was by matters that are unforeseen. And there will always be such matters in government. But clearly, Mr. Speaker, in the case of the Appropriation Bill No. 16 I think there is a great responsibility in developing a tightening exercise which the government clearly must be undertaking at this time to visit the functioning of some of the state enterprises that have brought us to this point today where some \$45 million have to be allocated as subvention and we are told later the state is going to give an undertaking with respect to the other \$55 million.

Mr. Speaker, many times I have raised in this Honourable House and outside; my own concerns with respect to National Properties I will say a little bit more on that, Mr. Speaker, because I do not want to lose my thought. I want to go back a little bit to Cricket World Cup, an expenditure which in general I supported in the sense that it is not everything that we do in St Vincent we can measure the benefits by dollars out turns. Some of them are long term, some of them we have to look at the social benefits that are accrued from them. But I must say when I drive and I look down on the playing field of Sion Hill Playing Field I feel very, very disappointed for what we spent money for and in fact what we have three, four five years later. The field is not even of a quality of what it was before Cricket World Cup and we wondered to the extent whether we were ripped off in some instances, and I am not pointing fingers yet.

But certainly we should have had a better physical legacy for the sums expended; it is nearly \$56 million spent on the Cricket World Cup and when we look back now there is little to show about it. The comment I make here now is tangential, I walked across to the Grammar School Playing Field about five days ago and yesterday I parked there to look at the football match that was in progress because I hadn't seen live sports on the Grammar School Playing Field for so many years. And I am surprised to see grass is growing on the concrete bleachers where normally spectators would be sitting. That is to tell you how far removed the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines are with sports. That couldn't have happened in the days when I was a school boy with the kind of traffic that passed that field. But let me not belaboured the point or the fact that we do not have the kind of legacies we should have had for the Cricket World Cup expenditure.

I am going back to National Properties, what bothers me, Mr. Speaker, I raised a question with the Honourable Prime Minister this morning on the Balance Sheet effect of the sale of the National Commercial Bank, and he gave an explanation which question time did not permit us to expand the debate. But I raised to myself whether or not, with respect to National Properties and to the NCB in some cases, whether they were in fact cooking the books. You see, National Properties is an entity that we created by the transfer in all cases of state assets to this behemoth. We took the properties of DEVCO and we gave it to them, we took the land and buildings of the National Commercial Bank and we gave it to them. We took lands in Bequia and we gave it to them. But up to now there is absolutely no evidence, the same thing with Food City, there is absolutely no evidence that for all

of the capital investments: international properties; they are growing concern or they can stand on their own feet.

Because if the truth be told just as happened with the National Commercial where when you wanted to divest it or to sell it you had to return the buildings and properties to the original owners. The same thing would obtain tomorrow if you try to sell Cobblestone Inn because here is a Hotel in the center of the Town that has great potential but the building the assets belong to National Properties. So, a person could not go and buy Cobblestone Inn without disrupting National Properties and that is for me a serious question almost to the point of dishonesty.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I am at a loss.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: You are lost?

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Yes.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: What I am saying is that the building in which Cobblestone Inn functions belongs to National Properties so if you went by now and say that this is a great hotel and I want to buy this and function as a growing concern and National Properties said they were not selling the building you have no hotel, because all you have is the services because the physical structure belongs to another legal entity, and that is the reality. It is the same thing happened in the case of the National Commercial Bank. [Interjections] Well, you see there is a big difference you know, I promise one of these days, I will deal with what happened between you and me, but it would not happen this evening; it would not happen this evening.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: What is the point you are making?

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: The point I am making is that National Properties is not a growing concern that can stand on its own. The country is something that ought to be a matter of concern for us. [Interjection] This is an administration that has been in place for just about ten years, [Knocking of gavel] (Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for your attempt) for just about ten years and in that period of time National Properties has been able to run up a debt of \$76 million: \$76 million and nothing to show for it. Any entity that has \$76 million of investment ought to be able to show strong profit margins somewhere about. National Properties could not even save their own Food City with the \$76 million loan portfolio; where did the loan go? [Interjection]

The reality is that it has been set up to incur debt off the books for the Central Government in what has been a veritable kiting experience you do not want to hear this but I have said it. But when you can go as an entity and you say to the National Insurance Scheme, “I want some money to borrow but I have no security hold these lands in Bequia for me”, and they could say, “Fine I would lend you the money on the strength that you have lands in Bequia” and NIS could say, “yes you have the loan go down to the NCB” that is already insolvent, “and get the money”; and the money you get there goes to an airport, which will not have a return in itself until about twenty or so years.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Ah!

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: You know full well, you can *ah and hehe!* You know full well that you are bleeding and you are hemorrhaging because these monies are not coming back. And that is the purpose for National Properties to incur debt off the books of the Central Government. And I am saying to the extent that we have to revisit whether this state enterprise should continue because sooner rather than later we will be running up debt after debt after debt for which we will have the taxpayers of this country having to bail us out. And that is the point the Honourable Member for East Kingstown is making. And we only behave this way when we are spending other people's money. A lot of people like to come in this House you know, especially Honourable gentlemen and boast of their effectiveness, their brilliance and efficiency. But like myself outside there when they were spending their own monies they are dismal failures. Try this, try that, done this done that and there is nothing to show for it.

Honourable Slater I do not know why you are watching the other Member for, I am not directing my thoughts to him you know.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: I can watch you. I watch who I want to watch.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Not me you watching, you can watch who you want to watch. But I am saying a lot of people in here like to bear their chest.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: What is this? This is a personal thing or something?

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Not a personal thing, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: You do not like to bear your chest?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Let us keep the debate ...

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I am including myself; I am including myself. [Interjections]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please let us keep the debate at the level ...

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: That it should be.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: it should be, please.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: So many personal attacks.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: And so Mr. Speaker,

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: You want confidentiality [inaudible]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please let us continue.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: And so Mr. Speaker, [I never so in such inferred].

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please let us continue the debate.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I never so inferred I made no disparagement to you; none whatsoever. [Interjection] I have made no disparagement to you neither did I so infer.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point that one could understand that some state organisations would always have difficulties, carrying themselves. I for example have been around with what is now NBC Radio and there are always big debates sometimes between that institution and Central Government, as to who owes who because sometimes they would argue that the amount of advertisements and promotions and programmes that they carry is way in excess of the government's contribution subvention. Those are cut and thrust I can understand agencies like Carnival having their own difficulties and depending to a large measure on the Soca Monarch and other shows to bail them out but again as an important festival you could see Central Government wanting to lend support to institutions of that kind.

You could understand that changing circumstances could lead to a postal corporation not making the profits today as it would have had twenty and twenty-five years ago. So, some of those things are explainable and you could live with those, but I am suggesting strongly, Mr. Speaker, that the argument does not hold for institutions like National Properties, and the government should seriously revisit that institution because I am almost certain that we will come back here next year and the year after, and the year after, and find that some kinds of assistance or bail out has to be provided as before for National Properties. Save and except for the fact that we are told if things happens and turns out well we could sell out the lands in Bequia and that is not such a very pretty picture; because essentially what we are doing is making life miserable: the future for a lot of people in Bequia miserable by having to sell off the best of their lands, for other investments.

So, that trade off of the state silver is something that has to be taken into serious consideration. So, Mr. Speaker, I simply want to make the point that I would not want to see us going back to a similar situations like this with respect to having to make these provisions and that we show some greater diligence in terms of how we are managing the affairs of some of these state enterprises, because ultimately it is the poor people in this country who have to pay. Already that is the case all of the subventions and the other fifty five that are not been explained is going to be paid for by the taxpayers of the country.

You know we have a lot of disagreements inside of here you know, most of us are Representatives and if the truth be told almost all the Representatives inside of here now and I am going back to my hobby hat; almost all of them would have like to have a broader smile on their face if after today and on the weekend and the next weekend and the next month they could go their constituencies and do the small things that mean big things to them. But up to now we still have a failed political system and a finance system that we are not correcting that does not allow us Representatives to go into our constituencies and to do the little things that are important; that same constituency development fund that I talked about and would not go away from. This \$45 million could have gone a long way.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Yes, yes.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: If each of us in here had \$3 million to spend on our constituencies to help with our footpaths, [interjection] retaining walls, drains, ply boards, river crossings, river defences and

patch a hole here; you could imagine how this country would have been feeling today and the small man would have felt for us reaching out to them. [Interjections] [Striking the desk with gavel] [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank you for the opportunity to make my presence felt on this particular issue and to lend support to the Honourable Member for East Kingstown even as we on this side give support to the Supplementary Estimates. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Honourable Member, for West Kingstown

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a very small contribution to this discussion and to continue on the points made by my Leader, the Honourable Arnhim Eustace and my senior colleague Major Leacock. Mr. Speaker,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, it holds also that you will address the Member.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, the duly elected Representative for Central Kingstown.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Central Kingstown.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: That is what I want to hear you say.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Beyond the realm of possibility, it has happened, Mr. Speaker. [Laughter] Yes. Mr. Speaker, there are a few points that I will like to seek clarification on, Mr. Speaker, if I begin with the Schedule relating to Supplementary Estimates No. 14, the very first item \$382,000: “To provide funds to journalise outstanding amounts for assistance given through the Ministry of Transport and Works”. It is very vague for that sizeable amount of money; there is no indication at all of what the funds are being used for: “To journalise outstanding amounts for assistance given through the Ministry”. There is nothing and it is a lot of money and to just say that you are journalising it really does not tell me anything, and I will really like to get an appreciation of what that \$382,000 is for.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for East Kingstown, the Leader of the Opposition pointed to a number of concerns especially as relating to Schedule associated with Supplementary Estimates No. 15. I am really puzzled by this document at a first glance I am led to believe that it is a first draft prepared by a clerk in the Ministry and I believe that is a significant oversight in allowing this to come before the House. This is a serious document and I have so many points to ask what this document is telling me. To begin with, the regular one has the eight column as the amount to be approved; There is no heading in the eight column on this ... I assume it is the same amount to be approved; a logical assumption; therefore I ask the question: why do we have the following items on this piece of paper? Item Nos. 4, 5, 6, 8, 14, 17, 23, 29, 38, 43, 47, 50, 53, and 61 and on the other Capital items 9, 10 and 16. My reason for asking this, Mr. Speaker, is there is nothing to be approved for all of these on whatever they are called and therefore why are they on the document before the House, I am confused.

If you look at the first 4, 5, and 6

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker may I? I thought I had explained that. What happens is this - in the column Supplementary Appropriation on the Estimates that is what the Special Warrant related to. The amount to be approved you notice is put amount to be approved on No. 14 but the heading there is missing in No. 15 that is what was actually spent and that is why I read 28 (3) of the Finance Administration Act. I have to provide the information as to the actual amount which was approved and what was spent. The sum which is spent is what we have to appropriate here in the Parliament. So, where you see the dashes the numbers which you just called out about ten or so, they relate to items of which you had a Special Warrant but where there was no expenditure: no money was spent and therefore those cannot be approved. The Special Warrants simply is there. And I gave several reasons why you may not spend what has been approved by a Special Warrant.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: Mr. Speaker, and here is where I make clear I am not nearly any accounting officer but when you look again at items 4, 5, 6 and 7 they all relate to the same item and that is why I am rather confused,

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: It is a different fund.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: It speaks to funds to facilitate the smooth running of the Electoral Office for January-August, 2010 payment of rental for October-December. They are all the same things. You have one for \$8,000 and \$8,000 and \$9,600 and then the seventh one is for \$79,000. A mean, logical it does not make for me, it refers to the same things, it gives ... the last one goes up to \$79,000 so I really don't ... I cannot make head or tail as to why it is aggregated this way and why some are expended and some are not given that ... well, I leave that up to the finance people. It just seems to me that it is not finished but then that is my humble opinion.

Mr. Speaker, on the same document, item No. 49 and I think and I think that is on page 4 the fourth page of the Schedule to Supplementary Estimates No. 15, item No. 49: \$208,233.00 and the explanation is to provide additional funds to facilitate the payment of contracted Bus Operators, September-December 2010: \$208,233.00 for Bus Operators September-December 2010. I would like to buy a bus and get that contract that is an enormous sum for such a short period of time, it confuses me and how many people are we moving? That is a lot of money in any book and I do not know whether that is ... it does not look right to me if you ask me but then I am only an engineer. [Interjection] No! No! I said to me it is a huge sum for a few months for bus rental and I hope that we can get some explanation of who we are busing and where and how that could add up to so much. [Interjection] Yea! Yea! Yea! [Laughter] [Interjections] [Laughter] [Laughs] Very funny, you know it is amazing how we could laugh, you know. The people who feeling it in this country and I know there are so many in my own constituency they do not see anything funny in it. These are sums of money being allocated to lawyers and these sums, as I understand it, Mr. Speaker, are not the only sums these are in excess of other sums that they paid from time to time for different things. So, I mean at a time when we really should be tightening our belt the two sets of payment to lawyers well in excess of half million dollars is an item of to me tremendous concern given the hardships and the unemployment situation in our country.

Mr. Speaker, with those brief remarks, I thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Senator Baptiste.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I too would like to lend my voice to this debate briefly. I have some concerns as well with respect to clarification and through you I would like the Honourable Member, the Honourable Minister of Finance to perhaps deal with them when he is making his wrap up. But first of all let me too join with my colleagues in congratulating the Honourable Member for East Kingstown in his presentation. I consider it to be a very sober indication of our reality and a presentation to be taken seriously by all who are seriously concerned about the state of affairs of our people in St Vincent and the Grenadines. And I also look forward to continue to learn from him as we go forward as a young politician.

In terms of clarification through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable Member, the Honourable Minister of Finance, I heard the Honourable Member explain the reasons for what appeared to be some repetition in the Schedules. I just want to find out if in the case of Supplementary Estimates No. 14, there are some repetitions where not only the Special Warrant numbers are the same but the actual amounts are the same. For example if you look under Supplementary Estimates No. 14 you will observe that in the case of item No. 13 and 14 you have the same Ministry of Health, the same project number and same source of funds and then the actual Supplementary Appropriation the amount twice is \$346.00 and it is the same Special Warrant number. So, I was wondering if what you explained about the official's intention to do it differently the next time around if this kind of example was included as well; because to me this looked like an actual mistake of a repetition. It is not a mistake it is the same amount twice? Okay.

In that regard, I too was concerned to see those small amounts it made me questioned the whole preparation in terms of budgeting. For me when it came to purposes like communication services and operation services and so on to think that one did not foresee, or to think that one had to ask for a Special Warrant to make those small payments, it made me question the whole budgetary exercise. It made me question the effectiveness of it, in terms of whether or not there was proper planning and proper budgeting so that you do not turn around and as it were make a mockery of the exercise by having to submit a Special Warrant for such a small amount at a short space of time into the year 2010. I wanted to point that out.

With respect to items Nos. 8, 9 and 10 on Supplementary Estimates Nos. 14 where the Honourable Member for East Kingstown rightly identified the fact that these had to do with journalising expenses incurred at the Toronto Tourist Office for supplies and materials in February 2003 twice, and in another case February 2004. Again the question of planning, I mean why are we going so far back? It is as if somebody all of a sudden caught themselves and realised that they had spent what they did not have and they only now years later coming to try to deal with it. And I empathize in a sense with public servants who may not even have been around at that time but came in subsequently and had to, as it were, deal with this and sort of try to clean up.

I agree with the Opposition Leader the Honourable Member for East Kingstown that it appeared as some sort of clean up exercise and I would hope that the Honourable Minister of Finance would see to it that you know whatever capacity building and assistance that has to be given to public servants to ensure that these sort of things do not reoccur and that their planning and budgetary preparations could be better.

I would like to move on to Supplementary Estimates No. 15. Again, I understand the explanation of the Honourable Minister of Finance with respect to the fact that even though spending did not take place in columns where we see like blanks; again I had to question why would you go requesting a Special Warrant for certain amount and then end up not spending it? You know while I understand you gave some examples of why that may happened, it made me question the issue of planning again. Because if you bring a Special Warrant my understanding is that this is an unforeseen matter you did not budget for it but you needed it and so you make a request for a Special Warrant but when you do that and it is approved then you do not eventually spend the money, one seriously question your planning and your preparation.

On that Schedule, okay, I was going to raise a point but I just realised that it was dealt with before so I will pass. On that same Schedule under Capital Estimates, item No. 14 we see an amount of \$2.2 million Special Warrant approved to provide funds for the rehabilitation and replanting of banana fields and associated cost.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Fifteen not fourteen

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Thank you. It is fourteen on my Schedule.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Oh! No! No! Special Warrants: oh! You are talking about the number.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Sorry the item number. Yes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am sorry.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: No problem. I can certainly see the need for a Special Warrant there because you know you cannot foresee a hurricane and so on. What I am concerned about when you look at a large amount like that and for the purpose one of the things that this does not tell us but one would be interested in knowing is: really what is the outcome, I mean has it been successful; was this two point something million for the rehabilitation, and replanting of banana fields well spent? How was it disbursed; and what was the mechanism of disbursement? Did the farmers really get what they needed and was it enough, you know? These are the kind of things that perhaps some accompanying report of some sort will help us to really see if these spending were justified and so on. And we are happy that we were able to put that money into the rehabilitation and replanting of banana fields, but a more detailed account of the success of such an undertaken or otherwise is important.

There was another item I cannot seem to find it now, it concerns \$1 million, yes just above item No. 5, sorry, not just above, item No. 52 on that same Schedule.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: The Recurrent.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Yes, thank you. Yes, on the Recurrent Estimates item No. 15, item No. 52 \$1 million was requested Special Warrant No. 54 of 2010 and it was for the purpose of providing funds for the payment of an income support for a period of seven months to banana farmers to compensate for income lost while fields are being rehabilitated. And I notice with interest that while \$1 million was the amount of the Supplementary Appropriation the actual spending was less \$767,508.* [Sure]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: In a situation like that. You noticed that one item is Capital, the first one you mentioned \$2.2 million.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Yes.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: This one is a Recurrent spending for the income support, but you are giving income support to real flesh and blood people and you will have a number of names which would be submitted and not necessarily all of the names which are submitted by the Ministry of Agriculture would meet with the approval because there are cross checks. There are all kinds of reasons that this can happen. For example, the Minister of Agriculture and a number of public servants are banana farmers. The Minister of Agriculture's name, I did not see his name on but a number of them would have their names on and we are not paying those. It is income support for people who are involved in farming and then what you would have happening an interesting thing that when you say no, you lay down certain guidelines then they would go back, you might have heard me on this, and they cut off other people names who are involved in bonafide farming but whom they believe might be in a position similar to them. [Interjection]

A man owns a company, [not the Minister the Minister does not deal with that] a man who has a company he registers a farm in his company's name; the fact that he has a company does not mean that he is not a farmer; he has only put it in the name of a company for all sorts of reasons why somebody would not have it in their own name but have it in a company name. Sometimes when all certain names are off legitimately, you may find some which may be also cut off. And there is a compliance to which you may well ascribe an adjective malicious and then you have to look at those names and say, "well how could you not give these persons the income support". You would not get the amount because you had the Estimate first and there is a problem with the list and later on like we just approved at the Cabinet a number of persons who are additional who should have been on the list but were not on the list.

And I will tell you what happened, you know because I may deny some people on the basis that you are a public servant and you are not, they say, "ah! Ah! I gon teach you a lesson, I gon take off other people names who might well be legitimate and you will get some real political horrors for that". Don't believe ... there are circles within circles you know, you have to be in it to know it. It is like the Lotto you have to have a ticket.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: So, I explain that as a practical matter, so there is nothing from the standpoint of policy with the Minister of Finance that is not something where we are denying people, we have million but it is a problem with the actual names. It is a matter with the regulations: Financial Regulations, that any subvention like this, any social welfare payment like this to the farmers, any item which comes as a consequent of say a storm and you have to give the money each of those names has to be specifically approved so that it can then go to the office of the Director General of Finance and Planning and then go on to the Accountant General for the person to come in from Kingstown, from West St George, from Colonarie and Park Hill to get their money that is how it happens. So, the names the actual names have to be listed because some people would have different volumes for their income support and that has to be calculated and so on because they have a formula.

HONOURABLE ANESIA BAPTISTE: Thank you, Honourable Member. I would like to go lastly to the Supplementary Appropriation No. 16 and wish to say that clearly this one shows: the Schedule, it shows the extent of the indebtedness that these institutions had at the National Commercial Bank; these government state owned enterprises. And two concerns I have, I asked myself now that the majority shares in the bank have been sold, I asked myself what now is the new overdraft limit. For example of these institutions at the Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines? And are we really looking at restructuring these institutions, to ensure problems that may arise with not having access to the same kinds of overdraft, problems such as not being able to pay salaries and problems such as having to send home people? I am concerned that if there is no restructuring of the operations of these same institutions that we can end up in these kinds of problems and we really should not ignore the lessons of the past. Because these schedules themselves prove to us just how badly these institutions were performing in terms of non-performing loans altogether to the tune of \$45 million, and we had to actually take a loan to pay off those debts.

So, these are things in my humble estimation and submission that need to be looked at in terms of the restructuring of the operations of these institutions to ensure that if it is not already the case we do not have them for example having to lay off staff or cutting salaries. I lend my support to these Estimates having said those things. Much obliged, Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Senator Francis

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I rise to give support to these Supplementary Estimates that are before us No. 14, 15 and 16 and like the Minister of Finance, the Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Representative for Central Kingstown, Honourable Representative for West Kingstown and the Honourable Senator Baptiste they all lend support to them so I stand also to lend support to help them in lending support to these Estimates, because none of the speakers on the Opposition bench not one has said that they do not support the Estimates.

HONOURABLE DANIEL CUMMINGS: You want me to say so?

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: No! No! No! I am just lending support to you. I have just finished listening to the Honourable Senator Baptiste she ended off by saying that she lends support to the full Estimates. So, the paper that is in question which most comments have come from No. 16, 14 and 15 are maybe bureaucratic bungling here and there not properly written, scanty explanatory notes but these are not prepared by the Ministers; these are not prepared by your elected Representatives of the people. These are prepared by public servants and therefore I am sure that the public servants would have heard your criticism of their presentation method and I am sure that they would take note of it. [Interjection] I am sure they will improve on it.

So, Appropriation Bill No. 16 of 2011 Mr. Speaker, and I could understand the Opposition finally getting a little chance to dig their teeth into the matter of the National Commercial Bank and the divestment of sales. And the Leader of the Opposition even scoffed at the word divestment, if I recalled correctly.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: It was like a scoffing of the word divestment, again I am speaking from the impression I got listening to you.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: You seemed to be at loggers with that all day. [Laughter]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable gentlemen we have eleven Bills to go through before the night is through.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Yes Mr. Speaker, but ...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I am not talking.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Oh! I thought you were asking me to wrap up.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No! No! No!

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Okay. [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, basically I hear that the picture on No. 16 reflects a failure of institutions [interjections]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking of gavel] Honourable Members please, [Striking gavel] [Laughter] just reminding again we have eleven more Bills to go through tonight.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, the most senior Member over there and my senior Member are ...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Just reminding you. Okay, good. The institutions here are being criticised by the Opposition. This was a case as is clearly marked out in this document and has been articulated by this administration that the government took responsibility for these debts. And an interesting comment made by Senator Baptiste, Honourable Senator Baptiste she would like to know what now is their overdraft limit? So, they could well be overdraft limits for these institutions for which the government has taken over their debts. And if there is such a credit and overdraft limit for these individual organisations at the Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines that would say to me that they have some level of creditworthiness because it is no longer the National Commercial Bank 100% owned by government. So, I am sure that all these institutions still carry a fair level of overdraft at the Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines, so that I would not want us to go as far as describing these individual corporations as having failed.

HONOLURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: They failed.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Well, Let me pick the Housing and Land Development Corporation, I am going to pick that one. It is a failure the Leader of the Opposition said, but this is an accumulation of debt for ten years: ten years, from 2001 until ... because you all had closed the Housing and Land Development Corporation. There was nothing existing then, there was not even a bank account, there was a debt inside of the Estimates reflecting a debt; but this is the accumulation that we had put on the book for ten years. Divide it by

ten it is a \$1 million a year that we are subsidising low income housing, but we have built 700 low income houses in this country [Applause and knocking on desk]. You call that a failure, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, you know what I would refer to as a failure 400 hundred houses at Diamond and when we took office in 2001 we met seven: seven three of which were unfinished and all the verandahs were used by cattle to sleep at nights. That is what I called a failure. What you see here accumulating, Mr. Speaker, and I am putting it to you because I happened to have very intimate knowledge of it. This is more infrastructural development and this morning I addressed the matter of private development, private land developers who sell lands for middle and upper class people to build their homes but putting no infrastructure and in the end those middle and upper class persons come to the Central Government out of taxpayers money to get the infrastructure put in place.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: Case in point Pembroke.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I addressed it in Pembroke this morning, responding to the Honourable Parliamentary Representative for South Leeward question. But the point I want to make here, in any case this would be a cost to the Consolidated Fund because we have set a perfect example of how to develop land and I do not blow my trumpet very often but in this one I am blowing it because I spearheaded it.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Toot your horn, toot your horn.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: The best looking development in this country are the low income developments, where poor people live. The drains are perfect the roads are perfect none have broken up as yet and they have been there for ten years. Drive to Clare Valley, drive to Peter's Hope drive to Diamond and drive to Brighton. I do have an apology to the people in Brighton and I will correct that in this term as Minister of Works, where that single road that takes you down to the bottom of the development has not yet been done and I have a commitment to have it done. So, basically this \$10.496 million here

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I have \$2 million more to give you

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: [Interjection] you can say ... thank you Sir; by the time I done talk you are going to give me another \$2 million, because I am here to support you with these Estimates. I am not talking for nothing you know. So, we could say a \$1 million for subsidising infrastructural development for low income homes 700 of them. [Interjection] Yes man; St Vincent Port Authority, no sorry HLDC is \$11.8, sorry I read it wrong. The Port Authority I think the Minister of Finance, Prime Minister explained that that was for the crane.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Right, a crane. Now basically, what happened at the National Commercial Bank this administration, this political party from 1994 and before in the programmatic platform for the movement of national unity it was articulated that we will at one point sell shares in state owned corporations, it is not something we are hiding and have hidden for years. We have been very clear on it. Right now, the workers down there will own 10%, the workers of this country through the National Insurance Services will own shares in the National Commercial Bank, not the P H. Veiras as the Leader of the Opposition had articulated that he was going to sell to the P.H. Veiras, C.K. Greaves and Randy's Supermarket for them to give to their employees that is what he had said. [Interjection] Oh! I have him on tape, you just come you do not

know. He said so, I have him recorded, I have played it back on STAR FM and I have played it on WE FM and I have circulated a document throughout the entire consultation process on the divestment of the shares.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: [Inaudible] sell some of them [inaudible]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Nobody ...

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Sorry, sorry. You having realised what you had done then tried to cover it up afterwards but that is what you articulated. You said clearly that you are different to this administration that you will pick the firms in town and you call names. C.K. Greaves and Company; P.H. Veira and Company; Randy's Supermarket and I will sell shares to them for them to give to their employees. Oh! How generous these firms are. I went to Randy, I drove down to Randy's Supermarket and I said, "Randy boy, you really doing well boy, you are going to buy shares for your employees"? He said, "What are you talking about"? I said, "You did not hear the Leader of the Opposition last night on Radio"? [Interjections]

So, Mr. Speaker, ... [interjections] I am on the topic of Supplementary Estimates No. 16 that deals with the divestment of the shares of the National Commercial Bank and \$45 million of a CDB that was utilized to pay off some debts at the National Commercial Bank to facilitate the sale of the shares of the NCB, to facilitate the divestment of the share of the NCB. But the Leader for the Opposition the Honourable Member for West Kingstown and the Honourable Senator said that these corporations failed that is why we are paying off their debt. [Interjections] Well, the people will be their judge. [Interjection] Central Kingstown [Laughter] I believe that you are much wiser, maybe junior [Laughter] but a little wiser... [Laughter]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, let us keep ...

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown saying that we spend \$56 million for the World Cup and he cannot see anything for it. I agree with you with Sion Hill Playing field that might be in a worst condition today than before World Cup but I cannot agree with you that we are not seeing the \$56 million. Go to Stubbs Playing Field, go to the Arnos Vale Playing Field and the \$56 million is there staring you in your face. We are not utilising it enough having invested \$56 million.

HONOURABLE DR. DOUGLAS SLATER: It was supported by the Opposition.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: And in this Parliament the Opposition ... you want to hear this part first before you interrupt?

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Yes.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: All right sit down. [Laughter] In this parliament the Opposition supported the investment in World Cup Cricket.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: That is a regional decision.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Now, would you sit now?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking of gavel]

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Yes please.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Good. Mr. Speaker, I am very serious about the misrepresentation by the Honourable Senator. In fact, I was emphatic that when you make investments in Sports you do not just measure it by financial returns and you have to look at the social and other benefits that would come in the long term, but I certainly expected that by this time they would have had a much richer legacy around than we having spent the \$56. And I expressly drew attention to the state of the Sion Hill Playing Field. He speaks about Stubbs but that too went backwards a little bit.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: I thought you were objecting ...

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Hold! Hold! Hold on.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Don't repeat what I...

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Hold! Hold on! The Arnos Vale Playing Field outside No. 2; Arnos Vale No. 2; also that field that should have been in better condition. I am simply saying that we should have had a much richer legacy than we have had. In fact, it is costing us now for having spent that \$56 million. In fact, we should be having a greater return on it like so many other sports field: that is the point I was making.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: All right.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: But you specifically mentioned the figure of \$56 million and said that you cannot see it.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Could you move on.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: We do not have the Hansard to check it out now, but I know you said so. We can prove it next meeting; the Clerk will bring the Hansard. [Interjection]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Hello! Honourable let us move on.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, may I proceed in my style, am I offensive to the parliament, Mr. Speaker?

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No, you are not being offensive.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am being interrupted by the other side; they are taking up my time, Mr. Speaker. I want to get through this thing very quickly.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: They are not taking up your time; your time will be allotted to you.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Thank you very much, Sir. Kingstown Town Board, \$4,025,000.00. Mr. Speaker, I want to know the administration that run this country to make Kingstown Town Board profitable. I want to see the one, from the administrator days come right down that is trouble; that is an expense on the taxpayers of this country. It will continue to be; we may try to reduce it but I would not describe it as a failure because the rentals for the shops, I mean. I sat down yesterday trying to work out the repairs for Little

Tokyo how to proceed with a plan to repair it; I said okay let us look at those who have the least outstanding payables [laughs] and it was difficult to put together, everybody owes the Town Board and everybody utilizes the facilities in town. So, let us not deem something like that a failure, we can tighten up in certain areas and reduce the deficit but are you going to send home 50 of them just to make it look: balance the books are we going to do that? I am putting it this way, Mr. Speaker, with this \$45 million; this is not a reflection on the individual institutions; but a transaction to allow for the divestment of the sale of the NCB.

We had National consultations throughout the length and breath of this country on that divestment, I hardly saw at any of those consultations a Member of the Opposition, there might have been one or two supporters of the NDP who came in there to rib. Nobody participated in the public discussion maybe it was because STAR was carrying it and the Members of the Opposition do not want to hear their voice on STAR Radio. But we have sold this matter to the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines; the government debt was heavy and the people coming in to invest say look, "I cannot carry all this debt if I am going to buy over this bank or buy shares in this bank, make some arrangement to reduce some of this debt". If we were not creditworthy the CDB would not lend us. If we were so bad and the government creditworthiness was so down in the hole you think CDB would lend us a \$100 million? But they did, why did they? Because they agreed with the divestment of the sale of the shares of the NCB and also the performance of the Unity Labour Party Administration; the same CDB.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: That is because [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: I am coming by you now, you know. The same CDB on which the Leader of the Opposition worked for years and assessed Belize, Grenada, what did you say, Barbados Sandiford Government and somebody else; they came and assessed us you know. They had to assess us to give us \$100 million to lend us \$100 million. They gave us a pass mark because they granted the loan of \$100 million from the CDB to us, it is natural conclusion.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: [Inaudible] that is their purpose.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Man you had your chance to talk already let me talk now.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: [Striking of gavel]

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, so that we are now ... this that the Opposition is supporting is the process that they do not have any objection to the amounts being charged to the accounts and for the Supplementary Estimates to be approved.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: State your point of order.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: The Honourable Member is once again misrepresenting not just this House Mr. Speaker but the nation, with respect to the situation of the government and the National

Commercial Bank. To state before this Honourable House that the Caribbean Development Bank came and examined the situation of the NCB and gave the government a pass mark is seriously misstating the facts on the matter; is seriously misstating the facts on the matter.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: That one *bun yo eh?*

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Is seriously misstating the facts. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is the reverse.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: [Laughs]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Make your point.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: The Bank indicated that the National Commercial Bank had serious liquidity problems and it had to be bailed out. It made it clear that they had to divest of the Bank as the condition for the loan and it also stated that the Bank was operating in a way that would have brought a contagion effect on the rest of the Caribbean including the currency of the OECS and it also stated.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Untruth.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: You cannot tell me it is not true, I read the report...

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Mr. Speaker, I gave way ...

HONOURABLE MR SPEAKER: Just a minute; just a minute.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: and there is no way Mr. Speaker, if a Bank was in a healthy condition ...

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You are debating the issue, right.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Well, I am stating the facts to support my argument of misrepresentation. If the Bank was in healthy condition a government could not get less for the sale of the Bank than it had to borrow from the Bank; that is straight mathematics.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, all that he has said there I have said

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: His opinions.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: but he had his chance to debate realised that he did nothing on the subject matter but run down National Properties, I am making some valid points so now he wants time to say what he wants to say, I am not going to allow him to do it, Mr. Speaker, I am not giving way on the subject. What he has said, I said about the debt, I said it; whatever, he has said there just now I said it but what he is omitting is that having agreed that we will get rid of the debt is that we would have had enough creditworthiness following the assessment of the CDB to get a \$100 million to borrow from them. [Knocking on the desk] That

is all it is and you cannot wipe that off the loan is there we have paid off the loans at the Bank we no longer owe the Bank. I believe the other \$55 million was used to pay off some other Central government debts, so as to make the Bank comfortable.

Now, if we go now and get an overdraft it is not the Board of Directors that Cabinet put together that is going to approve it, it is the Board of Directors of the Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines. So, when Housing goes and gets their \$2.5 million overdraft, or they get a \$1 million overdraft it is because they have creditworthiness, let us accept that and stop creating little mischief here and there.

Mr. Speaker, I think I said enough on this subject and I will leave the rest. I support this and I support the three Supplementary Estimates in this Parliament. Thank you.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No further debate, Honourable Prime Minister, please wrap up. [Interjections]

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: You could sit down you know, [Inaudible] provision [Laughter]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I want to thank all Honourable Members each of whom articulated support for these Estimates: Supplementary Estimates and for the Supplementary Appropriation Bills save and except the Honourable Member for West Kingstown, I cannot recall that he had given his support.

Mr. Speaker, if I may address a few of the comments and I will go from the Supplementary Estimates No 16 of 2011 backwards and come to No 14. Mr. Speaker, when you look at each of these items one would see that there is a value of these enterprises and the work they have been doing. This is not to say that they cannot be more efficient and we are seeking to have all the public sector enterprises more efficient. The Honourable Senator Leacock says that he understands

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Member for.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I forgive you.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I apologise, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member for Central Kingstown said he quite understands the \$1.1 million for the postal corporation, because the postal corporation has been providing a service but the revenue stream has been diminished because of the technology changes. And we know that the postal corporation has its challenges because there are very few letters. Mr. Speaker, I would tell you for instance, we were looking at closing some rural post offices and to use a hub and spoke that they will – the mail would come to a hub and we put persons on motor cycles and we let them distribute to persons who are using the mail. The Honourable Minister for Agriculture, the Member for North Windward the post office at Owia on this: he says “No way can we close our post office at Owia, it is a center where people hang around and it is a point for social gathering”. So, I asked the persons from the Postal Corporation who were there, I said, “Please tell me over the last year on an average how many pieces of mail we had coming to this post office and leaving”? Nine pieces per a month were coming in and four were leaving, so I raised the question as to whether we should keep it open for thirteen pieces. [Interjections]

You know I used these ... I am prepared to be persuaded; I am open to be persuaded and Honourable Members must understand that when it comes on the finance of the country I am very serious and I present the arguments have the information and allow myself to be persuaded if that is the case if there is a basis.

Now, the Honourable Minister for Transport and Works outlined succinctly about the Housing and Land Development Corporation. Mr. Speaker, the Cricket World Cup \$6.5 million we simply had to spend the money to upgrade all the facilities the major place there. Mr. Speaker, persons tend to forget the sea defence and the river defence, all that was a part of the project you know: very important which assisted for the protection of the airport and then of course all the facilities which are there and out at Stubbs and of course improvements had been made at Sion Hill and we have had some deterioration.

Mr. Speaker, the Carnival Development Corporation, the sum there is a term loan on an overdraft facility. Carnival Development Corporation had to buy some assets, you know the stage and all the rest of it what you see, to make it professional when people go to the Victoria Park and see it. It is not an activity which in any way is profitable, we have to subsidise it. National Properties a substantial part of the \$9 million there is the loan; I cannot recall if it is about \$4 million because they had paid \$2 million for the Ju-C building, there is an asset for it and the value for that has increased. So, we must be really balanced in our comments and in our criticisms; people would not take us seriously if we just go off in an insensitive manner, that kind of politics is gone.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Speaker.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I really have to ... The Honourable Prime Minister and I am grateful for his analysis but the point I was making about National Properties, Mr. Prime Minister, Honourable Prime Minister, about the institution and its relationship to loss effect is you cannot buy a property for \$6 or \$6.5 million and the interest cost in a given year is greater than the revenue stream. And that is the point that I am making. In fact, Central Government in the last Budget had to come back and contribute some \$2 million or there I think to ... and that is the point, it is a loss making entity and that is the point I am making.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, National ... the place there had been rented to different tenants and my friend, sorry the Honourable Member for Central Kingstown who is my friend [laughter] is wrong about his analysis there. And I think the Port Authority the business people were asking for a crane, of the size which we have down at Port Campden Park; those monies these are justifiable monies.

Now, what is the situation with the \$100 million in a global sense in a strategic sense? I want the people of this country to realise and I have said this over and over this is not a new loan you know, it is a loan which has taken account of these items here \$45 million which loan had already been there. All we have done is to change the source of the lender who is now the Caribbean Development Bank rather than the Bank of St Vincent and the Grenadines. Similarly, the reason why you do not see an inclusion here for the \$55 million in relation to debt by the Central Government is because it remains the debt of the Central Government you just simply changed the person who lent you the money and this money is loaned at a lower rate of interest 4½% as against on an

average 9% because a substantial amount of this \$45 million was in overdraft which is paying 12-14%. So, I want to make that point.

Mr. Speaker, it is now 7:35 p.m. I do not believe that there are a number of persons listening to us because they are listening to the news and when they are finished they are going to listen to other things and look at programmes of entertainment and the like. The persons who are listening to us at this hour are persons who have followed these issues and I can answer all the arguments about the National Commercial Bank and its sale. When we got to office, a Bank in Trinidad with regional connections offered to buy it at \$500,000.00 a number approaching zero, the government's equity in real terms was about EC\$5 million. We put the government equity to \$84 million; we built the National Commercial Bank. Mr. Speaker, on all the indicators at the National Commercial Bank, they were better by far in 2010 than they were when we arrived in 2001 [applause]. And let us understand this: banks do trade in these regions at their book value, and the book value of the equity was \$84 million the government's equity and that is why we ended up with \$42 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me go further to this and I can talk about all the ratios but during the time of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition when he was Minister of Finance, there were three years when he was Minister of Finance and then Prime Minister two and a half years there was a qualified report: a qualified auditor's report in each of those years. And when an auditor gives you a qualified report it means your numbers do not make sense and they cannot verify any of these things and they are saying look to protect themselves we are giving you a qualified report. They weren't, Mr. Speaker, making provisions, for instance because what we held for CLICO and British American we had to make provision at the National Commercial Bank you know. We made a provision of 100% that is why in the sale agreement if the money comes back it comes back to us and I am fighting so that I could get back some of that money and when it comes, it will come as a windfall. [Interjection]

I had a meeting

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Honourable Prime Minister would you give way?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Mr. Prime Minister you ... Honourable Prime Minister, through you Honourable Speaker, indicated that there was a period of time that the National Commercial Bank Auditors issued qualified reports during the regime of the Honourable Arnhim Eustace, Minister of Finance. And your conclusion of that is that if the report is qualified it represents a lack of confidence or words to that effect.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: In the numbers.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: In the numbers, they do not believe you? Honourable Prime Minister you would also accept that the last audit report on the state of St Vincent and the Grenadines was also qualified, by the Auditor General of St Vincent and the Grenadines.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Nah! Nah!

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Well, I am putting it to you and I will lodge it in this House that the last report by the Auditor General on the state of St Vincent was also a qualified report. Much obliged Mr. Speaker.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, that is just not true that is the usual ...

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, there is a tendency by my friend

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: the Honourable for Central Kingstown he stylizes the facts.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: The last Auditor's Report was qualified.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: He stylizes the fact in search of an explanation and that is the problem.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSLAVES: No! No! No! You wrong again.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: Wrong.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, so, that the issues relating to the Bank and I had a meeting with people from Antigua for instance including Prime Minister and so on the Minister of Finance, I think the Minister of Finance was there, the Governor of the Central Bank, other persons the CDB persons discussing possibility of doing what we did here. And the CDB said what the Government of St Vincent did over the years, this government is to institute a series of reforms and put a number of good governance practices in place and have excellent management and that give confidence for them to lend the \$100 million. It is known throughout the region. I just saw the Head of the IMF Team who is here to do the usual Article 4 Consultation and at the Executive Board Meeting where we just got approval for the Rapid Credit Facility because of the second storm in April they commended the government of St Vincent and the Grenadines on this matter and the highly skilled manner in which we have done it and the creative way and asked why other governments are not doing this in relation to some other financial institutions the Executive Board of the IMF.

Now, the Executive Board of the IMF from time to time would say several things which I do not agree with but I only make that point in the context of the debate which we are having here. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, with some finality on this question, this issue was canvassed in the last elections and the people of this country accepted both our arguments and our opinion and returned us to office [applause]. And by the last week of the campaign

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: by the last week of the campaign, the NDP was running for cover from the National Commercial Bank. Mr. Speaker, I want to address a couple of the issues raised by Honourable Members. The question of the 2003 Tourism office journalising, I suspect and I can check this. Mr. Speaker, the tourism offices and the offices of the Mission overseas during the time of the NDP administration were very rarely audited. The Director of Audit had to seek permission from the Prime Minister to go and do the audits because they had to provide the money, I changed that. We in this government we put it as a line item in the Budget to strengthen the independence of the Director of Audit and they go up all the time. To say this to you and I mean the Honourable Leader of the Opposition would remember that in 2001 he wanted to pay Kingsley Layne over a \$100,000 to cover his credit cards but Mr. Layne ... he was an Ambassador at the time in Washington he could not provide any of his bills nothing was audited and they had to just back away. But he had said that Mr. Layne had an audited statement, when we got a copy of the statement it was his accountant who had provided an accountant's statement and not an audited statement which is an entirely different business; but we make sure that the auditing takes place.

Now, I made the comment before as to how we are to tighten up the presentation in terms of number of items to aggregate them, and like the Leader of the Opposition, I am in agreement that you know to come for Special Warrants early as a Minister of Finance I look askance at it. But if you bring something with people's retirement benefits they are not coming out of pension monies, they are not public servants with security of tenure. When the persons were involved in that particular Ministry the Accountant Officers did not do their work properly you know, and have it within the context of the Estimates and you know how we do it. I mean that is just ... we cannot allow that and I usually make ... colleagues would tell you the way I am firm and robust on that and even while I approve I would append a note saying I do not like to approve Special Warrants this early and for something for which you ought properly to have put in the budgetary process and clearly you did not take the budgetary process as seriously as you should have taken it. And you try to get that inculcated because as a Minister of Finance ... well the Director General tells them do not come with any Special Warrants very early in the fiscal year to the Prime Minister because you know he is going to go ballistic and I do it sometimes because I cannot make people suffer for the errors of any public servant.

Legal fees: you know I am a little astounded that the legal fees of a hundred and something thousand dollars for example for the case where we recovered the 100 acres of land. The hundred acres of land beach front property is a serious asset that has come into the state. The Member for the Southern Grenadines, I am sure, the Honourable Member, would not share the view that to spend one hundred and something thousand on lawyers to win at the High Court and win at the Court of Appeal to get that property in the hands of the government where we can then use it for further development and as I say we have some developers. I mean we have to be careful when we make these particular kinds of submissions.

I want to say, I have no doubt the Honourable Leader of the Opposition and I would continue to talk about deficits in the way in which and surpluses and growth in the way in which President Obama is doing on one hand with the Democrats, Republicans and the Tea Party People, the Labor Party and the Conservative in the United Kingdom and so on and so forth. [Interjection] But I just want to say this, Mr. Speaker, when we embarked on expanding Food City [interjection] [Striking gavel] we did so because at the time there were two

companies: two families who are really determining what basically we eat and what we drink and we had to provide some competition. There is now at

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Well, you may disagree with that.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible] [Striking of gavel]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Well, you may rebut it.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Actually, it is quite becoming of me because I happen to believe it. And I am not saying anything which is adverse.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I have nothing against the Greaves absolutely nothing. Last week I went to shop by the Greaves.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: No. No.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please could you stop this cross talking.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: We allow the Greaves to expand their facility up at the port there in relation to the molasses. I mean.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister you have

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister you have ten minutes to conclude.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: How are they the biggest employer? What about Mustique? [Interjection] What about Canouan? You know, I mean let's be... Mr. Speaker and the Food City arrangement is a good one for the country. I spoke to Mr. Boyea: Ken Boyea, in relation to the arrangement he has with the Entrepreneurs out of St Lucia and I am satisfied that he has gotten a fine deal, it is not for me to talk about it. It is for him to speak about it, and the private sector in this country and the people have confidence in us and in our policies. The Management Studies Department at the West Indies in Barbados did a survey across the region and we top the list with 67.9% approval [applause] for our policies. [Interjection] They are there and we see the confidence. I do not understand why these things are not, they are trying to see if they could just ignore those. [Interjection] Mr. Speaker, and if you want further evidence of confidence, the last time when we went on the market for our ruling with what was our old treasury bills the short term monies we went

for \$20 million it was over subscribed by \$42 million and we got 3.9% interest. [Knocking on desk] I do not know what is going to be but we are going to the market on the 26th of this month again with another ruling instrument and if we do 3.9% I mean it would be an amazing thing.

So I just ... a number of things relating to some particular procedural things and so on, I mean we can talk to the public servants. There is one matter, Mr. Speaker, and I am happy that the Leader of the Opposition came back in, it concerns the ... and I have to explain how we deal with the account for the Leader of the Opposition. When this was brought to me and I signed it on the 30/11, this is the second one I did and I said, "Why am I being asked to sign Special Warrants in relation to the Leader of the Opposition's telephone bills or whether they are electricity bills or whatever through the Clerk of the House"? So, I gave instructions that we change the mode of disbursing the money which is in the Estimate \$153,000.00 for the office of the Leader of the Opposition to give him in four quarterly installments. The only problem with this is that we must remember that this money of \$153,000.00 is not to subsidize political activity but for the office of the Leader of the Opposition where you have to employ a Research Officer who is a graduate, you have to employ a Secretary and you have to employ a handyman driver, because those have been established. We only changed the mode of disbursing then to pay for your office rent, and to pay for telephone, water and electricity.

No but the point I am making is this, I do not want the office of the Leader of the Opposition is subjected to an audit that the money which he is ... I am not onto the argument as to whether he has his office up by the NDP headquarters, I am not there, I mean he has his office wherever he wants to have it. But the point is this the Research Officer has to be hired because since the Honourable Member for North Leeward has demitted that office really you have to pay for somebody, I know I can understand a month, two months that you are looking for somebody appropriate and maybe three months and I can understand that I mean, I am in a practical world but surely we must be able to find someone after eight months since the last election; and the demitting of the office by my Honourable friend from North Leeward for the office of the Research Officer.

I make that point not in any jaundiced manner, I make it only in the context of what the Honourable Leader is talking about accountability, good governance and all of it; I make it within that same frame of reference.

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: [Inaudible]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I want, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the three Supplementary Appropriation Bills Nos. 14, 15 and 16, I beg to move in relation to the operational part of the Motion that this Honourable House do approve the Supplementary Estimates Nos. 14, 15, and 16 of 2011.

Question put

HONOURABLE ST CLAIR LEACOCK: I am voting no against No. 16.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You are voting no against No. 16; but you said in your debate that you support it [Laughter] [interjection] you change your mind.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, that having been done I beg to move that this House resolve itself into a committee of the whole House to consider the Supplementary Appropriation Bills, Nos. 14, 15 and 16.

**House resolves into committee
House resumes**

**Appropriation Bills 14, 15 and 16 of 2011
Passed Committee stage
Without amendment**

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that each of the Supplementary Appropriation Bills namely Nos. 14, 15 and 16 of 2011 to sanction payments from the consolidated funds for certain services in excess of the Appropriation Act for the years stated in the respective Bills that each of these Bills be read a third time by title and passed.

Question put and agreed to

4. ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION LOAN AUTHORISATION BILL, 2011

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I would like to indicate to Honourable Members how we intend to proceed for the balance of the evening. The two matters which I want us to address is (1) to have passed this particular Bill and (2) to do the first reading of: The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Bill and put that into Select Committee so that the next time we come back we can do the amendments on the Shipping Act and the NIS to take account on the Maritime Convention. So, we want to do now the Economic Diversification.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: No. the Honourable Leader of the Opposition asking a question.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Yes, I was saying that I would like to have them done now but I have to try and read the sense of someone who remembers

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: You are doing well. [Laughter]

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: that they would wish to ... Mr. Speaker, I beg to move a Bill for an Act to secure a loan to finance the projects under the Economic Diversification Programme, I move that this Bill be read the first time.

Question put and agreed to

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move under Standing Order 48(2) that this Bill be taken through all its stages at today's sitting.

Question put and agreed to

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to secure a loan to finance a project under the Economic Diversification Programme be read a second time.

Question put and agreed to

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister, debate on the Bill; any?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, this is matter which has been subjected to a lot of public debate and discussion in this House it is US\$10 million from the Taiwanese for the International Airport Project. It is part of the economic diversification. I have to come to the House first of all as a good governance measure, a number of persons may not know this but in some countries in this Caribbean persons borrow money and don't come to the parliament you know. I have known of many examples, we must not do that. We must come here so that people would know what is happening. This is a soft loan; we did it on the last occasion when we had the one for agriculture which was \$13 million – agriculture and other things we could not bring this at that same time for the simple reason that we did not know which bank the government was directing us to. This bank, Mega International Commercial Bank Limited is a different bank from the other one and we have already sent the requisite documentation in terms of the contract which has been signed with OECS and the like.

We have US\$20 million in Grant; I do not have the interest rate to put in this Bill but I need to have this so that I could effect fairly speedily the negotiations for the loan. It is a soft loan which we had agreed upon which from Taiwan the kinds of monies which we have been getting from them is 4-4½% when we borrow. We have tried to get less and they have been as the Honourable Leader of the Opposition would know we had a variation but really the modal number has been around that 4-4½%. It is a standard Bill and I bring it here for approval because I do not want when I am finished using up the Grant on the terminal building I do not have my house in order in relation to the loan and governance requires thinking about the issue in advance. So, I want to put my house in order and then leave the public officials having done what I am supposed to do to effect the negotiations under the direction naturally of the Minister of Finance: that is all what this is about.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of the Opposition you are debating this matter?

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Mr. Speaker, this is a straight forward matter we support the Bill.

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the support by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition on this matter. I beg to move that this Honourable House resolve itself into a committee of this whole House to consider the Bill clause by clause.

House resolves into a committee

House resumes

**Economic Diversification Loan
Authorisation Bill, 2011
Passed the committee stage
Without amendment**

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move that a Bill for an Act to secure a loan to finance the projects under the Economic Diversification be read a third time by title and passed.

Question put and agreed to

7. PREVENTION OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS BILL, 2011

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to move a Bill for an Act to give effect to and to implement the protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children and to provide for matters connecting therewith and incidental thereto. Mr. Speaker, the object and reason for the Bill, they are contained in the long title. I beg to move the first reading.

Question put and agreed to

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members,

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: You are not doing the church Bills?

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: I am calling the Select Committee for the trafficking and then you and the Clerk and the Honourable Member for Ecclesiastic Affairs will address the Church Bills. Mr. Speaker, the following members on the government side:

The Honourable Minister for Education	Hon Girlyn Miguel
The Honourable Minister for Social Development	Hon. Frederick Stephenson
The Honourable Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs	Hon. Maxwell Charles
The Honourable Senator	Hon. Elvis Charles
The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs	Dr. the Hon. Douglas Slater
The Honourable Attorney General	Hon. Judith Jones-Morgan and

myself; because there are National Security issues, six persons really: so I do not know four, five I do not know, whatever you wish to have.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:-

The Honourable Representative for
the Northern Grenadines

Dr. the Hon. Godwin Friday

The Honourable Senator

Hon. Anesia Baptiste

The Honourable Senator

Hon. Vynnette Frederick

The Honourable Representative for
North Leeward

Hon. Roland Mathews and

myself.

10. **CHRISTIAN PILGRIM FAITH INCORPORATION BILL, 2011**

**Question put and agreed to
Christian Pilgrim Faith Incorporation Bill, 2011
Read a second time and passed**

11. **GOSPEL HALLS OF ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
INCORPORATION BILL, 2011**

**Question put and agreed to
Gospel Halls of St Vincent and the Grenadines
Incorporation Bill, 2011
Read a second time and passed**

12. **FAITH PENTECOSTAL NEW COVENANT MINISTRIES INCORPORATION BILL, 2011**

**Question put and agreed to
Faith Pentecostal New Covenant Ministries
Incorporation Bill, 2011
Read a second time and passed**

13. **OUR LADY OF GUADELOUPE HOME INCORPORATION BILL, 2011**

**Question put and agreed to
Our Lady of Guadeloupe Home
Incorporation Bill, 2011
Read a second time and passed**

14. **GREEN HILL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH INCORPORATION BILL, 2011**

**Question put and agreed to
Green Hill Pentecostal Church
Incorporation Bill, 2011
Read a second time and passed**

15. ST PETERS SPIRITUAL BAPTIST CHURCH INCORPORATION BILL, 2011

**Question put and agreed to
St Peters Spiritual Baptist Church
Incorporation Bill, 2011
Read a second time and passed**

**16. GOOD NEWS BIBLE CHURCH ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES
INCORPORATION BILL, 2011**

**Question put and agreed to
Good News Bible Church
St Vincent and the Grenadines
Incorporation Bill, 2011
Read a second time and passed**

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: The Select Committees, Honourable Members, for these Bills.

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker:-

The Honourable Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs	Hon. Maxwell Charles
The Honourable Minister for Social Development	Hon. Frederick Stephenson
The Honourable Senator	Hon. Elvis Charles
The Honourable Senator	Hon. David Browne

HONOURABLE MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE:-

The Honourable Representative

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: [Inaudible] for Pastor

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: I am coming to him [Laughter] [Interjection] [Laughter]

The Honourable Representative for South Leeward	Hon. Nigel Stephenson
--	-----------------------

The Honourable Senator

Hon. Anesia Baptiste

The Honourable Representative for
West Kingstown

Hon. Daniel Cummings

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: West Kingstown?

HONOURABLE ARNHIM EUSTACE: Yes.

HONOURABLE JULIAN FRANCIS: [Inaudible] [Laughter]

ADJOURNMENT

DR. THE HONOURABLE RALPH GONSALVES: Mr. Speaker, we have a hefty Bill: the trafficking Bill which we need to go through. And I think we should give ourselves enough time that we can get it done; so that when we come back here in the next meeting we could have the report out of the Select Committee and debate it. I would like to get it out of the way before the end of September; accordingly, the last date in September; Thursday 29th, so we can have enough time for the Select Committee.

I would like to move that this Honourable House do stand adjourned until Thursday September 29th, at 10:00 a.m.

HONOURABLE GIRLYN MIGUEL: I second it.

**Question put and agreed to
House adjourned at 8:25 p.m.
Until Thursday 29th September**